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INTRODUCTION

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA presents its report of activities, corresponding to the period November 2017 - October 2018, in which it informs about its compliance with the Work Programme for the year 2018, adopted by the XLIII Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council (Caracas, 28 to 30 November 2017), through Decision 567, as well as other tasks and activities performed by the organization.

According to Decision 440, adopted by the XXVIII Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council (Caracas, 7 to 9 April 2003), the activities contained in the Work Programme for 2018 are structured into three thematic areas: Intra-Regional Relations, Economic and Technical Cooperation, and Extra-Regional Relations.

In the Area of Intra-Regional Relations, some initiatives were developed to analyze the integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean, the productive structures and the economic growth of the region; then, Phase III of the Programme of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports was launched. In this connection, the "III Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of Logistic Port Communities" (Lima, 16 and 17 August 2018) and the II Colloquium on Scientific Research on Port logistics chains (Lima, 15 August 2018) took place with the participation of industry executives, officials of ministries and public institutions, consultants and researchers from 13 countries and 27 port systems. In addition, SELA continued to strengthen the statistical information system of its Web site, as well as the management and coordination of its specialized portals concerning the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Promotion of South-South Cooperation, Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean, SELA-SMEs, Free Trade Zones in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports.

In the Area of Economic and Technical Cooperation, SELA carried out actions aimed at complying with the activities referred to in this area for strengthening economic and technical cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Meeting on Public-Private on Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition. In addition, SELA developed activities listed to in the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Programme for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, aimed at promoting the productive integration of SMEs into global value chains, the implementation of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in LAC (IPPALC), the financial inclusion and the formalization of MSMEs in LAC, the impact evaluation of public policies for MSMEs in the region and the promotion of public-private partnerships of MSMEs for business cooperation.

In the Area of Extra-Regional Relations, among the aspects related to the monitoring and analysis of preferential trade agreements with extra-regional countries that might influence economic, trade and investment relations with Latin American and Caribbean countries, emphasis was made on the analysis of economic, trade and cooperation relations of Latin America and the Caribbean with China.

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. Reflection Meeting of the Integration and Cooperation Secretariats of Latin America and the Caribbean

With the purpose of identifying common challenges and promote synergies and complementarities in the regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA participated in the "Reflection Meeting of Secretariats of Intergovernmental Regional Mechanisms", which was held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago, Chile, on 17 April 2018.

This meeting, convened by ECLAC, was held within the framework of the "Second Meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development" and attended by representatives of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), the Pacific Alliance, CAF-development bank of Latin America, the Andean Community (CAN), the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the International Youth Organization (OIJ), the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and ECLAC.

As a contribution to the deliberations, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA presented the document [*Objectives and priorities of the Work Programme of SELA and its relationship with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*](#) (SELA-CEPAL/Di No. 1-18).

The development of this meeting and its main conclusions are included in the [*Report on the Reflection Meeting of Secretariats of Intergovernmental Regional Mechanisms*](#), prepared by ECLAC.

Activity I.1.2. Prospective vision of Latin American and Caribbean integration

To continue with the deep analysis of the integration process in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA organized the "Seminar: Prospective vision of Latin American and Caribbean integration", in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

This seminar, which was held in Mexico City on 6 and 7 March, aimed to discuss the status and future of integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean. To do so, discussions were based on recent studies about integration schemes and challenges posed by the international environment, intra-regional trade and future scenarios. In addition, a presentation was made of the current lines of work of the various regional and subregional integration mechanisms and organizations and of some instruments for monitoring, analysing and measuring regional integration. Representatives of extra-regional organizations and academicians raised the challenges

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posed by the international environment and made proposals on various prospective scenarios and the long-term vision of regional integration.

Participants in this seminar included experts from the following Member States of SELA: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay and Venezuela; representatives of Thailand and the Russia Federation; and representatives of the following organizations: Pacific Alliance (AP); Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); Latin American Integration Association (ALADI); CAF-development bank of Latin America; Centre for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE) of Mexico; Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC); Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Caribbean Community (CARICOM); Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation; Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean (IDB-INTAL); the Secretariat for the Central American Economic Integration (SIECA); Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); Andalusia Loyola University; and University of the Pacific (UP) of Peru.

In this context, the Permanent Secretariat published the study [A prospective vision of Latin American and Caribbean integration](#) (Series Económicas - March 2018. N° 2018-2), prepared by officials of the organization. The document, a compendium on the status of trade integration in the region, includes the main facts of the socio-economic asymmetries affecting the fulfilment of the regional integration goals and conducts a review of the long-term trends in integration based on the various subregional mechanisms. In addition, it highlights the possibilities for the region to achieve higher levels of convergence and contains some public-policy recommendations that favour this process.

Activity I.1.3. Integration Index of Latin America and the Caribbean. Updates and revision of the methodology

In 2016, the Permanent Secretariat started to develop an indicator with the primary objective of quantifying the degree of integration among different integration mechanisms in the region, namely: the Pacific Alliance (PP), the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Andean Community (CAN), and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). In this connection, it prepared the [Integration Index for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (SP/RRIIALC- DT N° 2-16), which served as the basis for discussion at the "Regional Meeting on the Integration Index for Latin America and the Caribbean" (Guatemala, 11 October 2016), held at the headquarters of the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA). On that occasion, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA presented the methodology used for constructing said indicator, which facilitates the measurement of the stage of integration at which each subregional mechanism stands and quantifies the behaviour at the different stages of integration identified in economic theory and the evolution over time.

In 2017, the indicator was updated, but the methodological structure developed in 2016 was maintained and some improvements were incorporated into the method for rescaling it, in order to improve the reading of the indicator for public policy-makers.

In 2018, the Permanent Secretariat made the methodological revision of the indicator, based on three cornerstones: 1) Reduction in the number of indicators used as input for the calculation of the index, as well as the replacement of some indicators for those that collect more efficiently the behaviour of the integration mechanisms in the established dimensions; 2) use of new statistical

techniques for the calculation of the index; and 3) implementation of different methods for the graphic representation of the results, in order to facilitate the reading of the index.

These methodological improvements or modifications point to the optimization in the calculation process and enhance robustness to the index. The evaluation and follow-up of each dimension making up the index (political, social, economic, environmental and cultural) will pave the way for the development of public policies aimed at guiding policy-makers on the control variables they can use and should incorporate to improve the instruments that will help them achieve the objectives.

Activity I.1.4. Vulnerability Indicators. Forecasts and evaluation of results

The Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat for the year 2017 included the preparation of the document "[*Early Warning Indicators for Central America: A tool for times of crisis*](#)" (Series Económicas. July, N° 2017-1), in which a set of variables was selected for the design of an indicator capable of timely identifying episodes of high speculative pressure that could lead to the occurrence of a crisis.

In a context where emerging countries have recorded periods of economic instability characterized by reductions in levels of production, lower dynamism in foreign trade flows, low level of consumption of goods and services, and high inflation and unemployment rates, it is necessary to have this type of measures with the aim of providing policy-makers with quantitative tools that contribute to decision-making in prevention and mitigation of the effects that take place when external shocks occur.

Said indicator of external vulnerability was built for five Central American countries, namely: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Dominican Republic. The goal was to establish a system of individual monitoring, considering the needs and characteristics of each country.

For 2018, the Permanent Secretariat updated the indicators used for creating the External Vulnerability Index (EVI) and estimated the evolution of this indicator, in order to maximize the time available for each of the countries to forecast the occurrence of a crisis or episodes of high speculative pressure. While the methodology used in the study of 2017 was developed by Kaminsky et al. (1998), the contributions made by Supriyadi (2014) were incorporated. The update of this study includes new methodological contributions of SELA that strengthen the results obtained.

Activity I.1.5. Follow-up reports on subregional integration mechanisms

Follow-up reports on subregional integration mechanisms are periodical publications that contain the macroeconomic performance of integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean, in a timely manner, based on the release of official data by central banks and multilateral organizations in the region.

The first issue of this report aimed to provide a summarized and practical perspective of the region's macroeconomic performance during the first half of 2016. From the learning linked to this first issue, a decision was made to change the periodicity of the report and to improve some visual components of it. As of 2017, the frequency of reports became biannual, which facilitates the collection of data and is in line with the different timelines for publication of official statistics of the different countries in the region. Once these changes were incorporated, the image of the issue for

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the first half of 2017 changed, illustrating more clearly and in a nutshell the region's macroeconomic statistics, updated until December 2016 and July 2017, in each case.

Macroeconomic statistics for the end of 2017 will be released in the report for the second half of 2018. At present, the report for the first half is being prepared, aiming to provide the broadest compilation of statistics of the region. While waiting for the update of official data, the Direction of Studies and Proposals of the Permanent Secretariat is developing automated data collection and publication processes that minimize the time elapsed between the publication of figures from authorized national and regional organizations and the corresponding analysis. With this effort, a progress is being made in the periodical and timely dissemination of the economic performance of subregional integration mechanisms, with emphasis on the analysis of the macroeconomic environment and the main variables of the external sector of them.

The construction of the report also contributes to the expansion of the database on these variables, thus allowing for economic monitoring and keeping the Member States and the public in general informed about the economic situation of the countries in the region through SELA's electronic portal.

Activity I.1.6. Case studies for integration

Case studies for integration are short and readable articles about topics of interest to the Member States and a complementary product to the documentary database of the institution. They describe initiatives in the promotion of cooperation, coordination and articulation among nations and among integration mechanisms and serve as a reference for decision-making for the benefit of the regional integration process.

During this year, work continued on the identification of new initiatives of the economic reality, inside and outside the region, and new case studies will continue to be published, depending on the priorities and topics of interest to the Member States and which are linked to the documents prepared by the Secretariat.

In addition, the following case studies were prepared: *Latin America and the Caribbean: the perpetual middle-income region* (Case study N° 5) and *Integration indices and processes* (Case study N° 6). The first document aims to contribute to the discussion in economic terms of the phenomenon of the middle-income trap, which could keep the countries in the region stuck, limiting their growth permanently. Case of study N° 6 collects the various existing integration indices at the extra-regional level, grouped by continents; analyzes integration processes in each region and makes a comparison with Latin America and the Caribbean, with a view to answering the question about whether, indeed, this is the least integrated region, according to some authors.

Activity I.1.7. Report on the Regional Integration Process

Monitoring the development of integration processes in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean has been one of the topics of particular interest to SELA. In this connection, the Direction of Studies and Proposals of the Permanent Secretariat has developed the annual "Report on the regional integration process", which aims to provide Member States with an analysis of the recent evolution of regional integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean, with emphasis on the economic and social aspects of integration; as well as of trade relations, movements of persons and capital; international cooperation and the construction of common institutional frameworks

among countries. The report provides the Member States with data that may be particularly useful for decision-making on regional integration from the unilateral and multilateral points of view.

