2020 system-wide results report of the United Nations development system in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Contents

I. Executive summary

- The 2020 system-wide results report of the United Nations development system in Latin America and the Caribbean provides an overview of regional challenges, opportunities and common responses of the entities of the United Nations development system in support of the follow-up and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by highlighting some collective achievements and examples of joint system-wide actions and results at the regional level in 2020.

- The first case of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Latin America and the Caribbean was confirmed on 26 February 2020. Since then, it quickly spread to all countries and territories of the region. In response to the unprecedented scale of the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations, under the leadership of the Pan American Health Organization and the World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), supported the scaling up of health systems to provide coverage and quality services for the immediate COVID-19 response throughout all the countries of the Latin America and Caribbean region. While the core United Nations health response followed specific response plans, namely the WHO COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and the PAHO Response Strategy and Donor Appeal, a health pillar was incorporated in the United Nations socio-economic response plans (SERPs) developed by the 25 United Nations country teams in the Latin American and Caribbean region in 2020.

- What started as a health crisis became a large-scale social and economic crisis, with the region being one of the hardest hit, facing the worst economic recession in 120 years and more than a third of its population estimated to be living in poverty in 2020. The pandemic demonstrates the extent to which a single hazard has the potential to trigger multiple cascading effects that impact the life support systems of societies and economies. It has magnified the structural weaknesses of development and governance models, and aggravated pre-existing gaps and inequalities in the region. In this context, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has suffered a setback and has become more challenging while remaining the utmost priority for shifting towards a new development paradigm capable of eradicating extreme poverty, closing income, wealth, social protection and health gaps and disparities, generating more and better quality employment, ensuring healthy lives, tackling the climate crisis, strengthening resilience, and promoting well-being for all at all ages, while leaving no one behind.

- In 2020, the United Nations development system prioritized efforts to support governments in their response to COVID-19, implementing new inter-agency initiatives to provide integrated responses to risks and challenges exacerbated by the pandemic, leveraging its expertise to develop joint analysis on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region and to offer policy guidance. At the same time, the United Nations development system assisted Member States to address gaps in SDG implementation, and provided capacity-building support to a wide range of actors, from governments to United Nations Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams, to advance SDG implementation at the national level. Beyond its support to the governments, the United Nations development system leveraged new partnerships and fostered cooperation with multiple stakeholders to accelerate implementation of the SDGs and other

internationally and regionally agreed frameworks, norms, and standards.

- The report focuses mainly on the social and economic dimensions of the United Nations actions at the regional level. Within the framework of the 2030 Agenda, the report adopts a multi-sectoral approach that highlights the close interlinkages between health, socioeconomic- well-being, and environmental protection. Importantly, the report makes references to specific inter-agency initiatives that involve a health dimension, for example, on prevention and response to violence against women and children; health and nutrition; health and the economy; health and infrastructure; health and the environment; health and post-disaster assessments; and mental health and youth.

- For the first time, the United Nations development system will present a system-wide results report at the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. This report was developed in response to recommendation three of the United Nations Secretary-General's report A/74/73-E/2019/14 on the implementation of the General Assembly resolution A/RES/71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations development system. It aims to enhance transparency, accountability, and results-based management at the regional level. This is a transitional report, as the United Nations Regional Collaborative Platform (RCP) for Latin America and the Caribbean was only established in November 2020. The first RCP annual results report will be presented to Member States in 2022.

II. Overview of key regional development challenges and opportunities

1. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 2020 presented a range of challenges on a scale that had not been encountered since more than a century ago. The economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is the manifestation of three interrelated structural crises: one of instability and low output growth, one of growing inequality, and an environmental one that threatens to destroy the natural systems that sustain life on the planet.[1] The global COVID-19 pandemic, of zoonotic origin, exposes the complex interaction between human, economic and natural systems and the systemic nature of risk. It also reveals deficiencies in risk governance across the health, disaster management, economic and other sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic shook the foundations of development in the region, exacerbating many of the risks and challenges that countries had already been confronting — and obliterating years of progress achieved by Member States and societies, including with the support from the United Nations and a wide range of local, national and international partners. The region was one of the hardest hit in the world, and it is too early to accurately predict the long-term implications of the pandemic, which has already killed nearly 2.5 million people at the global level, including 700,000 people in Latin America and the Caribbean,[2] and left many more with chronic health issues. The pandemic has magnified the

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[1] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Building a New Future: Transformative Recovery with Equality and Sustainability. Summary* (LC/SES.38/4), Santiago, 2020.
[2] World Health Organization (WHO), WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard [online] https://covid19.who.int/table.

structural inequalities in accessing health services, with the poorest population facing financial and geographical barriers, compounded by gender, disability status, ethnic origin and/or migratory status. Already weakened public health structures were strained to breaking point, struggling to meet the health-care needs of people, especially the approximately 250 million people with non-communicable diseases, who are more vulnerable to becoming severely ill from COVID-19.

2. In terms of economic performance, the region was already experiencing a six-year run of weak growth — 0.3% on average over 2014–2019 and just 0.1% in the last of those years, according to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).[3] The economic slowdown driven by lockdowns, the shutting down of production activities, limited public gathering, and physical distancing life- and health-protecting policies, resulted in lower investment rates, reduced export volumes, widening productivity gaps, increasing decent work deficits and increasing levels of domestic and external debt, and became the worst economic, social and production crisis the region has experienced in 120 years. In 2020, it is estimated that the gross domestic product (GDP) for the region contracted by 7.7%.[4] While growth is projected in 2021 at an estimated 3.7%,[5] this represents less than half of what was lost in the previous year. It may take as long as a decade for regional GDP to recover to pre-pandemic levels.[6]

3. In line with the provisions of the 2030 Agenda, which recognizes that the situation of the most vulnerable countries deserves special attention, the small island developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean, representing 16 countries of the 33 in the region, face unique additional challenges, many of them due to their insularity and proneness to severe economic shocks in part due to the lack of economies of scale in production, high debt levels, reduced scope for output diversification, high dependency on tourism for many and on oil and gas for others, heavy dependence on food imports that make them vulnerable to disruptions in food supply chains, and their vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events.

4. Latin America and the Caribbean contributes significantly to the global economy, and the macroeconomic performance of most of its countries has led them to be designated as middle- or upper-middle income countries. This classification has limited the countries' access to concessional financing from international financial institutions and other development partners. At the same time, the current crisis requires additional financial resources and access to innovative financing for development, taking into account variables that go beyond per capita income criteria to address the deepening health, economic and social effects of the pandemic and to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

5. Interrelated with the Latin American and Caribbean region's economic situation, areas of

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[3] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2020* (LC/PUB.2020/17-P/Rev.1), Santiago, 2021, p. 11.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

particular concern include health, notably mental health and non-communicable diseases, social protection, climate change and resilience, crime and violence, ensuring that health, development and growth are equitable and benefit all, food security and nutrition, governance and institutions, and human mobility. These areas are all interrelated, and advances and setbacks in one area often affect the others. In addition, vulnerable members of societies are often affected disproportionately — experiencing a much greater burden of the suffering and receiving a much smaller share of the succour that any progress brings. Vulnerable populations who require priority attention differ from country to country, but age, gender, disability, race and ethnicity are commonly shared factors: women and girls, and young and old people, persons with disabilities, people of African descent, indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees find themselves in even more challenging situations, being those who are furthest left behind. This situation creates even greater challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to achieve the 17 SDGs.

6. The crisis has had an unprecedented impact on the world of work in Latin America and the Caribbean, causing job losses, the bankruptcy of companies of all sizes and a sharp drop in people's incomes. It also highlighted the decent work deficits in the region, reflected in a high rate of labour informality. Both regional and subregional analyses clearly show the severe impact of the pandemic on labour indicators in Latin America and the Caribbean. The first three quarters of 2020 were the stage for a particularly strong contraction in both the labour participation and employment rates, of -5.4 and -6.0 percentage points, respectively — the implication being that about 10% of jobs in the region were lost, causing many people to abandon the workforce. The projections of the indicator for the whole of 2020 indicate that the unemployment rate could close at 10.6% this year.[7] The culture sector and creative economy have also been affected during the pandemic, as countries have seen their heritage sites and facilities for the enjoyment of art and culture in all its manifestations closed. Traditional festivals and a wide range of events have been cancelled with significant repercussions on the cultural life of local communities and the income of creative professionals.

7. The region's overall wealth belies the fact that it has one of the highest inequality indices in the world, with the wealthiest 10% of the population capturing 54% of the national income.[8] The inequalities that affect large portions of the Latin America and the Caribbean region's population increase the chances that economic and social gains are not allocated to those who may need them the most. The region also suffers from high levels of informality, an average of 53% in the region in 2016, and 67.5% among young people in 2019[9] according to the International Labour Organization (ILO),[10] which limits the access of much of the population

[7] International Labour Organization (ILO), *Panorama Laboral 2020 América Latina y el Caribe*, Lima, 2021, p. 12.
[8] World Inequality Database [online] https://wid.world.
[9] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/International Labour Organization (ILO), "Employment trends in an unprecedented crisis: policy challenges", *Employment Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean,* No. 23 (LC/TS.2020/128), November 2020, p. 36.
[10] International Labour Organization (ILO), *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*, third edition, Geneva, 2018, p. 32.

to social protection programmes and systems. Only 47.4% of employed persons in Latin America and the Caribbean were affiliated or contributed to the pension systems[11] in 2018 and 53% were affiliated or contributed to health systems[12] in 2016. Inequalities are also visible in access to education. School closures affected over 154 million children and inequalities in access to connectivity have touched the poorest the most, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).[13] School closures also impacted the access of students and families to key services provided by schools, such as nutrition and preventive health care. It is estimated that the number of people living in poverty increased by 45.4 million in 2020 — representing a 15-year regression in poverty levels. Further, the number of people living in extreme poverty increased by 28.5 million, and now comprises 15.5% of the total population. Three decades of work to reduce extreme poverty have been wiped out in a year.[14]

8. The experience of inequality among vulnerable populations of society is most evident with women, who despite often being more highly educated than men, suffer disproportionately in the areas of health, care, labour participation, unemployment, salaries, and even access to formal employment — about 52% of women worked in the informal sector[15] in 2016 and 57% of women in Latin America and 54% in the Caribbean work in industries much more prone to economic shocks and with fewer protections with regard to labour and other rights.[16] Women are also particularly affected by economic slowdowns, as they are at higher risk of losing employment than men and are responsible for a much greater share of unpaid care work — and this burden will only increase as people in the region continue to age more rapidly than in other parts of the world. Youth is another group vulnerable to inequality. Despite having higher levels of education than previous generations, young people from Latin America and the Caribbean face multiple challenges related to violence, insecurity, unemployment, and health, among others. Girls and female adolescents face compounded obstacles to their development as they are at higher risk of suffering from gender-based violence, child marriage and early unions, and limited access to sexual and reproductive health and to basic social services. At least 20 years of regression in unmet needs for family planning are expected at the end of 2021 according to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).[17]

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[11] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "The social challenge in times of COVID-19", *COVID-19 Special Report*, No. 3, May 2020, p. 1.
[12] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), "Health and the economy: a convergence needed to address COVID-19 and retake the path of sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean", *COVID-19 Report*, Santiago, July 2020, p. 10.
[13] See [online] https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-more-95-cent-children-are-out-school-latin-america-and-caribbean.
[14] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Reconstruction and transformation with equality and sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/SES.38/11), Santiago, 2020, p. 8.
[15] International Labour Organization (ILO), *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Picture*, third edition, Geneva, 2018, p. 32.
[16] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "The economic autonomy of women in a sustainable recovery with equality", *COVID-19 Special Report*, No. 9, February 2021, p. 2.
[17] United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), "Impact of COVID-19 on access to contraceptives in the LAC region", *Technical Report*, New York, August 2020, p. 12.

