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Update for the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

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Committee Overview

Recent Developments

Although the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has not had an official meeting in recent months, it has actively worked with other United Nations (UN) agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society to strengthen regional relationships and sustainable development within Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).¹ In particular, ECLAC was very active in the discussion that took place at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*, held in Paris, France from 30 November – 11 December 2015.² ECLAC also released one of its most important annual reports in December, “Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean 2015,” which provided the latest estimates of economic growth in the LAC region for 2015 and predictions for growth in 2016.³ Furthermore, ECLAC partnered with civil society organizations (CSOs) to issue a report calling for greater economic cooperation between LAC and China because of China’s growing economic influence in the region.⁴

As stated, ECLAC was extremely active at COP21 in Paris; its Member States participated in a variety of events and meetings while promoting sustainable and inclusive development strategies.⁵ ECLAC participated in an event titled “Towards Better Climate Action in Latin America: Present and Future Regional Cooperation on Climate Change,” which expanded upon previous programs that addressed the LAC region’s strategies toward climate change.⁶ ECLAC also worked with the Central American Agricultural Council (CAC) to host an event titled “Food Security Under a Changing Climate.”⁷ This event worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme to address the effects that climate change has on food security and development.⁸ As well, ECLAC proposed a debt relief strategy for English-speaking Caribbean states also classified as Small Island Developing States (SIDS).⁹ The strategy proposes a “regional resilience fund to finance climate change adaptation and mitigation measures” be established; Director of ECLAC’s Economic Development Division, Daniel Titelman, announced this proposal.¹⁰ Just days after COP21 concluded, experts from 15 LAC states met at ECLAC headquarters in Santiago, Chile to underscore the effects of international trade on the global fight against climate change.¹¹ The specialists from LAC states concluded their discussions by reaffirming that ECLAC must remain focused on combatting climate change, as it remains a hindrance to achieving sustainable development.¹²

On 17 December 2015 ECLAC released its annual report, “Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2015,” which updated the previous year’s assessment on the region’s economic growth and encourages Member States to improve economic growth through productivity and investment.¹³ Senior UN officials highlighted the connection between the agreements reached at COP21 and investing in the production of renewable energy sources, which could improve economic development while also combatting climate change in the region.¹⁴ The ECLAC report also predicts limited growth in 2016 as the price of commodities that the LAC region exports remain low, especially in the hydrocarbon and mineral sectors.¹⁵ This reaffirms that ECLAC Member

¹ UN ECLAC, *ECLAC Will Promote Initiatives for Sustainable and Inclusive Development During the COP21*, 2015.

² *Ibid.*

³ UN ECLAC, *ECLAC Presents its Overview of the Region’s Economies in 2015 and its Projections for Next Year*, 2015.

⁴ OECD, *The time is now for a new Latin America-China partnership to foster mutual development strategies, says the Latin American Economic Outlook 2016*, 2015.

⁵ UN ECLAC, *ECLAC Will Promote Initiatives for Sustainable and Inclusive Development During the COP21*, 2015.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ UN ECLAC, *ECLAC Proposes Debt Relief for the English-speaking Caribbean to Invest in the Fight Against Climate Change*, 2015.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ UN ECLAC, *Experts Highlight Contribution of International Trade to Fight Climate Change and for Sustainable Development*, 2015.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ UN ECLAC, *Latin American and Caribbean Economies Will Grow Just 0.2% in 2016 in a Complex Global Scenario*, 2015.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

States should consider investing in renewable energy sources, which would diversify their economies while also allowing them to combat climate change.¹⁶

To respond to the dismal report on the economic outlook of LAC in 2015 and 2016, ECLAC partnered with the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and the CAF – Development Bank of Latin America to release a report titled “Latin America Economic Outlook 2016.”¹⁷ The report calls for enhanced partnership strategies between LAC and China, which already has strong economic relationships with several LAC states including Brazil, Chile, and Peru.¹⁸ The report also encourages LAC states to reform development policies to more adequately cater to China’s agro-food industry and services, while promoting long-term strategies to promote investment and trade relations with China.¹⁹

In concluding 2015, and looking forward to 2016, ECLAC continues to serve as a platform for achieving social and economic development in the LAC region. In particular, ECLAC is playing a crucial role in the growing international regime to combat climate change. Ultimately, ECLAC remains committed to promoting sustainable development through its renewed commitment in addressing climate change, supporting regional international efforts of increasing economic development and progression, and strengthening its relationship with the UN and the international community as a whole.