For the 2018 report, the Direction of Studies and Proposals prepared a new version focused on the analysis of the commercial dimension of regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, in accordance with the restructuring of the report started in 2017. While the thematic scope is much more modest than expected in such a document, the fact of dealing only with commercial topics in this issue led to an improvement in quality of the final document, which in turn has resulted in a better use of the human and financial resources of the Permanent Secretariat.

In the report that is under preparation and will be published in 2019, a series of methods for trade analysis has been used, from indicators widely referred to in specialized literature to techniques recently designed by experts in the area. Thus, the report includes a wide range of indicators that measure aspects of trade, including trade openness (trade participation on gross domestic product index), intra-industry trade (Grubel-Lloyd index), intensive and extensive margins of trade (Hummels-Klenow indices), trade diversification (normalized Herfindahl-Hirschman index), comparative advantage (normalized revealed comparative advantage index), sophistication of the basket of traded products (technological sophistication revealed PRODY and EXPY indices), trade intensity in a given geographic region (trade introversion index) and compatibility of trade among countries (trade complementarity index). The report shows the results of the network analysis applied to international trade along with another series of quantitative data derived from traditional systems of accounts and statistical data.

For such purposes, the 2019 report is expected to extend the thematic approach to the analysis of international factor movements in the region, considering the availability of statistical data on these topics. It will also update the analysis presented this year, focusing on trade relations in the region and collecting relevant methodological adjustments to provide a more useful report to the Member States of SELA.

Activity I.1.8 Impact of infrastructure on the effectiveness of trade integration in Latin America and the Caribbean

Analysis and discussion on infrastructure in Latin America and the Caribbean is a theme of particular relevance today. Various regional organizations, such as CAF-development bank of Latin America and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) have promoted regional discussion forums on aspects related to infrastructure, while offering huge financial resources for the development of infrastructure projects that vary in scale and approach. Although from the beginning the role of infrastructure in connectivity and facilitation of the movement of goods, services and factors of production has been recognized, most of the existing knowledge, discussions and policies have been focused on the effects of infrastructure on productivity and economic growth of countries. In a much lesser extent, research has been devoted to the possible interaction between the development of infrastructure and the effectiveness of trade integration policies (understood as unilateral, bilateral or multilateral measures focused on the elimination of economic and institutional barriers to trade among countries).

In this context, the Permanent Secretariat carried out a research on the impact of infrastructure development on the effectiveness of trade integration policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. To that end, it conducted an econometric analysis of trade flows between the countries of the region and the rest of the world, based on the so-called gravity equation in international trade. In addition,

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it used, in a complementary manner, the network approach for the analysis of international trade, which has been gaining ground in the literature about this topic.

Preliminary results show significant effects of infrastructure on trade and on the effectiveness of the integration efforts in the region. In addition, such effects are deeper in the case of transport infrastructure. It is a fact that the lack of investment in infrastructure, in particular in transport infrastructure such as roads, ports and airports, hinders connectivity among countries, generating higher costs that limit trade among nations and reducing the effectiveness of policies that lower economic barriers to the transfer of goods. Accordingly, policies that point to a greater trade integration in the region should formalize the development of the necessary infrastructure for trade and determine the operational and financial requirements for such purposes.

The development of this work has represented a useful experience in the field of collection and analysis of data that can be extended to other areas of interest, such as the detailed analysis of economic policies aimed at regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean or the explanation of certain policy variables on trade in services and the movement of factors of production in the region. In addition, this work calls for the improvement of statistical systems, whose development is necessary for the proper explanation of the phenomena that occur in the subcontinent and, thus, for the better policy-making and implementation of policies on trade and integration in the region.

This work is expected to be completed in October of this year.

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

Activity I.2.1. Ecotourism and its role in the promotion of sustainable development

This activity provided for the conduction of the "Regional Seminar on ecotourism and its role in promoting sustainable development", which aimed to: i) disseminate experiences and regional and extra-regional initiatives on smart tourist destinations and ecotourism; ii) identify the benefits of ecotourism in environmental, economic, cultural and social matters, according to the objectives of the 2030 Agenda; and, iii) provide a meeting space for cooperation between public and private organizations with the purpose of promoting ecotourism initiatives and tourist destinations in the region.

For the conduction of this regional seminar, the Permanent Secretariat was scheduled to convene the governmental focal points for the tourism sector, as well as regional and international institutions linked to this sector.

In this connection, the Permanent Secretariat made efforts to achieve the co-sponsorship and venue for the event in a Caribbean Member State. Initially, a formal communication had been sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bahamas, but it was not possible to secure the co-sponsorship.

Subsequently, notes were sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries of Jamaica.

This activity was scheduled for the month of June, but was suspended due to budgetary constraints of the Permanent Secretariat and is expected to be rescheduled, depending on the availability of resources.

It should be noted that the Permanent Secretariat contacted the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Caribbean Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (CASME), which were supporting logistical and organizational work in Jamaica, to ask for co-sponsorship.

Activity I.2.2 Determinants of migration flows in the region and their impact on the labour market

In accordance with this activity, the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and the Secretariat General of the Andean Community (CAN) organized the “Regional Meeting on Migration and Migration Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean” in Lima, Peru, on 22 March 2018. This meeting aimed to discuss some of the factors determining migration flows and their impact on the labour market in Latin American and Caribbean countries. It is also intended to review, compare, and characterize updated information on migration flows in the region that may be useful to the institutions responsible for decision-making in this area.

The agenda for the event was divided into two sessions that included, on the one hand, the explanation of the main determining factors of migration flows in the region and their impact on the labour market; and, on the other hand, the major regional challenges concerning migration policies.

The Permanent Secretariat prepared and presented the base document for the meeting, entitled [*Migration flows: A determining factor of national productive capacities, the case of CAN countries*](#) (SP/RRMPM-ALC /Di N° 3-18), which offers some empirical evidence that allow to clarify the impact of the outflow of people on the productive capacities of their countries of origin.

In particular, the study provides a characterization of migration flows in the countries making up the Andean Community (CAN). Once migrants are characterized, an evaluation is made of those factors affecting the decision to migrate, and the determinants of migration flows are identified. Taking into account that production capacities are part of the human capital and move along with the people when they decide to migrate, the impact of these movements on economic growth was quantified. The evidence by country confirms that emigration reduces the production capacities and competitiveness of nations, but the magnitude of the negative impact varies considerably among cases. Although these results are revealing, they should be considered a fledgling approach to this point.

Participants in this meeting included specialists from the following Member States of SELA: Brazil, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic and Venezuela; representatives of the following countries outside the region: Belgium, Canada, Estonia, France, Hungary, Luxembourg and Russia; representatives of the following organizations: Pacific Alliance (PA); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); Association of Caribbean States (ACS); CAF-development bank of Latin America; Regional Centre for Seismology for South America (CERESIS); Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); Latin American Faculty for Social Sciences (FLACSO); International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); Andean Health Organization - Hipolito Unanue Agreement; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); International Organization for Migration (IOM); International Labour Organization (ILO); Andean Parliament; and the Secretariat of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR). The representatives of the following Peruvian public bodies participated in the event: the Central Reserve Bank of Peru; the National Institute for the Defense of Competition and

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Protection of Intellectual Property (INDECOPI) and the French Institute of Andean studies (IFEA), as well as the Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya and the Universidad San Ignacio de Loyola. A representative of the Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ) also attended the event.

PROGRAMME: TRADE FACILITATION

PROJECT I.3. Regional Meetings on Foreign Trade Single Windows

Activity I.3.1. X Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows

Foreign Trade Single Windows (FTSW) are strategic tools used to facilitate trade and promote an increase in trade flows, with a greater potential as long as progress is achieved in terms of interoperability at the regional and/or subregional levels. The appropriate application of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for the development of FTSWs serves as a basis for business information flows to efficiently accompany the international movement of goods and contribute to greater gains in competitiveness throughout the international supply chain.

The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement includes a specific provision concerning the adoption of FTSWs and encourages stakeholders to make progress in terms of interoperability, as an effective means for streamlining, simplification, efficiency and transparency in commercial transactions of exports, imports and transit.

Continuing with the effort launched in 2010 with the first Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows, jointly carried out with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Colombia, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA has systematically promoted these annual regional meetings with the purpose of fostering concertation processes that contribute to digital inclusion within the framework of the regional integration processes, as well as a permanent and proactive debate on issues of significance related to FTSWs in the regulatory, technical, technological and governance areas.

The IX Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows addressed three thematic blocs that dealt with issues related to the management of information on FTSWs and their use for risk management; the progress in the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement; the latest UN-CEFACT Recommendation on Public-Private Partnerships in Trade Facilitation; some elements of governance in FTSWs; the importance of transport facilitation for foreign trade; and, as usual, participants shared the progress and challenges of FTSWs in the member countries of SELA that participated in the meeting.

As on previous occasions, with the X Regional Meeting on FTSWs, the Permanent Secretariat aimed to promote the analysis of strategic elements and relevant experiences in this matter, in order to disseminate best practices and generate recommendations that contribute to consolidating programmes for the optimization of processes that facilitate and promote foreign trade in those countries that have incorporated this tool and support the efforts aimed at consolidating FTSWs in Latin America and the Caribbean, as part of the trade facilitation and e-government strategies.

This X meeting was scheduled to be held in October in Ecuador, but due to circumstances unrelated to the Permanent Secretariat and associated with organizational issues of the co-sponsoring country, it was suspended.

PROJECT I.4. Programme for the creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports: Towards strengthening logistic port communities, standards of services and technological innovation

Activity I.4.1. Programme for the creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports – Phase III: Transition towards the conformation of the Network

Through Resolution of P.E. No. 0047/2017, dated 9 June 2017, CAF-development bank of Latin America approved a non-reimbursable technical cooperation for the Permanent Secretariat of SELA in order to support the Programme for the creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports, Phase III, which aims to consolidate and expand the Regional Programme for the creation of the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports, launched in 2014 and continued in 2015-2016, so that progress can be made in the achievement of the ultimate objective of effectively establishing the Network and the recommendations for facilitating and encouraging collaborative innovation projects in countries, port communities and logistic corridors in Latin America and the Caribbean can be replicated.

The implementation of Phase III of the Programme started on 15 August 2017 and is expected to last one year. This Phase III proposes the expansion and consolidation of the Network, with the inclusion of six new ports in the Programme and the formation of a transitional organizational structure that will take the initial steps to make progress towards the effective establishment of the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports as an entity with legal personality.

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

As long as more countries and their port communities build real transport and trade facilitation networks with emphasis on the reference model for competitiveness of port logistics chain, designed within the framework of this Programme, the structural flaws in our region should begin to be minimized.