9. People of African descent, representing about 21% of the population in the region in 2020,[18] and indigenous peoples, about 10% of the population in 2018,[19] are other population groups vulnerable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic due to the structural inequalities and different forms of discrimination that they face, added to the limited intercultural perspective in health systems, which represents a considerable barrier to equal access to health systems and other social protection services.[20]

10. In recent years, the region has experienced a large-scale increase in the number of migrants and refugees. There are roughly 5.4 million refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela around the world, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) — the vast majority of whom are hosted by Latin American and Southern Caribbean countries. The primarily northward migration from Northern Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) has been catalysed by chronic poverty, high levels of crime and violence, limited economic opportunities, and extreme weather events. Regardless of origin, migrants and refugees are particularly vulnerable due to limited access to basic rights such as health, protection, shelter, food, and education. Within this population, children and women and girls find themselves especially vulnerable to the challenges faced by migrants, and sexual and reproductive health services are severely lacking and need to be strengthened.[21] Food insecurity is also disproportionately affecting migrants. World Food Programme (WFP) remote food security surveys (January 2021) focusing on migrants, found that 2.1 million migrants are in moderate and severe food insecurity in certain countries of the region. Half a million are in severe food insecurity. They are reporting significantly lower levels of food consumption compared to the resident population, as 12% of migrants are in a situation of severe hunger (compared to 7% of residents) (WFP, 2021). The consequence of the pandemic on migrants, refugees, and other displaced persons has been even more extreme, forcing many of them to become increasingly dependent on emergency humanitarian assistance for health, shelter, food, protection, and education.

11. Food security and nutrition have also been severely impacted by the pandemic and present a challenge for the region. According to *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020*, the cost of a healthy diet in Latin America and the Caribbean is on average US$ 3.98 per day (per person), which is over three times more expensive than what a person living below the poverty line can spend on food.[22] Food insecurity has been rising rapidly, with a

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[18] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), "Afrodescendientes y la matriz de la desigualdad social en América Latina: retos para la inclusión", *Project Documents* (LC/PUB.2020/14), Santiago, 2020, p. 85.

[19] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC), "Los pueblos indígenas de América Latina - *Abya Yala* y la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible: tensiones y desafíos desde una perspectiva territorial", *Project Documents* (LC/TS.2020/47), Santiago, 2020, p. 152.

[20] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Social Panorama of Latin America, 2020* (LC/PUB.2021/2-P), Santiago, 2021, p. 19.

[21] See [online] https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-020-09912-x.

[22] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020: Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets*, Rome, 2020, p. 67.

nearly nine percentage point increase between 2014 and 2019 — raising the regionwide rate of people facing food insecurity to 31.7% of the population.[23] According to the *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean 2020*, in 2019 the number of people living with hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean stood at 47 million. This implies that approximately 7.4% of the region's inhabitants suffered from hunger, but perhaps more importantly, it also means an increase of more than 13 million people in the total undernourished population in the last five years. Similarly, in 2019 more than 190 million people faced moderate or severe food insecurity. In other words, one out of every three inhabitants of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean did not have access to nutritious and sufficient food due to lack of economic or other resources.[24] Economic insecurity in the region has naturally had a tremendous impact on this situation. Due to the increase in the unemployment rate, projected at around 10.6%,[25] and high cost of healthy food, it is now estimated that more than 104 million people in the region cannot afford a healthy diet and close to 200 million suffer moderate or severe food insecurity.[26] In Latin American and Caribbean countries with a WFP presence, the Programme witnessed a 400% increase in acute food insecurity between January and August of 2020.[27] In the Caribbean alone, WFP estimates that there are 410,000 severely food-insecure people due to the impact of COVID-19.[28]

12. The region also suffers the impact of natural disasters. The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season has been the most active ever recorded — with 30 named storms. Among them, hurricanes Eta and Iota (category 4) affected an estimated 7.3 million people across Central America according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), with associated flooding, landslides, and crop damage in Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. These events severely affected various economic and social sectors, such as agriculture, infrastructure, housing, water and sanitation, health, food security and womens's and child protection. Wildfires, in countries like the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Brazil, have affected millions of hectares affecting crops, biodiversity and livelihoods. These larger events come on top of multiple smaller and recurrent extensive disasters that erode the resilience of people, particularly the most vulnerable. This reflects the risk that climate change imposes on the entire region of Latin America and the Caribbean[29] and a double standard between countries and between social groups: those that

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[23] World Food Programme (WFP), *WFP Global Response to COVID-19: September 2020*, Rome, 2020, p. 4.

[24] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others, *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean 2020 – Food security and nutrition for lagged territories-In brief*, Santiago, 2021.

[25] International Labour Organization (ILO), *Panorama Laboral 2020 América Latina y el Caribe*, Lima, 2021, p. 10.

[26] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others, *Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean 2020 – Food security and nutrition for lagged territories-In brief*, Santiago, 2021.

[27] WFP remote surveys, 2020.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Evaluación de los efectos e impactos de las depresiones tropicales Eta y Iota en Guatemala* (LC/TS.2021/21), Santiago, 2021, p. 20.

pollute the least are those who are most exposed to the impacts of the climate emergency.

13. With the COVID-19 pandemic, a large-scale crisis in governance became manifest, exposing pre-existing conditions related to socioeconomic inequalities, fiscal frailty, low trust in institutions, political and social polarization, perception of State capture, and weak mechanisms of political representation. Trust in public institutions is low in the Latin American and Caribbean region,[30] and representation for vulnerable populations based on income gender, age, ethnicity, education, disability, migration status and geographical location is limited. While social unrest remains latent, needs such as inclusion, recognition of rights, and constitutional reforms have served as triggers for street protests.

14. Crime and violence continue to represent a major issue in Latin America and the Caribbean. The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) estimates that the annual direct costs of crime and violence approach US$ 261 billion.[31] Although the region has only 8% of the world's population, it accounts for 30% of its homicides — its homicide rate (18.4 per 100 thousand people) is three times the global average[32] of 6.4 per 100 thousand people. While there was on average a 4% decrease in homicides in 2020 when compared to 2019, this does not imply a region-wide reduction. Several countries reported an increase in murders, and over half of the countries in the region (14 out of 26) have homicide rates over 10 per 100,000 inhabitants.[33] Homicide rates are especially high among boys and men, resulting in 2019 in 169,383 deaths from interpersonal violence among males and 24,359 among females.[34] Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence and crime, and especially violent crime, reflected in the high rates of femicides in the region. In 2019, 4,640 cases of femicide were recorded in 24 countries of the region.[35] The region of the Americas also has the highest child homicide rate in the world: 5.8 per 100,000 in 2017 compared to the global average of 1.7 per 100,000.[36] Data suggest that many children and adolescents also experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse in 2019 (an estimated 58% of children aged 2–17 in Latin America).[37] The socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has in turn caused crime and violence to increase, and violence against women and girls, and violence against children and older persons has been exacerbated by mobility restrictions and

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[30] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Trust in public institutions: building blocks of a conceptual framework", p. 17 [online] https://www.sparkblue.org/system/files/2020-11/Trust%20in%20public%20institutions.%20Building%20blocks%20of%20a%20conceptual%20framework%5B3%5D.pdf.

[31] Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), *The Costs of Crime and Violence: New Evidence and Insights in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Washington, D.C, 2017.

[32] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Global Study on Homicide 2019*, Vienna, 2019, and InfoSegura, 2020 [online] https://infosegura.org/en/.

[33] InfoSegura according to official data from Governments in the region.

[34] World Health Organization (WHO), "Global Health Estimates", 2019 [online] https://www.who.int/data/global-health-estimates.

[35] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Addressing violence against women and girls during and after the COVID-19 pandemic requires financing, responses, prevention and data compilation", November 2020, p. 3.

[36] Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), *Regional Status Report 2020: Preventing and Responding to Violence against Children in the Americas*, Washington, D.C., 2020.

[37] Ibid., p. ix.

emergency measures. For instance, data collected in Central America by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Infosegura Regional Project reveals that domestic violence increased in several countries in the subregion during the second quarter of 2020 compared to 2019.[38] In addition to disproportionate economic hardship and an upsurge in violence, women's burden of unpaid care work increased with school closures and lockdown measures.

15. Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, new opportunities for the United Nations development system to contribute at the regional level have also become apparent. In response to the unprecedented impact of the crisis on the region, Latin American and Caribbean countries implemented significant emergency socioeconomic measures. According to the COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean of ECLAC, emergency cash and in-kind transfers executed in 2020 covered about 49.4% of the population — approximately 326 million persons. In total, an estimated 1.25% of regional GDP was spent on emergency social protection measures (non-contributory social protection and earmarked resources) in 2020, which contributed to slow down the increase in poverty.

16. Countries of the region also undertook a wide range of fiscal, financial and economic policy tools representing 4.1% of the region's GDP to address the health emergency and mitigate social and economic repercussions.[39] In the Caribbean, the values vary between 0.5% to 5% of GDP.[40] The support provided by these packages is a significant contributor to the 3.7% projected growth in regional GDP in 2021 — a figure which is naturally contingent on multiple factors such as access to vaccines and progress in vaccination against COVID-19 at the regional level; continuity of expansionary monetary policy by the central banks of the major economies to sustain dollar liquidity globally and boost growth in the respective economies; and the evolution of the levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality, which could accentuate latent social tensions as well as geopolitical tensions, including technological and trade frictions between countries that could affect the international context in which the region operates.[41] Further, from the perspective of fiscal policy, the pandemic's impact will be felt for years to come. High levels of public debt and the significant financial effort for the COVID-19 response may lead to difficulties in financing post-pandemic health, social, and economic budgets.

17. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 SDGs have never been so relevant, as they form the foundation established by the international community in 2015 for advancing towards a new development model. In this regard, the countries of the region continued to prioritize the 2030 Agenda and reorganized their economic, social and environmental targets to support progress towards the fulfilment of the SDGs. This was reflected in the region's numerous voluntary national reviews (VNR), including during the

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[38] Number of intra-family violence warnings to the 911 system.
[39] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2020* (LC/PUB.2020/12-P), Santiago, 2020, p. 77.
[40] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *The Caribbean Outlook: forging a people-centred approach to sustainable development post-COVID-19* (LC/SES.38/12), Santiago, 2020, p. 11.
[41] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2020* (LC/PUB.2020/17-P/Rev.1), Santiago, 2021, p. 12.

pandemic, with the presentation of VNRs by nine countries at the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2020, reflecting the strong commitment of the region to conducting a transformative process in order to overcome the economic and social impacts of the pandemic while accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. However, it must be acknowledged that some slowdown in the progress of the Agenda may be expected, as funding sources may be compromised as government budgets are reallocated. For example, public health funding may become scarcer as governments begin to take on the need for supporting pandemic-related obligations such as vaccine distribution.

18. Therefore, the pandemic has revealed both new opportunities and what should not be done in order to build back better with equality and sustainability. The current development model has revealed its limitations in terms of both how it contributes to inclusive economic growth and its capacity to meet the growing demands of the population for greater equality while achieving the necessary social and environmental balances that enable governance and the consolidation of democracy. A change of strategy is imperative and a new political and social contract is needed, and a new global deal must be forged.

19. The region is presented with an opportunity to conduct a profound transformation towards an inclusive and sustainable development pattern that guarantees the conditions necessary for a balance between inclusion, economic growth and environmental sustainability, underpinned by political partnerships that place equality at the centre of development.[42] It is therefore an occasion for the governments of the region to accelerate policies aiming at transforming the production matrix, further diversifying the export structure of the countries, and discussing the pertinence of a wide range of industrial, technology and environmental policy instruments. The design of a new, fiscally sustainable and growth-friendly, universal social welfare regime, including the strengthening of health systems and its related programmes, is also paramount. Such transformation implies increased investments in public health systems to expand universal health coverage. These investments also need to cover health-related programmes, including regular immunization and that for pandemic-specific organisms, as well as health promotion and protection. Special focus is required to strengthen the crisis preparedness of health systems in the region. A transformative recovery in the health sector equally entails effective leadership and governance; increased intersectoral coordination; a shift from a dependency on global supply chains to the development of a health-care manufacturing industry; and moving from telemedicine to digital transformation in health. Access to sexual and reproductive health services as well as other essential services, including for survivors of violence, remain priorities.

20. The COVID-19 pandemic is a vivid example of systemic compound risk. It shows us that the very nature and scale of risk has changed to such a degree that it has the potential to overwhelm established risk management approaches; therefore, a transformative recovery must also integrate a systemic approach to risk and contribute to building multisectoral risk governance. Reducing disaster risk and underlying vulnerabilities to build resilience is at the

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[42] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Building a New Future: Transformative Recovery with Equality and Sustainability* (LC/SES.38/3-P/Rev.1), Santiago, 2020.

heart of the sustainable development agenda and is more necessary than ever today. [43]

21. There is currently margin for a greater political will to define and push forward new governance models that are based "on strengthening of transparency; quality of information and accountability; inclusive national dialogues and consultations on recovery policies; the elimination of the use of violence as a negotiation mechanism between social and political actors; and the rule of law and access to justice applied to all without discrimination" (UNDP, 2021).

22. The aspiration is that emergency socioeconomic programmes as well as recovery policies reach the most vulnerable populations, those that are furthest behind. In the region, income levels, gender, age, race, ethnicity, education, disability, health status, geographical location, migration status, situation of displacement, statelessness and other international protection requirements remain key determinants that influence the capacity of people to access development opportunities. Discrimination and social gender bias continue to disproportionally affect large groups of persons, requiring specific advocacy and support to ensure that they are part of the design and coverage of post-pandemic recovery policies.

23. Leaving no one behind and fostering more inclusive growth will be for naught, however, if the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda is not addressed. The natural resource endowment is often exploited unsustainably, the impact of natural and human made disasters are more visible, ecosystems are deteriorating and biodiversity is shrinking at alarming rates in the region.

24. The United Nations development system developed a series of common policy recommendations and advocacy to support countries to build back better with short-, medium- and long-term measures for conducting a transformative recovery. Complementing this, ECLAC called for the United Nations development system to join the "big push for sustainability" put forward during the thirty-eighth session of the Commission, held in October 2020. It puts forward seven interlinked sectoral systems —energy transition based on renewable energies, sustainable mobility and urban space, the digital revolution for sustainability, the health-care manufacturing industry, the bioeconomy (sustainable development based on biological resources and natural ecosystems), the circular economy, and sustainable tourism— all of which would have a positive impact on job creation and GDP growth while reducing emissions and resulting in a smaller environmental footprint and in the restoration or better maintenance of the productive capacity of the region's natural heritage.[44]

25. The new Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean also presents an opportunity, being an internal mechanism of the United Nations system at the regional

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[43] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), "The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: an opportunity for a systemic approach to disaster risk for the Caribbean", *COVID-19 Report*, Santiago, 2021, forthcoming.

[44] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Building a New Future: Transformative Recovery with Equality and Sustainability* (LC/SES.38/3-P/Rev.1), Santiago, 2020.

level that aims at providing strategic direction on common regional, subregional or cross-border priorities and ensuring coordination, collaboration and better use of the experience, expertise and assets of all United Nations entities dealing with development at the regional level so as to provide Member States and United Nations country teams with enhanced support in this decade of action to deliver the SDGs by 2030.

III. Advancing the United Nations Secretary-General's reforms at the regional level

26. Drawing on the five recommendations of the Secretary-General as spelled out in his report A/74/73-E/2019/14 on the implementation of the General Assembly resolution A/RES/71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and following Member States' welcoming these efforts in ECOSOC resolution A/RES/2020/23 and in General Assembly resolution A/RES/74/297, the United Nations Regional Collaborative Platform (RCP) for Latin America and the Caribbean was established in November 2020 following recommendation one related to the creation of such a platform, and the transition from the Regional Coordination Mechanisms and the United Nations Sustainable Development Group for Latin America and the Caribbean was completed by December 2020. The RCP unites all United Nations entities[45] across the three United Nations pillars working in support of development in the region, and its Chair is the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, and the Executive Secretary of ECLAC and the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNDP are Vice-Chairs. The RCP has set the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as its guiding blueprint in order to address key challenges that transcend country borders, and facilitate joint work to maximize the potential, capacities, and assets of its members in support of Member States, Resident Coordinators, and United Nations country teams.

27. Derived from recommendation one and prior to the establishment of the RCP, the United Nations development system prioritized joint efforts in 2020 around five main areas in order to further maximize its impact in implementing the 2030 Agenda in order to provide a transformative recovery with equality and sustainability: climate change and resilience; crime and violence; equitable growth; governance and institutions; and human mobility. It was also agreed that the themes of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, as well as youth, would be addressed across the five areas. Details of the results achieved in these areas by the initial issue-based coalitions (IBCs)[46] as well as the thematic Working Groups on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls and on Youth, are included in the section on "Highlights of system-wide results at the regional level".

28. Following the Secretary-General's second recommendation related to the establishment of strong knowledge management hubs in each region by pooling policy expertise, the United Nations development system developed and launched the regional knowledge management

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[45] DCO, DPPA ECLAC, FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, OCHA, OHCHR, PAHO/WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNDRR, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UN-Women and WFP.
[46] Adjustments to the IBCs may take place in the context of the full roll-out of the RCP in 2021.

platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the SDG Gateway, under the leadership of ECLAC and UNDP, and in coordination with all the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system in the region, as well as the regional Development Coordination Office (DCO) for Latin America and the Caribbean. The SDG Gateway, managed technically by ECLAC, consolidates and displays the regional work of the United Nations development system related to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, including key events, data and statistics, analytical tools, and knowledge products. The platform has enhanced the visibility and accessibility of regional assets of the United Nations development system, including the work of the five IBCs and the two cross-cutting thematic groups, as well as the work on all SDGs. In a complementary manner, some entities, such as PAHO/WHO, have developed a portal to monitor progress on specific SDGs, for instance on SDG 3, with a focus on inequalities. Regarding the establishment of rosters of expertise, the United Nations development system agreed on the initial thematic areas and sub-areas of coverage, as well as the criteria for their creation.

29. The present report is developed in follow-up to recommendation three requesting the United Nations development system to enhance transparency and results-based management at the regional level, recognizing that it is a transitional report since the RCP was only established in November 2020. The first annual results report of the RCP will be presented in 2022.

30. In the framework of the Secretary-General's fourth recommendation to undertake a change management process to consolidate existing capacities with regard to data and statistics, the regional group on SDG Data and Statistics, co-led by UNFPA, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and UNICEF, worked in close collaboration with ECLAC to conclude the mapping of United Nations entity expertise and technical assistance in data and statistics accessible to Member States through the SDG Gateway, and to update the regional self-assessment tool to diagnose capacity to produce SDG indicators, which ECLAC will share with all national statistical offices and systems of countries of the region in 2021. The group also worked in close collaboration with the Regional Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, where it organized various knowledge-sharing dialogues with national statistical offices and other stakeholders to discuss priority issues for Member States in the context of the pandemic. Issues discussed included challenges on census development, household surveys, time-use surveys, violence indicators, administrative registries, and labour market indicators, among others.

31. With regard to the fifth recommendation of the Secretary-General, to identify administrative services that could be provided more effectively and efficiently to regional offices through Common Back Offices, the Regional Operations Management Team (ROMT) for Latin America and Caribbean was revamped to ensure full readiness in 2021. With 17 entities participating under its co-chairs UNDP and UNFPA, ROMT focused on reorganizing internally and ensuring that needed capacities were in place at the regional level in 2020. By 31 December 2020, 14 United Nations Country Teams, supported by DCO, had signed off on their Business Operations Strategies, one was ready for sign-off, two had reached the

quality assurance phase and nine were in development. During 2020, UNDP provided administrative services (i.e. procurement, human resources administration, payments, visa and accreditations, customs) to the 25 Resident Coordinator's Offices in the region, and operational support to 7 United Nations entities: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), DCO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), and UN-Women, upon request. UNDP was responsible for the administration of the United Nations House in Panama and hosted the Resident Coordinators and their offices in 21 countries. Meanwhile, in December 2020 an agreement was signed between the United Nations Department of Operational Support and DCO for ECLAC to provide administrative services to the 25 Resident Coordinator's Offices in the region in certain areas, such as procurement, engagement and management support for consultants and individual contractors, international travels, among others. This has already been implemented, with the transfer of the Resident Coordinator's Office in Chile into ECLAC premises.

