



Sistema Económico
Latinoamericano y del Caribe

Latin American and Caribbean
Economic System

Sistema Económico
Latino-Americano e do Caribe

Système Economique
Latinoaméricain et Caribéen

Final Report on the XXXVIII Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council

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A. RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

1. In compliance with provisions set forth in Article 12 of the Panama Convention, the XXXVIII Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council was held at the headquarters of SELA in Caracas on 17, 18 and 19 October 2012.

2. Participants included delegations from the following Member States: Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela; representatives of the following international and regional organizations: Caribbean Community (CARICOM); Latin American Association of Development Financing Institutions (ALIDE); and the International Organization for Migration (IOM); the Permanent Secretary of SELA, His Excellency Ambassador José Rivera Banuet, and officials from the Permanent Secretariat of SELA.

3. On 17 October, a Meeting of Heads of Delegation took place prior to the formal opening of the Preparatory Stage, which considered the Agenda and Organization of Works contained in document SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 2-12/Rev.1, proposed the new Members of the Bureau for the Council and considered Draft Decision N° 1, entitled "Participation of Paraguay in the XXXVIII Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council." In this connection, Heads of Delegation discussed extensively on the topic and the aforementioned Draft Decision, which established the non-participation of Paraguay at the meeting. They decided to submit the issue for consideration of the Preparatory Stage of the Council.

4. the Bureau of the Latin American Council was made up as follows: His Excellency Wilfred Elrington, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belize, as Chairman; His Excellency Erick Molina Sandoval, Ambassador of the Republic of Guatemala in Venezuela, as First Vice-Chairman; His Excellency José Antonio Marcondes de Carvalho, Ambassador of the Federative Republic of Brazil in Venezuela, as Second Vice-Chairman; and the Honourable Rubén Darío Molina, Director-General of the Office of Multilateral Affairs and Integration of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as Rapporteur. All of them were unanimously elected.

5. The Preparatory Stage was opened by the Honourable Mr. Héctor Javier Sucojayo de La Cruz, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Embassy of the Plurinational State of Bolivia in Venezuela. In his speech, at the end of his country's term as Chairman of the Latin American Council, he said that it was a period of intense activity as part of the work carried out by the organization, as reflected by the consultations and responses to requests from Member States as well as regional and subregional cooperation and integration organizations. Sucojayo underscored the important discussion and coordination efforts carried out with the active participation of his Excellency Jorge Alvarado Rivas, former Chairman of the Latin American Council, and the Member States, to support the Permanent Secretariat in compliance with Decision No. 513, and for the sake of better focusing SELA's work. He noted that the result of such effort was the proposed Draft Work Programme for 2013.

6. The delegations thanked the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for the work carried out during its Chairmanship of the Latin American Council, and congratulated the new Bureau on their election and successful conduction of the Preparatory Stage. They also thanked the Permanent Secretary of SELA, Ambassador

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José Rivera Banuet, and the staff of the Permanent Secretariat for their technical and logistical support and hospitality.

7. The Ministerial Stage was opened by the Honourable Mrs. Verónica Guerrero Rodríguez, Vice-Minister for Latin America and the Caribbean of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, who stressed that the most universal Venezuelan of all time, our Liberator Simón Bolívar, is a reference par excellence of the Latin American and Caribbean integration and unity, with initiatives such as the creation of the Gran Colombia or the proposed Amphictyonic Congress of Panama. She added that her Government, committed with the Bolivarian ideology, is actively working on the strengthening of innovative mechanisms, such as ALBA, MERCOSUR, UNASUR, and now CELAC, for the countries in the region to advance together, setting aside differences and working under the guidance of those principles which unite them, such as complementarity, cooperation, solidarity and respect for the sovereignty of peoples.

In this regard, she said that SELA has a lot to contribute as a space for reflection and creation of bold proposals for the generation of thinking and the joint economic action in the region, at both intra-regional and extra-regional levels. She pointed out that SELA must become the fundamental support to CELAC, to the governments of its 33 member countries, in terms of guidance, recommendations, advice on effective and efficient economic policies to deal with the global crisis and ensure the well-being and good living of all, through economic policies for productive and commercial complementarity, linkages of productive chains and the scientific, technological and industrial strengthening of the countries in the region. The text of her speech is included in Annex I of this Report.

8. Immediately afterwards, His Excellency Wilfred Elrington, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belize, in his capacity as Chairman of the Bureau of the Council, formally opened the meeting and, on behalf of his government, thanked the Member States for his election, expressing his readiness to fully support the activities of the Latin American Council and those of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA.