In addition, the Network proposes a series of support subsystems, such as the strengthening of the Methodological Support Groups consisting of research and innovation centres that technically support port communities in each region and country. In addition, the Programme intends to provide the Network with greater regional institutions, so that there is a strategic plan that allows it to promote and influence public policies for transport and trade facilitation, digitization of ports and greater cooperation in each country.

At this stage, technical visits for making strategic diagnoses, strategic planning exercises and workshops on management of port logistics chains have been made to port systems linked to the different phases of the programme; in addition, the Quantitative Model of productivity indicators in the port logistics chain has been designed and the second version of the Index of Competitiveness and Management of the port logistics chain has been applied and reported.

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The Programme has developed a series of technical activities between 2014 and 2018 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 aim of identifying, promoting and disseminating the best institutional, digital and innovation practices in the region.

Activity I.4.2. III Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting of Logistic Port Communities

The II Regional Meeting of logistic port communities was held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 26 to 29 July 2017. On that occasion, the central objective of the event was to consolidate the temporary working structure that serves as a basis for the effective creation of the Network of digital and collaborative ports, based on a new regional partnership around them, whose mission was to respond to the new challenges of port governance, technological modernization and trade facilitation, promoting the regional port ecosystem towards higher levels of technological interoperability, logistic integration, adaptation to the markets, as well as social and environmental sustainability.

Specifically, its objectives were: i) Strengthen links, networking and collaboration among institutions, professionals and academics linked to the port logistics chain; ii) develop a high-level debate among representatives of international technical cooperation (CAF-development bank of Latin America, SELA and ECLAC), port communities, government, unions, academia and suppliers to the industry on topics that strengthen the ecosystem of digital and collaborative ports in the region; iii) inform about the working plan of the Technical Cooperation Programme PHASE-III with long-standing and new ports; iv) socialize the organisational structure of the NETWORK in its TRANSITION STAGE and its working plans for 2017-2018; and v) create an initial strategic guideline for the NETWORK in its FORMALIZATION STAGE and make progress with a survey on adoption of technologies in the port logistics chain.

The Transitional Directive Committee, established in March 2017, was chaired by the national port authority of Peru and presented the working plan for each one of the technical committees and of the Expert Group, highlighting among their fundamental objectives the formalization of the Network as a regional non-profit association.

At the II Meeting, a recommendation was made to continue holding these annual seminars, and the delegation of Peru proposed Lima as the venue for the III Latin American and Caribbean meeting on logistic port communities, which was unanimously approved.

The III Meeting was held from 16 to 18 August 2018 in Lima, Peru, with the co-sponsorship of CAF-development bank of Latin America and the National Port Authority of Peru. Participants included representatives of the port systems linked to the Programme, as well as ministerial authorities in charge of this topic and other organizations interested in contributing to the collaborative work being developed in this context.

On this occasion, participants discussed the role of public policies in the promotion and facilitation of logistic port communities (cases of Chile, Peru and Colombia) and their prospects for impacting the industry. The major regional port systems presented their vision on future ports in the fields of governance, community technologies, sustainability and logistic integration corridors. In addition, the results of the qualitative and quantitative studies to measure the level of competitiveness of port logistics chains in the main port systems were presented.

Prior to the III Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting of Logistic Port Communities, the "II Colloquium on scientific research on port logistics chains" was held with the purpose of conducting a debate on the *Importance of networks for scientific collaboration as regards regional port logistics*. Additionally, participants shared their views on some applied research projects in the port logistics chain.

PROGRAMME: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES AND KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

PROJECT I.5. Promotion of innovation and technological development

Activity I.5.1. Electronic commerce and its development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Status and prospects

As part of the Permanent Secretariat's activities regarding the digital economy and the use of information and communications technologies for trade, the "Regional Meeting on e-commerce in Latin America and the Caribbean: Opportunities and challenges for the internationalization of SMEs" aims to take a first step in addressing the concerns of small and medium-sized enterprises with export potential in the region. Through this meeting, both business leaders and public policy makers will have an overview of the usefulness of electronic commerce as a tool for internationalization and envisage concrete solutions in this area, in accordance with the needs faced by small and medium-sized enterprises in the region.

The objectives of this activity are as follows: i) identify the specific opportunities and challenges that must be addressed by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean for the use of electronic commerce as a tool for the insertion of small and medium-sized enterprises into international markets; and ii) define a concrete framework of public policies for the use of electronic commerce in the insertion of small and medium-sized enterprises of the region into international markets.

After discussions with our counterpart, the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), we agreed to conduct this activity during the first quarter of 2019, in accordance with the Framework Cooperation Agreement signed between the two institutions in 2017.

Activity I.5.2. Intra-regional value chains based on digital economy and smart technologies

The need to generate sustainable growth and decent employment through trade remains an important political goal for many developing countries. According to the International Trade Centre, 80% of world trade takes place within the value chains, and around 60% of this trade is of intermediate goods. Integration into value chains allows SMEs in developing countries to benefit from participation in world trade.

Globalization, coupled with the rapid advance of new technologies and their disruptive business models, poses a series of challenges and opportunities for the internationalization of SMEs on a large scale, as the agreements of Bali in 2014 will enable new rules of the game for trade and transport facilitation

According to the *Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (e-LAC 2018)*, derived from the V Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, 5 to 7 August 2015), convened by ECLAC, as ICTs, in particular Internet, permeate all the

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economic and social fields, their relevance in terms of innovation, growth and development takes on a new dimension

After more than one decade of ICT policies, Latin America and the Caribbean shows progress in the following aspects: establishment of legal frameworks, higher levels of coverage of telecommunication services (in particular, mobile telephony and Internet), the implementation of programmes in social areas (in particular, education and health) and the development of e-government. However, the countries of the region continue to advance at different speeds, with gaps within and between them, as well as differences with respect to more developed economies

The pillar of the digital economy on the agenda promotes the development of the ICT industry, increases growth based on innovation and productivity, enhances e-commerce, and strengthens the regional digital entrepreneurship ecosystem. The countries have begun to adopt the guidelines of the Regional Digital Agenda, where one of the bets is to achieve an efficient integration between the ICT industry and traditional and exporting companies, on which each country bases its capacities for trade integration at the regional and global levels.

In the particular case of Latin America and the Caribbean, the region shows a significant lag with respect to the adoption of technologies in companies. According to the results of the Digitization Index (DIGIX), which is measured by the Research Team of the BBVA Bank (Cámara and Tuesta, 2017), there is a poor performance in the region.

For this activity, a smart value chain will be defined as an international supply chain involving suppliers, producers, logistic services networks, distributors and final consumers, who have achieved a degree of exchange of information based on digital enablers that allow them to reduce their response times to markets, take advantage of shared resources, minimize the carbon footprint from their operations, and continually improve their products in two-way collaboration with the final customer.

In its mission to support trade and investment, SELA aims to facilitate the internationalization of SMEs in intra-regional value chains and their integration in the digital economy and smart technologies ecosystem. To that end, it is necessary to undertake technical cooperation activities focused on disseminating global best practices in the fields of regional integration of value chains, promote sectoral and transnational governance within the ICT industry, innovation and entrepreneurship according to the current and future needs of the internationalized SMEs and strengthen public policies for the promotion of such collaboration actions.

For that purpose, and in order to achieve technical and financial support, this project was submitted for consideration of the Government of the Republic of Korea, through the Korean Council for Latin America Commission. After several steps to strengthen cooperation ties with this country, the Ministry of Finance expressed an interest in cooperating for the materialization of the project, and both parties agreed to postpone this activity for next year and sign a Framework Cooperation Agreement, if possible.

PROJECT I.6. Strengthening the statistical information system on SELA's Web site**Activity I.6.1. Development of an interactive system for the management of databases and economic statistics on SELA's Web site**

At present, the quantitative data have gained in importance for decision-making. Various organizations, both public and private, have increasingly attached importance to the collection and analysis of this type of information as a requirement for choosing among different lines of action. In addition, with developments in computers' processing capacity and the mass application of Internet, the collection and use of statistics and indicators, for both specialists and the general public, have been facilitated. Considering this global trend, since the year 2017, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA has developed an interactive system for the management of databases and economic statistics that are expected to be offered, open to the public, through the portal of the organization. The purpose is to provide Member States with all the quantitative information derived from the research and analysis documents conducted by officials of the Permanent Secretariat, as well as those commissioned to external consultants.

For the development of the interactive system, the Permanent Secretariat has formed a work team composed of professionals of the Direction of Studies and Proposals and the information technology consulting firm IKEL'S. This team has designed the overall structure of the database, recording the values of the selected indicators and testing the capabilities of the interactive system. The first step taken was to incorporate the data used in versions of the *Report on the regional integration process* and the *Report on economic integration*, given the ease of update and incorporation into the database of the indicators contained in said publications.

For 2019, a first version of the interactive system is expected to be available to users with all the basic features. The system will operate as a subportal of the new SELA's Web site, which is also in progress. Subsequently, it will incorporate the rest of indicators developed by or for the Permanent Secretariat, and the features of the system will be further developed and expanded.

PROJECT I.7. Management and coordination of specialized portals

In order to optimize the contents of its portals related to institutions and the integration of Latin American and Caribbean economies, in 2018 SELA continued the process of updating its specialized portals, through which some issues of the utmost importance in the Work Programme of the organization are addressed.

Activity I.7.1. Management and maintenance of the specialized portal on the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

The purpose of this portal, created in 2011 through Decision 527 *Support of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and its Work Programme to the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)* of the Latin American Council, is to follow up, systematize, and contribute to the dissemination of documents and information generated by the different authorities of CELAC. In 2018, SELA continued the process of updating the information as it was available on the Web.

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Activity I.7.2. Management and maintenance of the specialized portal on international cooperation directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Promotion of South-South Cooperation

In 2013, the Permanent Secretariat created the "[Portal on international cooperation directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: promotion of South-South cooperation](#)". In order to maintain it, the organization relies on national focal points for international cooperation of the Member States of SELA. It also has the collaboration of the most outstanding Latin American and Caribbean institutions linked to the subject. In particular, it draws information from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), the United Nations System, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and, specifically, the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77 (G-77).

This specialized portal is a tool designed to systematize and provide the user, in a friendly manner, with updated information on the most relevant initiatives and efforts that are being carried out in Latin America and the Caribbean to boost international cooperation, with special reference to South-South Cooperation (SSC) and triangular cooperation. The portal includes the section [National Focal Points for Cooperation](#) of the Member States of SELA, which can be accessed through a map of the region and an index. Both channels take the user to the basic data that identify the National Focal Point of the country of his selection, complemented by a news section and a recent documents section that focus on cooperation in that country, in addition to a news section referred to the region. The links section is also very useful, including: the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the Group of 77; ECLAC, and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB).

