



# **Forty-third Annual Report of the Permanent Secretariat**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA hereby submits its report of activities for the period October 2018-September 2019, on the execution of the Work Programme for 2019, as approved by the XLIV Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council (Caracas, 26 to 28 November 2018), through Decision 572, as well as other activities and tasks carried out by the organization.

Pursuant to Decision No. 440, adopted at the XXVIII Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council (Caracas, 7 to 9 April 2003), the activities scheduled in the Work Programme for 2019 were structured into three areas: Intra-Regional Relations, Economic and Technical Cooperation, and Extra-Regional Relations.

In the Area of Intra-Regional Relations and as part of the programme of integration and economic growth in Latin America and the Caribbean, some initiatives were developed in order to measure the progress of regional integration, particularly by preparing follow-up reports on subregional integration mechanisms, a report on regional integration and case studies on integration.

The Permanent Secretariat continued updating the three indices designed for Latin American and Caribbean countries, namely:

- i) Integration Index of Latin America and the Caribbean (IINTALC);
- ii) External Vulnerability Index (EVI); and
- iii) Trade Introversion Index (IICO) and strengthening the Statistical Information System of SELA's Web portal and development of the interactive system for managing the databases and economic statistics of SELA.

Moreover, action was taken to materialize regional and technical meetings as scheduled, namely:

- i) Inter-institutional monitoring group for regional integration;
- ii) Universal health coverage as a mechanism to facilitate regional integration;
- iii) Productive transformation in the digital area: An opportunity for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- iv) E-commerce and its development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Status and prospects;
- v) Intra-regional value chains based on digital economy; and
- vi) Furthermore, the activities continued, as envisaged in the Programme for the Creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports: Strengthening logistic port communities, standards of services and technological innovation, in addition to the IV Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting of Logistic Port Communities.

In the Area of Economic and Technical Cooperation and within the project to strengthen cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, the following events were held:

- i) XXX Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Coordination and efficiency of international cooperation vis-à-vis the occurrence of natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean, and VIII Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- ii) IX Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition. Joint UNCTAD-SELA Project; and
- iii) Cultural and creative industries: New opportunities for regional development.

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In the field of cooperation for economic and social development, the following meetings were held:

- i) Seminar on advances in public policies for poverty reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: A multidimensional approach;
- ii) Seminar on the assessment of the impact of public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean: Policies for Disaster Risk Reduction;
- iii) Meeting on strong and inclusive labour markets: Challenges and prospects for Latin America and the Caribbean; and
- iv) Seminar on food and nutrition security in Latin America and the Caribbean: Treatment of food losses and waste.

Furthermore, headway was made with the setup of multi-dimensional development indicators and a database in furtherance of public policies, in addition to the analysis of migration challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean, in light of the network theory for the period 1995-2017.

Within the Latin American Regional Programme for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SELA-SMEs Programme), strides continued in terms of:

- i) Update and construction of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IIPALC);
- ii) Presentation of findings applied to the Member States of the Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay; and
- iii) Launch of the IIPALC in the Central American subregion.

Concomitantly, the following meetings were held, as scheduled in the Programme:

- i) Productive articulation for strengthening and developing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region;
- ii) Seminar-Workshop on experiences in formalization of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- iii) Organization of the Seminar on Perspectives for internationalization of SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean; and
- iv) Seminar on Academia, entrepreneurship and business success: Discovering the formula for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the Area of Extra-Regional Relations, within the programme on assessment and promotion of economic relations with Latin American and Caribbean countries, there were advances in the following terms:

- i) Meeting for the analysis of economic, trade and cooperation relations of Latin America and the Caribbean with India; and
- ii) Seminar on the Eurasian Economic Union and Latin America and the Caribbean: Cooperation for greater inter-regional integration.

**I. EXECUTION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME****AREA I. INTRA-REGIONAL RELATIONS****PROGRAMME: INTEGRATION PROCESS AND ECONOMIC GROWTH IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN****PROJECT I.1. Assessment of the Latin American and Caribbean integration process****Activity I.1.1. Regional integration: Inter-institutional monitoring group**

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA proposed the establishment of an inter-institutional monitoring group during the Seminar on Prospective Vision of Latin American and Caribbean integration, held in Mexico City, in 2018. The purpose was to design a technical regional agenda with a focus on the dimensions of Latin American integration, particularly to address some needs regarded as urgent in the region in multiple regional and global seminars and forums.

From the outset, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and SELA pondered on a joint work agenda involving the experts of multilateral organizations entrusted to study and assess regional integration. Subsequently, the following institutions would join the efforts: Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), CAF-development bank of Latin America and the Institute for the Integration of Latin American and the Caribbean (INTAL) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The inter-institutional monitoring group has held two meetings under the Work Programme 2019. The first meeting took place during the Seminar "Assessment of the integration process in Latin America", hosted by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA on 7 and 8 May 2019, in Montevideo, at the venue of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI). Its objectives included: i) assessment of the trends of integration mechanisms in the long term; ii) study of the regional potentials to attain higher levels of convergence, and iii) provision of support tools for policy making related to regional integration.

During the meeting, intra-regional coordination strategies were presented to deal with trade in services. Some initiatives were suggested on public policies to foster higher levels of integration, and the role of regional development banks was discussed. Additionally, and in order to work on a future work agenda, a matrix of institutional activities was completed to assess meeting points so as to avoid duplications in work subjects, and propose new activities in line with institutional work programmes.

The second meeting took place during the Seminar: "Bridging gaps in Latin American integration processes," held on 17 and 18 July 2019 at the headquarters of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), located in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The objectives of this seminar included: i) identification and analysis of the main gaps in regional integration processes; ii) review of the current ways of convergence, and iii) supply of support tools for public policy making on the regional integration process.

On this occasion, participants defined work areas that the Follow-up Group will prioritize, with special emphasis on the digital transformation, regulation and convergence in the treatment of

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the social dimension of integration, as mechanisms to overcome intra-regional asymmetries in the search for greater convergence of the integration processes.

During the meetings of the inter-institutional monitoring group, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA encouraged the use of quantitative approaches to measure the progress of Latin American integration in the multiple dimensions under analysis, the conduction of studies on productive diversification and regional convergence, and cooperation to strengthen the institutional fabric that sustains regional integration.

### **Activity I.1.2. Universal health coverage as a mechanism to facilitate regional integration**

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, hand in hand with the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS) and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), is organizing the Seminar: "Universal health coverage as a mechanism to facilitate regional integration" scheduled to take place in Mexico City, on 27 and 28 November 2019.

This activity, within the mandates of the Permanent Secretariat to tackle the social dimension of integration, intends to: i) Share a comparative view of policies and programmes on universal health coverage in Latin America and the Caribbean; ii) Assess the role of the regional infrastructure for governance so as to ensure universal health coverage; and iii) Identify opportunities for South-South Cooperation (SSC) in the health sector as a mechanism to bolster regional integration.

This meeting space will allow the exchange of experiences on health as a fundamental component of the social dimension of Latin American and Caribbean integration, the review of achievements of this public policy from the perspective of universal health coverage and access, the protection of infrastructure and the quality of health services, as well as available opportunities for international cooperation, South-South and Triangular cooperation within the framework of regional institutions.

The national focal points in charge of health in the Member States of SELA will be convened to this event, as well as representatives of specialized regional and subregional organizations, scholars and the private sector.

The main conclusions of this event will be listed in the corresponding final report.

### **Activity I.1.3. Follow-up reports on subregional integration mechanisms**

Follow-up reports on integration mechanisms started in 2016, in light of the need to offer easy to read, summarized information on the regional dynamics of Latin America and the Caribbean.

These reports make emphasis on the macro-economic context, particularly external variables of the five subregional integration mechanisms according to the market behaviour, namely: the Pacific Alliance (PA), the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Andean Community (CAN) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Issued every six months, these reports are a compendium of the updated statistics of activities in the region. Moreover, a description is made of significant events during the six-month term, as well as the status of the mechanism with respect to the region, that is, population, life expectancy, size of the economy and per capita income.

Note is taken of major events in the macro-economic development of each mechanism by using variables such as economic growth, inflation, unemployment, and gross domestic product (GDP) according to the expenditure (i.e.: consumption, investment, public spending, and exports). Likewise, a briefing is made of the external sector performance by analyzing the behaviour of the balance of trade, direct foreign investment (both in flows and in balances), public foreign debt as a percentage of GDP, and net international reserves.

The data released in the report stem from the official agencies of each country, properly completed with information supplied by institutions specialized on surveys of socio-economic data at the regional level, such as ECLAC and the IMF. The report for the first half of 2019 is slated for November, in order to have available the largest amount possible of official information for 2018.

#### **Activity I.1.4. Case studies for integration**

Case studies for integration are short articles, of a rigorous analysis, written in a less scholarly tone. The objective is to provide decision makers with several initiatives inside and outside the region, which show experiences, best practices and issues of interest for Latin American and Caribbean economies.

Since 2018, these reports have been devised as a supplementary product of the SELA documentary compendium. Their structure has helped develop a wide array of easy-reading subjects, aimed at the general audience. The Permanent Secretariat intends to continue releasing these case studies, same as in previous years.

In 2019, a methodological note was released, which explained the proposal of the Permanent Secretariat to define strategic productive sectors, bearing in mind the individual features of the economies or regions. Such proposal results in a very important tool to identify potential sectors able to energize the economic growth. This time, the case of Salvador was studied as an example of what can be taken from productive abilities for a mapping of productive niches in order to complement existing tools, able to promote the internationalization of regional SMEs. Main findings include the identification of potential sectors linked to agriculture and textiles, as well as more economically complex sectors, such as pharmaceuticals and chemicals used to manufacture personal care items. These findings are included in the document corresponding to the first issue of the Economic Series of 2019 (Rodríguez, Javier and Sánchez, Karla (2019)). *Mapping productive chains in El Salvador*, SELA-SE/2019-1. Caracas: SELA.

#### **Activity I.1.5. Report on the regional integration process**

Tracking the development and evolution of the integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean has always been among the critical subjects for the Permanent Secretariat of SELA. This is the *raison d'être* for the yearly report on regional integration. The paper provides SELA Member States with an analysis of the recent developments of Latin American and Caribbean integration processes, with emphasis on the economic and social aspects of integration, namely trade relations, movement of persons and capital, international cooperation, and the construction of common institutional frameworks among countries. The report supplies useful data for decision making on regional integration, from the unilateral and multilateral standpoints.

For the 2019 edition, the report has focused on an analysis of the commercial dimension of regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean by examining commonly used indicators concerning this topic. While the thematic scope seems much more modest than expected from such a paper,

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the exclusive treatment of commercial topics is a win-win in the quality of the final document, resulting in better utilisation of the human and financial resources available at the Permanent Secretariat.

In this edition, a series of methods for trade analysis has been considered, ranging from widely used indicators in specialized literature, up to the most recent techniques designed by experts. The report contains a battery of indicators that measure trade issues, such as trade opening (trade over GDP ratio); intra-industrial trade (Grübel-Lloyd index); intensive and extensive trade margins (Hummels-Klenow indices); trade diversification (normalised Herfindahl-Hirschman index); comparative advantage (normalised revealed comparative advantage index); sophistication of the basket of marketed products (PRODY and EXPY indices of revealed technological sophistication); intensity of trade relations in a selected geographical region (trade introversion index) and trade compatibility among countries (trade complementarity index). Similarly, the report displays the results of the implementation of the network analysis used in world trade, along with additional series of quantitative data, derived from standard systems of accounts and traditional statistical data. This document will be published on SELA's Web page by the end of 2019.

### **Activity I.1.6. Latin American and Caribbean Integration Index**

Tracking the progress of Latin American and Caribbean integration mechanisms is pivotal for the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, insofar as it helps understand the countries' development on the basis of the establishment of economic blocs. In this context, the Latin American and Caribbean index (INTALC) was developed in 2016. The indicator aims at measuring the linkage and convergence of countries within various regional integration mechanisms, including five (5) dimensions associated with integration, namely: economic, social, environmental, political and cultural dimensions.

Throughout 2017 and in early 2018, the index was updated, just keeping the methodology developed in 2016 and enhancing the re-escalation method for better reading by policy makers.

In late 2018 and during 2019, a methodological review was made of the index estimation, in line with three fundamental axes: 1) Reduction or replacement of some of the indicators used as input to estimate the index, and selection of those indicators that make integration mechanisms more effective in the multiple dimensions in place; 2) Use of new metrics to estimate the index, and 3) Implementation of multiple methods of graphic representation of results, for a better view and reading.