32. In addition to the five recommendations of the Secretary-General, and in order to increase regional level communications from the United Nations development system, a group co-chaired by UNDP and UNFPA was established to help foster partnerships and disseminate key messages and public statements. The group was key to ensuring that important and trustworthy information, analysis, and initiatives regarding COVID-19 were both visible and accessible to the public. In the area of HIV and health, the Regional Group of UNAIDS Sponsors for Latin America and the Caribbean issued a joint statement, which advocated for ensuring the human rights of key populations in the context of the pandemic. Another joint statement on COVID-19 in the context of human mobility was issued in May 2020 addressing issues such as discrimination and xenophobia, the situation at borders, stranded migrants, migrant workers, deportation and detention, shelter and reception facilities, access to health care, movement restrictions, risk of violence, civil registry and birth registration, disasters and natural hazards, regularization as well as access to, and continuity of, education. The foundations established in 2020 continue to bear fruit and in the beginning of 2021, the group developed the campaign #2021YearForRecovery. The group stands ready to provide advice to United Nations resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to develop nationally tailored partnerships and fundraising strategies. In addition, outside of the scope of these groups, a joint an Op Ed in the newspaper *El País*, signed by ECLAC, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), ILO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNICEF and WFP, further advocated for the importance of reopening schools and the potential negative impacts of not doing so. In addition, in support of United Nations General Assembly resolution A/75/L.41 "Global health and foreign policy: strengthening health system resilience through affordable health care for all", the Inter-American Task Force on Non-Communicable Diseases, led by PAHO/WHO together with the Organization of American States (OAS), ECLAC, the World Bank and IDB, established a stronger partnership to spur multisector collaboration on non-communicable diseases in the era of COVID-19, and issued a joint statement calling for promotion of policies and interventions that support health-in-all-policies for non-

communicable disease prevention and control across the lifespan —with equity— while reinforcing the role of health as an essential component of human capital.

IV. Highlights of system-wide results at the regional level

33. The main results achieved by the United Nations development system in 2020 to support Member States and United Nations country teams focus primarily on the immediate actions taken by the United Nations development system to respond to the effects of the pandemic and actions to address the structural causes of inequality and to promote a transformative recovery with equality and sustainability. This section includes the work conducted by the initial five IBCs that were identified based on country needs and priorities, namely: climate change and resilience; crime and violence; equitable growth; governance and institutions; and human mobility, as well as other inter-agency processes and initiatives related to these thematic areas to the COVID-19 pandemic. Adjustments to both the IBCs and the main areas of focus may take place in the context of the full roll-out of the RCP in 2021. In addition to the five main areas, the United Nations development system prioritized inclusion of youth and women and girls in its regional policy and advocacy work as transversal areas. Other inter-agency initiatives and results outside of the IBCs are included in this section to reflect the full breadth of the regional support provided by the United Nations development system in 2020.

i. Immediate actions to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

34. In 2020, Latin American and Caribbean governments encountered a dire situation when they were required to act decisively and at an unprecedented scale to a rapidly developing multi-faceted crisis with the COVID-19 pandemic at its core. The United Nations development system at the regional level mobilized its expertise to understand the scope of the impact of the crisis in the region, support the response efforts of the United Nations Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams, and provide policy analysis and recommendations that assist Member States in the definition of measures for the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

35. In the context of the spread of the COVID-19 virus, by January 2020, PAHO/WHO activated regional and country incident management system teams which continue to operate in the region to the date of this report. These teams have provided direct emergency response to ministries of health and other national authorities for surveillance, laboratory capacity, support to health-care services, infection prevention and control, clinical management and risk communication; all aligning with priority lines of action. While the core United Nations health response followed specific response plans, namely the [WHO COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan](#) and the [PAHO Response Strategy and Donor Appeal](#), a health pillar was incorporated in the United Nations socio-economic response plans (SERPs) developed by the 25 United Nations country teams in the Latin American and Caribbean region in 2020 following the [United Nations framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#) launched in April 2020 to guide country-level action. The health

pillar of SERPs included actions geared towards maintaining essential life-saving health services. Under the guidance of PAHO/WHO, the United Nations focused on providing analytical and policy support and rapid technical guidance; programme implementation and technical support; and cooperation on tracking and reaching vulnerable populations. As a result of a whole-of-United Nations mobilization, over 11.5 million personal protective equipment (PPE) and risk communication and community engagement materials were distributed in the region in 2020, and 28,690 health facilities received United Nations support to maintain essential health services. This included assistance to maintain services for child and maternal health, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS treatment, essential services for survivors of violence, vaccination campaigns and treatment of non-communicable diseases, among others.

36.   Within this global socio-economic response framework to COVID-19, DCO and UNDP co-organized two regional reviews of the SERPs developed in Latin America and the Caribbean under the leadership of the Resident Coordinators and in close collaboration with United Nations country teams and the technical leadership of UNDP. The first one was on 30 June 2020 with all Resident Coordinators of the region and UNDP Resident Representatives to review progress achieved on the development of the SERPs, to identify challenges and needs for support from the regional and global levels, and to agree on recommendations to further improve both SERPs and the partnership strategy around them. A second stocktaking took place on 3 December 2020 with the Resident Coordinators, UNDP Resident Representatives, and members from the 25 United Nations country teams in the region to discuss results, challenges and lessons learned on various dimensions of the SERPs, including gender equality and women's empowerment, public communications and financing. The discussions were organized by geographical subregions in order to strengthen subregional analysis and strategies.

37.   One of the key areas where policy recommendations produced by the United Nations development system at the regional level were considered particularly useful was on the subject of online learning modalities and support for the safe reopening of schools. In that respect, UNICEF, UNESCO and WFP worked on two sets of guidelines for ministries of education and school administrators and principals, respectively. UNESCO, in collaboration with UNICEF and as part of the Regional Education Working Group for Latin America and the Caribbean, rolled out a series of exchanges of knowledge and information for ministries of education and national education actors, focusing on the four pillars of SDG-Education 2030: equity, inclusion, quality, and learning throughout life. Over 108,000 people in the education sector accessed the information provided. The UNESCO Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE), with support from UNICEF, worked to produce and disseminate knowledge and information on curriculums and student learning achievements with ministries of education through an online platform that gave special attention to education responses in the context of COVID-19 and its impact on the access of children, adolescents and young people on the move to quality, inclusive and equitable education. The joint policy paper "Education in the time of COVID-19" (ECLAC/UNESCO) aims to shed light on various consequences that measures adopted in

response to the crisis will have on educational communities in the short and medium terms and provides an example of such output. Also related to education, UNICEF and UNDP developed the policy paper "COVID-19 and primary and secondary education: the impact of the crisis and public policy implications for Latin America and the Caribbean" , which outlines a general diagnosis of the situation in pre-primary, primary and secondary education in the region.

38. The United Nations development system also produced guidance and policy analyses on issues related to social protection, employment, the relation between economy and health, and other specific areas of development. The joint report "Social protection for families with children and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean: An imperative to address the impact of COVID-19" (ECLAC/UNICEF) highlights the importance of social protection for families with children and adolescents and draws attention to the need to continue strengthening the inclusion of a universal and child-sensitive perspective in the region's social protection systems. "The COVID-19 pandemic could increase child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean. Technical Note N.1" (ILO/ECLAC) discusses the strong negative correlation between the economic situation and the incidence of child labour. Another important joint policy product, "Health and the economy: A convergence needed to address COVID-19 and retake the path of sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean" (ECLAC/PAHO), states that, in order to both control the pandemic and reopen the economy, States need to demonstrate effective and dynamic leadership and stewardship through national plans that incorporate health, economic and social policies. It also emphasizes that the economic reopening phase must be gradual and based on health protocols that allow the virus and its spread to be controlled, in addition to protecting workers, especially health workers. UNICEF and the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG), with WFP, also developed a series of technical notes reporting actions taken, focusing on social assistance, social insurance and labour market programmes.

39. Among the responses directly resulting from the societal impact of COVID-19, in particular the increase of violence against women and children due to lockdown measures, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN-Women and PAHO/WHO joined efforts to apply global methodologies around identifying intersections between violence against women and violence against children in the region. The regional analysis was carried out by the United Nations entities within the framework of the Latin America Regional Programme of the Spotlight Initiative.[47] It revealed that the six global areas of intersection were proven to be equally applicable in Latin America and the Caribbean. These are: (1) shared risk factors; (2) gender and social norms; (3) co-existence; (4) intergenerational impacts; (5) similar and mutually exacerbating consequences; and (6) adolescence.

40. In June 2020, a regional webinar was held in the virtual community of practice on violence

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[47] The Spotlight Initiative is a global, multi-year partnership between the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

against women and girls of the Latin America Regional Programme of the Spotlight Initiative. The meeting helped disseminate the study results and foster dialogue among over 500 participants (women's and youth/adolescent civil society organizations, governments and service providers) on challenges and opportunities to integrate services on violence against women and on violence against children during the pandemic. In addition, joint guidance and policy recommendations were produced by ECLAC, UNICEF and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children to address the specific issue of violence against children and adolescents during the pandemic. In addition, PAHO, UNFPA and UN-Women collaborated on developing joint guidance on COVID-19 infection prevention and control in shelters for women and children survivors of domestic and family violence in the Caribbean. Lastly, to support Member States in strengthening responses to domestic violence in the context of COVID-19, PAHO strengthened training for health workers, including training on first-line support for helpline responders in collaboration with UNFPA.

41. The United Nations development system has been actively involved with its partners in the production of analyses and publications involving gender-related subjects. Examples include joint analyses of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region, such as "Challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the health of women, children, and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean" (UNDP/UNICEF), which highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to and organization of health services, and presents estimates of the effects of the reduction of health services coverage on achieving the 2030 Agenda. Another example is the publication "Domestic workers in Latin America and the Caribbean during the COVID-19 crisis" (UN-Women/ILO/ECLAC), which highlights the impacts of the current crisis caused by COVID-19 on domestic workers in the region, considering that between 11 million and 18 million people are engaged in paid domestic work, of which 93% are women. The study describes measures and regulations promoted by social actors and institutions in countries of the region to guarantee access to labour and social security rights for female domestic workers. Other joint reports include the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and ECLAC document on the specific challenges faced by migrant women in South America in the context of the pandemic, and the ECLAC and UNFPA report "Risks of the COVID-19 pandemic for the exercise of women's sexual and reproductive rights". Another joint publication, "Gender, Climate and Security: Sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change", prepared by UNEP, UN-Women, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) and UNDP, with contributions from WFP, demonstrated the linkages between those three areas of gender, climate and security and provides concrete ways to prevent conflict and foster lasting peace.

42. The thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, an internal group of the United Nations development system in the region which promotes a coordinated voice and approach from the United Nations development system on all issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in Latin America and the Caribbean, provided advisory services to United Nations country teams on ways to mainstream gender equality in the United Nations SERPs to COVID-19. It also

supported the formulation of new joint programme proposals on the COVID-19 response, contributing to four proposals being selected by the United Nations COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund and receiving a high mark for gender inclusion in some countries of the region.