The section on the Meeting of International Cooperation Directors, organized annually by the Permanent Secretariat, should also be noted. This section includes a summary of the background of such a significant event for the region, and offers access to the web pages of meetings held between 1987 and today, as well as a list of the final reports, 20 of which are accessible and can be downloaded.

The Document section consists of [Documents of SELA](#), organized by year and [Other Documents](#), generated by other organizations, also accessible by year. All the documents are presented in pdf format, easy to access and download.

Finally, the section of co-operators consists of [Bilateral co-operators](#), organized by country, and [Multilateral co-operators](#).

Activity I.7.3. Management and maintenance of the specialized portal on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Permanent Secretariat continued generating contents for the specialized portal on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean and improving the details of computer design and programming for the progressive incorporation of some services and products for governmental focal points responsible for this subject, as well as associations and representatives of the private sector interested in risk management.

In this connection, the portal includes statistics and documents prepared by the Permanent Secretariat, as well as by regional and international institutions in charge of the issue of disaster risk reduction.

The objectives of this specialized portal are as follows: i) collect, select, organize, systematize and disseminate information, initiatives, best practices and proposals about public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean, with special emphasis on the information generated by institutions specialized in the matter, such as CAPRADE CDEMA, CEPREDENAC, REHU, ECLAC, UNISDR, OCHA, among others, as well as that emerged from fora such as the “Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction” and the “Regional Meetings on International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance (MIAH)”; and (ii) promote companies and associations of the Latin American and Caribbean private sector interested in contributing to disaster risk reduction in the region, highlighting the actions of the “Voluntary Commitment of the Private Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean to Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building”.

In order to add value to the portal in terms of the information provided, in June a link to the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE), both in the Americas and around the world, was incorporated.

Activity I.7.4. Management and maintenance of the specialized portal on Free Zones in Latin America and the Caribbean

With the purpose of promoting the activities of the various free zones (FZs) in the region, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA maintains this specialized portal to provide experts, authorities and general public with updated information on commercial, industrial and services free zones in Latin America and the Caribbean, in addition to news on the daily events of these economic areas. This is another way through which SELA contributes to the promotion of exports, productive diversification, the promotion of foreign investment and technology transfer in the region, as was expressly mandated at the Conference of Government Authorities in charge of Free-Trade Zones in Latin America and the Caribbean (Cali, Colombia, 2012) and is the spirit of the Panama Convention.

Activity I.7.5. Management and maintenance of the specialized portal on SELA-SMEs

In 2015, with the purpose of providing both the Member States and the business and governmental focal points for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean with a source of relevant and updated information on the development of SMEs in the region, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA launched this portal, which has become an excellent means for disseminating the activities of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Programme for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SELA-SMEs Programme).

This tool enables SELA to support the cooperation actions for the creation and strengthening of SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean, and updates a network of contacts with public and private entities to facilitate interaction with those responsible for public policies, as well as with representatives of the sector in the Member States.

Specifically, through this portal, it is possible to consult information on key issues associated with SMEs, namely: public policies related to the development and growth of SMEs, financial inclusion, formalization, public-private partnerships, productive articulation, competitiveness, productivity, financing and guarantees, and entrepreneurship, among others. In 2018, the portal was kept up to date and some records were adjusted to facilitate the consultation of information by the user.

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Activity I.7.6. Management and maintenance of the specialized portal on the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports

The non-reimbursable Technical Cooperation Agreement signed in 2014 between the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and CAF-development bank of Latin America to carry out the Programme for the creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports includes the design and construction of the specialized portal on the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports. This tool was created to help preserve, systematize, manage and disseminate knowledge, information and documentation generated by the different instances of the Network, while giving greater visibility to the Network and enhancing its usefulness as a dynamic and up-to-date source of related information for both the technical staff in ports who needs the information available on the portal and the Network as working tools and for end users who require port information depending on their business.

The ultimate goal is for the portal to facilitate the materialization of two of the main objectives of the Network, namely: "Contribute to the strengthening of ports and their communities to meet the challenges that the growing volume of foreign trade and strategies of the large international actors are imposing on ports, thus supporting the main objective to achieve intra and extra-regional trade facilitation in Latin America and the Caribbean", and "Provide all stakeholders, especially exporters and importers and authorities responsible for this matter, with a space that allows them to timely access key information for their activity".

Designed on the basis of collaborative work, the portal offers a technical and administrative environment with restricted access to staff of the Network and a public environment to which end-users can access for their query.

In 2018, the Permanent Secretariat has continued to work on the coordination of the structuring of the portal, the responsibility of which is shared by multiple authorities linked to logistic port communities currently making up the Network.

Activity I.7.7. Management and maintenance of the Directory of Latin American and Caribbean intergovernmental organizations, institutions and agencies

This directory was created with the following objectives: i) provide the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean with timely and effective access to up-to-date information on the main entities making up regional institutions; and ii) promote inter-agency coordination in order to boost the development and continuity of synergistic efforts among intergovernmental organizations, institutions and agencies in Latin America and the Caribbean. It currently offers information on 121 regional bodies, which can be retrieved through a general search and an advanced search, by key words, as well as through a list sorted alphabetically by institution. The most recent update was made in August 2018.

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. 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 integration into value chains

The Permanent Secretariat went forward with negotiations for the host and co-sponsor for the “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 integration into value chains”.

This meeting will be held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 6 and 7 December of this year, with the co-sponsorship of the Government of the Dominican Republic through the Directorate-General for Multilateral Cooperation of the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development and the support of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77 (G77).

This meeting aims to: i) identify major opportunities and challenges for international cooperation, triangular cooperation and South-South cooperation in strengthening the commercial infrastructure that will facilitate greater participation of the region in global value chains; ii) generate a space for synergy to exchange successful experiences and best practices in commercial infrastructure management with a view to reducing costs and time in foreign trade logistics; and iii) present the advances in commercial infrastructure management through the evaluation of the status of implementation of the physical works and the use of the information and communications technologies for the modernization of logistics processes.

This regional meeting will be aimed at national authorities responsible for international cooperation of the Member States of SELA, regional and international organizations, bilateral and multilateral development institutions, and experts in the field.

It should be noted that, for the conduction of this activity, the Permanent Secretariat presented for consideration of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77 (G77) the project “Strengthening cooperation in commercial connectivity in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards greater integration into value chains”, which was approved by the Committee of Experts and the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the PGTF. This will make it possible to obtain the financial support for the mobilization of some international cooperation directors for Latin America and the Caribbean who will participate in this regional meeting and to defray some logistical and operational expenses of the meeting, together with the resources budgeted by the Permanent Secretariat.

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Activity II.1.2. Forum on opportunities for international cooperation for Latin America and the Caribbean: Challenges of the 2030 Agenda

This activity provided for the conduction of the “Forum on opportunities for international cooperation for Latin America and the Caribbean: Challenges of the 2030 Agenda”, which would have the following objectives: i) Identify the main opportunities and challenges of international cooperation, triangular cooperation and South-South cooperation in implementing national and regional strategies to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda; ii) contribute to the promotion of greater coordination and synergy among focal points for international cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean and bilateral and multilateral donors to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda; and iii) present innovative cooperation sources for sustainable development between regional and extra-regional stakeholders, linked to the public and private sectors, and civil society.

This approach would allow for: i) reduction in the information gap with respect to the main difficulties faced by the Member States of SELA, along with bilateral and multilateral donors who work with them, in implementing the 2030 Agenda; ii) detection of regional hotspots demanding greater coordinated action among international cooperation agencies to facilitate the implementation of the SDGs; and iii) promotion of inclusion of non-State stakeholders in national strategies.

Due to budgetary constraints, the Permanent Secretariat had to suspend this activity.

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

The VII Meeting on “Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean”. Building resilient infrastructures” is scheduled to take place on 20 and 21 November 2018, in Mexico City, with the co-sponsorship of the Government of Mexico, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) and the Ministry of Governance (SEGOB), the Regional Office for the Americas of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Cementos Mexicanos (CEMEX), and the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS), as well as with the support of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ) and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID-OFDA).

This activity has the following objectives: i) Continue promoting the creation of public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction with the help of governmental and private focal points in the region and the implementation of actions in the field; ii) continue supporting the coordination and cooperation of the work carried out by the UNISDR in the field of strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors for disaster risk reduction, as well as in global and regional platforms; and iii) further promote continuity of government, business and operations during disaster situations with the exchange of knowledge and experiences, collaborative environments among the various stakeholders in the field of risk management.

Specifically, this VII Regional Meeting will address the following topics i) Evaluate resilience of physical infrastructure (public and private buildings), hospitals, health services, educational and cultural facilities for the protection of the historical heritage and cultural heritage in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; ii) examine corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a resource to strengthen social resilience against disasters; iii) identify regional best practices in terms of investment and efficient, sustainable and responsible capacity building; and iv) Present the Initiative

of the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE) and its international and regional progress.

It should be noted that, within the framework of this VII Meeting on “Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean”, the initiative Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies (ARISE) in Mexico is scheduled to be launched and led by the company Cementos Mexicanos (CEMEX). In this connection, an agreement for the establishment of the National Chapter of ARISE-Mexico will be signed.

This activity is aimed at government authorities from Latin American and Caribbean countries; public and private companies in the region interested in disaster risk management; authorities responsible for disaster risk management at the regional, national and local levels, and international organizations related to disaster risk management.

The main conclusions of this meeting will be included appropriately in the corresponding final report.

Other activities:

Within the framework of the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS), the Permanent Secretariat of SELA was invited as speaker at the forum “Social Security in emergency situations”. At this event, held from 18 to 20 April in Cancun, Mexico, the Permanent Secretariat presented the document [*Macroeconomic impact of natural disasters due to the occurrence of natural events in Latin America and the Caribbean*](#) (SP/RRIMDOENALC /DT N° 1-17), prepared by officials of the Permanent Secretariat in 2017.

During this presentation, the Permanent Secretariat gave an overview of the situation in the region in the field of emergency response, advances in the area of disaster risk reduction and a complete assessment of the capabilities and strategies for economic recovery with evidence of best practices at the international level.

In addition, the Permanent Secretariat was invited to participate in the “VI Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas”, which was held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 20 to 22 June of this year. This was a propitious occasion for holding bilateral meetings with various institutions with which the Permanent Secretariat has been addressing this issue. The meetings with representatives of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the White Helmets Commission are worth mentioning, as well as those with UNISDR and CEMEX, among others.

On 20 June, within the framework of the Parallel Session 3: Risk integration in private sector practices, the UNISDR opened a space for the Permanent Secretary of SELA to formalize the announcement of the conduction in Mexico of the VII Meeting on “Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Building resilient infrastructures”.