For the same reason, a proposal was made to supplement the index with another measurement that considers particularly the partnerships or linkages among countries as the basis for the estimation. The goal is to compare these findings with the INTALC results and provide sounder metrics on integration that may be useful for the countries in the region. This update will be published at the end of the year, along with a technical note, in the indicator database of the new institutional Web site.

### **Activity I.1.7. Vulnerability index. Update and evaluation of results for Latin America**

The supply of new tools to policy makers in order to facilitate and refine their management, and eventually improve the quality of life of citizens is of the essence for the Permanent Secretariat of SELA. In this regard, in 2017, the Permanent Secretariat included in its Work Programme the

creation of an indicator able to timely identify events of high speculative pressure that may wreak havoc in the countries in the region.

This activity consisted in conducting the study "*Central America: Early Warning Indicators, a tool for times of crisis*", which offers policy makers statistics metrics to anticipate the occurrence of any economic and financial crisis. In this way, the appropriate corrections could be easier to make or some policies instruments could be implemented to lessen the effects of such shocks in the economy.

Proceeding with this activity under the Work Programmes for 2018 and 2019, data that give input to the indicators used to construct the External Vulnerability Index (EVI) were updated. Their value was re-estimated and their future behaviour was reckoned, with the primary aim of forecasting a crisis or events of high speculative pressure. This update will be published by the end of the year, along with a technical note, in the database of indicators of the new institutional Web site.

#### **Activity I.1.8. Trade Introversion Index (TII). Update and follow-up of trade linkages in Latin America**

Several indicators are available to measure the relevance of Latin American intra-regional trade. Notwithstanding, these tools show a series of limitations that could mislead the outcome.

In this connection, SELA included in its Work Programme for 2018 an indicator to overcome the constraints of standard indicators. Unlike any standard trade share index, the Trade Introversion Index (IILCO) properly ascertains whether the size of trade relations between geographical units or inside a region is strong or weak.

The study conducted in 2018 found different levels of trade relationship in the analyzed integration mechanisms: The Pacific Alliance (PA), the Andean Community (CAN), the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and the Central American Integration System (SICA). In 2019, the TII was updated to assess the current status of intra-regional trade and track the relevant strides, both at aggregate and itemized levels, of major export products per country. The update is set to stimulate the trade of some products that further the development of productive abilities and increasingly complex activities for a productive interlocking in the region. This update will be published by the end of the year along with a technical note, in the database of indicators of the new institutional Web site.

#### **PROJECT I.2. Analysis of productive structures and economic growth in the region**

##### **Activity I.2.1 Productive transformation in the digital era: An opportunity for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean**

The Regional Meeting on Productive transformation in the digital era: An opportunity for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean, co-hosted by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM); the National Development Agency (ANDE), and the National System for Productive Transformation and Competitiveness of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, was held on 29 and 30 April 2019, in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Its objectives included: Create a space for discussion on the main challenges and opportunities of the countries in the region in the efforts at transformation of their productive matrices; ponder on the status of implementation of a regional digital agenda that promotes growth and productivity

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with special emphasis on SMEs; and gain knowledge about best practices in the use of digitization for the inclusion of SMEs in business association programmes.

Representatives of the following SELA Member States took part in the event: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay. Representatives of the following organizations were present as well: Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI); Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); CAF-development bank of Latin America; Regional Centre for the Promotion of Central American MSMEs (CENPROMYPE); Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

During the event, it was noted that Latin American and Caribbean countries share a diagnosis of low productivity, low levels of competitiveness and high concentration of exports of commodities.

In this regard, encouraging productive transformation is a primary task in domestic development programmes. According to the findings of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs implemented in the Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay, policy making in this area is at an intermediate stage.

As part of these efforts, digital technologies turned out to be a necessity and a source of opportunities for the development of new productive sectors. The use of these new technologies has facilitated and simplified the flow of information and communications, reduced production costs and increased the quality of products. All of this has resulted in ready access to global markets of providers and customers, the setup of international production chains, better quality of products, and economic diversification.

Nevertheless, the existence of barriers to cash in on technology innovation has been recognised, such as little awareness of the opportunities offered by technology innovation, poor training and difficult access to financing.

In order to overcome these challenges, the region should harbour the implementation of ground-breaking regulations, create tools that encourage e-entrepreneurship (cutting-edge incubators and accelerators, technology transfer programmes, seed capital facilities), and devise projects for digitization that go beyond the stage of incorporation and trigger training, business intertwining and development of new technologies.

Likewise, there is the need to streamline public administration and strengthen comprehensive innovation systems involving the government, the private sector, scholars and the civil society, within an environmentally sustainable framework. Such efforts must be seconded by a steady increase of expenses in innovation, presently amounting to 0.8% of the GDP in the region, in contrast with European countries, where they stand above 4%.

Participants in the event thanked SELA for the meeting as a forum for discussion, and they emboldened the organization to keep on working on these topics, in support of reform processes in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The main conclusions are listed in the final report on this activity.



**PROGRAMME: TRADE FACILITATION****PROJECT I.3. Programme for the creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of digital and collaborative ports: Strengthening logistic port communities, standards of services and technological innovation****Activity I.3.1. Programme for the creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of digital and collaborative ports. Phase IV: Network associativity and regional deployment of public policies for port logistics**

By virtue of Resolution P.E. No. 0047/2017, dated 9 June 2017, CAF-development bank of Latin America approved a Non-Reimbursable Technical Cooperation in favour of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA to support the Programme for the Creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports: Phase III, whose purpose is to consolidate and expand the Regional Programme for the Creation of the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports, started in 2014 and continued in 2015-2016, so as to make progress towards the objective to effectively establish the Network and recommendations can be replicated in order to facilitate and promote collaborative innovation projects in countries, port communities and Latin American and Caribbean logistic port corridors.

The execution of Phase III of the Programme began on 15 August 2017 and was scheduled to last for one year. In this Phase III, a proposal was made to expand and consolidate the Network, linking six new ports to the Programme and forming a transitional organizational structure that will take the initial steps that will allow for progress towards the effective creation of the Network, as an entity with specific legal entity.

This Programme has undertaken the task of strengthening various aspects of logistical competitiveness, from the institutional, such as the logistic port communities, the regional public-private partnerships around logistics and national plans for logistics; and from the operational, with best practices for the synchronization of ship-port-terrestrial operations and collaborative information technologies such as the Port Single Windows, logistics coordination systems and logistics modules in interoperation with the Foreign Trade Single Windows.

The Network proposes a series of support subsystems, such as strengthening Methodological Support Groups consisting of research and innovation centres that technically support each port community in each region and country. The Programme also aims to provide the Network with greater regional institutional nature, so that there is a strategic plan that allows it to promote and influence public policies for trade and transport facilitation, port digitization and greater collaboration in each country.

In this phase, technical visits have been made for the development of strategic diagnostics, with strategic planning exercises and the conduction of workshops on Logistic Port Chain Management, to the port systems linked in the different phases of the Programme. Likewise, the Quantitative Model of productivity indicators of the Logistic Port Chain has been designed and the measurement of the Competitiveness and Management Index of the Port Logistics Chain, in its second version, was applied and reported. The Programme has made strides with a number of technical activities between 2014 and 2019 with the main port communities of Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Brazil, with the purpose of identifying, promoting and disseminating institutional, digital and innovation best practices in the region.

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### **Activity I.3.2 IV Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting of Logistic Port Communities**

In compliance with the Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat for the year 2019, the IV Regional Meeting of Port Logistic Communities was held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 7 to 10 August 2019, at the facilities of the University of Trinidad and Tobago, and the Hilton Hotel in that city.

The objectives of the meeting were as follows: i) Draft a proposal for a 2030 Agenda for regional port transformation for the main ports; ii) Bring together representatives of the main logistic port communities members of the Network, national and local authorities that will further develop medium and long-term strategic definitions with multidisciplinary teams according to competitiveness and sustainability priorities; and iii) Present the results of the collaborative work carried out by the three technical committees and the Transitional Steering Committee.

The event was divided into four major blocks that rendered an account of the work carried out by SELA and CAF during the past four years, as well as the working mechanism of the meeting and the future of the Network. Also, participating high-level port authorities of Trinidad and Tobago described the work done in the port system of that country hosting the event. In the other three sessions, expert panellists made important contributions in the field of maritime clusters in Central America and the Caribbean; on strategies for port competitiveness in logistic corridors; and the progress made in public policies and institutional transformation in the region. In addition, they introduced the subject of the future work of ports in the era of the digital transformation.

Additionally, and as part of the consolidation of the future work of the Network, the Assembly of the Members with the participation of the Steering Committee created a strategy for the 2019-2020 roadmap of the Technical Committees and the Regional Working Agenda 2030: Towards digital transformation of ports, with an emphasis on the first stage in the countries of the Pacific Alliance.

Prior to the IV Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of Logistic Port Communities, the "III Symposium of scientific research in the Logistic Port Chains" was held on Wednesday, 7 August 2019, in the facilities of the UTT. This year, the Symposium focused on highlighting the importance of digital transformation to strengthen ports, being developed through maritime clusters and maritime training and education.

### **Activity I.3.3. Presentation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of digital and collaborative ports**

After the culmination of four years of work, the Network of Ports has become a reference model for the management of community initiatives with growth prospects in the use of technologies to promote innovative solutions; also encouraging technical cooperation actions in each port linked to the programme, such as workshops on strategic assessment, formation of methodological support groups, and training workshops for the industry.

The Network has identified a new space to develop international technical cooperation in port environments, which traditional multilateral organizations have not been able to address in integral, dynamic, result-oriented manner. In a short time, the Network has grabbed the attention of 28 port systems that need to adapt their management approach in order to make a quantitative leap in competitiveness, adopt technological changes, and integrate themselves in a collaborative way with

the maritime businesses, value import and export chains, logistic user community, and public transport policies. At present, ports should act swiftly in networks supporting business and innovation, in order not to lag and miss opportunities to develop themselves as port clusters, and thus boost economic and social development of port cities and competitiveness of foreign trade.

Based on the progress made during all phases of the programme, CAF, SELA and the organizational network structure (committees) are expected to coordinate actions that allows for developing some strategies for the formulation of short and long-term agendas, focused on the institutional strengthening of the Network, permanent measurement of the evolution of regional competitiveness, and dissemination of national and regional public policies on logistic port modernization.

Additionally, and in order to gain greater visibility and disseminate, transfer and share knowledge and information generated within the framework of the Programme for the Creation of the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports, this meeting will introduce an improved Portal of the Network of D&C Ports, hoping that it becomes a key element for their digital support at the stage of institutionalization of the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports promoted by SELA.

Due to force majeure, this meeting was postponed for the first quarter of 2020. The event will feature a formalized Network as a regional non-profit association, along with the new facilities of the Specialized Portal of the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports as a functional tool for the community's collaborative work.

## **PROGRAMME: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES AND KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY**

### **PROJECT I.4. Promotion of innovation and technological development**

#### **Activity I.4.1. Electronic commerce and its development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Status and prospects**

A priority of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA in promoting the digital economy and the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) is to promote the use of tools to strengthen trade in the region. Thus, it is organizing the Seminar on "Electronic Commerce in Latin America and the Caribbean: Current situation and prospects", which seeks to address the concerns of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with a lot of exporting potential at the regional and international levels.

This event will provide business leaders and public policymakers with a meeting space where they will get an overview of the usefulness of electronic commerce as a tool for internationalization and will seek specific solutions in this area, in accordance with the needs faced by the business sector in the region. Thus, the main objective of this activity is to identify specific opportunities and challenges that the countries of the region must address in order to use electronic commerce as a tool for the insertion of small and medium-sized enterprises into international markets. The seminar will also identify the mechanisms used in electronic means – both existing and potential – and will define a concrete framework of public policies for the use of this tool in the insertion of small and medium-sized enterprises of the region into the international markets.

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This seminar was scheduled to be held on 8 and 9 October at the headquarters of ALADI in Montevideo with the collaboration of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, it was postponed for 2020 owing to force majeure.

### **Activity I.4.2. Intra-regional value chains based on digital economy**

A smart value chain is defined as an international supply chain involving suppliers, producers, networks of logistic services, distributors and end consumers, who have achieved a degree of information-sharing based on digital enablers, that allows them to reduce their response time to markets, take advantage of shared resources, minimize the carbon footprint in their operations and permanently improve their products in two-way collaboration with the end customer.