43. Other population groups were also under the focus of the United Nations development system in order to address the situation of those who are furthest behind. In this sense, ECLAC, jointly with FAO, UN-Women, ILO, UNFPA, PAHO, UNDP, and the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC), and as part of the ECLAC- BMZ/GIZ cooperation programme 2020–2022, prepared a study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the indigenous peoples of Latin America, presenting both States' responses and those of indigenous peoples themselves to the crisis, as well as a series of recommendations to include these populations in the management and the response of the pandemic, putting their collective rights at the centre. ECLAC and UNFPA also addressed the situation of people of African descent in the region and the challenges that they face, which reflects the structural inequalities and racial discrimination that persist in the region.

44. In addition, the United Nations development system developed another specific initiative that targeted groups facing multiple discrimination and are most impacted by the crisis. It was organized by ECLAC and UNFPA in the framework of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and involved the organization of virtual dialogues on the impacts of COVID-19 from a population and development perspective, to analyse the sociodemographic situation of the countries of the region in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and its impacts on population groups in situations of greater vulnerability, and in the light of the agreements adopted in the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development and the 2030 Agenda. Six dialogues were held in 2020 on migrants, older persons, people of African descent, persons with disabilities, sexual and reproductive health, and a special one on the Caribbean subregion, reaching approximately 21,500 people through Webex meetings and social media platforms such as Facebook live and YouTube. Under the initiative "Every Woman Every Child Latin America and the Caribbean (EWEC-LAC)", UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-Women, WHO, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Bank Group launched a joint statement advocating for the continuity in the provision of essential sexual, reproductive, maternal, child and adolescent health services for the population in the context of COVID-19, and provided guidance to monitor maternal health indicators in pregnant women and social inequalities during COVID-19 pandemic.

45. In terms of health and human mobility, the UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNHCR and IOM worked together to increase awareness and provide tools and training for the prompt care and adequate treatment of migrants and refugees living with HIV in the context of COVID-19. In collaboration with civil society organizations, more than 250 persons were trained, including staff from border control authorities, shelter and reception centers and regional humanitarian workers from several United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations. The technical note "What you need to know about HIV and COVID-19 in the

context of human mobility" was also disseminated among the [Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela](#) (R4V). The Platform, co-led by UNHCR and IOM, coordinated the response to the flow of refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to 17 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. In order to advocate for antiretroviral coverage for migrants and refugees living with HIV in the context of COVID-19, the United Nations development system published the paper "[Recommendations for governments concerning the care of refugees and migrants living with HIV in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)" for advocacy activities at national level.

46. In regard to food security and nutrition, the top priority early in 2020 was to understand the magnitude of the crisis faced by the region. To that end, the quick generation of accurate new data and analysis was imperative. WFP and FAO worked together to create a [joint analysis for early warning on acute food insecurity hotspots that positioned regional priorities at the global level](#). In 2020, WFP, ECLAC and the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP) finalized [studies](#) on "The cost of the double burden of malnutrition: social and economic impact" in various countries of the region. The studies highlighted the high cost of malnutrition and its impact on productivity, health, and education, and made a case for governments to invest in prevention and response of malnutrition. ECLAC and FAO also published a [monthly newsletter on Food Systems and COVID-19](#) in Latin America and the Caribbean, that targeted senior-level policymakers and advisors.

47. Other examples of data, analysis and policy recommendations jointly developed by the United Nations development system in the region on the issues of food insecurity and malnutrition include "[Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)" (FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), PAHO, UNICEF and WFP), which focuses on food security and nutrition in the region and describes some of the main policies that the countries are developing to face the different forms of malnutrition; ECLAC and FAO also jointly prepared the report on "[Preventing the COVID-19 crisis from becoming a food crisis: Urgent measures against hunger in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)" as well as [bulletin series on analysis and responses to the effects of the COVID-19 on food systems](#), which offers policy recommendations for sustaining demand and administering the food trade during the emergency.

48. To create a common regional information-sharing platform to discuss the relevance of disaster risk management and climate action for the COVID-19 recovery, the IBC on Climate Change and Resilience organized a series of webinars and technical briefs with the webinars' conclusions. Some examples include the "[Youth engagement for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change. Preparation session for the regional Youth forum 2021](#)" webinar (led by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), UNICEF and UNESCO) and one on Sustainable and inclusive business production in response to COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean (led by ILO and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)). These were made available on a dedicated space on [Preventionweb](#) and linked to the [SDG Gateway](#). The webinars were conceptualized as training and advocacy spaces on issues directly relevant for the COVID-19 response and

progress on the SDGs.

49. In relation to infrastructure, PAHO and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) published a set of guidelines for construction workers to take preventive measures for managing COVID-19 risks and avoid the spread of the virus. The "COVID-19: Prevention Measures at Construction Sites" guidelines were presented in several countries in Latin America and introduced to construction works sites in alliance with the public and private sector. This initiative contributes towards SDGs 3 and 9 and constitutes an effort towards promoting security measures for workers to ensure their well-being and boosting economic reactivation through safe infrastructure activities.

50. The COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean was launched on 3 April 2020 at the request of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to ECLAC with the aim of providing a source of information, geo-referenced data, and analysis on the economic and social impacts of the pandemic, and monitoring the evolution of the crisis and the short-, medium- and long-term measures taken by the governments of the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Observatory is a regional knowledge and communications platform for disseminating data and analyses of economic and social effects at the national and regional levels on health systems; the structure of the labour market and employment, education, industry, trade, and macroeconomic policy; the impact of the pandemic on gender equality; and, more recently on vaccines. Led by ECLAC, the COVID-19 Observatory is the result of a joint effort between United Nations entities, in particular UN-Women, DCO, and Resident Coordinators, to monitor and present proposals to address the impact of the pandemic.

51. Similarly, UNOPS and ECLAC presented the Regional Observatory on prices for medicines recommended by WHO for the treatment of COVID-19. The Observatory provides immediate information for the public sector and civil society in the region, allowing the comparison of international prices that stem from official sources from 21 countries, with the aim of establishing a range of fair market prices in order to reduce the risk of corruption and fraud.

ii. **Actions to address the structural causes of inequality and to promote a transformative recovery with equality and sustainability**

52. The United Nations development system implemented a wide range of actions in the region to address the structural causes of inequality and to promote a transformative recovery with equality and sustainability in 2020. It includes the work conducted by the five current IBCs as well as other inter-agency processes and initiatives. The main results achieved inside and outside the IBCs have been categorized according to five main areas of collaboration, as well as to the cross-cutting themes of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and youth.

Climate change and resilience

53. The United Nations development system's work in the area of climate change and resilience in 2020 covered five main actions: leveraging existing initiatives to provide integrated responses to existing challenges, convening (virtual) workshops and conferences designed to share knowledge and reinforce partnerships, launching new initiatives, and creating opportunities to support and foster cooperation among different stakeholders.

54. An example of leveraging existing initiatives can be found with the Climate Promise, launched at the United Nations Climate Action Summit in September 2019 to support over 100 countries to scale up climate action to meet their climate pledges and deliver impact on the ground. The initiative is led by UNDP and implemented in close collaboration with ECLAC, FAO, UNEP and UNICEF. Other key international partners include the International Renewable Agency (IRENA), EUROCLIMA+, and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). In 2020, 11 Climate Promise countries from the region submitted updated nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that show greater ambition and inclusiveness, which is an important step towards the next Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to be held in 2021.

55. The 2020 Latin American Regional Platform on Low-Emission Development Strategies (LEDS LAC)[48] Regional Workshop offered the United Nations development system an opportunity to promote a sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean through its facilitation of a strategic space to advance the regional discussion regarding the design of long-term strategies towards net zero emissions and green recovery, raising the ambition of the Nationally Determined Contributions, and low-emission, resilient mobility and transportation. The workshop, led by UNDP, IDB, GIZ and ECLAC, was attended by 16,000 participants from governments, cooperation agencies, non-governmental organizations, academia and private entities of the region. One of the key results of this cooperation includes the NDC LAC tool to monitor and update information on the status of the nationally determined contributions in the region. This tool will be managed by LEDS LAC and is fed with information coming from UNDP, IDB and ECLAC.

56. New initiatives launched in 2020 include the Joint Action Plan on Environment and Health in Latin America and the Caribbean (2020–2021). This initiative was implemented by UNEP and PAHO to reduce risks to health caused by environmental factors, and includes activities on air quality, chemicals and waste, climate change and emergencies. The partnership led to the promotion of a subregional model law on air quality in Central America, and to the reactivation of the Regional Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution of Latin America and the Caribbean. It also served as a platform to increase knowledge on COVID-19 waste management procedures through joint virtual events.

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[48] Part of Low Emission Development Strategies Global Partnership (LEDS GP) initiative, in which UNDP cooperates at global and regional level (see [online] https://ledslac.org/).

57. With the goal of creating opportunities to support and foster cooperation among different stakeholders, the United Nations development system helped establish the Circular Economy Coalition for Latin America and the Caribbean. Its mission is to provide a regional platform to enhance inter-ministerial, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder cooperation, increase knowledge and understanding on circular economy, and provide capacity building and technical assistance for the development of public policies for circular economy and sustainable consumption and production. The Coalition was the result of the efforts of eight strategic partners that included the United Nations development system, other international organizations and private foundations, and was led by the governments of four countries of the region.

58. Another example of fostering cooperation for the implementation of internationally and regionally agreed frameworks, norms and standards relating to environmental protection can be found in the work of OHCHR, ECLAC and UNEP, which jointly organized a regional virtual forum to address challenges and opportunities in the defence of rights and the environment in South America in November 2020. Environmental human rights organizations, defenders and networks from South America participated in the event. The forum served to position regional priorities of environmental defenders at the global level and to further dissemination of the conclusions of the forum through various United Nations platforms, including the second meeting of the countries signatory to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) held in December 2020.

59. At the end of 2020, upon requests received by the Presidents of Honduras and Guatemala, the ECLAC Damage and Loss Assessment (DaLA) methodology was conducted to assess the economic, social and environmental impacts of Hurricanes Eta and Iota in both countries [49][50] to respond to the need to estimate the financial costs of the disaster with a view to determining the amount of sector-specific funding needed for recovery and reconstruction efforts. These DaLAs were carried out jointly by ECLAC, the Resident Coordinators' Offices and the United Nations country teams of those two countries, as well as other United Nations entities, IDB, the World Bank and the Central American Economic Integration Bank. In the case of Guatemala, the government also implemented a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), a tool developed by the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union. Anchored by the UNDP, which provides coordination and technical support on the ground, the PDNA assesses the full extent of a disaster's impact, defines the recovery needs, and, in so doing, serves as the basis for designing a recovery strategy and guides donors' funding. At the request of the Governments of Ecuador, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, an adapted version of the PDNA was used to assess the impact of COVID-19, reflecting its adaptability to different crises and catastrophes. The assessments, led by the respective governments and coordinated by UNDP, actively engaged United

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[49] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Evaluación de los efectos e impactos de la tormenta tropical Eta y el huracán Iota en Honduras* (LC/TS.2021/22), Santiago, 2021.