¹⁶ UN ECLAC, *Latin American and Caribbean Economies Will Grow Just 0.2% in 2016 in a Complex Global Scenario*, 2015.

¹⁷ UN ECLAC, *The Time Is Now for a New Latin America-China Partnership to Foster Mutual Development Strategies*, 2015.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

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United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2015, December 11). *The Time Is Now for a New Latin America-China Partnership to Foster Mutual Development Strategies* [Press Release]. Retrieved 23 December 2015 from: <http://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/time-now-new-latin-america-china-partnership-foster-mutual-development-strategies>

This source discusses the document “Latin American Economic Outlook 2016,” released by the OECD in December 2015. This report ties in with a recently released ECLAC report as they both agree that Latin America’s economic growth will be negative for 2016. This is important for delegates to read as it suggests that LAC states begin to strengthen their relationship with China. China has been a vital trade partner with LAC states, even surpassing intraregional trading partners. This document is thus significant to the region as China’s trade relationship with LAC states has grown significantly since 2000, and the OECD report encourages this relationship to continue to increase for continued progress in LAC.

United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2015, December 15). *Experts Highlight Contribution of International Trade to Fight Climate Change and for Sustainable Development* [Press Release]. Retrieved 23 December 2015 from: <http://www.cepal.org/en/news/experts-highlight-contribution-international-trade-fight-climate-change-and-sustainable>

This press release discusses the recent COP21 and the role that ECLAC played at the conference. Climate change continues to be an important topic that effects all members of the LAC community. Fifteen ECLAC Member States met to discuss the effects of climate change on the region and the outcomes of the COP21 in Paris. This is an important source because it gives an overview of recent meetings that have been held between ECLAC Member States regarding climate change and other recent events on the subject.

United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2015, December 17). *Latin American and Caribbean Economies Will Grow Just 0.2% in 2016 in a Complex Global Scenario* [Press Release]. Retrieved 23 December 2015 from: <http://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/latin-american-and-caribbean-economies-will-grow-just-02-2016-complex-global-scenario>

This press release discusses the recent report released by ECLAC entitled “Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the Caribbean 2015.” The report suggests that Latin American economies have contracted in 2015 and will not grow much in 2016. The document calls on LAC states to focus on increasing investment and productivity in order to improve economic growth. This is important for delegates to consider because it is a very recent report released by ECLAC and has implications on all of this committees’ topics and on Member States’ policies. This source should be read in conjunction with the OECD report on the same subject.

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United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2015, December 15). *Experts Highlight Contribution of International Trade to Fight Climate Change and for Sustainable Development* [Press Release]. Retrieved 23 December 2015 from: <http://www.cepal.org/en/news/experts-highlight-contribution-international-trade-fight-climate-change-and-sustainable>

United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2015, December 17). *Latin American and Caribbean Economies Will Grow Just 0.2% in 2016 in a Complex Global Scenario* [Press Release]. Retrieved 23 December 2015 from: <http://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/latin-american-and-caribbean-economies-will-grow-just-02-2016-complex-global-scenario>

I. Social and Economic Development in Cities

Recent Developments

Population growth is currently at its fastest rate of all time – half of the world’s population lives in cities – and urban growth estimates show an additional 1.5 billion people will be added in the next 15 years.²⁰ For this reason, recent international discussions have emphasized the crucial role of socioeconomic and environmental goals in developing an agenda for sustainable cities that is both comprehensive and long-term.