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, in its role to support the promotion of trade and investment, aims to facilitate the internationalization of SMEs in intra-regional value chains and their integration into the digital economy environment and the use of smart technologies. To that end, it is necessary to undertake technical cooperation activities focused on the dissemination of global best practices in regional integration of value chains, the promotion of sectoral and transnational governances integrating the industry of ICTs, innovation and enterprises according to the current and future needs of internationalized SMEs and in strengthening public policies for the promotion of such collaboration actions.

In 2019, a regional seminar was scheduled as well as a working paper that would include the possibilities for international technical cooperation in order to strengthen a new collaboration ecosystem between those SMEs participating in the intra-regional value chains, the new platforms for services based on the digital economy and the public policies to generate the regulatory framework to promote these new forms of collaboration. This activity was postponed for 2020 owing to force majeure.

### **PROJECT I.5. Strengthening the statistical information system on SELA's Web site**

#### **Activity I.5.1. Developing an interactive system for managing economic databases and statistics on SELA's Web site**

During 2018-2019, SELA's Interactive Portal of Statistical Indicators was developed and scheduled to be launched with the new version of the institutional Web site in the third quarter of the year. In doing so, the Permanent Secretariat seeks to strengthen the dissemination and facilitation of data related to economic and social integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, by offering an interactive space to provide access to the various statistical products developed within the organization. In addition, through this tool, the Member States and other users will be able to timely access the statistical information that characterizes the regional integration process and other economic and social inter-relations among the countries of the region.

### **PROJECT I.6. Management and coordination of specialized portals**

#### **Activity I.6.1. Management and maintenance of specialized portals**

As part of the information provided by SELA to Member States and, in general, to all audiences interested in the development of Latin America and the Caribbean, through its general Web site, the organization maintains a number of specialized portals related to key aspects of its mandate under the Panama Convention, namely: *Community of Latin American and Caribbean*

*States (CELAC) and South-South Cooperation; International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean; Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean; Free Trade Zones; Latin American and Caribbean Regional Programme for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SELA-SMEs); Directory for LAC organizations.*

The Permanent Secretariat is currently undertaking a market exploration process to select the supplier that will redesign the portal on SMEs with a view to optimizing the presentation of information, especially the legal information. It is also doing the same with the portal on Logistic Port Communities, within the framework of the *Programme for the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports*, which has developed since 2014 with the cooperation of CAF-development bank of Latin America.

In addition, the site referred to the Member States was updated, in particular the matrix of economic indicators and that of socio-demographic indicators.

## AREA II. ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION

**PROGRAMME: SUPPORT TO ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES**

**PROJECT II.1. Strengthening economic and technical cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Activity II.1.1. XXX Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Coordination and efficiency of international cooperation vis-à-vis the occurrence of natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean**

The Permanent Secretariat hereby reports on two Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Firstly, the "*XXIX Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Strengthening cooperation in trade connectivity in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards greater insertion in value chains*" was held on 6 and 7 December 2018, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. The government of the Dominican Republic co-sponsored the event through the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development and the General Directorate for Multilateral Cooperation (DIGECOOM), in addition to the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund of the Group of 77 (PGTF-G77).

This regional meeting aimed to: i) Identify main opportunities and challenges in international, triangular and South-South cooperation for stronger trade infrastructure and further involvement of the LAC region in global value chains; ii) Create a space for synergy for the exchange of successful experiences and best practices on management of trade infrastructure so to reduce costs and time in foreign trade logistics; and iii) Brief on the headway made with management of trade infrastructure by assessing the status of execution of physical works and the utilization of information and communication technologies to streamline logistic processes.

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The meeting was attended by representatives of the organizations responsible for international and South-South Cooperation in SELA Member States; representatives of organizations specialised in development of trade infrastructure and connectivity in the region, and representatives of regional and international cooperation, financing and integration organizations.

During this meeting, the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI), acting as the coordinator for Latin America of the Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Cooperation (GPI-ETC), to which SELA is a party, listed the strides with consensus on voluntary guidelines for an effective triangular cooperation. The results were produced at the Second High-Level United Nations Conference for South-South Cooperation (PABA +40), held in March 2019.

The Rapporteur's Report and the conclusions are available in the Final Report of this activity.

Secondly, the "*XXX Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Coordination and efficiency of international cooperation vis-à-vis the occurrence of natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean*" took place on 11 and 12 April 2019, in Panama City. The government of the Republic of Panama co-sponsored the event through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Government and the Regional Logistic Centre for Human Aid (CLRAH), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Red Cross International Federation (RCIF), and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

The objectives of this regional meeting included: i) Submit a general assessment of the main initiatives developed by the Member States of SELA and specialized international organizations to contribute to the consolidation of coordinated and efficient cooperation vis-à-vis adaptation and mitigation of effects of natural disasters; ii) Promote best practices of international cooperation in cases of disasters and strategies for adaptation and mitigation of their impacts, which are susceptible to replication in different geographical and demographic contexts; and iii) Disseminate and exchange information on protocols of coordinated action for the efficient management of international cooperation in cases of natural disasters.

Within the framework of this activity, the official inauguration took place of the Humanitarian Hub for Latin America and the Caribbean, under the aegis of the government of the Republic of Panama. The attendees included representatives of the organizations responsible for international cooperation and South-South Cooperation of SELA Member States; representatives of organizations dedicated to humanitarian aid, response to natural disasters and social security in the region, as well as representatives of regional and international cooperation, financing and integration organizations.

This activity was adjourned owing to force majeure during the second day.

Note that the XXXI Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean is slated for 2020. The event, intended to bolster novel mechanisms for South-South and Triangular Cooperation (CSSTr) in Latin America and the Caribbean, will be co-hosted by the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation, which has formally expressed its desire and interest to provide the venue and co-sponsor this regional meeting.

For such purpose, the Permanent Secretariat has submitted for the consideration of the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77 (G77), as part of the 2019-2020 programme, the project: "*Innovative Mechanisms for South-South and Triangular Cooperation (CSSTr) in Latin America and the Caribbean*", in search of financial and technical support to this activity.

**Other activities:**

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA took part in the "Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (PABA+40)," held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 20 to 22 March 2019. Within the framework of this Conference, the Permanent Secretariat provided two informative documents entitled "Contribution by the Permanent Secretariat to South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the region" (SP/SELA-PABA/Di N° 1-19) and "Statement by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA" (SSP/SELA-PABA/D-19).

Furthermore, within the context of the Conference, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and the South Centre initialled an agreement to encourage South-South and Triangular Cooperation in furtherance of the socio-economic development of Member States and in support of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This agreement will enable both parties to carry out joint activities at the technical and institutional levels. Such activities are channelled to: i) Host meetings, seminars, workshops or forums intended to disseminate knowledge and advice on international and regional cooperation or socioeconomic development programmes, and ii) Conduct professional exchanges and agree on research into the topics deemed as appropriate for the respective objectives.

Moreover, with a view to strengthening cooperation with the Organization of American States (OAS), the Permanent Secretariat attended the 49th Regular Session of the OAS General Assembly, following an invitation from the Secretary-General. The event took place in Medellín, Colombia, from 26 to 28 June 2019. The timing was good for a talk with the OAS Executive Secretary for Comprehensive Development (SEDI), Kim Hurtault-Osborne, in order to identify work areas of common interest and for joint efforts by 2020.

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA kicked off negotiations with SEDI to enter into a cooperation agreement. The goal is to lay the foundations for cooperation and common understanding, devise actions and set strategies towards the implementation of public policies for comprehensive development of Member States, and create the necessary conditions to overcome exclusion and inequality in the region.

For such purposes, SELA and SEDI prepare to unite collaboration efforts through a cooperation framework for joint action to contribute to expand public policies in common interest areas, deepen the operations of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean, consolidate micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in LAC, advocate for the human rights of migrants, engage in job creation, and ensure access to decent work conditions; all of this through actions of technical and institutional cooperation and encouragement of best practices.

Additionally, the Permanent Secretary of SELA requested his OAS counterpart, Luis Almagro, the incorporation of SELA into the Joint Summit Working Group (JSWG), a taskforce responsible for supporting the Summit Implementation Review Group (SIRG), the main executing body of the Summit Process.

The interest of the Permanent Secretariat in joining the group of Inter-American and international organizations that support the Summit Process for the implementation and follow-up of mandates relies on its ability and willingness to give technical guidance in order to spot the challenges faced by the Americas, for their potential review and discussion in the Summit Process. The expertise of the Permanent Secretariat in the preparation of projects and initiatives could be a substantial contribution to accomplish the commitments made at the Summits, eventually improving living

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conditions in the region. In the event of materializing the incorporation, SELA would become a party to the JSWG, along with OAS, IDB, ECLAC, PAHO, the World Bank, IICA, CABEI, CAF, BCD, IOM, ILO, UNDP and OECD.

### **Activity II.1.2. Cultural and creative industries: New opportunities for regional development**

The Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), hand in hand with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism (MINCIT) of Colombia, the Medellín Mayor's Office and the Medellín Chamber of Commerce for Antioquia, will host the "Regional Meeting on Orange Economy: Creating opportunities for regional development", in Medellín, Colombia, from 5 to 7 August 2019.

The objectives of the meeting are as follows: i) Create a space for discussion on the main challenges and opportunities for the cultural and creative industries in Latin American and Caribbean countries; and ii) Promote the exchange of regional and international successful practices in the implementation of actions that promote joint work between the public and private sectors and the academia for the benefit of cultural and creative activities.

Representatives of the following SELA Member States attended the event: Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela. Similarly, representatives of the following regional and international organizations attended the event: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), BBVA MicroFinances Foundation, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Ibero-American Organization (IEO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

This event highlighted the ability of the cultural and creative industries to boost economic activity and generate quality employment. This is evidenced by the performance shown in 2015, when the orange economy generated revenues in the amount of more than US\$ 124 billion and 1.9 million jobs.

Among the empirical regularities of the cultural and creative industries is the concentration of supply in locations with financial power, a demand led by the young population with intensive use of digital platforms and positively related to the user's educational level.

As regards business and operating environment, 87% of cultural and creative enterprises are micro-enterprises with an average lifespan of 2.4 years; 47% use the homes of their owners as the centre of operations, and their main source of funding are their own resources or those of someone close to them.

The conclusions of the event highlight that the main challenges of the region to accelerate the dynamism of this productive sector are in improving the operating environment of the business; promoting institutional strengthening; boosting innovation and knowledge systems; encouraging digitization; promoting territorial communication mechanisms that make national mandates more effective and policy design more participatory at the department level; and incorporate the activities of the orange economy into productive transformation programmes, investment promotion and export diversification.



The Rapporteur's Report and the conclusions of this event are collected in the Final Report of the meeting, available at SELA's Web site ([www.sela.org](http://www.sela.org)).

**Activity II.1.3. VIII Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean**

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and the National Emergency System (SINAE) of Uruguay are working on the "VIII Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean," slated for 12 and 13 December, in Montevideo.

This activity will focus on the following objectives: i) Continue to promote the formation of public-private partnerships to promote disaster risk reduction, with the help of governmental focal points and private entities in the region, as well as the implementation of actions in this connection, together with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR); ii) Continue to foster continuity of government and business, and operations amid disaster situations, through the exchange of knowledge and experiences among the various actors in the field of risk management; and iii) Continue to support compliance with the goals adopted within the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 regarding issues related to resilience, damage reduction and international cooperation, among others.

This event will convene government agencies engaged in disaster risk reduction in the Member States; public and private businesses in the region, interested in risk management, and specialized regional and subregional organizations.

The main conclusions of this event will be listed in the corresponding Final Report.

Note also that the Permanent Secretariat took part in the "Sixth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction", held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 13 to 17 May 2019. Thus, SELA reasserted its commitment to disaster risk reduction and resolute support to the Private Sector Partnership for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE), coordinated by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

**Activity II.1.4. IX Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition. Joint UNCTAD-SELA project**

The IX Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Working Group on Trade and Competition (WGTC), hosted by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, in tandem with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the National Competition Commission (CONACOM) and the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Paraguay, was held on 4 and 5 October 2019, in Asunción, Paraguay.

This meeting aimed at analyzing the interaction between trade policies and competition in order to boost technology innovation and productive transformation in the region.

Participants in the event included authorities responsible for trade and competition in Latin American and Caribbean, as well as representatives of regional and international organizations, scholars and the private sector.

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The Permanent Secretariat submitted a study entitled "Trade and competition policies to spur productive transformation: Opportunities and challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean". It offers an overview of the advances in the field of productive transformation, which have been included in Latin American and Caribbean trade and competition agencies, as part of their regulations, policies or action areas. The paper explores the challenges and opportunities of such agencies to engage in productive processes. It also lists the best practices for trade-competition linkage to enhance productivity.