[50] Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Evaluación de los efectos e impactos de las depresiones tropicales Eta y Iota en Guatemala* (LC/TS.2021/21), Santiago, 2021.

Nations entities present in the countries. In El Salvador, the government led a combined assessment of the pandemic and Tropical Storms Amanda and Cristobal. Joint training courses to build capacity of government officials in the region on the DaLA methodology were also conducted by ECLAC, PAHO and UNDRR in 2020.

Crime and violence

60. In the area of crime and violence, the United Nations development system produced results in the intersection between violence and gender, focusing on addressing the issue of violence against women and girls and femicide/feminicide. In this context, the Latin America Regional Programme of the Spotlight Initiative has been instrumental in supporting Member States. Based on a partnership between the European Union and the United Nations development system, the Regional Programme has a special focus on Central America and Mexico due to the high prevalence of feminicide with unique aggravating factors, such as migration in unsafe conditions, organized crime and disappearances. UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women have collaborated with strategic regional and subregional partners, governments and civil society organizations to promote laws and policies that respond to the rights of women and girls; gender equitable social norms to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls and femicide/feminicide; and quality disaggregated and comparable data and harmful practices to inform laws and policies. The Regional Programme directly contributes to the achievement of SDGs targets 5.2 and 16.1. Key results achieved by the Regional Programme are indicated in the following paragraph.

61. UN-Women strengthened its strategic partnership with the Specialized Network on Gender of the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors to promote the adaptation and adoption of the Latin American Model Protocol for the investigation of gender-related killings of women (femicide/feminicide); UNFPA launched a virtual regional Community of Practice on Essential Services to support institutions and strengthen coordination efforts between national and subnational actors in response to violence against women and girls; PAHO and UNFPA initiated a partnership to develop a virtual course for health workers on how to respond to intimate partner and sexual violence; and UNDP developed a multi-dimensional research architecture to generate evidence on the intersections between violence against women and femicide/feminicide and new scenarios of high risk and social vulnerability in 18 countries in the region. This architecture consists of eight studies linked under a common conceptual framework, and covers areas such as migration flows and human trafficking, in collaboration with IOM and the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI); justice/legal response to violence against women and femicide/feminicide, including the Palermo Protocol, with the support of the *Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género*, MESECVI and UNODC; organized crime, structural poverty and multiple exclusions, with the support of the Global Women's Institute at George Washington University, UNODC and OXFAM International; and data management on disappearances of women and girls and the quality of femicide/feminicide indicators with the support of ECLAC.

62. PAHO/WHO collaborated with UNICEF, UNESCO and the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children in the launch of the *2020 Regional Status Report: Preventing and Responding to Violence against Children in the Americas*. The report is a milestone for the region and includes new homicide estimates for children and adolescents under 18 years of age. It offers an important baseline for the adaptation of "INSPIRE: seven strategies to end violence against children" in the Americas. The report will also inform the second regional conference on INSPIRE, organized in partnership with PAHO, UNICEF, UNODC, the End Violence Partnership, Save the Children, Plan International and the World Bank, to build government capacity on INSPIRE for South American countries through a series of virtual workshops held between November 2020 and May 2021.

Equitable growth

63. Given the deep economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean, one of the most challenging areas is achieving equitable growth. The production and consumption patterns that have prevailed for decades are socially, economically and environmentally unsustainable. Focused attention must be placed on the recovery from this global health, economic and social crisis to ensure that the most vulnerable segments of the population are not left behind. This requires conducting structural transformation towards a new production matrix, with new productive, business, social and political structures, which means that new policies will be necessary to create jobs and reduce informality, address structural socio-economic inequalities, mitigate climate change and protect the environment. The United Nations development system at the regional level has therefore mobilized its expertise to provide policy, capacity-building and programmatic support to Member States as they navigate the difficult policy decisions that will influence the future of economies and growth in the region.

64. In terms of policy support, the joint publication "Employment situation in Latin America and the Caribbean. Work in times of pandemic: the challenges of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)" (ECLAC/ILO) examines labour market trends in the region, including policies implemented by countries to protect formal and informal employment, income and the production sector, and highlights the importance of unemployment insurance. It also presents recommendations for transitioning economies towards more formality, highlighting good practices from the region on the simplification of procedures, improved data management and greater oversight along with incentives for small and medium-sized enterprises.

65. In the area of capacity-building support for equitable growth, in 2020 the United Nations development system served a wide range of stakeholders that include Latin American and Caribbean governments and United Nations country teams in their efforts to advance sustainable social protection systems and new national care systems. This joint work was undertaken via the IBC on Equitable Growth and the thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, which launched an online course on social protection, care and gender. This course, organized with UNDP, UN-Women, ILO

and UNICEF, sought to provide tools to improve the capacities of the institutions working on social policies and social protection systems in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to integrate the gender perspective in the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies for social protection and care.

66. On the programmatic front, one of the key ongoing initiatives that is imperative to addressing the specific vulnerabilities of Caribbean SIDS is the Debt for Climate Adaptation Swap Initiative, a subregional initiative spearheaded by ECLAC that addresses the high and unsustainable level of debt shouldered by many Caribbean economies. The initiative actively promotes a strategy to address the high debt-low growth dilemma of the Caribbean while fostering sustainable investment in climate adaptation. Its main beneficiaries are Caribbean economies, starting with three pilot countries from the subregion, and it counts on the participation of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, the CARICOM Development Fund (CDF), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), FAO, UNDP, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the University of the West Indies. The initiative actively promotes the creation of a Caribbean Resilience Fund to support financing sustainable development and the implementation of key SDGs.

67. The United Nations development system is also coordinating the Global Opportunities for Sustainable Development Goals Initiative (GO4SDGs) to accelerate the shift to more inclusive green economies and sustainable production and consumption patterns, as well as to strengthen public and private sector capacities to deliver on the SDGs and the Paris Agreement. This initiative was started in 2020 by UNEP and its partners include the Green Growth Knowledge Platform, ILO, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), One Planet Network, SEED, the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, UNDP and the World Economic Forum. Its purpose is to replicate and scale up tools and best practices around the green economy and sustainable consumption and production across regions, to serve as the means for a green-economy-based recovery.

68. The United Nations development system supports other inter-agency initiatives to promote the transition to more sustainable economic models as well —such as the Latin American Green Awards, which is supported by ILO, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), UNEP, UNIDO and UNDP and funded by the Partnership for Action on Green Economy. Through this initiative, entrepreneurs are able to access financing for sustainable ventures that eventually generate green jobs for the region. The Latin American and Caribbean Network on the Environmental Footprint of Coffee is another example of this type of initiative. The network, supported by ECLAC and UNEP, has provided technical assistance and capacity-building on life cycle approaches to improve resource efficiency in the production of coffee in 12 countries. Its ongoing partnership with the European Union facilitates the consideration of inputs from the coffee sector in the European Union's export regulations.

69.   The United Nations development system has also engaged in the promotion of sustainable and inclusive local food systems and enhanced health and nutrition-sensitive approaches. These include home-grown school feeding and fostering better diets and healthy lifestyles to contribute to improved resilience at community level. Related to this issue, and in an effort to promote joint actions and strategies in support of regional integration and collaboration, the United Nations,[51] together with governments, the OECS Commission, the Caribbean Agricultural Health and Food Safety Agency and other development partners, such as CDB , launched the "2020–2021 Multi-sectoral Response Plan and Appeal for the Eastern Caribbean" to strengthen food systems in six countries of the subregion. The programme focuses on support to small and medium-sized enterprises to increase their inclusion in the subregional market, as well as on job creation, with emphasis on women and youth. In addition, since April 2020, eleven international organizations —including ECLAC, FAO, IFAD and WFP— have agreed to pool their efforts to help Latin American and Caribbean countries secure their food systems and maintain agriculture and food trade during the COVID-19 pandemic.[52]

Governance and institutions

70.   The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light a region-wide governance crisis and also provided a unique opportunity to establish new governance models that strengthen transparency, participation and accountability. In this context, the United Nations development system forged new agreements between governments, the private sector, civil society and communities to envisage these new governance models. The report "Effective Governance, beyond recovery" was prepared and vetted in 2020 for presentation at the XII Ministerial Forum for Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean — an event co-organized by UNDP and ECLAC. The result of an extensive consultation process among stakeholders, the report makes transformative policy proposals that would pave the way for more peaceful societies, transparency and accountability of public institutions, inclusive political participation, expanded social protection systems, more equal access to quality social services, and a more resilient and equitable economy that generates equal opportunities for all without discrimination. During the event, an implementation plan for the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development was also adopted by the countries of the region, in which key priorities connected to strengthening social protection systems and social inclusion policies for a recovery with equality in the region were identified. Within the Social Development and COVID-19 Observatory, a wide database on non-contributory social protection interventions of the countries of the region to tackle social impact of the pandemic was also developed. This public information good has been a key resource for social policy analysis.

71.   The IBC on Governance and Institutions provided a mechanism to raise awareness at the regional level of the global process leading to the adoption of the "United Nations Guidance

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[51] The programme is supported by FAO, UNDP, ILO and UN-Women under the coordination of the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Barbados and the OECS.
[52] See [online] http://www.fao.org/americas/noticias/ver/en/c/1270642/.

Note on the Protection and Promotion of Civic Space" in November 2020. IBC members contributed to the sharing of information on a joint United Nations-civil society global online consultation on the United Nations approach to protecting and promoting civic space among various regional partners and constituencies. These efforts positioned the IBC as an entry point for the mobilization of United Nations country teams for the roll-out of a guidance note in 2021.

72.   Thanks to collaboration between the IBC on Governance and Institutions and the Working Group on Youth, the United Nations development system in the region also helped generate tools to increase young people's political participation and understanding of democratic values. The open online course "Global Citizenship Education: Youth, Human Rights and Participation in Latin American and the Caribbean" was developed under the leadership of UNESCO and with support from the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding. Its purpose was to encourage young people to engage in responsible, committed and transformative participation and raise awareness about the 2030 Agenda. The course provided an opportunity to learn key concepts around participation, democracy and human rights, as well as about experiences and practices from youth across the region

73.   In a joint effort, the Global Task Force on Corruption, UNDP, UNODC, ECLAC, DPPA and UNOPS prepared the "Study on Efficient Public Procurement: UNOPS experiences in Latin America". It presents concrete results and progress achieved in many countries through the application of the fair public management approach promoted by UNOPS and ECLAC to improve national capacities, with the aim of contributing to SDG 16 and compiling concrete experiences in the strengthening of public procurement that can be a useful reference for other agencies and governments.