The bilateral meeting between the Permanent Secretary of SELA and Ms. Mami Mizutori, Assistant Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, is also worth mentioning, with both institutions ratifying their interest in continuing their joint work on topics related to public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction and their commitment to promoting the Memorandum of Understanding (2015–2020) signed between SELA and the United Nations on this matter. In addition, the Permanent Secretariat was also invited to participate in a

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working breakfast with representatives of the private sector to exchange views in order to enhance and encourage private participation in disaster risk reduction.

It should also be noted the bilateral meeting with the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS), aimed at strengthening inter-institutional cooperation relations and defining possible areas of work and cooperation with a view to signing a Framework Agreement for Institutional Cooperation between the two organizations.

Activity II.1.4. Latin American and Caribbean cooperation in trade and competition. Joint UNCTAD-SELA project. VIII Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition of Latin America and the Caribbean (WGTC)

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Administrative Council for Economic Defense (CADE) of Brazil, is organizing the “VIII Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition (WGTC) in Latin America and the Caribbean”, scheduled to be held on 10 and 11 October 2018 in Brasilia, Brazil.

On this occasion, authorities responsible for trade and competition from Latin American and Caribbean countries, representatives of regional and international organizations and institutions will analyze the impact of maritime transport, infrastructure and port services on the trade and competition in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The main conclusions of this meeting will be included in the respective final report.

PROGRAMME: SELA-SMEs

PROJECT II.2. Latin American and Caribbean Regional Programme for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Activity II.2.1. Productive integration of SMEs into global value chains

Given the need for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to adapt to the new challenges posed by the latest-generation trade opening schemes, it is necessary to create a space for opportunities to promote the inclusion of SMEs in productive processes, identify the linkages and trade links that promote their diversification, and achieve their gradual incorporation into global value chains.

To that end, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA has structured various activities for the promotion of value chains that facilitate the productive articulation and export capacity of enterprises, and promote the increase in productivity and the sustainable growth of the region. Among the objectives of this work agenda are training, associativity, improvement in access to credit and new information technologies of these companies.

As a first stage of this work agenda, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA held a “Regional Meeting on productive integration and strategic alliances” in November 2017 at the Mercosur Secretariat in Montevideo, Uruguay. First, it presented a base document on the strengthening of regional trade and productive integration, which assessed the degree of interdependence of national markets and with the region, being able to respond to particular information needs that support decision-making in both private and public companies.

Secondly, the Permanent Secretariat submitted a proposal to build a Network of Strategic Alliances for the promotion of trade in the region. Part of the difficulties in developing business and commercial activities is due to the lack of a system of detailed information on business opportunities in the Member States. These tools are essential to promote business, research and technological exchange.

In this connection, a network of strategic partnerships can only be designed and fed through the exchange of information between companies and integration mechanisms. That is why this initiative was channelled through a letter of commitment by the Member States to provide and generate the necessary information to create a system of business opportunities in the countries of the region and the different integration mechanisms.

Then, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA is expected to conduct in October a seminar on "Productive articulation for the strengthening and development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region", which aims to strengthen strategic partnerships among SMEs at the national and regional levels and identify the commercial advantages and strengths of countries that will participate as a pilot group for this project. In this event, a presentation will be made of a base document on the construction of a preliminary map of productive niches between sectors and countries that, in addition, identify potential opportunities for SMEs in value chains.

At that meeting, participants will address the issue on the basis of a line of work, ranging from the definition of productive transformation, value chains and their determination; the formation of round tables about the incorporation of SMEs into value chains with the participation of the various integration mechanisms; assessment of opportunities for cooperation, promotion of public-private partnerships, possibilities for financing entrepreneurship and evaluating infrastructure; and, finally, the creation of a space for the formulation of proposals, commitments and organization of upcoming meetings.

In addition, the Permanent Secretariat is working on the development of working sessions that will enable the active participation of the public and private sectors of each country and the continuous exchange of qualitative and quantitative information on productive niches and will in turn facilitate the enrichment of the directory of SMEs for the regional Network of Strategic Alliances and thus the creation of a statistical database on production complementarities, accessible through the portal of the organization.

Activity II.2.2. Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC)

In order to continue the implementation of the *Public Policy Index for MSMEs (IPPALC)* in the countries of the Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay, the Permanent Secretariat participated in the national coordination meetings in Chile, held at the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism on 4 June; in Uruguay, with the support of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (MIEM), on 6 June; and in Argentina, at the Ministry of Production, on 8 June.

During these meetings, participants presented advances in the preliminary results achieved, discussed the progress made in responses to the evaluation questionnaires, identified future areas of work, determined goals to comply with the scheduled timetable and establish responsibilities, related to the different dimensions.

The progress made during the national meetings served as the platform for the conduction of the "Subregional Workshop to validate the results of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America

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and the Caribbean (IPPALC): Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay”, held in Bogotá, Colombia, on 16 and 17 July 2018, with the support of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism of Colombia (MINCIT), CAF-development bank of Latin America and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The main objective of this event was to discuss and validate the scores proposed for dimensions and sub-dimensions of the IPPALC, as well as the preliminary conclusions obtained in each of the participating countries. Thus, synergy among national coordinators was promoted, which provided an opportunity for deepening the process of information search, enriching the results achieved, complementing the analysis and generating consensus on the incorporation of methodological changes that promote greater accuracy of the indicator.

After this workshop, on 18 July, private meetings were held with national coordinators at the headquarters of the MINCIT, in order to address specific issues of each country, look for more information and evidence on some sub-dimensions of work and make a thorough review of the assessment developed.

With this event, the phase of technical meetings that began in 2017 was completed and the phase of preparation of the final publication was started, whose official launch was agreed to take place in Lima, Peru, during the first quarter of 2019.

The main conclusions of the meeting are included in the [*Final Report on the Subregional Workshop to validate the results of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean \(IPPALC\): Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay*](#) (SP/TSVIPP-MIPYMES ALC/ IF- N° 1-18).

Activity II.2.3. 2030 Agenda: Regional Meeting on Financial Inclusion of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Permanent Secretariat, jointly with the Ministry of Economy (MINECO) of Guatemala, organized the “Seminar-Workshop on Financial Inclusion of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean”, which was scheduled to take place on 12 and 13 July in Antigua, Guatemala.

The objectives of the Seminar-Workshop are as follows: i) Identify successful practices in financial education and inclusion of MSMEs; Issuance and use of electronic money, mobile banking, digital payment and simplification of procedures for both business registration and entry into the financial system; and ii) identify successful practices in the design of financial instruments and schemes aimed at meeting the needs of MSMEs, in particular, potential financing options, such as “Fintech”.

This activity is aimed at the governmental focal points for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises of the Member States of SELA, representatives of business associations for SMEs, regional organizations and experts in the subject.

In discussions with MINECO, during the first quarter of 2018, both parties agreed on an ambitious agenda consisting of five (5) working sessions, in which the following participants will be involved: i) Governmental focal points for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean; ii) representatives of business associations of SMEs; iii) regional organizations; and iv) experts in the field. In addition, the agenda for the Seminar-Workshop focuses on the exchange of experiences and knowledge about innovative financial instruments that are available to MSMEs, not only from the perspective

of bankization, but also of the potential that is opening up with the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs), crowdfunding and factoring.

This activity was scheduled to take place on 3 and 4 May, but due to financial limitations of the Permanent Secretariat, it was rescheduled for 12 and 13 July. Finally, given the stage of budgetary restriction, in consultation and coordination with the Ministry of Economy of Guatemala, a decision was taken to suspend it, and Member States and participants were notified on 14 June.

This activity is being rescheduled for 30 and 31 October of this year in Antigua, Guatemala.

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

Activity II.2.4. Experiences of formalization of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, jointly with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and MSMEs (MICM) of Dominican Republic, was expected to organize the "Seminar-Workshop on Experiences of Formalization of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean", scheduled to take place on 14 and 15 June 2018 in Santo Domingo, but had to reschedule it due to financial constraints.

This Seminar-Workshop aims to: i) Share a comparative vision of the formalization policies and programmes of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean; and ii) Promote the most important experiences as regards formalization of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Given the proximity of the date of preparation of the meeting and due to budgetary constraints of the Permanent Secretariat to cover the payments provided for, SELA and the Ministry of Industry, Trade and MSMEs (MICM) of Dominican Republic were forced to postpone this activity subject to budget availability of this Secretariat and reschedule it for the first quarter of 2019.

Activity II.2.5. Seminar on evaluation of impact of public policies for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Permanent Secretariat, in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) of the Republic of Panama, the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD), CAF-development bank of Latin America, the Ibero-American School of Administration and Public Policies (EIAPP), the, the Centre for Research and Teaching on Economics (CIDE), the Regional Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results for Latin America and the Caribbean (CLEAR-LAC) and the World Bank, organized the "Seminar on impact evaluation of public policies for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean", held in Panama City on 10, 11 and 12 September of this year.

This activity aimed to train participants in managing and mastering the tools required for the design and impact evaluation of public policies for MSMEs, as well as in implementing the standards that an impact evaluation must meet and identifying the suitable instruments for conducting it. To that end, the Seminar was expected to: i) train the technical staff in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies for MSMEs; ii) disseminate best practices and experiences in the field; and iii) promote technical cooperation among the focal points for MSMEs.

The Seminar-Workshop consisted of eight working sessions, in which emphasis was given to the quantitative methods for the design and implementation of an impact evaluation of public policies for MSMEs.

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The participants included representatives of governmental focal points for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean and national coordinators of the Public Policy Index for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC).

This activity was conducted by specialized trainers of CAF-development bank of Latin America, Centre for Research and Teaching on Economics (CIDE) and the World Bank.

The main conclusions of this Seminar are included in the respective final report.

Activity II.2.6. Regional Meeting of business associations and MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean: Achievements for the construction of public-private partnerships in the region

This Regional Meeting aimed to: i) Identify the main constraints faced by the private sector, business associations and MSMEs in developing strong and long-lasting sustainable development-oriented partnerships between the public and private sectors; ii) identify mechanisms that improve the opportunities for cooperation and complementarity between the public and private sectors; iii) collect the main initiatives being developed by the private sector, business associations and MSMEs for the strengthening of public-private partnerships in the region; iv) collect the main cooperation initiatives being promoted by bilateral and multilateral donors to encourage public-private partnerships and better use of them by the private sector, business associations and MSMEs; and v) analyse mechanisms for the establishment or strengthening of regional and/or subregional business associations to facilitate the exchange and dissemination of information to the private sector.