Moreover, UNCTAD submitted a study focused on the treatment of competition and the development of regional technological innovation.

The main conclusions of this regional meeting are contained in the Final Report of the IX Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition in Latin America and Caribbean.

### **PROJECT II.2. Economic and social development**

#### **Activity II.2.1. Advances in public policies for poverty reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: A multidimensional approach**

The Permanent Secretariat hosted the *"Technical Workshop on advances in public policies for reduction of multidimensional poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean"*, along with the government of the Republic of Paraguay, through the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) and the Social Cabinet of the Presidency of the Republic, as well as the MERCOSUR Social Institute (ISM), on 3 and 4 June 2019, in Asunción, Paraguay.

This technical workshop aimed to: i) Disseminate best practices and experiences of successful programmes and social policies for poverty reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean, and ii) Facilitate better coordination among national authorities in Latin America and the Caribbean responsible for social development, multilateral organizations and regional development banks in the design and implementation of public policies and programmes for poverty reduction in the region.

Participants in this event included specialists of the Member States, representatives of the Ministry of Health and Social Development (MSDS) of Argentina; Colombian NGO Prosperidad Social; National Assessment Commission (CONEVAL) of Mexico; Technical Secretariat of the Social Cabinet of Panama; Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI); NGO *Crece Contigo* of Uruguay, and the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) of Uruguay. The following parties were also present on behalf of the Government of Paraguay: Ministry of Social Development (MDS); Social Cabinet Technical Unit (UTGS) of the Presidency of the Republic; Statistics, Surveys and Census General Directorate (DGEEC) and the Planning Technical Secretariat (MINNA).

Extra-regional representatives also participated, namely, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Embassy of the Republic of Italy in Paraguay. Representatives of regional and international organizations appeared, as follows: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI); Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES); MERCOSUR Institute of Public Policies on Human Rights (IPPDH), MERCOSUR Social Institute (ISM), Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab for Latin America and the Caribbean (JPAL-LAC); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI); the

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); Oxford University (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, OPHI); Andrés Bello Catholic University (UCAB) of Venezuela, the Economic and Social Research Institute (IIES), and the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA).

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA had an opportunity to make a presentation on the headway made with the mainstreaming of its Work Programme with the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and remark its main initiatives in its social agenda: the Latin American and Caribbean Integration Index and technical cooperation on public policy innovation and learning. Similarly, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA produced the project *Partnerships for the well-being of Latin American and Caribbean youth*, intended to energize South-South and Triangular Cooperation in social development policies by means of better coordination, ready access to information and technical assistance.

Moreover, discussions continued in order to assess the impact of public policies for social development and focus on a technical workshop on the steps to reduce multidimensional poverty in Central America and the Caribbean, in partnership with the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab for Latin America and the Caribbean (JPAL-LAC) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, OPHI, by Oxford University, respectively.

The Rapporteur's Report and the conclusions are available in the final report on this activity. In the report, some general conclusions were made about reduction of poverty under the SDGs and the Agenda 2030, child development as a priority for social development policies, an approach of multidimensional poverty, technical challenges of the metrics of multidimensional poverty, the contribution of South-South and Triangular Cooperation to social development and poverty reduction, the challenges of social development policies and poverty reduction, and a collection of some best practices and experiences presented during the workshop.

#### **Activity II.2.2. Food and nutrition security in Latin America and the Caribbean: Treatment of food losses and waste**

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, shoulder to shoulder with the Ministry of Social Development (MDS) of the Republic of Uruguay, MERCOSUR Social Institute (ISM) and the MERCOSUR Parliament (PARLASUR), organized the "Regional High-Level Meeting on Food Security in Latin America and the Caribbean: treatment of food losses and waste," which was scheduled to take place from 30 September to 2 October 2019 in Montevideo, Uruguay, but due to force majeure, this meeting was postponed for the first quarter of 2020.

This regional meeting will have the following objectives: i) Assess the scenario for food security in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially the progress made and the policies enforced to reduce hunger; ii) Study the consequences of food losses and waste in the region; and iii) Promote experiences and best practices on the treatment of food losses and waste in the region.

The event will convene national focal points in charge of food security and policies to deal with food losses and waste of SELA Member States, regional and international organizations interested in the topic, representatives of the private sector and experts. The Permanent Secretariat will promote initiatives for the treatment of food losses and waste, which are turning into best practices in the region.

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### **Activity II.2.3. Migratory challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean: Analysis in light of the theory of networks**

Out of three population variables, migration has rather to do with people's decision, whether their free and voluntary act and deed, or forced. Migrating in or out of the national border results from a combination of what it is reasonable-objective and emotional-subjective, in a non-linear, non-definitive way, involving multiple factors. Migration, together with birth and death, alter the population structure and dynamics in a territory. Therefore, migration is somewhat a dynamic and changing social issue. *"Migrations are too diverse and multifaceted, and the contexts where they occur are very varied as to be explained by one single theory"*. (Arango, 2003: 27).

Different migration patterns show the multidimensional complexity of this phenomenon, construed as the result of social, economic, environmental and political processes in a society. The identification of causes, determinants and consequences of people's movements, both domestic and foreign, and their inter-relations would be insufficient, given the dynamic complexity of the context where migration takes place and where it is manifested.

This activity involved outsourced research into the macro-structure of migration in the countries in the LAC region. In this connection, it relied on the network theory, completed by a ratio analysis. The paper, published in September 2019, provides an overview in order to describe and understand the role of multiple nodes in the functional structure of the network of these countries and the rest of the world.

The study confirms the escalation and consolidation of migration networks in 1995-2017 for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the expansion and addition of new countries to such networks, thus increasing the relevance of intra-regional people's movement. All of this, despite the insufficient data itemisation and specification.

The research study found increasing complexity in the phenomenon of migration, as appears from the ratios of the reviewed indices, which fail to show unequivocal signs of people's movement, with socio-economic conditions as the main trigger to improve living conditions.

Despite all this analysis, the higher profile and increasing complexity of migration are a reason to delve into such one of the most relevant and crucial subjects in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### **Activity II.2.4. Seminar on impact evaluation of public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Policies for disaster risk reduction**

For the third year in a row, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA will host the Seminar on Impact Evaluation of Public Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. This training activity will be conducted jointly with the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD), the Ibero-American School of Administration and Public Policies (EIAPP), CAF—development bank of Latin America, and the Latin American Centre for Learning and Evaluation of Results (CLEAR-LAC).

In 2017, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA hosted the "Regional Seminar: Introduction to the Impact Evaluation of Public Policies and Programmes" (Mexico City, from 23 to 25 August 2017). The objective was to train participants in handling and mastering the necessary tools for managing,

monitoring and evaluating the impact of public policies and exchange experiences in formulating public policies with a view to consolidating skills for the use of impact assessment as a tool for accountability and for the continuous improvement of public policies and programmes.

Later on, in 2018, the Permanent Secretariat organized the Seminar on Impact Evaluation of Public Policies for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama City, Panama, from 10 to 12 September 2018), which was also co-sponsored and supported by the World Bank, with the purpose of focusing the methodology of impact assessment of public policies aimed at SMEs and MSMEs.

One of the conclusions of the seminar points out that impact assessment is not a methodology commonly used in public administrations and governing bodies in Latin American and Caribbean countries, and therefore the exceptional quality and validity in this niche to carry out technical cooperation initiatives for SELA Member States was taken into consideration. For this reason, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA deemed it relevant and useful to organize the *Seminar on impact evaluation of public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean in Disaster Risk Management and Reduction*, so that experts and decision-makers in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) can discuss about the issue, strengthen technical capabilities and promote its use in the region.

The Seminar will be held from 4 to 6 December in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, and will be co-sponsored by the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD), the Ibero-American School of Administration and Public Policies (EIAPP), CAF-development bank of Latin America, the Centre for Learning and Evaluation of Results of Latin America and the Caribbean (CLEAR-LAC), as well as the participation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), with the purpose of analyzing and focusing impact assessment on public policies aimed at disaster risk management in the region.

The objectives of this activity are as follows; i) Train participants in the seminar in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies for disaster risk management and reduction; ii) Disseminate best practices and experiences; and, iii) Promote technical cooperation among focal points for disaster risk reduction.

This new training activity will be aimed primarily at selected officials from government focal points in charge of disaster risk reduction and/or national agencies responsible for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of DRR policies. The training would be specifically aimed at the members of the Latin American Network on Risk Management and Climate Change in Public Investment.

The main conclusions of the event will be included in the corresponding Final Report.

#### **Activity II.2.5. Strong and inclusive labour markets: Challenges and prospects for Latin America and the Caribbean**

With the emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Revolution 4.0) on a global scale, all spheres of society have undergone profound changes. Technological trends, such as the Internet of Things, cognitive automation, artificial intelligence, robotics and the analysis of large volumes of data have been disruptive agents in the traditional conception of communications, of industrial and labour processes.

In this context, advanced countries have made strategic efforts to understand the new dynamics of their labour markets and harmonize technological innovation processes with the generation of new skills in the working class. In contrast, in Latin America and the Caribbean, analytical work on the

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new determinants of labour behaviour should be deepened in order to promote a comprehensive reform agenda.

In this connection, the Permanent Secretariat plans to hold a regional meeting that aims to: i) Generate a space for synergy and reflection on the main challenges and opportunities of the region's labour markets in the context of globalization, digitization and profound technological changes; ii) Gain knowledge about the main determinants of labour market behaviour and the impact of new technologies on their performance; and iii) Encourage the exchange of regional and international best practices in the implementation of a reform agenda that promotes the formation of sound and inclusive labour markets.

The Permanent Secretariat is coordinating the support of the local counterpart in order to hold this activity in 2020.

### **Activity II.2.6. Multidimensional indicators of development. Database in support of public policies**

For more than one century, countries have outlined public policies for development. However, this concept is fraught with complexity in view of its multidimensional nature, and therefore measuring the fulfilment of the proposed goals is quite a challenge. In any case, some perspectives and angles have been incorporated into the concept of development to encompass multiple dimensions, both in form and content, which consider economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental aspects. However, this entails an abundance of indices of various types, with each one attempting to measure conditions and/or variables present in various dimensions of the development of countries, some broader, others more specific, but all relevant.

This activity entailed the compilation of about 80 multidimensional indicators, itemised as follows: i) environment; ii) development and/or well-being; iii) freedom, democracy, and institutional nature; iv) innovation, science, and technology, and v) demographics. The purpose is to build a database available to public policy makers and researchers, especially from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ready access to all these metrics is highly appreciated for researchers and public policy makers, as it avoids duplication of efforts and promotes the intensive use of existing metrics. The developed indicators will be uploaded to the database of SELA's portal, along with a document that summarizes the main calculations, and will be published in the last quarter of the year.

**PROGRAMME: SELA-SMEs**

### **PROJECT II.3. Latin American and Caribbean Regional Programme for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises**

#### **Activity II.3.1 Productive articulation programme for strengthening and developing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region**

The productive articulation programme for strengthening and developing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region is the response of SELA to the needs of these businesses in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The main hurdles to SMEs in the region include scarce involvement in the creation of value-added goods. According to Bhagwati (2013), the incorporation of Latin America and the Caribbean into

global value chains occurs in the first or last stages of production, where the value-added is narrow and learning and technology transfer are lower.

Hence, in 2019 the Permanent Secretariat of SELA plans to prepare a work agenda with multiple activities to meet such urgent need within several scopes. The main purpose is to make room for SMEs insertion in production processes and identify trade dovetailing and links towards diversification. Besides, the proposal points to gradual incorporation of SMEs in global value chains, together with a work agenda targeted at training, association, better borrowing facilities and ready access to new information technologies.

The objectives envisaged in these action areas came to fruition through diagnostic seminars, the setup of taskforces and methodology support groups, and training workshops, with the involvement and technical support of multiple organizations related to SMEs in SELA Member States.

Within this context, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA brought forward a method to measure the export potential of the industrial sector, bearing in mind the relevant production capacity. In this way, guidance is given on activities able to spur economic growth and development in the region, as supplement and backup of the existing methods to identify value chains.

This new tool relies on the theory of capabilities for productive transformation, developed by Hausmann & Hidalgo (2013), in order to ponder on uncovered and covered comparative advantages of industrial sectors, thus favouring the identification of potentially productive niches.