74.   UNDP and OHCHR began collaboration in 2020 to enhance the mainstreaming of a human rights perspective in the private sector and to prevent and address business-related human rights abuse by promoting the application of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The Global Initiative on Business and Human Rights was launched in the region and the agencies collaborated in the design of a roadmap for the next decade of the implementation of those Principles in partnership with the Working Group on business and human rights. In this context, the UNDP tool Human Rights Due Diligence and COVID-19: Rapid Self-Assessment for Business, has been implemented by more than 25 enterprises in five countries

Human mobility

75.   Given the vulnerability of migrants, refugees and displaced persons to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations development system has been very active in leveraging its assets to provide timely regional and subregional responses to the issues surrounding human mobility. In this regard, the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V) played a key role, through the planning, implementation and monitoring of the 2020 Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP), which targeted the most vulnerable refugees, migrants and members of host communities in need of

assistance. The plan brings together 151 actors, such as United Nations entities, national and international non-governmental organizations, faith-based and civil society actors and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in 17 different countries. DCO facilitated collaboration between Resident Coordinators and the National Response Coordination Platforms. Projects were implemented in the areas of education, food security, health, humanitarian transport, integration, non-food items, nutrition, protection (including child protection and protection against gender-based violence, human trafficking and smuggling), shelter, and water, sanitation and hygiene. By October 2020, they had covered more than 2.2 million people.

76.   Considering the multinational and multidimensional nature of the crisis, host governments have sought solutions to specific regional challenges through the Quito Process —a State-led initiative to promote consensus and dialogue between countries in Latin America and the Caribbean receiving Venezuelan refugees and migrants. R4V actors implementing activities under the Quito Process do so within the scope of the RMRP and coordinate through the R4V Platforms. Within the Framework for Action between UNDP and ILO, and as a response to the governments' request under the Quito Process, both organizations launched a joint Regional Strategy for the socioeconomic integration of refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and host communities. The purpose of this strategy is to promote the sustainable inclusion of migrants in host communities and improve their contribution to the local economy and development.

77.   The United Nations development system also focused its abilities on addressing subregional human mobility priorities. The Comprehensive Development Plan for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south-southeast Mexico seeks to address structural causes of migration. The Comprehensive Development Plan, requested by the Presidents of the four countries to ECLAC, aims to ensure that migration from the countries of Northern Central America and south-southeast Mexico is safe, orderly and regular, while tackling its structural causes. The Plan seeks, inter alia, to contribute to sustainable development by stimulating economic growth, promoting universal access to social services, fostering resilience to climate change and guaranteeing rights throughout the migratory and forced displacement cycle. Under the coordination of ECLAC, the Comprehensive Development Plan benefited from inputs and consultations with 19 agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, DCO, the Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams of the four countries covered by the plan.

78.   The United Nations development system also fostered cooperation for the implementation of internationally and regionally agreed frameworks, norms and standards. A key process in that regard was the Regional review of the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean. IOM and ECLAC, in collaboration with several other members of the United Nations Network on Migration, advanced in the review mandated by General Assembly resolutions 73/195 and 73/326 (see A/RES/73/195 and A/RES/73/326). Fourteen Member States completed the questionnaire aimed to assist in identifying their achievements, priorities and gaps regarding the

implementation of the Global Compact for Migration.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls

79. With regard to the cross-cutting theme of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, and in addition to many of the previously reported initiatives that mainstreamed a gender perspective and promoted women's empowerment, the United Nations development system has been actively involved with its partners in the production of analyses and publications on gender-related subjects. For example, the joint publication "Care in Latin America and the Caribbean during the COVID 19: towards comprehensive systems to strengthen response and recovery" (ECLAC/UN-Women) emphasizes the importance of the construction of comprehensive care systems for sustainable development and welfare in the region as a key element for the socioeconomic recovery. Other joint policy recommendations and updated data and statistics about the situation of women's autonomy in the region have been produced by the United Nations development system with the support of strategic partners and are included in the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.

80. The thematic Working Group on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls worked with the IBC on Climate Change and Resilience to launch "From words to action: Projects with Innovative Solutions to Promote Nature Conservation, Climate Action and Gender Equality". This publication, led by UNDP, UNEP, and UN-Women, provides guidance on how to further incorporate a gender perspective in national, subregional and regional programmes on climate change and environmental protection.

81. The Joint Programme "For a Region Free of Child Marriage and Early Unions: 2018–2022 Initiative", led by UNICEF, UN-Women and UNFPA, continued implementation in 2020, to provide region-specific solutions to address the causes and consequences of child marriage and early unions such as unequal gender norms, sexual violence, transition and completion of secondary school for girls and early motherhood. It focused attention on adolescents, indigenous, rural, and middle- and low-income areas in six countries in the region. In 2020, the lead agencies prepared a technical guidance document "Child Marriage and Early Unions (CMEU) in Latin America and the Caribbean in Humanitarian and Crisis Settings".

82. UNOPS, UN-Women and UNAIDS have also addressed the situation of persons in the highest risk areas by providing training, and proposing concrete instruments for infrastructure with a focus on gender mainstreaming and diversity, such as the guidelines on Parks for Everyone and the HIV Agents of Change initiative. To this end, UNOPS has supported articulation with UN-Women and UNAIDS, in order to work together in the inclusion of the social dimension in projects in three countries of the region.

83. The United Nations development system has also used its convening power to advance gender equality in the region. ECLAC and UN-Women organized the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was hosted

by the Government of Chile, and actively engaged FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, PAHO and WFP. Over 1,000 attendees participated in discussions on subjects such as women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios, and how transboundary challenges such as financial globalization trends, the digital revolution, demographic changes and climate change are affecting gender equality and women's autonomy in Latin America and the Caribbean. As a result of the Conference, Member States adopted the Santiago Commitment, which includes the agreement to tackle the transnational dimensions of gender inequalities —with specific commitments related to the trade and gender agenda, climate change, and the digital economy— and to implement gender-sensitive countercyclical policies to mitigate the impact of crises on women's lives and promote policies to galvanize the economy in key sectors, including the care economy.

84. Another example of convening power lies in the follow-up to the Regional Conference on Women, regarding which ECLAC and UN-Women organized a virtual briefing of ministers and high-level authorities of machineries for the advancement of women in Latin America and the Caribbean, entitled "The response to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis from a gender perspective", in order to analyse the distinct economic and social scenarios of the current crisis and its differentiated impact on women in the short, medium and long terms. The meeting also aimed to exchange information about the main initiatives that governments in the region are carrying out with special consideration for women's needs and gender inequalities in the framework of the current crisis. Finally, it sought to promote regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation initiatives that support a coordinated response to the coronavirus crisis by incorporating lessons learned regionally and globally.

Youth

85. With regard to the cross-cutting theme of youth, the United Nations development system has focused primarily on outreach and education to ensure that young people have the knowledge, capacity and access to participate in the achievement of the SDGs. For example, considering the direct and indirect impact of COVID-19 on the lives of young people, and in particular on their mental health, UNICEF and PAHO launched the Youth COVID-19 hangouts, a safe space for young people to connect with other young people, express their feelings, ask questions, obtain reliable information regarding COVID-19 and address their mental health needs during the crisis. These hangouts were originally focused on mental health and coping strategies; however eventually, several other topics were also addressed based on requests from young people. These included youth sexual and reproductive health in the context of COVID-19, the COVID-19 vaccine and bullying. The hangouts featured sessions in English and Spanish, and on several occasions included sign language and closed captioning to facilitate participation of youth with disabilities.

86. Another example of outreach to youth in 2020 included the launch of the United Nations Survey on Youth in the context of COVID-19 undertaken by the thematic Working Group on Youth as part of a global United Nations effort to generate data and evidence to guide public policy and promote youth participation and engagement in the framework of the

United Nations Youth2030 Strategy. This joint survey captured the perceptions of young people on the impact of COVID-19 in their lives and their future and used the findings to consider the needs of adolescents and youth in the COVID-19 response, in order to support youth organizations in their advocacy efforts. Findings were broadly disseminated under a common United Nations strategy in more than 18 regional virtual meetings from August to November 2020.

87. Given the critical role youth has to play in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in the realization of just, peaceful, and inclusive societies, the United Nations organized the Regional Youth Consultation towards Beijing+25 in Latin America and the Caribbean to understand the progress and challenges around the 12 areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to describe how the challenges are presented in the different territories, and to define priority challenges and generate shared action strategies to address them. A special session on youth, peace, and security was included in the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean held in January 2020 in order to establish regional priorities and a road map for peacebuilding processes. The diversity of the participants, who included adolescent girls and boys, transgender youth, and non-binary people, was an important achievement of the regional consultation. As a result of this consultation, the Declaration of the Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Youth was presented to the Conference and reflected the challenges, demands, and commitments of the region. The Declaration will also be positioned at the global level as part of the Generation Equality Forum, a civil-society-centered, global gathering for gender equality convened by UN-Women and co-hosted by the Governments of Mexico and France during the first half of 2021. The initiative also contributed to creating a network of young and adolescent activists working for peace and security with a gender perspective, as well as opening a safe space where they could share their experiences, fears and aspirations.

iii. Support for United Nations country teams and Resident Coordinators

88. In addition to its work in the five main areas of focus and two cross-cutting themes, the United Nations development system maintained its support to United Nations country teams, Resident Coordinators, and Resident Coordinator's Offices at the country level. As part of its regional architecture, the United Nations relies on a technical group, the Peer Support Group, which is chaired by DCO and includes 22 entities from the United Nations development system, to deliver guidance and quality assurance support on the various stages of the Common Country Analyses and the design process of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. In 2020, the Peer Support Group provided support to the four countries that initiated their new Cooperation Frameworks that year (Colombia, Cuba, Mexico and Paraguay) and to those four countries that start implementing their Cooperation Frameworks in 2021 (Argentina, Guatemala, Panama and Uruguay). Additionally, in support of subregional cooperation, the Peer Support Group reviewed the Common Country Analyses from the six United Nations country teams in the Caribbean working on the next United Nations Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF 2.0), which covers 22 countries and territories, and engaged in an exchange with

the Caribbean Task Team and the Resident Coordinator's Offices to provide technical guidance.

89.   Virtual sessions on the cooperation framework guiding principles were held for the United Nations country teams of Brazil, Guatemala and Honduras. This capacity-building assistance and the Peer Support Group's support with the design and facilitation of engagements with governments and partners helped bring the voices of the most vulnerable people into the centre of the cooperation framework. The Peer Support Group's Monitoring and Evaluation Task Team strengthened the design and quality of evaluations, thereby contributing to ensuring that recommendations of the review cycle of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework were factored into the design of the new Cooperation Frameworks. At the request of the United Nations country teams in Mexico, the Task Team delivered training on integrated indicators to measure how Cooperation Framework results aligned with the SDGs.

iv.   Engagement with key regional stakeholders

90.   The 2030 Agenda encourages and promotes multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to bring together governments, civil society, the private sector, regional organizations, the United Nations system and other actors in support of the implementation of all the SDGs and targets. The current crisis demands a vision that goes beyond national borders and allows for the design and coordination of multilateral actions. Only by integrated multi-stakeholder collaboration will it be possible to tackle the pandemic successfully and, at the same time, deal with its social and economic effects in the short, medium and long terms. Based on this common vision and a spirit of regional solidarity, the United Nations development system at the regional level has engaged with a series of key stakeholders and fostered collaboration with traditional and new partners in order to better support Member States in advancing in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in such an unprecedented crisis.