With a view to organizing this regional event, the Permanent Secretariat created a directory (database) of the main private national professional federations of the Member States of SELA on the basis of the consultation made by the Permanent Secretariat and responded by the Member States.

This activity was expected to take place in the first half of the year, but, due to budgetary constraints of the Permanent Secretariat, it was suspended.

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 China: A place of opportunities for SMEs in the region

In its pursuit of contributing to rapprochement and promoting cooperation between its Member States and nations of other regions, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA participated in funding and conducting a panel of experts that formed part of the IV International Seminar "Latin

America and the Caribbean and China: Conditions and challenges in the 21st century". This event was organized by the LAC-China Network of the National Autonomous University of Mexico and CAF-development bank of Latin America, and was held in Mexico City on 28, 29 and 30 May 2018. Every two years, this forum brings together focal points for academic circles, as well as multilateral and business associations, with the purpose of promoting access for the public and private sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean to potential opportunities for financial cooperation and trade links with the People's Republic of China.

The panel of the Permanent Secretariat, entitled "Experiences and opportunities in LAC-China cooperation: Towards the internationalization of SMEs in the region", was carried out as part of the closing session of the seminar with the purpose of promoting an exchange of views on the challenges and opportunities faced by Latin American and Caribbean SMEs in their internationalization process towards the Pacific basin, specifically to the Chinese market. For that purpose, participants included five experts in the field of internationalisation of SMEs, productive development and international relations, who – based on their experiences at the China-Veracruz Centre of Studies, the Association of Zhonghua Entrepreneurs of Mexico, the Argentina-China Chamber of Commerce, the Uruguay-China Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Production of Peru, respectively – urged to further strengthen the processes to disseminate potential opportunities and generate trade and managerial capacities among small and medium-sized entrepreneurs in the region.

The event was mainly targeted at representatives and researchers from universities and academic institutions in the region and public sector officials in charge of trade and competition in the Member States of SELA. It brought together the China-Veracruz Centre of Studies, the Uruguay-China Chamber of Commerce, the Argentina-China Chamber of Commerce and the Latin America-China Network in outlining an agenda to facilitate access of SMEs in the region to the Chinese market, focused on the generation of export capabilities and familiarization with the business protocols of the Eastern nation.

PRESS, PUBLICATIONS AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

1. Plan for dissemination in mass media and press coverage

The Press Office has set as its objective to position, on the local and international public agenda, news and informational contents about the activities foreseen in the Work Programme of SELA for 2018, with a fresh and innovative image based on the guidelines of the institution, the prevalence of messages and the design of strategies for actions (on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis). This should be achieved through timely dissemination to traditional media (press, radio and television) and online media (Web pages, social networks).

The strategic implementation of the communications plan to publicize the various meetings, workshops, seminars, signatures of agreements, acts and other activities involving SELA was carried out through the dissemination of press releases on the Web site, specialized portals, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube of the organization, as well as the coordination of agendas for interviews and preparation of statements for the written press, radio and television with the Permanent Secretary, Directors and specialists.

In addition, during the period from November 2017 to October 2018, the Press Office included its Instagram accounts in its Management of Social Networks, and revamped its LinkedIn account. The

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Press Office developed new contents (news, interviews and articles) and videos for SELA's new Web site, targeting the various audiences of the Permanent Secretariat.

Likewise, during the period, the Press Office continued with its routine activities such as the production of the information service for more than 300 subscribers, as well as the adaptation of new informational products about the studies and documents prepared by the Permanent Secretariat to be strategically disseminated by the following services:

- **Information Service of SELA.** Newsletter containing a selection of the most relevant news about the region and the world related to issues of interest for the development of Latin America and the Caribbean. This publication transmits the communications aimed at Member States of SELA, subscribers registered in SELA's portal, mass media, governmental representatives, consular delegations, the private sector and civil society. This information is published in Spanish and English, which are registered in a chronological order in the portal SELA.org.
 - **Press Section on SELA's Web site SELA.org.** Publication of all information produced through the daily information service, press releases and bulletins. In addition, the contents of the following specialized portals have been managed: CELAC, South-South Cooperation, Disaster Risk Management, SELA-SMEs Programme, Free Trade Zones and Digital Ports. The contents are provided in Spanish and English.
 - **Press Coverage.** Through contacts with the national and international press, information was provided about the meetings, seminars, workshops and presentations organized by the Permanent Secretariat within the framework of the activities carried out inside or outside its headquarters, which are also disseminated through Difusión SELA, SELA's Web portal, and SELA's social networks, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.
 - **Agenda of interviews.** Communication actions carried out by Public Relations that reinforced the messages, image and positioning of the organization in mass media, over a given period by means of interviews in press, radio and television with influencers of the public opinion: television anchormen, news agencies and journalists responsible for covering topics related to the institution.
 - **Collaboration in updates of lists for dissemination.** Activities continued to update and streamline the lists of subscribers to SELA's Web portal on a permanent basis, and the organization promoted the implementation of a New Messaging Service with MailChimp to subscribers, national and international mass media, specialized portals and printed media, among others, for the purpose of continuously improving the scope and effectiveness of the dissemination of information.
2. **Informative products: Daily information service, press releases, management of news in specialized portals and written or video contents (news, interviews and reports) for the new Web site of SELA**

With the purpose of providing key audiences of SELA with up-to-date and relevant information on developments in the region as regards SELA's thematic areas – i.e. intra-regional relations, extra-regional relations, and economic and technical cooperation – communications were prepared that summarize the activities of the Work Programme for 2018. Such communications reflect the objectives and benefits of the studies, proposals and programmes of the Permanent Secretariat.

The following informative products were published:

- **Information service.** Daily digital newsletter, prepared through monitoring and selection of news published in national and international mass media in Spanish and English, which are classified and disseminated through SELA's Web portal and whenever relevant, through the specialized portals administered by the Permanent Secretariat as well as social media accounts on Twitter and Facebook: @selainforma. At the same time, this information is forwarded via e-mail to the Embassies and Representatives of Member States, regional government entities as well as officials from national and international organizations, subscribers to SELA Network and international mass media.
- **Written and video contents for the new portal.** SELA launched a New Narrative on the contents of the portal and its social networks, in order to publicize its work in a more attractive and innovative way. News, interviews and reports were prepared to make an impact on relevant and new audiences in order to turn them into recurring visitors.
- **Press releases and press coverage.** In order to keep the direct and general beneficiaries of SELA well informed, the Permanent Secretariat prepared and distributed press releases, which were published and disseminated through the SELA's Web portal SELA.org, e-mail and social networks, to Embassies and Representatives of Member States, regional government entities, officials from national and international organizations, all of them subscribers to SELA Network and national and international mass media.

Press releases published in the period November 2017 – October 2018:

- VII Regional Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction in Mexico (20 and 21 November 2018)
- VIII Annual Regional Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition in Brazil (10 and 11 October 2018)
- SELA and Extenda - Andalusian Agency for Overseas Promotion sign agreement (21 September 2018)
- SELA to provide training on impact evaluation of regional policies for MSMEs (05 September 2018)
- SELA to hold III Meeting of port logistic communities in Lima (03 August 2018)
- SELA will hold a workshop on the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Bogotá (06 July 2018)
- SELA attends the VI Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Cartagena (18 June 2018)
- SELA to deal with the issue of internationalization of SMEs during the LAC-China Seminar (28 May 2018)
- SELA and the Eurasian Economic Commission forge cooperation ties (24 May 2018)
- SELA and CAN sign Cooperation Agreement for economic development (23 March 2018)
- SELA and CAN to deal with regional migration in Peru (14 May 2018)
- SELA and ECLAC to hold seminar on integration in Mexico (02 March 2018)
- SELA: Disaster Risk Reduction on Tourism will be subject of discussion in Dominican Republic (04 December 2017)
- XLIII Meeting of the Latin American Council of SELA will focus on the cross-cutting issue of MSMEs (27 November 2017)
- SELA and MERCOSUR together for productive integration for SMEs (16 November 2017)
- SELA and OECD join efforts to support MSMEs in the region (11 November 2017)
- SELA organizes seminar on opportunities for cooperation (09 November 2017)
- SELA to hold meeting of directors in charge of cooperation and intellectual property in Panama (03 November 2017)
- SELA and ALADI foster trade facilitation in Latin America and the Caribbean (27 October 2017)
- SELA and ECLAC sign technical and institutional cooperation agreement (26 October 2017)

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- SELA to conduct technical workshop on the Public Policy Index for MSMEs (IPPALC) in Central America (19 October 2017)
- SELA organizes IX Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows (18 October 2017)
- SELA marks 42nd anniversary cooperating with Latin America and the Caribbean (17 October 2017)

3. SELA in the social networks

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA has developed a strategy to diversify the scope of the communications made through the Web site SELA.org and its social networks. To that end, it strengthened its presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and its Youtube channel of videos, thus addressing in an immediate and dynamic manner the information requirements of the users of SELA's network, and achieving through the Web 2.0 modality a closer interaction with those who require the contents generated by the organization, since these tools enhance and complement the information services offered by the Permanent Secretariat in a bi-directional way.

With globalization, this process has brought about advantages for citizens, public administrations, enterprises and organizations such as SELA, improving management with greater transparency, collaboration, segmentation, virality and feedback of communications.

Social networks have become appropriate channels to publicize meetings, workshops, seminars, signing of agreements, acts and other activities in which SELA participates, in accordance with the Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat for 2018.

Being present on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Youtube allows for gaining knowledge about the demands and needs of the various audiences of SELA, which will progressively indicate the institution which are the most appropriate ways to disseminate the informative products of the annual plan.

Thus far, the weekly average readership analyzed amounts to 2,798 people on Facebook and from 976 to 4000 impressions per day on Twitter for those tweets of a most informative nature. The network of contacts in LinkedIn, of almost one hundred, increases every week, and so happens on Youtube when videos are uploaded. In Instagram, SELA is beginning to attract followers, although it is the most recently adopted space for connection with audiences.

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

INTEGRAL INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM OF SELA

1. SELA's Web portal (www.sela.org)

In terms of dissemination of the programmed activities, on SELA's portal 11 mini-sites were designed and published, corresponding to the regional events conducted during the period November 2017-September 2018 and which analysed, among others, the following topics: cooperation for intellectual property; productive integration and strategic partnerships; disaster

risk prevention; prospects for Latin American integration; migration policies in the region; internationalization of SMEs; prospective vision of Latin American integration; public policy index for LAC; evaluation of policies for MSMEs; financing mechanisms and guarantees for MSMEs in LAC, training for MSMEs in the continuation of business and operations vis-à-vis disasters; and transport and trade facilitation from the perspective of logistic port communities, with emphasis on public policies of institutions, digitization, improvements and tracing of port development in the region. Each mini-site is an integrated package of information on an event and includes from the agenda and logistics information to the final report, going through the papers presented and other documents that served as inputs and/or were derived from the event.