On 25 September 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) achieved unprecedented success during its 70th session by adopting resolution 70/1, “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”²¹ Through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 Targets, the international community aims to further the established work of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and achieve long-term sustainability through policies that improve current social, economic, and environmental realities.²² To this end, it is important to highlight SDG 11, “Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable,” which aims to declare a comprehensive set of measures, through its 10 targets, to improve housing, transportation, urban planning, sanitation, environmental policies, heritage protection, and infrastructure, among other key areas.²³ In addition, it is also worth considering the other goals relating to social and economic development in cities: Goal 1 aims to eradicate poverty; Goal 6 focuses on clean water and sanitation; Goal 8 stands for decent work and economic growth; Goal 10 seeks to reduce inequalities.²⁴

In early October, ECLAC’s subsidiary body, the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, met in its second session in Mexico City to discuss the implementation of the *Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development*, which was adopted in 2013 by the Commission and deals with issues relating to equality and the recently adopted SDGs.²⁵ According to ECLAC’s Executive Secretary Alicia Bárcena, the Consensus is essential for the region’s progress on population policies that will focus on prioritizing citizens’ needs and increasing opportunities to ensure equality and autonomy.²⁶

Furthermore, climate predictions for 2016 suggest Latin America faces greater negative risks from climate phenomena, such as El Niño expecting to exceed global extreme flooding and drought records.²⁷ For instance, in December 2015, Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay experienced heavy rainfall that caused flooding in multiple areas, but particularly those close to major rivers; thousands were forced to evacuate their homes and streets were no longer functional.²⁸ As these risks increase due to climate change, it is essential to take an all-inclusive approach when discussing city development that includes policies targeting disaster risk reduction and prevention.²⁹ In December, efforts to encourage disaster reduction measures were adopted as part of GA resolution 70/204, highlighting the need for countries to cooperatively implement policies in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international documents to guarantee that cities and communities will be ready and resilient in the face of extreme weather conditions.³⁰

Among one of the most important meetings of 2015, the 21st Conference of Parties of the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* held in December in Paris, France, bringing together the international community to take action to implement mitigation, adaptation, and climate responsibility measures.³¹ After several days of deliberation and compromise, the Conference adopted the *Paris Agreement*.³² To uphold the policies put forth in the

²⁰ UNFPA, *Urbanization*.

²¹ UN DPI, *Closing Statement of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*, 2015.

²² UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 1.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 14.

²⁵ UN ECLAC, *Population Policy is Essential for Full, Sustainable Development*, 2015.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ UN OCHA, *El Niño: Snapshot of Impact and Projected Humanitarian Needs*, 2015.

²⁸ *Flooding 'worst in 50 years', as 150,000 flee in Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay*, BBC News, 2015.

²⁹ UN DPI, *Recent unusual weather worldwide calls for urgent preventive action, UN official warns*, 2015.

³⁰ UN General Assembly, *International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/70/472/Add.3)*, 2015.

³¹ UN ECLAC, *Historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change*, 2015.

³² UNFCCC, *Adoption of the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1)*, 2015.

Agreement and to encourage adaptation and mitigation policies, ECLAC is focused on “progressive structural change for a more sustainable and inclusive development,” which aims to protect the region from extreme flooding and drought conditions and to foster a general social benefit.³³ Given that these structural changes are at the heart of city sustainability and reducing social inequality, ECLAC’s plans strive to promote adaptation policies that protect the social wellbeing of individuals and are economically advantageous for communities.³⁴ Mitigation policies will focus on “social inclusion and health care measures – such as the improvement of public transportation, waste management and ecosystem’s health.”³⁵

In addition to concerns relating to climate change, urban development has become one of the top priorities in international policymaking due to fast population growth.³⁶ For instance, the Third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) to be held in Ecuador in October 2016 to bring together all sectors of society to develop a New Urban Agenda.³⁷ As part of the preparations for Habitat III, the region announced it will be participating in discussions to build awareness about the New Urban Agenda and host a Habitat III Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Meeting in April 2016 in Toluca, Mexico City with the goal of bringing policy recommendations that could ultimately be adopted at the conference in October.³⁸

Demand for greater access to employment opportunities, housing, public space, and infrastructure, food, water, sanitation, and other social services is increasing exponentially with the fast population growth in cities.³⁹ Current global discussions and outcomes such as the SDGs and the *Paris Agreement* aim to raise awareness about the social and economic issues facing citizens today more than ever, as well as balance development with sustainability. Hence, emphasis must be made in discussions that promote city sustainability by including a comprehensive approach that mainstreams the core values of the SDGs and targets that foster social welfare and economic development, while also upholding preventive and responsibility measures to protect the environment from future greater deterioration.

³³ UN ECLAC, *The Climate Agreement in Paris: Betting on Collective Action*, 2015.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ UNFPA, *Urbanization*.