As scheduled for 2019, a seminar and two workshops were conducted: The Seminar on productive articulation for strengthening and developing SMEs in LAC; the first workshop on productive articulation for strengthening and developing SMEs in LAC, and the seminar-workshop on productive articulation for strengthening and developing SMEs.

The first workshop took place in Asunción, Paraguay, in March 2019, under the aegis of the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MIC) of Paraguay. On that occasion, the representatives of the institutions responsible for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean were offered a three-day training in the basics of production capabilities and transformation, database handling and estimates by using the STATA statistical suite (Software for Statistics and Data Science). This workshop enhanced technical cooperation among regional focal points.

The second workshop, held in June 2019, in Santiago de Chile, under the aegis of the General Directorate for Economic Affairs (DIRECON) of Chile, ran concomitantly with a seminar primarily aimed at government focal points for MSMEs (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises) of SELA Member States. It was convened by a group of countries that expressed their interest in proceeding with the project and took part as well in the first workshop, held in March 2019, in Paraguay.

The latter workshop relied on the dissemination of a new methodology proposed by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA to spot potential productive sectors, in line with the own features of individual economies or regions, so as to cement the results from the multiple tools used for such purpose.

In this connection, SELA continued carrying out activities to disseminate the use of this tool, as well as the training of technical focal points of the countries that are parties to the project, in order to replicate the methodology in their own countries.

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Additionally, this seminar-workshop was useful to learn about and expand the concepts of productivity, and spread the existing strategies and proposals to strengthen the regional productive articulation. Furthermore, the training workshop only for country coordinators intensified the knowledge obtained during the first workshop with regard to the adequate management of statistical data, as required for the estimates, as well as early estimates of the models able to identify potential production niches, by means of real statistical data of each country.

Similarly, within this programme, the Permanent Secretariat gave remote technical aid to the country coordinators that are parties to the project, who expressed their interest in an official notice from their institutions.

In this context, three Webinars covered core issues for the methodology development. The Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD) hosted the webinars. Subject matters included: (i) required statistical data; (ii) data arrangement in an appropriate format to be managed with the used software (dta format), and (iii) review of the first estimates made by the countries.

These activities were useful to follow-up the headway made by each country with the development of the methodology, ahead of the seminar-workshop in Santiago de Chile. Furthermore, the activities were useful as feedback between SELA and country coordinators, thus identifying the most urgent individual needs.

Moreover, the experts of the Permanent Secretariat were in touch via e-mail and video conferences with country coordinators, in consultation on the said methodology.

Finally, the countries that are parties to the Project have requested onsite technical aid to make estimates and a complete diagnosis of potential sectors, as well as instil awareness in the owners of the required statistical data for the methodology development.

### **Activity II.3.2 Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC). Presentation of the results of the IPPALC project applied to the member countries of the Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay**

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, shoulder to shoulder with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and CAF-development bank of Latin America, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism, and the Ministry of Production of Peru, led the "[Presentation of the results of the IPPALC project applied to the member countries of the Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay](#)", in Lima, Peru, on 25 April 2019.

The objectives of this event were: i) Present and disseminate the final results of the IPPALC implemented in the countries of the Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay; and ii) Promote the drafting of a joint work agenda to follow up the reforms and the exchange of best practices in the sector of MSMEs.

Representatives of the countries that are parties to the IPPALC pilot project attended the event, to wit: Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. Similarly, delegations of Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay were present as observers. Representatives of regional and international organizations took part in the event, notably: CAF-development bank of Latin America; the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Foundation for Strategic Analysis and Development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (FAEDPYME), the



Central American Regional Centre for Promotion of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (CENPROMYPE), the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and Financiera Confianza of BBVA MicroFinances Foundation.

The regional meeting was the good timing for the presentation of the paper "[Policies for competitive SMEs in the Pacific Alliance and South American participating countries](#)", co-authored by OECD and CAF-development bank of Latin America, in cooperation with SELA and FAEDPYME.

The paper weighs the strengths and weaknesses in the different areas of design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of policies for MSMEs in the seven countries encompassed by the project, helps measure the degree of development of policies in each dimension and offers guidance to policy makers on identification and implementation of future reforms in line with global best practices.

This paper is the result of the inter-institutional cooperation started in 2017 with OECD and CAF-development bank of Latin America, upon the implementation of the IPPALC project in the Member States of the Pacific Alliance and South American participating countries Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay.

Participants in the event, particularly IPPALC country coordinators and senior authorities in the field of MSMEs of the seven countries covered by the project, hailed the outcome of the research. They remarked its significance in making an in-depth diagnosis of the present status of institutions concerning promotion of MSMEs, in favour of an optimum public intervention and the exchange of best practices in a context of regional and international benchmarking.

This event, materialised by the efforts made by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA at the implementation of the OECD Policy Index in Latin American and Caribbean countries, completes the first stage of the pilot project for the Member States of the Pacific Alliance and South American participating countries Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay. As follow-up, strides are being made in outlining the IPPALC project for Central American countries.

The Rapporteur's Report and the conclusions of this event appear in the Final Report, available on SELA's Web site ([www.sela.org](http://www.sela.org)).

### **Other activities**

During the First Technical Cooperation Forum of the Pacific Alliance (PA), held in Lima, Peru, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA discussed opportunities of inter-institutional cooperation through punctual petitions retrieved from the Pacific Alliance (PA) project portfolio. As a result of these presentations, SELA offered expertise and advice on MSME-driven projects and additional follow-up, as requested soon.

#### **Activity II.3.3      Launch of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs (IPPALC) project in the Central American subregion**

In compliance with the Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat for 2017, the "Technical Workshop on the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC): Central America" took place in San Salvador, El Salvador. The National Commission of Micro and Small Businesses (CONAMYPE) of El Salvador and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) co-sponsored the event. As agreed, any country interested

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in implementing this tool should make it known in a formal notice addressed to the project technical team (OECD-SELA).

In this way, both the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) received letters of intent from seven Central American countries, along with an endorsement from the Regional Centre for the Promotion of MSMEs (CENPROMYPE) of the Central American Integration System (SICA).

In this connection, in line with the efforts undertaken in 2015 for the effective implementation of the IPPALC, the Permanent Secretariat has included in its Work Programme for 2019 a subregional meeting, entitled "Launch of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs (IPPALC) in the Central American subregion". The event will take place with the support of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Regional Centre for the Promotion of MSMEs (CENPROMYPE).

Invitations will be extended to the representatives of the following SELA Member States: Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic. The call will also include representatives of the following entities: the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); the Regional Centre for the Promotion of MSMEs (CENPROMYPE) of the Central American Integration System (SICA); the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB).

The objectives of this meeting are as follows: a) Support Central American countries in the processes to evaluate and determine the objectives related to the development of SME policies; b) Offer a space to share national visions in adopting the IPPALC; c) Optimize the procedural framework designed by the Permanent Secretariat for the successful implementation of the IPPALC; and d) Review and validate the evaluation questionnaires for each IPPALC dimension in view of the structural needs and characteristics of the countries.

The Permanent Secretariat is coordinating the support of the local counterpart in order to hold this activity in 2020.

### **Activity II.3.4 Seminar-Workshop on experiences of formalization of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean**

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, in tandem with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and MSMEs (MICM) of the Dominican Republic and CAF-development bank of Latin America, hosted the "Seminar-Workshop on experiences of formalization of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean," in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 14 and 15 February 2019.

The objectives of the seminar-workshop included: i) Share a comparative vision of the policies and programmes for formalization of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean, and ii) Promote the most important experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean in the area of formalization of MSMEs.

The attendees included government focal points for SMEs from Argentina, Belize, Colombia, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Panama, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and Uruguay. Representatives of the private sector also participated, such as Adopem Bank, Jamaica Chamber of Commerce (CARICHAM) and the Dominican Federation of Chambers of Commerce, among others. Additionally, representatives

came from the following regional and international organizations: Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI); CAF-development bank of Latin America; Regional Centre for the Promotion of MSMEs (CENPROMYPE), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The seminar tackled the following subject matters: strengthening of institutional capabilities to spur formalisation; meeting the requirements and procedures under labour and tax jurisprudence, and ensuring consistency with the set of regulations on copyright and market operation. Furthermore, the seminar discussed the major problems and challenges in strengthening institutional capabilities to invigorate the formalisation of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean; quality of labour and social equity as by-products of formalisation, and tax systems and fiscal benefits for the sake of formalisation. Presentations were made of experiences and best practices related to public policies on formalisation for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean; ongoing country strategies in the region, and a roadmap to energize MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Rapporteur's Report and the main conclusions of this seminar will be included in the corresponding Final Report.

#### **Activity II.3.5 Seminar: Perspectives of internationalization of SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean**

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, hand in hand with ProColombia and BBVA MicroFinances Foundation, is hosting the "Seminar: Perspectives of internationalization of SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean", to be held in Bogotá, Colombia, on 21 and 22 November 2019.

The event will focus on the following objectives: i) Analyse the public policies developed in LAC and in Spain to promote the internationalization of SMEs. ii) Gain knowledge about the initiatives to support and provide advice from public and private entities in order to support SMEs in their internationalization process. iii) Gain knowledge about the methodologies to develop instruments that allow for determining and fostering the export potentials of SMEs in LAC, with a view to their inclusion into international markets; and iv) Analyze and systematize best practices and most successful experiences in the internationalization efforts of SMEs, with a view to their dissemination and eventual adoption.

The event will convene government focal points for small and medium-sized enterprises of SELA Member States, as well as the agencies dedicated to export, trade encouragement and support of SMEs.

The Rapporteur's Report and the main conclusions of this seminar will be included in the corresponding Final Report.

#### **Activity II.3.6 Academia, entrepreneurship and business success: Discovering the formula for Latin America and the Caribbean**

The academia plays a fundamental role in the development of skills and abilities for the emergence of new companies and business models. In addition to imparting the knowledge of each area, educational institutes must become spaces for synergy and encounter of the actors that may contribute to the success of the ideas.

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In partnership with private enterprises and public entities, academic institutes have created programmes to promote competitiveness of students to grab the attention of investors who supply them with seed capital and provide market opportunities to develop their products. Similarly, the academia has materialized changes in the subject matter of its careers to favour the formation of entrepreneurs and multiply their leadership skills, negotiation skills and skills for the formulation of projects.

However, the region has still many challenges to overcome in the construction of solid transmission mechanisms between the academic training and business success. Educational institutes must remain in constant feedback with businesses to build, together, a work platform that supports entrepreneurship and strengthens research and applied development systems in enterprises.

In this connection, the Permanent Secretariat proposed the conduction of a regional meeting to: i) Create a space for discussion on the main challenges and opportunities for the countries of the region in strengthening the capacities of the academia to support entrepreneurship and business activity; and ii) Promote the exchange of regional and international best practices in the implementation of actions to promote collaborative work between the public and private sectors and the academia.

This activity was scheduled to take place in Mexico City, Mexico, with the co-sponsorship of the National Institute for Entrepreneurs (INADEM). However, due to recent institutional changes within the Mexican government, this event was.

### AREA III. EXTRA-REGIONAL RELATIONS

**PROGRAMME: EVALUATION AND PROMOTION OF EXTRA-REGIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES**

**PROJECT III.1 Follow-up and analysis of preferential trade agreements signed among extra-regional countries that could influence their economic, trade and investment relations with Latin American and Caribbean nations**

**Activity III.1.1 Analysis of economic, trade and cooperation relations of Latin America and the Caribbean with India**

In recent years, India has grabbed the attention of analysts, entrepreneurs and policy makers from various countries of the world. India has posted an economic growth rate higher than most developed and developing countries, achieving a substantial market size and making a significant structural change on the global scene, only surpassed by the United States, China, Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom and France. Despite the significant performance of the Indian economy, relations between India and Latin America and the Caribbean are still in an incipient stage. The Latin American and Caribbean region represents only a small share of the international market of goods and services involving India. Only Argentina, Brazil and Chile maintain rather smooth economic relations with India.

In view of the foregoing, SELA will hold the "Seminar on experiences and opportunities for internationalization of Latin American SMEs with India" in Curitiba, Brazil, in December 2019 with the support of the Brazilian Service of Support for Micro and Small Enterprises (SEBRAE). With this

event, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA aims to lay the foundations for the connection of both regions through SMEs, given their relevant role in dynamic and inclusive economic development, both in Latin America and the Caribbean and India.

The seminar will focus on the development and status of relations between India and Latin America and the Caribbean; skills to strengthen bi-regional economic relations; the key strategy for cooperation for the sake of SMEs; successful examples of economic and cooperation relations between these regions, and further steps for deeper bi-regional relations. Besides, the event will be the meeting space for the establishment and strengthening of partnerships between public and private parties from Latin America and the Caribbean and India.