With respect to the optimization of SELA's portal, Ikel's Consulting, the company contracted to carry out the activities related to the design of the new Web site of the organization, continues to develop the corresponding project, which includes a new graphic style for the new digital image of SELA. Essentially, a new and more agile communication strategy was adopted, in order to attract and retain new audiences, and supported by avant-garde elements of digital marketing, on the basis of a very attractive and functional drafting of the contents of the portal.

Moreover, since, according to surveys, globally 76% of Internet users utilize mobile means and that percentage will reach 80% in two years from now, the development of SELA's new Web site is envisaged to include access through mobile devices by using the Responsive Web Design technique, i.e. adaptable Web design. Thus, users will be able to access SELA's portal through their smartphones, thanks to a visual adaptation to the dimensions of mobile devices.

In addition, procedures were adopted to increase the number of new subscribers and to update relevant data. Such procedures include: the use of platforms for sending massive e-mails, registration forms and analysis of statistics. In their initial phase, such procedures include profiles for subscribers and the activation of an automated service for massively sending the information service bulletin

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

CEDIC-SELA is a centre to manage information and knowledge that systematizes and disseminates the documents containing SELA's intellectual production. For that purpose, it catalogues, classifies and organizes documents stemming from the conduction of the activities included in the Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat. Such documents are included in the Documentary Data Base (DDB), which serves as the reservoir of the studies carried out by the organization, among which stand out the Informative Documents (Di) and the Work Documents (DT), associated or not to the meetings, seminars and workshops organized by the Permanent Secretariat in accordance with the Work Programme. In addition, CEDIC-SELA also includes in its DDB the documents used as input in the events and the documents derived therefrom.

In addition to the aforementioned documents, CEDIC-SELA identifies, selects and includes in its data base those documents drafted by regional and extra-regional organizations that are relevant to the topics included in the Work Programme, which are of relevance to its mandate in accordance with the Panama Convention, of interest for the countries that make up SELA and, in general, for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In 2018, CEDIC-SELA continued to serve as the reservoir or interface, through the DDB for publication on the Web site of the organization, of the documents related to the events and other

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activities carried out by the Permanent Secretariat, as well as the new sources of information generated during the year, such as the bulletins of the Direction of Studies and Proposals. Every official document published by the Permanent Secretariat through its portal (www.sela.org) is catalogued and indexed in the DDB.

Through this instance, combined with SELA's portal, the Permanent Secretariat maintains and enhances its offer of specialized and up-to-date information on the major issues associated with its mandate in accordance with the regional integration process and the institutional framework that serves as the basis for that process, as well as the promotion of initiatives related to sensitive issues such as trade facilitation (particularly Foreign Trade Single Windows and digital and collaborative ports), disaster risk reduction management, development of MSMEs, international cooperation, intellectual property and extra-regional economic relations of the Latin American countries, among others.

During the reported period, CEDIC-SELA offered its services and value-added information products to support decision-making and the development and monitoring of issues of interest for the Latin American and Caribbean community. Such services are also offered to other interested regional organizations and, on express demand, to undergraduate and graduate students, within and outside the region. In addition, CEDIC-SELA offers its face-to-face consultation service to interested users, especially to researchers, teachers and students of economics, foreign trade and international relations.

This year, CEDIC-SELA supported the conduction of the various events organized by the Permanent Secretariat through the publication, on the DDB and the corresponding mini-sites, of the papers presented at these events, and, through the edition and post-fact update of the contents of the mini-sites and, occasionally, in the editing of the corresponding reports.

In terms of the specialized sub-portals, CEDIC-SELA continued to update the following issues: *Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)*; *disaster risk reduction*; *South-South Cooperation*; *free trade zones*; *directory of organizations and the SELA-SMEs Programme*. Additionally, it updated the site of the *Summit of the Americas*.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

1. Cooperation Agreements

The Permanent Secretariat has continued to develop high-level contacts with various regional and international organizations, in order to deepen cooperation and promote greater and better coordination, particularly with the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), the Andean Community (CAN), the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD), the Centre for the Promotion of Micro and Small-sized 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), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO)

Similarly, SELA continued to conduct workshops with extra-regional countries, such as those carried out with Japan, Korea, Russia, Spain, and with other regional organizations, such as the Ibero-

American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS), among others.

As a result of these high-level efforts, the following cooperation instruments were signed:

- i) Framework Cooperation Agreement between the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) (signed on 26 October 2017)
- ii) Framework Cooperation Agreement between the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) (signed on 17 November 2017)
- iii) Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) to establish a joint internship programme (signed on 26 January 2018)
- iv) Framework Cooperation Agreement between the General Secretariat of the Andean Community and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) (signed on 23 March 2018)
- v) Memorandum of Understanding between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) to promote inter-institutional cooperation within the framework of integration processes strengthened in both regions (signed on 24 May 2018)
- vi) Framework Cooperation Agreement between the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and Extenda - Andalusian Agency for Overseas Promotion, in order to establish the bases for cooperation and understanding between the parties so as to promote actions and initiatives for development and internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises.

On the other hand, within the framework of the cooperation relations between the Permanent Secretariat and the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77 (G77), SELA proceeded with the accountability of the Project "Cooperation for Intellectual Property and Productive Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean", through which financial support was lent for conducting the "XXVIII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors in Latin America and the Caribbean: Cooperation for Intellectual Property and Productive Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean", held in Panama City on 7 and 8 November 2017.

In addition, the Permanent Secretariat and the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77 (G77) signed the "Project to strengthen cooperation for commercial infrastructure in Latin America and the Caribbean: Towards greater integration into value chains", which will allow for providing financial support for the conduction of the "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 integration into value chains", which will take place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 6 and 7 December 2018.

For the programming of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) of the Group of 77 (G77) corresponding to the year 2019, the Permanent Secretariat presented the Project "Coordination and efficiency of international cooperation vis-à-vis the occurrence of natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean", which will allow for supporting a regional meeting with the cooperation directors of the region.

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In September, the Permanent Secretariat signed a Non-Reimbursable Technical Cooperation Agreement with CAF-development bank of Latin America, with the purpose of developing the Programme on Productive Articulation for Strengthening and Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the region. This programme is aimed at "identifying and disseminating tools to help policy makers develop mechanisms that favour the development of SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean". It will be developed through various activities aimed at promoting inclusive value chains, facilitating productive articulation and increasing the export capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises in the region, while favouring the development of greater productivity of them and promoting sustainable growth of the region.

More specifically, the project aims to address issues related to the training of entities directly linked to decision-making and the formulation of public policies; examine the formalization programmes for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean; identify successful practices of financial inclusion related to financing schemes oriented to the needs of these companies; develop a series of indicators that facilitate the evaluation and follow-up of their trade and degree of interdependence of national and regional markets; and finally, develop a map of productive niches.

On the other hand, and in order to further develop and strengthen the Programme for the Creation of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of digital and collaborative ports in its Phase III: Transition towards the creation of the network, the Permanent Secretariat requested from CAF-development bank of Latin America an extension for the completion of the third phase of the programme, within the framework of the implementation of the Non-Reimbursable Technical Cooperation Agreement signed between the two institutions for the creation of the Network. In this connection, it was agreed to conclude this project by February 2019, and the network is expected to be presented during the second half of the year.

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

2. Visits to the Permanent Secretariat

- On 11 January 2018, the Permanent Secretariat received the visit of His Excellency Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Li Baorong.
- On 30 January 2018, the Permanent Secretary of SELA received a visit from the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the World Food Programme (WFP), José Miguel Barreto, to address issues of interest for both institutions.
- On 28 February, the Permanent Secretary received a courtesy visit by His Excellency Ambassador of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Sebastián Michel Hoffmann.
- On 6 April, he received the visit of the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of the Republic of Chile, Roberto Araos Sánchez.
- On 5 October, he received the visit of the Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the United States of Mexico, Juan Manuel Nungaray.

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

- On 13 November 2017, the Permanent Secretary visited the headquarters of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, where he met with Peter Grohmann, UNDP Coordinator and Resident Representative.
- On 14 November, he visited the Embassy of the Republic of India where he held a conversation with his Excellency, Ambassador Rahul Shrivastava.
- On 20 November, he met with the Representative a.i. of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) at its headquarters in Caracas, Ms. Marlene Zoraida Arguello.
- On 21 November, he met with the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of Canada, Craig Kowalik, at the headquarters of the Embassy of that country.
- On 4 December, he paid a visit to the Embassy of the Russian Federation, where he held conversations with his Excellency, Ambassador Vladimir Saenskiy.
- On 9 February, he visited the Embassy of Japan, where he held talks with Ambassador Kenji Okada.
- On 16 February, he visited the Embassy of Spain, where he met with the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. José Hornero Gómez.
- On 28 February, he was visited by His Excellency Ambassador of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Sebastián Michel Hoffmann.
- On 3 May, he visited the Embassy of Turkey, where he met with His Excellency Ambassador Sevki Mütevellioğlu.
- On 4 May, he visited the Embassy of Spain, where he held talks with His Excellency Ambassador Jesús Silva Fernández.
- From 14 to 16 June, he participated in the First Meeting of the Presidential Commission of Economic Advice, convened by the People's Minister of Economics and Finance of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Simón Zerpa Delgado, at the Ministry and other institutions in the country.

4. Missions of the Permanent Secretary

The Permanent Secretary attended the "XXVIII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for America Latin and the Caribbean: Cooperation for intellectual property" and the "Seminar on opportunities for international cooperation for Latin America and the Caribbean", held in Panama City, Panama, from 7 to 9 November 2017.

Upon invitation by the Government of Paraguay and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Permanent Secretary participated in the Ministerial Meeting "Towards inclusive protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean" and the "V Meeting of the Directorate of the Regional Programme" of the aforementioned organization, carried out in Asunción, Paraguay, on 16 and 17 November, respectively.

The Permanent Secretary attended the "VI Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Plans for Business Continuity and Prevention for the Tourism Sector", held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on 7 and 8 December.

At the invitation of the Chair of Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Ambassador Susana Malcorra, the Permanent Secretary participated in the XI Annual Ministerial

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Conference held by said organization, which took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 10 to 13 December.

Invited by the President of the Republic of Chile, Her Excellency Michelle Bachelet, the Permanent Secretary attended the inauguration ceremonies of President elect Sebastián Piñera, carried out in Santiago and Valparaíso on 10 and 11 March.

The Permanent Secretary attended the XXIII Regular Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), held on Margarita Island, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, on 15 and 16 March.

