



Speech by Ambassador Javier Paulinich, Permanent Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)

Economic and Technical Cooperation

XXXI Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean: Unity and solidarity against the pandemic

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Mr Gibrán Ramírez Reyes, Secretary-General of the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS);

Directors and representatives of international cooperation organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean;

Representatives of regional and international organizations;

Distinguished participants;

Ladies and gentlemen,

I warmly welcome you to the Meeting of International Cooperation Directors, which is convened annually by the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and, on this occasion, the thirty-first meeting, is held virtually as a result of the global health crisis caused by COVID-19.

For the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, it has been very satisfactory to organize this event with the cooperation of the International Conference on Social Security (CISS), a reference institution in the promotion of inclusive public policies in the areas of welfare, protection and social security, and the collaboration of the Pérez Guerrero Trust Fund of the Group of 77.

This complex moment in world history, which has resulted in more than 50 million deaths worldwide and more than 12 million contagions and more than 400 thousand deaths in Latin America and the Caribbean, encourages us to create spaces for the exchange of views and experiences in order to generate best practices that allow us to obtain, to a large extent, a know-how in critical, similar and unforeseen situations.

It is precisely for this reason that the central topic of this meeting - unity and solidarity against the pandemic - is aimed at understanding the mechanisms of action and the opportunities for international cooperation in its various areas, such as South-South, Triangular, Horizontal and Technical, among others, to strengthen their effectiveness and efficiency in the short term.

During these two working days, we will have the opportunity to address some fundamental issues that we have considered appropriate for the topic of this meeting: cooperation in times of the COVID-19 pandemic; offers and demands for cooperation in the context of the pandemic in the priority areas defined by the cooperation organizations; challenges that have arisen to implement cooperation mechanisms; assessment of regional cooperation and solidarity; and identification of elements that should be corrected in the short and medium term.

6

The treatment of this issue is also an effort to stimulate the necessary feedback of progress towards Goal 17 on global partnerships and cooperation to ensure that countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, which requires the progressive alignment of multilateral actors, respecting the peculiarities and leadership of each country, for the sake of achieving regional development.

In addition, we welcome the fact that the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) has chosen this meeting to announce, through the Pro Tempore Presidency held by the Government of Mexico, together with the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS), the activation of the Disaster Protocol for Social Security Institutions in the Americas, with the aim of strengthening the social and economic resilience of the Latin American and Caribbean population in the face of multifactorial disasters.

In this regard, the accompaniment of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA has been considered in the implementation of said Protocol, in view of the active role it plays in conjunction with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) for the establishment of public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean. Thus, I wish to express, in my capacity as Permanent Secretary of SELA, our satisfaction and greater willingness to generate the benefits available to us in order to assist the region in its efforts to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic and social development.

I am confident that these days of reflection will enable us to continue promoting the timely coordination needed in the areas of technical support, in order to strengthen integration, cooperation and convergence, as well as to continue enhancing solidarity among our countries.

Finally, I wish to send fraternal greetings to the Central American, Caribbean and Mexican peoples, who have been deeply affected by the devastating passage of Hurricanes Eta and Iota, and a very special recognition to the entire regional health sector, a key player in the care and fight against the spread of the current coronavirus outbreak that plagues humanity.

Thank you.