### **Activity III.1.2 The Eurasian Economic Union and Latin America and the Caribbean: Cooperation for greater inter-regional integration**

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, together with the Government of Guatemala, through the Ministry of Economy (MINECO), the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), organized the “Seminar Eurasian Economic Union and Latin America and the Caribbean: Cooperation for greater regional integration,” held in Antigua, Guatemala, on 23 and 24 September 2019.

The objectives of the Seminar were as follows: i) Present concrete opportunities to shape up business and cooperation agreements between SMEs in the EEU and Latin America and the Caribbean; ii) Define a base agenda for cooperation between the governments of the EEU and Latin America and the Caribbean in the area of SME development in both regions; iii) Create a group to follow up economic relations between the EEU and Latin America and the Caribbean to monitor and encourage partnerships of SMEs in India and Latin America and the Caribbean; iv) Develop areas for cooperation in the field of regional economic integration between the governments of the countries of the EEU and Latin America and the Caribbean; and v) Set up an institutional baseline for trade and cooperation agreements between the businesses of the countries of the EEU and Latin America and the Caribbean, including SMEs.

The regional meeting convened representatives of SELA Member States and the EEU; government focal points in the fields of integration, trade encouragement and SMEs; representatives of MSME associations; regional and international organizations engaged with Latin American and Caribbean cooperation and integration, and experts.

The Rapporteur’s Report and the main conclusions of this seminar are included in the corresponding Final Report.

#### **Other activities**

#### **Cooperation between the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and the government of United Arab Emirates within the framework of Expo 2020 Dubai**

On 9 and 10 April 2019, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA took part in the Global Business Forum, held in Panama. During the event, the Permanent Secretariat held a conversation with Ms. Nasra Al Rahma, Senior Project Manager for International Affairs of the Government of United Arab Emirates, ahead of Dubai Expo 2020. Additionally, the possibility was pondered of holding on the side-lines of this event the Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council, prior consultation with SELA Member States.

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### PRESS, PUBLICATIONS AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

#### 1. Plan for dissemination in mass media and press coverage

The Permanent Secretariat plans to include informative contents and news about the activities of the Work Programme of SELA for 2019 in the local and international public agenda, with an innovative and fresh image based on the guidelines of the organization, the pre-eminence of messages and the design of strategies to undertake action (with weekly, monthly and quarterly publications). This is to be achieved through timely releases to traditional mass media (press, radio and television) and to Internet-based media (Web sites, social networks, among others).

The strategic implementation of the communications plan to publicize the various meetings, workshops, seminars, signings of agreements, minutes and other activities in which SELA participates was attained through the dissemination of press releases on the organization's portal, other specialized portals, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube, as well as the coordination of interview agendas and the preparation of written press, radio and television statements by the Permanent Secretary, the Directors and other specialists.

In addition, the Permanent Secretariat has focused on implementing new strategies for promoting SELA's work through social media management. This is conducted by planning and executing digital marketing actions that involve the creation and promotion of contents on studies, meetings, workshops, documents and activities and graphic pieces, aimed at the various audiences of the Permanent Secretariat.

The Permanent Secretariat also continued with the usual activities in this area, such as the production of the information service and the adaptation of new information products based on the studies and documents prepared by the Permanent Secretariat, which are strategically disseminated by:

- **SELA Information Service.** Newsletter prepared with a selection of the most important news about the region and the world, linked to topics of interest for the development of Latin America and the Caribbean. This newsletter conveys the communications addressed to SELA Member States, users registered on SELA's Portal, social mass media, government representations, consular delegations, the private sector and civil society, in Spanish and English, which are recorded in a chronological archive on the SELA's Web portal.
- **PRESS Section on SELA's Web portal (SELA.org).** Publication of all the information produced through the daily information service, press releases and bulletins. It includes the management of contents of specialized portals: CELAC, South-South Cooperation, Disaster Risk Management, SELA-SMEs Programme, Free Trade Zones and Digital Ports. The contents published on these specialized portals are in Spanish and English.
- **Press coverage.** Contacts were established with the national and international press to publicize the meetings, seminars, workshops, conventions, speeches and presentations organized by the Permanent Secretariat, regardless whether the activities are conducted inside or outside its headquarters, which are disseminated through Difusión SELA, SELA's Web Portal and SELA's social networks on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.
- **Interview Agenda.** Communication action of public relations which reinforces the messages, the image and position of the organization in mass media, during a certain period, through interviews in press, radio and television with influencers of the public opinion; anchor-men, news agencies and journalists responsible for covering issues related to the organization.

- **Collaboration in updating dissemination lists.** Actions were taken to permanently update contact listings on SELA's Web Portal. The Permanent Secretariat also promoted the implementation of the New Messaging Service with MailChimp among subscribers, national and international media, specialized portals, printed media, among others, in order to continuously enhance the scope and improve the effectiveness of dissemination of information.
- 2. Informative products: Daily information service, press releases, and management of contents in specialized Web portals**

In order to provide its users with up-to-date and relevant information on the region's development, i.e.: intra-regional relations; extra-regional relations; and, economic and technical cooperation, SELA forwarded messages summarizing the activities of the Work Programme for 2018. Such messages reflect the objectives and promote the studies, proposals and programmes of the Permanent Secretariat.

The following information products were developed:

- **Information Service.** Daily digital newsletter in Spanish and weekly bulletin in English, prepared by monitoring and selecting news published through local and foreign news agencies and mass media (Spanish and English), which are classified and disseminated through SELA's Web site Portal and, whenever relevant, on the specialized portals that the Permanent Secretariat manages, as well as its social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook: @selainforma. Such information is disclosed via e-mail to the Embassies and Representatives of the Member States, to regional government entities, to officials of national and international organizations, SELA subscribers and international mass media.
- **Written contents and videos for the new portal.** A new narrative in the contents of the portal and social networks was launched in order to publicize SELA's work in an innovative and more attractive way. News and interviews were carried out to make an impact on relevant and new audiences so as to make them regular visitors.
- **Press releases and convocations for coverages.** In order to keep the direct and general beneficiaries of SELA informed, press releases were prepared and distributed, which were published and disseminated on SELA's Web site, via email and through SELA's social networks, to the embassies and representatives of its Member States, regional government entities, officials of national and international organizations, all SELA subscribers and national and international mass media.

#### **Press releases published during the period November 2018 – September 2019**

- SELA participates in XXIII CLAD Congress with Public Policy Index for MSMEs (05 November 2018)
- Productive articulation will be the central topic of the XLIV Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council of SELA (12 November 2018)
- SELA and SEGIB agree on 2020 Working Plan for MSMEs (14 November 2018)
- SELA and CISS sign cooperation agreement (21 November 2018)
- SELA and CLAD join efforts to promote Latin American cooperation and support MDGs (27 November 2018)
- SELA Communiqué (30 November 2018)
- SELA organizes Seminar on productive articulation for SMEs in Guatemala (03 December 2018)

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- SELA: Meeting of International Cooperation Directors to deal with trade infrastructure and connectivity (04 December 2018)
- Permanent Secretary of SELA meets with FMBBVA for MSMEs (14 January 2019)
- Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) to hold First Seminar on formalization of MSMEs (05 February 2019)
- SELA participates in II Regional Meeting of the UN Commission on International Trade Law (11 February 2019)
- SELA to present in Panama the results of the III Phase of the Programme on Digital and Collaborative Ports (20 February 2019)
- SELA organizes workshop on strengthening and development of regional SMEs in Paraguay (18 March 2019)
- SELA and South Centre sign agreement to promote South-South and Triangular Cooperation (22 March 2019)
- SELA: Meeting of International Cooperation Directors to address strategies to improve humanitarian assistance programmes vis-à-vis natural disasters (02 April 2019)
- Permanent Secretary of SELA: The strategy to strengthen MSMEs in the region is multidimensional (05 April 2019)
- SELA meeting to deal with productive transformation in the digital era and its opportunities for MSMEs (23 April 2019)
- SELA to hold meeting to evaluate the Latin American integration process (06 May 2019)
- SELA technical workshop to deal with achievements in policies for poverty reduction (31 May 2019)
- Seminar-Workshop on productive articulation for strengthening and developing SMEs (18 June 2019)
- SELA to hold the Seminar "Closing gaps in Latin American integration processes" (12 July 2019)
- SELA and FLACSO sign an agreement to promote sustainable and inclusive, economic and social knowledge (16 July 2019)
- SELA to address the challenges of the orange economy and its opportunities for regional development in Medellin (26 July 2019)
- Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports to move towards higher levels of innovation and efficiency (02 August 2019)
- SELA conference rooms named after former pioneer Permanent Secretaries from Ecuador and Peru (5 September 2019)
- Seminar addressed cooperation for greater regional and Eurasian integration in Guatemala (30 September 2019)

### 3. SELA in the social networks

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA has developed a strategy to diversify the scope of communications made through SELA's Web Portal and Social Networks, strengthening its presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube, to meet, in an immediate and dynamic manner, the information requirements of the users of SELA's Network. With this Web 2.0 modality, it has been able to strengthen the interaction with those who require contents generated by the organization, since such tools expand and complement the Permanent Secretariat's information services offer on a two-way basis.



With globalization, this process has brought about advantages for citizens, public administrations, companies and other organizations such as SELA, giving management greater transparency, collaboration, segmentation and feedback as regards communications.

Social networks have been appropriate channels for publicizing meetings, workshops, seminars, signings of agreements, minutes and other activities in which SELA participates, in accordance with the Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat for 2019.

Its presence on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube allows SELA to know the demands and needs of its various audiences, which, progressively, will indicate the institution what are the most appropriate ways to disseminate the informative products of the Annual Work Programme.

So far, the average weekly number of readers through social media represents on Twitter up to 76.5 K of impressions per day for those tweets with the largest disclosure exposure; on Facebook it reaches 2,927 followers, and on Instagram around 200 views. The network of contacts of almost one hundred on LinkedIn increases week after week, as well as on YouTube when videos are uploaded. Instagram is starting to attract followers, as it is the newest space used to connect with audiences.

It should be noted that, as a result of the communication strategy developed through social networks to increase the visibility of institutional communications, the Permanent Secretariat managed to establish a dialogue with direct audiences and the general public that is impacted by the proposals and initiatives promoted by SELA, through the implementation of products adapted to an increasingly globalized and multimedia-driven world.

## **INTEGRAL INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM OF SELA**

### **1. SELA's Web Portal ([www.sela.org](http://www.sela.org))**

In terms of the dissemination of scheduled activities, 19 minisites corresponding to the regional events held during the period December 2018 to September 2019 were designed and published on this portal, including:

- i. Seminar-Workshop on Financial Inclusion of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean, Antigua, Guatemala, 30 and 31 October 2018
- ii. VIII Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition of Latin America and the Caribbean, Brasilia, Brazil, 10 and 11 October 2018
- iii. VII Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Building resilient infrastructures, Mexico City, Mexico, 20 and 21 November 2018
- iv. XLIV Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council, Caracas, Venezuela, 26 to 28 November 2018
- v. Seminar on productive articulation for strengthening and developing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region. Guatemala City, Guatemala. 5 and 6 December 2018
- vi. XXIX Meeting of International Cooperation Directors: Strengthening connectivity and trade infrastructure. Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. 6 and 7 December 2018
- vii. Seminar-Workshop on experiences in formalization of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean. Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. 14 and 15 February 2019

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- viii. Workshop: Productive articulation for strengthening and developing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region. Asunción, Paraguay. 27 to 29 March 2019
- ix. XXX Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Coordination and efficiency of international cooperation vis-à-vis disaster risk due to natural threats. Panama City, Panama. 11 and 12 April 2019
- x. Presentation of results of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC). Lima, Peru. 25 April 2019
- xi. Regional Meeting on productive transformation in the digital era: An opportunity for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean. Montevideo, Uruguay. 29 and 30 April 2019
- xii. Evaluation of the integration process in Latin America. Montevideo, Uruguay. 7 May 2019
- xiii. Technical Workshop on "Advances in public policies for multidimensional poverty reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean". Asunción, Paraguay. 3 and 4 June 2019
- xiv. Seminar-Workshop on productive articulation for strengthening and developing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Santiago, Chile. 26 to 28 June 2019
- xv. Seminar "Closing gaps in Latin American integration processes". Buenos Aires, Argentina. 17 July 2019
- xvi. Orange Economy: Creating opportunities for regional development, Medellin, Colombia, 5 to 7 August 2019
- xvii. IV Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of Logistic Port Communities, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, 8 to 10 August 2019
- xviii. Eurasian Economic Union and Latin America and the Caribbean: Cooperation for greater regional integration, Antigua, Guatemala, 23 and 24 September 2019
- xix. Experiences and opportunities for the internationalization of Latin American SMEs with India, Curitiba, Brazil, 26 and 27 September 2019 (rescheduled)

During these events, the following topics were analyzed: i) Productive articulation for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean; ii) trade infrastructure; iii) leverage for the development of Regional Value Chains; iv) formalization of SMEs; vi) design of policies for the MSMEs sector to support and promote productive transformation; vii) development of indicators enabling trade assessment and monitoring, as well as the interdependence of national and regional markets; viii) development of a roadmap of productive niches; ix) consolidation of coordinated and efficient cooperation in the face of adaptation and mitigation of the effects of natural disasters; x) promotion of best international cooperation practices in case of disasters and strategies to mitigate their impact; xi) dissemination and exchange of information on coordinated action protocols as part of international cooperation in case of natural disasters; xii) presentation of the results of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs (IPPALC) as a benchmarking tool that has helped emerging economies in various regions of the world over the past decade to monitor and assess the progress of the policies to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises; xiii) productive transformation of MSMEs, according to the results of the Public Policy Index implemented in the Pacific Alliance countries, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay, the development of policies in this sector are at intermediate stage; xiv) provision of support tools for the generation of public policies related to the regional integration process through the evaluation of the Latin American integration process; xv) methodologies used to build a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and, promotion of best public policy practices to address multidimensional poverty; xvi) initiatives of the Permanent Secretariat on the development of a methodology for achieving national and regional productive articulation for SMEs in the region, starting by identifying productive sectors at the country level; and, xvii) dissemination of methodologies and tools that exist in the region for determining value chains.