The Permanent Secretary attended the "Regional Meeting on migration and migration policies in Latin America and the Caribbean", which took place on 22 March at the headquarters of the Andean Community (CAN) in Lima, Peru. It was organized by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA together with the aforementioned institution.

Upon invitation by the Government of the Republic of Peru, the Permanent Secretary attended the "Summit of the Americas", held on 13 and 14 April. In addition, invited by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), he attended the Business Summit of the Americas.

From 18 to 20 April, the "Second Meeting of the Forum of Latin American and Caribbean countries on Sustainable Development" was organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) at its headquarters in Santiago. Within the framework of that meeting, on 17 April, a reflection meeting was held among the secretariats of the regional inter-governmental mechanisms. The Permanent Secretary attended both meetings at the invitation of ECLAC.

The Permanent Secretary participated as a special guest in the "Intercontinental Dialogue on Cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and Latin America and the Caribbean", organized by the Eurasian Economic Commission and held in Moscow, Russia, on 21 May. He also attended as a guest the International Economic Forum of Saint Petersburg, held in that city from 24 to 26 May. Within the framework of said Forum, a Memorandum of Understanding between the Eurasian Economic Commission and the Permanent Secretariat of SELA was signed.

Within the context of the IV International Seminar "Latin America and the Caribbean and China: Conditions and challenges for the 21st century", organized by the LAC-China Network of the Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM) and CAF-development bank of Latin America, from 28 to 30 May, the Permanent Secretariat organized a panel of experts on "Experiences and opportunities in LAC-China cooperation: Towards the internationalization of SMEs in the region", on 30 May, where the Permanent Secretary participated.

At the invitation of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Regional Office for the Americas, the Permanent Secretary participated in the "VI Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas", held in Cartagena, Colombia, from 20 to 22 June.

The Government of the Republic of Korea through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Korea Foundation (KF) invited the Permanent Secretary to Seoul to participate in the 2018 Vision Sharing Programme for National Development in the countries of Central and South America, which took place in that city from 5 to 11 August.

At the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Paraguay, the Permanent Secretary participated in the Inauguration Ceremony of President elect Mario Abdo Benítez, which took place in Asunción on 15 August.

He also participated in the III Regional and Caribbean Meeting of Logistic Port Communities, which was held in Lima, Peru, on 16 and 17 August. This event was organized by SELA, jointly with CAF-development bank of Latin America and the National Port Authority of the Republic of Peru.

At the headquarters of the General Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB) in Madrid, Spain, on Friday 14 September, the Permanent Secretary gathered with Secretary General Rebeca Grynspan, in a fruitful working meeting that marked the beginning of cooperation between the two organizations.

The Permanent Secretary signed a Framework Collaboration Agreement between SELA and EXTENDA - Andalusian Agency for Overseas Promotion during a meeting held with the authorities of the Government of Andalusia on 21 September in Spain.

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

The Permanent Secretary attended the wreath-laying ceremony at the sarcophagus of Liberator Simón Bolívar in the Mausoleum of the National Pantheon, on 24 November 2017, on the occasion of the 42nd anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Suriname.

On 29 January 2018, upon invitation by the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD), the Permanent Secretariat participated in the Symposium: Challenges for Civil Service within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), at the Melia Hotel in Caracas.

He also attended the wreath-laying ceremony to commemorate the 102nd anniversary of the death of Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío at the National Pantheon on 6 February.

On 21 March 2018, he participated in the Plenary Session of the Heads of Diplomatic Missions accredited to Venezuela at the Apostolic Nunciature, Embassy of the Holy See.

On 22 March 2018, upon invitation by the Honourable Ministry of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Permanent Secretariat attended a Special Meeting with Tibusay Lucena, Chairwoman of the National Electoral Council (CNE), at its headquarters in Caracas.

On 23 March 2018, upon invitation by the Honourable Embassy of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Permanent Secretary participated in the wreath-laying ceremony to mark the "139th Anniversary of the Day of the Sea", at the equestrian statue of Liberator Simón Bolívar at the Bolívar Square in Caracas.

He also participated in the wreath-laying ceremony to commemorate the 174th Anniversary of the Independence of Dominican Republic at the National Pantheon, on 27 March.

The Permanent Secretary participated as a panellist in the Conference entitled "Development Banking: Integration and Financial Social Inclusion", which was organized by the Economic and Social Development Bank of Venezuela (BANDES) on 8 May, at its headquarters, to mark the 17th Anniversary of the bank.

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He also attended the wreath-laying ceremony to mark the 207th Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Paraguay at the National Pantheon on 15 May.

On 18 May, the Permanent Secretary attended the wreath-laying ceremony to mark the Day of the Flag of Haiti at the Mausoleum of the National Pantheon.

On May 18, he attended the wreath-laying ceremony to mark the 123rd Anniversary of Nicaraguan national hero Augusto Nicolás Calderón Sandino, which was carried out at the National Pantheon.

On 23 May 2018, upon invitation by the Honourable Embassy of Ecuador, the Permanent Secretary participated in the wreath-laying ceremony to mark the "196th Anniversary of the Battle of Pichincha and the Day of Ecuador's Armed Forces", carried out in the Monumental Complex of the National Pantheon and the Mausoleum of the Liberator in Caracas.

On 22 June 2018, the Permanent Secretary participated in the Inti Raymi ceremony upon Solstice, at the invitation of the Honourable embassies of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Ecuador, held at the Fine Arts Museum in Caracas.

On 6 August, the Permanent Secretary participated in the wreath-laying ceremony to mark the 193rd Anniversary of the Independence of Bolivia in the Monumental Complex of the National Pantheon.

On 23 August, the Permanent Secretary participated in the wreath-laying ceremony to mark the 193rd Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, in the Monumental Complex of the National Pantheon.

On 7 September, the Permanent Secretary participated in the wreath-laying ceremony to commemorate the 196th Anniversary of the Independence of the Federative Republic of Brazil, also in the Monumental Complex of the National Pantheon.

6. Development of human talent

Data Camp

With the purpose of supporting the research carried out by the Direction of Studies and Proposals and the Direction of Relations for Integration and Cooperation of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, a one-year contract was signed to use the DataCamp online platform, specialized in data analysis.

This leading company in Data Science Education offers a training based on technical innovation and courses taught by educators, experts in these tools, from various countries. It is an online activity comprising a total of 86 courses, which use different programming languages such as: R, Python and SQL.

Capacity building to develop a new narrative in contents

The workshop entitled *Capacity Building to develop a new narrative in contents* was carried out at the headquarters of the Permanent Secretariat. It was mainly targeted at officials of the organization responsible for the production of contents for SELA's Web site. For this purpose, SELA hired *Ikel's Consulting*, which designed and carried out a workshop consisting of four modules of three hours each, in which the company provided elements for effective communication and

explained the fundamental criteria for a better development of a new narrative.

During the working sessions, the facilitators, who were professionals in the area of Social Communication specialized in the management of contents for digital and printed media, shared their experiences with the participants, taking into account the themes and contents of SELA, as well as the general topics of interest indicated by the subscribers in a previously distributed survey for that purpose. The workshop consisted primarily of practical exercises aimed, not only at learning how to build efficient digital contents in terms of their impact on the audience, but also to promote interaction and foster the sense of teamwork among participants, as well as of identification with the organization.

Development of competencies among public managers: Strengthening communication and teamwork

Within the framework of cooperation between SELA and the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD), on 9 May, 16 members of SELA staff participated in the workshop entitled *Development of competencies of public managers: Strengthening communication and team work*, which was aimed at strengthening their communication and collaboration skills for the best functioning of SELA's teams and was based on creating working groups, communication and collaboration, as essential factors to efficiently operate productive work teams and leaders to act as supervisors, coordinators and counsellors.

Participants said they were satisfied with the workshop and expressed their opinions about the lessons learned.

Specialization course: Result-based management and budget

In compliance with the mandate of the Latin-American Council on SELA's budget, the Permanent Secretariat carried out at its headquarters the course on Results-based Management and Budget, thus training its staff to apply this methodology in preparing the budget for the Work Programme for the year 2020.

This specialization course was taught by the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). It lasted four days of intensive work (32 didactic hours), and was conceived as a specialization and updating programme aimed at professionals of the Permanent Secretariat. It was based on teaching classes with active training methods, under the modality of "learning by doing", which involved a review of key concepts and provided the opportunity to apply techniques and instruments through group exercises and to make a presentation on the final group work.

The contents were aimed at providing participants with the following theoretical tools: (i) public management and management model; (ii) strategic planning and programming; (iii) formulation of programmes and projects; (iv) technical foundations for design of management and monitoring indicators; (iv) budget design; (v) accountability; (vi) transparency; (vii) monitoring and evaluation; and (viii) use of open-data tools in technological innovation. All of these topics were reinforced through practical exercises for a better understanding of the usefulness of this tool.

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V. DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED (November 2017 – October 2018)

2017

1. Informative documents

[Economic and cooperation relations of Latin America and the Caribbean with the European Union.](#)

Permanent Secretariat of SELA Caracas, Venezuela. October 2017. SP/Di N° 4-17

2018

[Objectives and priorities of the Work Programme of SELA and its relationship with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.](#) Reflection Meeting of Secretariats of Intergovernmental Regional Mechanisms. Santiago, Chile. SELA-ECLAC, 17 April 2018. SELA-CEPAL/Di No. 1-18

Final reports on meetings

2017

[Final Report on the VI Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Business continuity and prevention plans for the tourism sector.](#) Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. 7 and 8 December 2017. SP/VIRAPRRDALC/IF-17

2018

[Report on the Subregional Workshop to validate the results of the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean \(IPPALC\): Pacific Alliance, Argentina, Ecuador and Uruguay.](#) Bogotá, Colombia. 16 and 17 July 2018 (SP/TSVIPP-MIPYMES ALC/ IF- N° 1-18)

[Final Report on the Regional Meeting on Migration and Migration Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean.](#) Lima, Peru. 22 March 2018 (SP/RRMPM-ALC/IF-18)

[Final Report on the Seminar: Prospective vision of Latin American and Caribbean integration.](#) Mexico City, Mexico. 6 and 7 March 2018 (SP/SVPILC/IF-18)

2. Publications

Cartaya, V. and Daboín, Carlos (2018). [A prospective vision of Latin American and Caribbean integration.](#) At: SELA Series Económicas N° 2018-2. March

Marcano, J. (2018). [Middle-income trap In Latin America and the Caribbean: An analysis of Markov chains based on regional subsamples.](#) At: SELA Series Económicas N° 2018-1. March

Latin America and the Caribbean: the perpetual middle-income region. Case Study N° 5

Integration indices and processes. Case Study N° 6

Economic Integration Report

3. Institutional reports

Financial situation October-December 2017

Financial situation January-March 2018

Financial situation April-June 2018

Financial situation July-September 2018