³⁷ UN-HABITAT, *UN-HABITAT III Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development*.

³⁸ UN-HABITAT, *HABITAT III Regional Meeting Latin America And The Caribbean - Toluca, Mexico 18-20 April 2016*.

³⁹ UNFPA, *Urbanization*.

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<http://crpd.cepal.org/en/news/population-policy-essential-full-sustainable-development>

The Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean is a subsidiary body of ECLAC that meets every two years. In its second session, the conference priority remains to monitor and review issues in the region related to population and development. Delegates will benefit from evaluating the relationship between the outcomes of the conference against other current international agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement as they better conceptualize how these efforts in Latin America can be matched to achieve international expectations.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2015). *Adoption of the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1)* [Draft Outcome Document]. Retrieved 8 January 2016 from:

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/109r01.pdf>

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change is one of the most important documents adopted in 2015 and makes an impact on the future of urban development. This agreement set a limit on global warming by aiming to eradicate greenhouse emissions through stopping the increase in global average temperatures, promoting adaptation measures to deal with the impacts of climate change, and by fostering financial investment to implement these measures. Delegates should evaluate how the decisions made in this agreement affect economic growth of urban areas while also curbing the negative effects of climate change through sustainability measures. In addition, delegates should consider how the Agreement would also affect the way in which disaster relief efforts are incorporated.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a comprehensive document in which the 17 Sustainable Development Goals are outlined along with its 169 Targets. Delegates should closely consider how the goals and targets are interrelated and support each other, and also examine important issues that did not become part of this agenda. Delegates should specifically consider the full extent of Goal 11 and how Member States can incorporate its values into national policies that aim to achieve a sustainable urban agenda. Delegates should seek to understand how Goals 1, 6, 8, and 10 indirectly relate to this topic and how can they be incorporated into measures that embody a more inclusive approach to city development.

United Nations, General Assembly, Second Committee, Seventieth session. (2015). *International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/70/472/Add.3)* [Report]. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/70/472/Add.3>

This report contains draft resolution II on “International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,” adopted by the GA as resolution 70/204, highlighting the importance of implementing strong commitments to curb the negative effects of natural disasters. It calls for the international community to study, evaluate, monitor, and strengthen disaster risk and relief measures. These measures are emphasized through the sustainable development perspective in which non-governmental organizations, women, persons with disabilities, and other civil actors must be included in the management and implementation of these policies in order to build resilient communities. Delegates should consider how to further incorporate civil society into disaster risk reduction efforts and how they can take a greater role in building resilient cities that take into consideration the goals put forth in this resolution and other major international agreements.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (n.d.). *UN-HABITAT III Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development* [Website]. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: <http://unhabitat.org/habitat-iii-conference/>

As delegates gain a deeper understanding of the role of cities in sustainable development, it will be essential to consider how Latin America and the Caribbean can take a greater role in one of the most anticipated conferences of 2016, Habitat III. This resource specifically will help delegates achieve a better understanding of what the international community will be discussing

in the coming years and what measures could be at the core of the New Urban Agenda and how they can be implemented.

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II. Guaranteeing Indigenous Peoples' Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean

Recent Developments

Perhaps the most important event for the United Nations (UN) in 2015 was the unanimous adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015.⁴⁰ Though each of the goals connect to the human rights of indigenous peoples, two targets specifically mention indigenous people groups: Target 2 of Goal 2, to double the agricultural productivity of indigenous peoples, and Target 5 of Goal 4, to “ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training” for indigenous peoples.⁴¹ Still, during the drafting of the goals many indigenous leaders felt the SDGs did not do enough to incorporate indigenous groups into the agenda.⁴² The minimal focus was especially problematic given that the UN failed to mention indigenous groups in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the previous decade.⁴³ Some progress has been made towards incorporating indigenous peoples into the post-2015 development agenda, however, as the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) convened a meeting of experts from 22-23 October 2015 to “develop strategic guidance and action-oriented recommendations” for development efforts in relation to the post-2015 development agenda.⁴⁴ UN officials hope that this renewed focus will lead to improvements in the protection of indigenous rights over the next decade.⁴⁵