Each minisite is a set of information related to an event that includes the background, objectives, agenda, base documents and the final report, which contains a summary of each activity and the main conclusions reached by the participants during the event.

As for the optimization of SELA's portal, the company Ikel's Consulting, hired to develop activities related to the design and improvement of the visibility of the new Web site, concluded the stage of development. At present, the portal is in a phase of review of contents, navigability and functionality.

In addition, this year a new evaluation tool for the events was implemented. It consists in the dissemination of an online survey with the purpose of capturing the impressions of users as regards their assessment and development. The results of this survey may, somehow, set a pattern on issues of interest for the Member States and help establish priority activities that can serve as a framework for the design of new activities for future Work Programmes.

## **2. Digital Centre of Information and Knowledge on Regional Cooperation and Integration (CEDIC-SELA)**

The Panama Convention envisages two main purposes for SELA: to promote intra-regional cooperation, in order to accelerate the economic and social development of its Member States, and to provide a permanent system of consultation and coordination for the adoption of positions and strategies on economic and social issues, both at international organizations and forums and vis-à-vis third countries and groups of countries. Achieving these purposes raises the need to have, in a timely manner, the relevant and up-to-date information required to think, design, agree and implement the initiatives, tools and actions that to comply with the mandate implicit in the stated purposes. On the other hand, an organization such as SELA must be able to make timely, fast, effective and efficient decisions for which information and knowledge are key inputs that must be adequately managed.

This is a common need for all organizations similar to SELA, whose mission is to contribute to the development and growth of Latin American and Caribbean countries, for which they generate and disseminate documents containing their visions, proposals and actions and, at the same time, they share information and knowledge produced by other regional and extra-regional agencies. For this reason, each regional organization has a unit in charge of managing such information and documents.

The organ that manages SELA's documents is the Digital Centre of Information and Knowledge on Regional Cooperation and Integration (CEDIC-SELA), whose function is to systematize and disseminate the documents containing the intellectual production of the organization. For this purpose, CEDIC-SELA catalogues, indexes and organizes the documents stemming from the conduction of the activities envisaged in the Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat and uploads them into the Document Database, which serves as the knowledge reservoir produced by SELA, and can be accessed through SELA's Web site (<http://www.sela.org/>).

Through this organ, combined with SELA's Web site, the Permanent Secretariat expands and maintains its specialized and up-to-date information offer, addressing major issues associated with its mandate depending on the regional integration process and the institutions on which it is based, as well as promoting initiatives related to issues of particular interest to the region, with a view to complying with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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In addition, SELA makes available to Member States and, in general, researchers, scholars and public and private administrators interested in key issues related to the development of Latin America and the Caribbean, four series of documents containing the results of the research activities: *Case Studies*, *Report on the Economic Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean*, *Economic Series* and *Methodological Notes*, with the latter started in 2019.

A document of great significance for the development of MSMEs in the region, in which SELA actively participated, was also published during the period under study: the [\*Public Policy Index for MSMEs \(IPPALC\): Results for the Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay\*](#). It was jointly produced by CAF-development bank of Latin America and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and presented in Lima on 25 April 2019.

SELA also prepared the *Trade Introversion Index*, designed as an indicator to identify preferences for intra-regional trade with respect to extra-regional trade and thereby determine the degree of trade linkage of a region or group of countries. It was developed on the basis of pre-existing trade opening indicators in other regions, for three integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean, namely: The Pacific Alliance (PA), the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and the Central American Integration System (SICA).

In addition to the aforementioned documents, CEDIC-SELA locates, selects and incorporates into the Document Database – and publishes on its Web portal – some documents generated by other regional and extra-regional organizations, concerning the topics included in the Work Programme, which are of significant relevance for its mandate and of interest for SELA Member States and, in general, for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the period under study, CEDIC-SELA continued to be the reservoir and interface – through its Document Database – for publishing on SELA's Web site the documents associated with the various events and other activities of the Permanent Secretariat. To this end, 241 documents concerning the following topics were incorporated into the Database and published on the portal: public policies for poverty reduction; analysis of the integration process in Latin America and the Caribbean; productive transformation in the digital era; international cooperation and public-private partnerships in the face of disaster risk; productive articulation of SMEs in LAC; formalization of SMEs; connectivity and commercial infrastructure; competitiveness and port management; competition and regulation in the maritime transport sector; measuring Latin America's trade linkage. According to the editorial principles and policy of the Permanent Secretariat, all documents that are presented at the events it organizes are uploaded to the Database and published on SELA's Web site in real time. At present, the Document Database has 5,821 bibliographic records.

In addition, during the period, CEDIC-SELA supported the conduction of the various events organized by the Permanent Secretariat through the publication of the corresponding minisites, the presentations made and, in general, the documents derived from such events. It also supported the editing and updating of the contents of the minisites of events and specialized portals.

Finally, with the purpose of optimizing the quality of its documents, the Permanent Secretariat started to prepare a style manual which offers to external consultants and SELA officials some guidelines regarding the use of written language and the editorial specifications established for the production and publication of such documents.

#### **IV. INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS**

##### **1. Cooperation Agreements**

The Permanent Secretariat has followed up and implemented the framework cooperation agreements signed and has strengthened cooperation relations and joint work with the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), the Andean Community (CAN), CAF—development bank of Latin America, the Centre for Development Administration (CLAD), the Centre for the Promotion of Micro and Small Enterprises in Central America (CENPROMYPE), the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and the World Trade Organization (WTO), among others.

In addition, as part of its activities concerning the social dimension of integration, the Permanent Secretariat has strengthened its inter-agency relations with the MERCOSUR Social Institute (ISM), the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab for Latin America and the Caribbean (JPAL-LAC) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), among others.

Regarding cooperation between the Permanent Secretariat and the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77 (G77), an accountability report of the “Project to Strengthen Cooperation for Commercial Infrastructure in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards greater integration into value chains” was issued. It allowed financial support for holding the “XXIX Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Strengthening cooperation for trade connectivity in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards greater insertion into value chains”, which took place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 6 and 7 December 2018.

As part of the programme of the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77 (G77) for 2020, the Permanent Secretariat submitted the Project “New mechanisms for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean”. Its objectives are: i) Present an overview of the main initiatives developed by specialized international agencies and governments in Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen the regional architecture for South-South and Triangular Cooperation; ii) Promote an institutional framework and guidelines to contribute to greater private sector engagement in regional Triangular Cooperation strategies, and iii) Disseminate and exchange best practices as regards diversification of financial sources for South-South and Triangular Cooperation projects in the region. This project will support the conduction of the XXXI Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean, which will be aimed at promoting innovative mechanisms for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean. The meeting will be held in Peru with the support and co-sponsorship of the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI).

SELA and the European Institute for International Studies (EIIS) agreed to start negotiations for signing an Inter-Institutional Cooperation Agreement aimed at promoting research, training, information and documentation activities in social sciences, public policies, democratic governance, political and economic sciences, and legal sciences. The agreement will also provide an instrument to facilitate collaboration among high-level researchers and joint work in the international arena.

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Both institutions expressed their will to strengthen and intensify their collaboration partnership and joint work through a cooperation framework based on EIIS' interest in continuing its work on Latin American issues from a multidisciplinary approach; and SELA's quest – as a regional intergovernmental organization – to agree on common economic strategies for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and to promote cooperation and integration among LAC countries with the help of recognized international institutions.

On 20 September 2018, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and CAF-development bank of Latin America signed a non-reimbursable technical cooperation agreement to carry out the *Productive Articulation Programme for Strengthening and Developing SMEs in the region*, whose main purpose is to identify and disseminate tools that enable policymakers to implement programmes to promote the development of SMEs in Latin America. In 2018 and 2019, various activities were carried out, such as seminars, workshops, technical assistance and methodological support under this agreement, which are described in Activity II.3.1 of this report.

In addition, on 15 August 2017, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and CAF-development bank of Latin America signed a non-reimbursable technical cooperation agreement to carry out the *Programme for the Creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports: Phase III*. Its expiry date was extended until February 2019 due to delays linked to the complexity of coordinating the numerous participants from port communities so as to implement all the activities foreseen in the agreement. This was due to an increase in the number of ports that have joined the programme this year, reaching a total of 28 port systems from 13 countries. At the end of all activities, a Final Report detailing the activities carried out, as described in Activity I.3.1, was submitted on 22 February in Panama at the headquarters of CAF-development bank of Latin America. That meeting was attended by various delegations from the Member States, accredited to Panama.

The Permanent Secretariat continues to intensify contacts with regional and international organizations, signing new cooperation agreements with the following institutions:

- Framework Cooperation Agreement between the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS), signed on 21 November 2018.
- Framework Cooperation Agreement between the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD), signed on 27 November 2018.
- Framework Cooperation Agreement between the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and the South Centre, signed on 22 March 2019.
- Signing of Amendment to Annex I of the Cooperation Agreement signed between SELA and the OECD on 5 April 2019.
- Signing of Addendum No 001 to the non-reimbursable Technical Cooperation Agreement between the Andean Development Corporation and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), signed on 29 June 2019.
- Memorandum of Understanding signed with the Faculty of Social Sciences, Argentinian headquarters, (FLACSO-Argentina), signed on 16 July 2019, in order to establish the bases for cooperation and relations between the two institutions so as to promote sustainable and inclusive economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition, contacts are being made for the signing of inter-agency cooperation agreements with the Regional Coordinator for Economic and Social Research (CRIES), based in Buenos Aires; the Latin American and Caribbean Centre (LACC) of the University of the West Indies (UWI); and the Loyola University.

Finally, the Permanent Secretariat continued to develop its internship programmes with national academic institutions with the participation of students of economics from Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB) and the Central University of Venezuela (UCV).

## **2. Visits to the Permanent Secretariat**

In compliance with SELA's mandates, the actions of the Permanent Secretariat are aimed at strengthening relations with representatives of the different Embassies of the Member States, in order to keep them properly informed about its activities, as envisaged in its Work Programme. To this end, in 2018, the Permanent Secretary received the following visits:

- On 21 October 2018, Mr. Frank Hartwich, Industrial Development Officer of the Agribusiness Development Department of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), visited SELA.
- On 22 October 2018, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of Uruguay, Mr. José Luis Remedi, paid a courtesy visit to SELA.
- On Monday 5 November 2018, SELA was visited by the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of Korea Mr. Dongil Oh.
- On 3 May 2019, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA received His Excellency Mr. Sebastián Michel Hoffman, Ambassador of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.
- On Tuesday 7 May, His Excellency Mr. Ruwan Gilian Adjako, Ambassador of the Republic of Suriname, paid a courtesy visit to SELA.
- On Tuesday 9 July, the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of the Republic of Italy, Plácido Vigo, paid a courtesy visit to the Permanent Secretariat.
- On Friday 2 August, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of Uruguay, Mr. José Luis Remedi, visited SELA.