91.   Many initiatives led by the United Nations development system have received support from regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations in the effort to mobilize all available human, institutional and financial resources and regional assets to better serve the countries of the region, focusing on cross-cutting areas, such as the COVID-19 response, gender equality, social development, education, population and development, migration, financing for development, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, and building resilience. While many activities that leverage partnerships with other organizations have been reported in previous sections, the following examples highlight the United Nations development system convening and partnership-building capacities and successes at the regional level.

92.   ECLAC, jointly with other United Nations entities, in particular UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, has activated some of its existing ECLAC subsidiary bodies and intergovernmental meetings, for which the Regional Commission acts as Secretariat, and their presiding officers mechanisms. They include in particular the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Conference on Social Development, the

Regional Conference on Population and Development, and the Statistical Conference of the Americas, to convene all stakeholders in the region to discuss the challenges in order to identify common solutions to overcome the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those conferences have acted as regional platforms that offered a space for policy dialogue, peer learning, exchange of experience, and multi-stakeholder engagement to discuss the progress made and challenges faced in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This is carried out in synergy with regional agendas and action plans such as the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, the Regional Gender Agenda, and the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, and taking into consideration the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. All 33 Member States and 14 associate members of ECLAC, all United Nations entities, Resident Coordinators, global, regional and subregional organizations, civil society organizations, including feminist and women's organizations, indigenous, people of African descent, and youth organizations and movements from the region, private sectors, and academia participated in and contributed to the outcomes of these events.

93. Another multi-stakeholder network, which exists to promote gender equality and the autonomy of women in the region, is the Inter-American Task Force on Women's Leadership, which comprises ECLAC, PAHO, UNDP and UN-Women, as well as OAS (through the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)) and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), IDB, ParlAmericas, the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and IDEA International, together with two civil society organizations, the Caribbean Institute for Women in Leadership (CIWiL) and the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM).

94. The Regional SDG-Education 2030 Latin America and the Caribbean Steering Committee, chaired by UNESCO and the Ministry of Education of Colombia, is one of the United Nations development systems' key partnerships in the area of quality education. It has been a vital regional coordination mechanism that involves different stakeholders, including governments, United Nations entities (in particular UNESCO, UNICEF and a third rotating seat now held by UNFPA), and regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations, such as CARICOM, the Central American Education and Cultural Coordination (CECC) of the Central American Integration System (SICA), OAS and the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI), as well as civil society organizations with a regional or subregional coverage (the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE) and Education International are current representatives). This multi-stakeholder platform has been important for creating consensus and promoting cooperation, communication and coordination to articulate existing efforts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Regional Steering Committee has also been key in advocating for prioritizing and protecting education in the countries' emergency responses. It has also furthered the regional development of initiatives on policy and technical dialogue among Member States.

95. Another key network of partners in the area of education is the Regional Education Group

for Latin America and the Caribbean region led by UNICEF and the non-governmental organization, Save the Children. It includes seven United Nations entities (UNHCROCHA, IOM, UN-Women, UNAIDS, UNDRR, and UNESCO), government agencies, such as the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the non-governmental international humanitarian agency IsraAID, World Vision, RET Americas, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, among others.

96.   Within the framework of the [Education4Justice Initiative](#) in support to CECC-SICA, UNESCO and UNODC organized two events to promote dialogue and exchange between youth leaders and policy makers from its eight Member States to advance the implementation of the recommendations in the field of citizenship education adopted within the Contingency Plan in Education for the SICA region, which is one of its prioritized pillars for action. The main outcomes of these dialogues are being systematized in a policy brief soon to be submitted for discussion with involved ministries of education.

97.   Other intergovernmental organizations and forums have also been actively involved in initiatives conducted in the region, such as IRENA in the implementation of the Climate Promise initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean led by UNDP in close collaboration with other United Nations entities, including UNEP, FAO and UNICEF. ECLAC has also signed a Framework Memorandum of Understanding between the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement to foster a strategic collaboration between the secretariat and the Regional Commission with respect to cooperation in the areas of climate mitigation, adaptation and awareness in the Latin American and Caribbean region. UNEP and PAHO signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate to reduce risks to health caused by environmental factors in the region and the implementation of the joint action plan on environment and health 2020-2021, involving the participation of academic experts and other key partners such as the Intergovernmental Network on Chemicals and Waste, the Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution and the Voluntary Coalition for the progressive closure of dumpsites in Latin America and the Caribbean.

98.   In summary, the year 2020 saw the transition from the United Nations Sustainable Development Group for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Regional Coordination Mechanism to the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean, a process which was finalized in December 2020. During this time, the United Nations development system in the region launched new inter-agency initiatives to provide integrated responses to challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and leveraged and adapted existing inter-agency initiatives to address gaps in SDG implementation. The system made use of the respective expertise of its members to develop joint analyses of the effects of the pandemic in the region and identify country-level policy recommendations to address the socio-economic emergency and support countries to build back better with short, medium, and long-term measures in areas such as education, employment generation, health and essential services, social protection, climate change and energy transition, food security, gender equality and women's empowerment, youth participation, the inclusion of

vulnerable populations in the recovery, and health-care infrastructure and manufacturing. Other United Nations development system functions included providing capacity building support to Latin America and Caribbean governments, Resident Coordinators, and United Nations country teams in their efforts to advance SDG implementation; fostering cooperation for implementing internationally and regionally agreed frameworks norms, and standards covering issues such as migration, gender equality and women's empowerment and autonomy, social development, and environmental protection; and fostering new partnerships to accelerate SDG implementation in the region.

V.   A way forward

99.   The extent to which the region is able to regain the path towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda will depend on some immediate priorities which relate to the capacity of Member States to administer the vaccine to their populations, including non-citizens; the availability of financial resources, both internal and external, to inject liquidity into micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises, which employ 60% of the active population in the region;[53] the continued implementation of emergency socioeconomic measures to support the most vulnerable; and the safe reopening of schools for on-site classes, and economic units; among others.

100.   The pandemic offers an opportunity to conduct a profound transformation in the region towards a new, more inclusive and sustainable development pattern with modifications to the production structure and the establishment of a new universal social welfare regime. An inclusive, resilient, and sustainable recovery will require addressing structural issues such as insufficient investment in public health and education systems, low economic growth and productivity and high levels of informality, decent work deficits, limited coverage of social protection systems, socioeconomic inequalities, fiscal frailty, low trust in institutions, political and social polarization, perception of State capture, and weak mechanisms of political representation, all of this in a context of limited regional integration. Health is an example of a sector that could benefit from further regional integration, especially regarding vaccine production and distribution, medical supplies, and medicines. COVID-19 has shown the importance of investing in research and development and technology transfer and development to ensure equitable global access to those technologies and foster regional integration.

101.   Risk is increasingly systemic, with complex interactions between human, social, political and economic systems, and natural systems. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the urgent need for new conceptual and analytical approaches to improve understanding and management of risk dynamics and complex, interconnected risk drivers with cascading effects. Progress will only be accelerated towards risk-informed sustainable development and regeneration by strengthening the understanding of systemic risk and incorporating

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[53] D. Herrera, "MSME Financing Instruments in Latin America and the Caribbean During COVID-19", *Discussion Paper*, No. IDB-DP-771, Washington, D.C., Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), May 2020.

systems-based approaches in the design of policies and investments across all sectors, geographies and scales. Improved risk governance is essential. There is an opportunity to build on progress to date.

102. The RCP will be at the forefront to support Member States, Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams in delivering high-quality policy advice on the socioeconomic emergency while introducing new paradigms in public policy and public-private interaction to transition to a new equitable and sustainable development model. The RCP has also a key role in promoting and accompanying the development of other subregional strategies, such as in the cases of the Comprehensive Development Plan for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and south-southeast Mexico, or the support for the implementation of the recommendations of the multi-country office review in the Caribbean. Moreover, the RCP will facilitate joint actions to address gaps in SDG implementation and foster regional coherence.

103. The IBCs and thematic groups will further leverage the expertise of their members to produce policy analysis and recommendations; generate research and data analysis; elaborate tools and guidance and deliver targeted technical assistance in response to country demands; as well as facilitate the positioning of key regional issues and messages in regional and global policy fora in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. IBC roles will be fostered to expand and strengthen synergies to generate tangible country-level results by bringing technical support to Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams in the specific thematic areas. In 2021, an IBC on financing for development is proposed to be established in addition to the initial five IBCs on climate change and resilience, crime and violence, equitable growth, governance and institutions, and human mobility. The RCP will also be supported by various operational groups, namely the Knowledge Management Hub Steering Committee, the SDG Data and Statistics Group, the Peer Support Group, the Partnerships and Communication Group, and the Regional Operations Management Team in order to deliver common regional public services and support to the countries of the region.

Annex: Membership of issue-based coalitions and other inter-agency working groups

Issue-based Coalitions	Leading United Nations entity	Members
Climate Change and Resilience	UNDRR, UNEP	DCO, ECLAC, FAO, ILO, IOM, OCHA, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIDO, UNICEF, UNOPS, UN-Women, WFP
Crime and Violence	UNICEF, UNODC, UN-Women	DCO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNHCR, UNESCO, UNFPA, WFP
Equitable Growth	ECLAC, ILO, UNDP	FAO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UN-Women
Governance and Institutions	UNDP, UNODC, UNOPS	DCO, DPPA, ECLAC, FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN-Women
Human Mobility	ECLAC, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF	FAO, ILO, OCHA, OHCHR, PAHO/WHO, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UN-Women, WFP

Thematic Working Groups	Leading United Nations entity	Members
Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls	UN-Women	FAO, ILO, IOM, OCHA, OHCHR, PAHO/WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNDRR, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNV, WFP
Youth	UNDP, UNFPA	ECLAC, FAO, ILO, PAHO/WHO UNAIDS, UNEP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNV, UN-Women

Operational Working Groups	Leading United Nations entity	Members
Peer Support Group	DCO	DESA, DPPA, ECLAC, FAO, IOM, OCHA, OHCHR, PAHO/WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNDRR, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UN-Women, WFP
Partnerships and Communication Working Group	UNDP, UNFPA	DCO, DPPA, ECLAC, FAO, IOM, ILO, OCHA, OHCHR, PAHO/WHO, UNAIDS, UNDRR, UNEP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UN-Women, WFP
Knowledge Management Hub Steering Committee	ECLAC, UNDP	DCO, UNEP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-Women
SDG Data and Statistics Group	UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-Women	ECLAC, FAO, ILO, OCHA, PAHO/WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNDRR, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC, UN-Women
Regional Operations Management Team	UNDP, UNFPA	DCO, ECLAC, FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, OCHA, OHCHR, PAHO/WHO, UNAIDS, UNEP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, UN-Women, WFP