At the regional level, the Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion of Peru (MIDIS), and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) hosted the “Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean” from 2-4 November 2015 in Lima, Peru.⁴⁶ At the conference, social development ministers from Latin American and Caribbean countries discussed the document “Inclusive Social Development: The Next Generation of Policies for Overcoming Poverty and Reducing Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean,” which focuses specifically on the unique inequalities that face indigenous populations in the region.⁴⁷ The report documents that “167 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean” live in poverty, with indigenous populations being particularly disadvantaged in the areas of education, health resources, and employment.⁴⁸ The delegates to the conference also adopted an outcome resolution that prioritized efforts to overcome social inequality in the future through South-South cooperation and policy analysis from ECLAC and all participating Member States, all of which should guide the improvement of the human rights of indigenous peoples going forward in ECLAC’s work.⁴⁹

In November 2015, ECLAC published “Towards Universal Social Protection: Latin American Pathways and Policy Tools”, which provides a new way of looking at social development and indigenous peoples’ rights that can guide and inform forthcoming work on the issue.⁵⁰ As a joint effort of four of ECLAC’s policy analysts, this publication outlines innovative social policies that Latin American Member States have used to protect social rights in the past decade.⁵¹ More specifically, the authors propose a new concept of social protection, which is marked by three fundamental ideas: “basic welfare guarantees, insurance against risks arising from the context of the life cycle, and moderation or repair of social harm that occurs when social problems or risks materialize.”⁵² The authors argue that social protection policy should combine efforts to provide for welfare needs facing the whole population with the welfare needs of specific marginalized groups, such as indigenous people.⁵³ In the past, policymakers have only paid attention to marginalized groups when they formulate their welfare programs.⁵⁴ Instead, the authors argue, Member

⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17.

⁴² Borrero, *Indigenous Peoples Cannot be Left Behind in the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, 2015

⁴³ UN DESA, *Concept Note: Indigenous Peoples and Agenda 2030*, 2015, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁴ UN DESA, *EGM on Indigenous Peoples and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development*, 2015.

⁴⁵ UN DESA, *Concept Note: Indigenous Peoples and Agenda 2030*, 2015, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁶ UN ECLAC, *Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2015.

⁴⁷ UN ECLAC, *Inclusive Social Development: The Next Generation of Policies for Overcoming Poverty and Reducing Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2015, pp. 25-31.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ UN ECLAC, *Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean Resolution 1(1)*, 2015.

⁵⁰ Cecchini, et al., *Towards Universal Social Protection: Latin American Pathways and Policy Tools*, 2015.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

States should utilize the social policy used to target indigenous groups as a model for social policy reform, marking a significant deviation from traditional thought processes on the issue.⁵⁵

In 2016, the UN system convened two important meetings relating to the rights of indigenous peoples. From 19-21 January 2016, the DESA/DSPD held a meeting of international experts on the topic “Indigenous Languages: Preservation and Revitalization” at UN headquarters in New York.⁵⁶ This meeting focused on Articles 12, 14, and 16 of the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which describe the importance of language to the preservation of indigenous cultures.⁵⁷ Although many recognize the importance of the preservation of indigenous languages, the UN has estimated that one indigenous language dies every two weeks.⁵⁸ For this reason, the January meeting has been crucial to discussing new strategies for preserving indigenous languages through education, the use of indigenous languages in urban contexts, the use of indigenous languages in print and digital media, and through state use of indigenous languages.⁵⁹ Policymakers are optimistic that this meeting, which represents the second meeting of experts on this topic, will pave the way to improved policy at the national and international levels, thus guaranteeing a greater protection of indigenous rights.⁶⁰ Likewise, the UN’s Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) will hold its 15th annual meeting from 9-20 May 2016 to discuss the theme “Indigenous Peoples: Conflict, Peace, and Resolution,” which is particularly relevant to the field of human rights.⁶¹

The conclusion of 2015 was fruitful for the UN and ECLAC’s efforts to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. The bodies convened expert panels, produced high-quality reports, collected data, and formulated policy for the sake of improving the protection of indigenous peoples’ rights in all Member States. The UN’s efforts in the field of sustainable development and social public policy are aimed at improving the status of indigenous groups and these recent events are clear indications of the steps forward that are being made.

⁵⁵ Cecchini, et al., *Towards Universal Social Protection: Latin American Pathways and Policy Tools*, 2015.