## **3. Consultations of the Permanent Secretary with Ambassadors and Representatives of Embassies of Member States, Presidents and Representatives of Regional and International Organizations accredited to Caracas and Government Authorities of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

The Permanent Secretary maintained contact with the ambassadors of the Member States, as well as ambassadors from other countries and representatives of regional and international organizations accredited to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, participating in various activities of interest for SELA and its Member States.

On 13 December 2018, the Permanent Secretary paid a courtesy visit to the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignor Aldo Giordano.

## **4. Missions of the Permanent Secretary**

The Permanent Secretary attended as a guest the 7th Steering Group Meeting of the OECD Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Lima, Peru, on 19 October 2018, as well as the meeting of the Steering Group Meeting held within the framework of

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the Third High-Level Meeting of the Programme on Integrity for Good Governance, which was conducted on 18 and 19 October 2018.

On 17 October, he met the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia, Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo, in Lima, Peru.

The Permanent Secretary participated in the Seminar-Workshop on Financial Inclusion of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Antigua, Guatemala, on 30 and 31 October 2018. It was organized by SELA, jointly with the Ministry of Economy of that country.

At the invitation of the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD), he participated as a co-sponsor and speaker at the XXIII International Congress of this important organization on State Reform and Public Administration. At the Congress, SELA delivered a presentation on the Public Policy Index for MSMEs: Promoting the optimization of public policies for their development. The aforementioned Congress was held from 6 to 9 November 2018, at the Centro Universitario de Ciencias Económico Administrativas (CUCEA) of the University of Guadalajara, Mexico.

Invited by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guatemala, Ambassador Sandra Jovel Polanco, the Permanent Secretary participated in the XXVI Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Antigua, Guatemala, from 12 to 16 November 2018.

The Permanent Secretary attended the VII Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Building resilient infrastructures, held on 20 and 21 November 2018 at the Convention Centre of the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS), in Mexico City, organized by the Permanent Secretariat.

He attended the opening ceremony of the Seminar: Productive articulation for strengthening and developing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region, held at the headquarters of the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA), in Guatemala City, on 5 and 6 December 2018, organized by the Permanent Secretariat. In the context of that meeting, he had the opportunity to hold talks with the Secretary-General of that institution, Mr. Melvin Arredondo.

The Permanent Secretary attended the XXIX Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Strengthening cooperation in connectivity in the field of trade in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards greater integration into value chains, which took place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 6 and 7 December 2018, organized by the Permanent Secretariat.

The Permanent Secretary attended as a guest the VII World Summit of Governments held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 10 to 12 February 2019, which dealt with issues such as the climate change; innovative improvement in global governance; application of artificial intelligence and the way science and technology are changing the future of humanity, with the purpose of foreseeing the orientation of development in different areas of human society and striving to improve well-being of people.

He participated in the 2nd United Nations High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation, PABA+40, held in Buenos Aires Argentina, from 20 to 22 March, invited by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of the Argentine Republic, Jorge Faurie. He also attended



other side events within the framework of this Conference, such as the event "The contributions of South-South Cooperation in Mercosur's Social Dimension for Sustainable Development", held on 19 March.

At invitation of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Permanent Secretary attended the World Business Forum on Latin America and the Caribbean, organized by the Chamber and held in Panama City on 9 and 10 April.

He also participated in the "XXX Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Coordination and Efficiency of International Cooperation vis-à-vis the occurrence of Natural Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean", organized by SELA in Panama City on 11 and 12 April.

At the invitation of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), he travelled to Santiago, Chile, representing SELA at the III Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Countries on Sustainable Development, which was held from 24 to 26 April at the headquarters of that organization.

The Permanent Secretary also attended the presentation of the results of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC): Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay, which was held in Lima, Peru, on 25 April. It was organized by SELA, together with the Government of the Republic of Peru, the OECD and CAF-development bank of Latin America.

He attended the "Regional Meeting on Productive Transformation in the Digital Era: An Opportunity for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean", on 29 and 30 April, held in Montevideo, Uruguay, and organized by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA.

At the invitation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), PhD Mami Mizutori, the Permanent Secretary participated in the 6th Session of the Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, which took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 13 to 17 May.

At the invitation of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), he participated in the 8th Steering Group Meeting of the Regional Programme of the organization for Latin America and the Caribbean (PRALC), held at its headquarters on 23 May. Subsequently, on the 24 May, he attended the 11th International Economic Forum on Latin America and the Caribbean also held in Paris, France, and organized by the OECD Development Centre.

He attended the 49<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), invited by the Secretary-General of that institution, Mr. Luis Almagro, which was held in Medellin, Colombia, from 26 to 28 June.

Invited by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), authorities of the Government of the Argentine Republic in collaboration with the Ibero-American Business Council (CEIB), the Permanent Secretary attended the III Ibero-American Forum on MSMEs, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 2 and 3 July.

He participated in the XIV Summit of the Pacific Alliance, held in Lima, Peru, on 5 July, invited by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru and the Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism of that country, representing the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Pacific Alliance.

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He attended the Seminar "Closing Gaps in Latin American integration processes", held on 17 and 18 July at the headquarters of the Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean (INTAL), in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and organized by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA.

He was invited by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Jorge Arreaza, to the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordination Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM), held in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on 20 and 21 July.

The Permanent Secretary participated in the Regional Meeting on the Orange Economy: Creating opportunities for regional development, held in Medellin, Colombia, on 5 to 7 August, organized by SELA in conjunction with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism of Colombia.

He participated in the IV Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of Logistic Port Communities: Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 8 to 10 August.

**5. Meetings and various activities in which the Permanent Secretariat participated**

The Permanent Secretary attended the presentation of Results of the Inter-agency Strategy of the SDGs, as part of the celebration of the 73rd Anniversary of the United Nations Day on 24 October 2018.

He attended the meeting for the presentation of the technical cooperation activities carried out by the Pan American Health Office (PAHO/WHO) in Venezuela during 2018, held on 30 November 2018.

The Permanent Secretary was present at the Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Sarcophagus of the Liberator Simon Bolivar in the Mausoleum of the National Pantheon on 24 November, on the occasion of the 42nd Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Suriname.

A delegation of the Permanent Secretariat attended the Meeting for the presentation of the national results of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Uruguay, held on 2 May at the headquarters of CAF-development bank of Latin America in Montevideo.

The Permanent Secretariat attended the Meeting for the presentation of the national results of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Argentina, held on 3 May at the headquarters of the Ministry of Production and Labour in Buenos Aires.

The Permanent Secretary paid a courtesy visit to the President of Telefónica Venezuela, Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zarco, on 10 June, at the company's headquarters.

A delegation of the Permanent Secretariat attended the Meeting for the presentation of the national results of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Colombia, held on 8 August at the headquarters of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism in Bogotá.

A delegation of the Permanent Secretariat participated in the Summit on the Orange Economy, held on 9 and 10 September at the Convention Centre of Medellín, Colombia.

## V. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS (October 2018 – September 2019)

- Follow-up reports on subregional integration mechanisms (The report for the first half of 2019 will be published in August)
- Case study with the results of the methodology proposed by SELA to identify strategic productive sectors
- Report on the regional integration process
- Final Report on the Regional Meeting on Productive Transformation in the Digital Era: An opportunity for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Work Document on intra-regional value chains based on the digital economy
- Rapporteur's Report on the XXX Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for LAC: Coordination and Efficiency of International Cooperation vis-à-vis the occurrence of Natural Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Informative documents entitled "Contribution of the Permanent Secretariat to South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the region (SP/SELA-PABA/Di N° 1-19), and the "Declaration by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA" (SSP/SELA-PABA/D-19)
- Research work entitled Challenges of Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean: Analysis in light of the network theory 1995-2017
- Rodríguez, Javier and Sánchez, Karla (2019). Productive articulation: A methodological proposal to identify potential productive niches. Methodological Notes, SELA-AM/2019-1. Caracas: SELA. Available at: <http://www.sela.org/bd-documental/publicaciones/apuntes-metodologicos/articulacion-productiva/>
- Rodríguez, Javier and Sánchez, Karla (2019). Mapping productive chains in El Salvador, SELA-SE/2019-1. Caracas: SELA. Under review

### Informative Documents

#### 2018

##### Final reports on meetings

*Final Report on the Subregional Workshop to validate the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC): Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay.* Colombia, 16 and 17 July 2018. Caracas: SELA. SP/TSVIPP-MIPYMES ALC/ IF- No. 1-18. Available at: <http://www.sela.org/media/2759860/informe-taller-subregional-de-validacion-del-ippalc.pdf>

*Final Report on the III Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of Logistic Port Communities.* Lima, Peru, 16 and 17 August 2018. Caracas: SELA. SP/IIIELCCLP:RPDC/IF-18. Available at: <http://www.sela.org/bd-documental/documentos/iii-encuentro-latinoamericano-y-caribeno-de-clp/>

*Final Report on the Seminar on impact evaluation of public policies for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean.* Panama City, Panama, 10 to 12 September 2018. Caracas: SELA. SP/SEIPP-MIPYMES ALC/IF-No. 1-18. Available at: <http://www.sela.org/bd-documental/documentos/evaluacion-de-impacto-de-las-politicas-publicas-para-mipymes-1/>

*Final Report on the VIII Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition of Latin America and the Caribbean.* Brasilia, Brazil, 10 and 11 October 2018. SP/VIIIIRAGTCCALC/IF No. 1-18. Available at:

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<http://www.sela.org/media/3199274/informe-final-gtcc-2018.pdf>

*Final Report on the Seminar-Workshop on Financial Inclusion of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean.* Guatemala, 30 and 31 October 2018. Caracas: SELA. SP/STIF-MIPYMES-ALC/IF-18. Available at:

<http://www.sela.org/bd-documental/documentos/informe-final-inclusion-financiera-de-las-mipymes/>

*Final Report on the VII Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Building resilient infrastructures.* Mexico City, Mexico, 20 and 21 November 2018. Caracas: SELA. SP/VN-RAPRR DALC/IF- 1. Available at:

<http://www.sela.org/media/3200073/informe-final-alianzas-publico-privadas-reduccion-de-riesgos-de-desastres.pdf>

*Final report on the Regional Seminar on productive articulation for strengthening and developing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region.* Guatemala City, Guatemala, 5 and 6 December 2018. Caracas: SELA. SP/SAPFDPYMESR/IF-18. Available at:

<http://www.sela.org/bd-documental/documentos/productive-articulation-for-small-and-medium-sized-enterprises-smes/>

*XXIX Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Strengthening cooperation in commercial connectivity in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards greater insertion into value chains.* Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 06 and 07 December 2018. Caracas: SELA. SP/XXXIXRDCIALC:CFCIC/IF 1-18. Available at:

<http://www.sela.org/bd-documental/documentos/xxix-reunion-de-directores-de-cooperacion-internacional-de-alc/>

*Final Report on the XLIV Regular Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Council.* Caracas, Venezuela, 26 to 28 November 2018. Caracas: SELA. SP/CL/XLIV. O/IF-18. Available at:

<http://www.sela.org/es/eventos/2018/11/xliv-cl/informe-anual/>

## 2019

### 1. Final reports on meetings

*Final Report on the Seminar-Workshop on experiences in formalization of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean.* Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 14 and 15 February 2019. Caracas: SELA. SP/STEF-MIPYMES-ALC/IF-19.

*Final Report on the Presentation of the results of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC), as implemented by the Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay.* Lima, Peru, 25 April 2019. Caracas: SELA. SP/PRIPPALC/ IF No. 1-19. Available at:

<http://www.sela.org/bd-documental/documentos/presentaci%C3%B3n-de-los-resultados-del-ippalc/>

*Final Report on the Regional Meeting on productive transformation in the digital era: An opportunity for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean.* Uruguay, 29 and 30 April 2019. Caracas: SELA. SP/RRTPED: OMIPYMES-ALC/IF No. 1-19. Available at:

<http://www.sela.org/bd-documental/documentos/transformacion-productiva-en-la-era-digital-y-las-mipymes-de-alc/>

*Final Report on the Technical Workshop on advances in public policies for multidimensional poverty reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean. Asunción, Paraguay, 3 and 4 June 2019. Caracas: SELA. SP/TTAPPRPMALC-DT No. 1-19.*

## **2. Institutional reports**

- Financial situation October-December 2018
- Financial situation January-March 2019
- Financial situation April-June 2019
- Financial situation July-September 2019