⁵⁶ UN DESA, *International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages*, 2015.

⁵⁷ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (A/RES/61/295)*, 2007.

⁵⁸ UN DESA, *International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages*, 2015.

⁵⁹ UN DESA, *International Expert Group Meeting Programme of Work*, 2016.

⁶⁰ UN DESA, *International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages*, 2015.

⁶¹ UN DESA, *UNPFII Fifteenth Session*, 2015.

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Cecchini, S., et al. (2015). *Towards Universal Social Protection: Latin American Pathways and Policy Tools*. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/eclac-un-towards-universal-social-protection.pdf>

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean produced this report to present a cohesive analysis of some of the rights-based approaches to social protection that have been used in Latin America in recent years. The authors propose a universalist approach to social protection, rather than one which focuses on specific marginalized groups. Thus, although policies for the rights of indigenous people are mentioned specifically only rarely, the entirety of this publication speaks to different strategies that may be used to protect the rights of indigenous peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean. Among other strategies, this book covers conditional cash transfer programs, health care programs, and education programs, all of which could be incorporated into the policy recommendations of the delegates when considering the rights of indigenous peoples.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development. (2015). *Concept Note: Indigenous Peoples and Agenda 2030*. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs/2015/indigenous-agenda2030/egmconceptnote.pdf>

This concept note was formulated to outline the connections between the post-2015 development agenda and the rights of indigenous peoples. The note discusses the differences between the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals as related to the incorporation of the needs of indigenous peoples as well as the way that indigenous groups have been present during the writing and adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals. Delegates should keep these connections in mind in their work for the conference, as the emphasis on sustainability across all substantive work at the United Nations is particularly salient this year.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development. (2015). *International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages* [Website]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/meetings-and-workshops/8109-2.html>

This website discusses the plans for the upcoming international expert group meeting on indigenous languages and the protection of these languages. Delegates should be aware of the important connection between language and the preservation of indigenous culture, which is a right afforded to indigenous groups under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indeed, the incorporation of indigenous language into education is one successful policy that has been used to mitigate inequality between indigenous groups and the general population. Language can be seen as one of the most important facets of the human rights of indigenous peoples, and should therefore play a role in the policies formulated by delegates during the conference.

United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2015). *Inclusive Social Development: The Next Generation of Policies for Overcoming Poverty and Reducing Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean* [Position Document]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from:

<http://crds.cepal.org/en/documents/inclusive-social-development-next-generation-policies-overcoming-poverty-and-reducing>

This report documents the status of social development for marginalized groups in Latin America and the Caribbean, and it focuses specifically on the status of indigenous groups in Chapter I. After outlining recent developments, the report discusses a variety of policy options to improve social equality including conditional cash transfer programs, legal frameworks, anti-poverty policies, vocational training, and protection against natural disasters. While most of this discussion is applicable to all marginalized groups, the report also notes which policies would be relevant to combatting poverty and inequality for indigenous groups in Chapter IV. Chapter V concludes with a discussion of the relevance of these policies to the sustainable development goals. Delegates may consult this timely document for ideas to inspire their own policy solutions in their resolutions and position papers.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 7 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1>
Adopted at the annual meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015, the post-2015 development agenda marks a new framework for international development. Many of the Sustainable Development Goals focus on targets that have special significance for marginalized groups such as indigenous peoples. These targets include goals for universal employment, access to health care, the sustainable use of natural resources, and education for women and children, all of which are applicable to current efforts to provide indigenous groups with these basic human rights. Delegates should understand the nuances of each of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the targets for action that connect to the goals, in order to draft resolutions and position papers that fully comply with the post-2015 development agenda delegates should also consider the extent to which indigenous groups were integrated into the goals, or left out, as some would argue, and whether this means the Sustainable Development Goals will be fully effective in promoting the rights of indigenous peoples.

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Cecchini, S., et al. (2015). *Towards Universal Social Protection: Latin American Pathways and Policy Tools*. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/eclac-un-towards-universal-social-protection.pdf>

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United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2015). *Inclusive Social Development: The Next Generation of Policies for Overcoming Poverty and Reducing Inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean* [Position Document]. Retrieved 4 January 2016 from: <http://crds.cepal.org/en/documents/inclusive-social-development-next-generation-policies-overcoming-poverty-and-reducing>



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III. Promoting the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

Recent Developments

The use of natural resources has continued to be a priority for the United Nations (UN) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) since September 2015.⁶² Natural resource usage was discussed heavily during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* in December 2015.⁶³ The conference provided an important milestone for both Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) countries and the entire global community as 195 Member States agreed upon a plan to slow the rise in earth's temperature by 1.5 degree Celsius.⁶⁴ The *Paris Agreement* calls for complete global cooperation in sharing best practices and giving proper aid to developing and middle economic regions of the world, including the LAC region.⁶⁵ This Agreement comes shortly after adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015 and contains objectives well ahead of what top climate researchers determined are necessary for a successful future with regard to the economy and the environment.⁶⁶ The nearly two week long COP21 was an especially important time for ECLAC Member States classified as Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which are disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change.⁶⁷ One SID Head of State, Bahamas President Perry Christie, suggested strongly during COP21 that there was a need to ensure that these Member States were helped to overcome their unique obstacles as one outcome of the *Paris Agreement*.⁶⁸ Other Latin American states recognized the importance of an agreement that allows for ambitious reduction in carbon emissions while still being able to use natural resources for economic development to lower poverty levels.⁶⁹ While ECLAC has not convened since May 2014, this historic agreement was widely celebrated by its Member States as an opportunity to further manage natural resources while securing sustainable development.⁷⁰

COP21 was an important milestone for LAC Member States toward increasing sustainable development, but it was also a critical point for European and North American members of ECLAC to maintain positive relations with developing regions of the world.⁷¹ European Member States of ECLAC convened in December 2015 to begin discussing their role in production of sustainable technologies in developing regions of the world, in LAC.⁷² North American and European Member States will have a pivotal role to play in determining the future of sustainable development for LAC, thus this meeting and its outcomes are crucial to understand future policy decisions.⁷³

While long term environmental sustainability remains an important aspect of properly managing natural resources, going forward there are also significant economic challenges that the international community still must address.⁷⁴ Petrobras, one of the largest oil corporations in LAC, has been struggling to overcome a debt crisis and saw significant losses in revenue in 2015.⁷⁵ Petrobras' issues seem emblematic of a larger issue within the LAC oil market, which is experiencing low prices, as they currently attempt to sell off a significant portion of their offshore oil fields.⁷⁶ With the recent challenges facing the oil market, LAC states are considering methods to develop new forms of sustainable energy not just to preserve natural resources but also to ensure strong economic development.⁷⁷

Equal access to water, one of the most important natural resources, also continues to be an important issue for LAC.⁷⁸ In November 2015 there were multiple dam collapses in Brazil that caused the deaths of over 20 people in

⁶² UN ECLAC, *Historic Paris Agreement on Climate*, 2015.

⁶³ UNFCCC, *Adoption of the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1)*, 2015.

⁶⁴ UN ECLAC, *Historic Paris Agreement on Climate*, 2015.

⁶⁵ UNFCCC, *Adoption of the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1)*, 2015.

⁶⁶ UN ECLAC, *Historic Paris Agreement on Climate*, 2015.

⁶⁷ Brown, *Bahamas PM renews call for grant, aid reform for SIDS at climate conference*, 2015.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Cunningham, *Reflections on COP 21: The Paris Agreement*, 2016.

⁷⁰ UN ECLAC, *Historic Paris Agreement on Climate*, 2015.

⁷¹ UNFCCC, *Adoption of the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1)*, 2015.

⁷² *IUCN Regional Conservation Forum calls for stronger biodiversity action and nature based solutions in Europe*, IUCN, 2015.

⁷³ Brown, *Bahamas PM renews call for grant, aid reform for SIDS at climate conference*, 2015.

⁷⁴ Connors & Kiernan, *Petrobras CEO's Challenges Aren't Going Away*, 2015.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Bousso & Blount, *CORRECTED-RPT-Brazil's Petrobras offers to sell up to 10 pct of coveted offshore oil field*, 2015.

⁷⁷ Connors & Kiernan, *Petrobras CEO's Challenges Aren't Going Away*, 2015.

⁷⁸ *Another two Brazil dams 'at risk of collapsing*, BBC News, 2015.

addition to cutting the supply of drinkable water for almost a quarter million people.⁷⁹ These dams were used primarily by iron and silver production companies to keep contaminated water out of public water supplies.⁸⁰ With the collapse of these dams, large segments of Brazil's population are now susceptible to dangers that come from contaminated water, as well as lacking clean water for agricultural purposes.⁸¹ In addition, there have been reports of damages that could potentially lead to the collapse of additional dams within Brazil.⁸² These dam failures came just a month prior to the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC) calling attention to mining facilities contaminating water access for indigenous peoples in Colombia.⁸³ The IAHRC, a branch of the Organization of American States, noted the lack of proper infrastructure for transporting clean water as one of the main reasons for continued contamination of this natural resource.⁸⁴ With water being one of the most critical natural resources for LAC there is a need to help build stronger infrastructure that will secure the right to water for individuals.⁸⁵

The sustainable use of natural resources has continued to be a top priority for the entire UN throughout 2015 and saw a crucial turning point for future policy decisions during COP21.⁸⁶ In order for the *Paris Agreement* to have success in LAC, North American and European Member States of ECLAC can help develop new sustainable technologies while providing adequate economic growth in maintaining the quality of natural resources such as water within the mandate of the commission.⁸⁷

⁷⁹ Darlington, *Dam break sweeps away homes in Brazil, killing at least 1 person*, 2015.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ *Another two Brazil dams 'at risk of collapsing*, BBC News, 2015.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ *Human Rights Group Demands Colombia Protect Indigenous Children*, Telesur, 2015.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ UN ECLAC, *Historic Paris Agreement on Climate*, 2015.

⁸⁷ *IUCN Regional Conservation Forum calls for stronger biodiversity action and nature based solutions in Europe*, IUCN, 2015.

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Another two Brazil dams 'at risk of collapsing'. (2015, November 17). BBC News. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-34851895>

This news article highlights a timeline of dam failings in Brazil that have led to both deaths and contamination of water, one of the most basic natural resources. Further, the article notes the failure to provide a safe environment surrounding mining operations and accept adequate responsibility by various groups. Through this source delegates can see how the development of infrastructure is necessary to ensure the protection of water resources.

Connors, W. & P. Kiernan. (2016, January 4). Petrobras CEO's Challenges Aren't Going Away. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/petrobras-ceos-challenges-arent-going-away-1451958600>

Economic growth is a primary driver of development and it is important to understand the climate surrounding the trade of natural resources. As it pertains to LAC, these Member States should be aware of the consequences of a devaluing oil market. Delegates should use this news article to view different reasons for the development of renewable energy sources by the international community as well as current challenges.

Human Rights Group Demands Colombia Protect Indigenous Children. (2015, December 18). Telesur. Retrieved 6 January 2016 from: <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Human-Rights-Group-Demands-Colombia-Protect-Indigenous-Children-20151218-0037.html>

Water is a key natural resource and the importance of access to clean water cannot be understated, especially for people living in rural areas. Not only do rural residents depend on water for drinking but also for maintaining of farm lands in order to sustain them financially. Delegates should look to Organization of American States initiatives such as described in this article to better understand the importance of water as a natural resource for the entire international community.

United Nations, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2015, December 12). *Historic Paris Agreement on Climate* [Press Release]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: <http://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/historic-paris-agreement-climate-change>

The Paris Agreement, detailed in this press release, came in December 2015 and marks a milestone for the international community in ensuring a sustainable future. With 195 Member States coming together for this movement towards sustaining natural resources, the Agreement takes an ambitious approach to creating a better future. Delegates should use the Paris Agreement and this release from ECLAC as a guide for what the United Nations and ECLAC hope to achieve going forward for sustaining natural resources.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. (2015). *Adoption of the Paris Agreement (FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1)* [Draft Outcome Document]. Retrieved 5 January 2016 from: <http://undocs.org/FCCC/CP/2015/L.9/Rev.1>

The full text of the Paris Agreement is one of the major starting points for looking at the future of natural resources in the global community and specifically in LAC. In addition to noting specific goals that these Member States hope to achieve, the Agreement also highlights how they intend to achieve this goal. Delegates should take special care to note provisions made to help emerging economies and developing countries reach their goals.

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