9. The Permanent Secretary of SELA, His Excellency Ambassador José Rivera Banuet, congratulated the members of the Bureau on their election, thanked the valuable work of the outgoing Bureau, and welcomed participants, saying that during his tenure he has endeavoured to comply with the activities entrusted by the Latin American Council and aimed at achieving an increasingly stronger and more effective presence of the organization in the region. In his speech, he highlighted the coincidence of this meeting with the celebration of the thirty-seventh anniversary of the signing of the Panama Convention establishing SELA. He then praised the valuable work carried out by His Excellency Jorge Alvarado Rivas, former Ambassador of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in support of SELA's activities and his contribution to the participation of the Member States in the development of integration and cooperation among them.

10. The Chairman submitted for consideration by the delegations the "Annotated provisional agenda and organization of works" for the Meeting (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 2-12/Rev.1), which was approved without amendments and includes the following items:

- I. Organization of Works
- II. FORUM: "Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC): Direction and prospects"
- III. Annual Report of the Permanent Secretariat
- IV. Work Programme for the year 2013
- V. Administrative Budget of the Permanent Secretariat for the year 2013

- VI. Administrative and Institutional matters
- VII. Election of the Permanent Secretary of SELA
- VIII. Other Matters

The List of participants and the List of documents are included in Annexes III and IV.

Next, the Chairman opened the meeting and invited the Permanent Secretariat to submit the items described above.

ITEM III: XXXVI ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

11. The Permanent Secretariat of SELA submitted its "Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of Activities of the Permanent Secretariat" for the period from October 2011 to September 2012 (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 3-12), which details the implementation status of the Work Programme for the year 2012, as well as other related tasks carried out by the organization in compliance with the mandates it has received.

The Secretariat also submitted the report on the compliance with Decision N° 527 of the Latin American Council, related to the linking of the Work Programme and activities of SELA with those of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

12. The Chairman thanked the Permanent Secretariat for the presentation of said documents and invited delegations to take the floor for remarks on this matter.

13. The delegations approved without amendments the reports submitted by the Permanent Secretariat.

ITEM IV. WORK PROGRAMME OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT FOR THE YEAR 2013

14. The Permanent Secretariat submitted the "Draft Work Programme for the year 2013" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 4-12) and highlighted that the programme took into consideration the guidelines set forth in Decision N° 440 of the Latin American Council, whereby the activities were divided into three thematic areas, namely: Intra-Regional Relations, Technical and Economic Cooperation, and Extra-Regional Relations. The Permanent Secretariat also stated that during the preparation of the contents of the Draft Work Programme, the objectives of the Work Programme for the year 2012 were assessed for compliance. Furthermore, the recommendations made by the Member States during the various activities and meetings carried out in 2012 were also included.

Similarly, the Secretariat stressed that consideration was taken of the views, suggestions and proposals that emerged during the reflection process on the future Work Programme of SELA among representatives of the Embassies of Member States accredited to Caracas and the Permanent Secretariat.

In addition, the Permanent Secretariat noted that the Informal Working Group held nine meetings to follow up compliance with Decision N° 521, whose results are reflected in the document entitled "Report of the Informal Working Group on the compliance with Decision N° 521 of the Latin American Council" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/Di N° 36-12).

Similarly, the Permanent Secretariat submitted the document "Proposal for the establishment and development of the SELA-SMEs Programme" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 10-12), highlighting the background, objectives and activities of the Programme.

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15. The Chairman thanked the Permanent Secretariat for the presentation of the Draft Work Programme for the year 2013, the Report on the compliance with Decision N° 521 and the Proposal for the establishment of the SELA-SMEs Programme, and invited delegations to make comments on the subject.

16. In this connection, the Meeting adopted Decisions N° 535 "Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat for the year 2013;" N° 532 "SELA-SMEs Programme;" N° 537 "Adoption and implementation of an evaluation methodology for the Work Programme of SELA;" and N° 539 "Follow-up to Decision N° 527 'Support of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and its Work Programme to the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)'".

17. Furthermore, the Meeting adopted Decision N° 538 "Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean."

ITEM V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT FOR THE YEAR 2013 AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

a. Budget

18. The Permanent Secretariat submitted for consideration by the delegations the "Draft Administrative Budget of the Permanent Secretariat for the year 2013" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 5-12), along with its corresponding presentation, which maintains the same amount and structure of income and expenses as that of the year 2012 and was approved. An urgent call was made to those Member States in arrears with SELA so that they get up to date with their quota payments as soon as possible. In this regard, they adopted Decision N° 534 "Administrative Budget for the year 2013."

b. Administrative Matters

Audit Report on the Financial Statements of the Permanent Secretariat at 31 December 2011

19. The Permanent Secretariat submitted for consideration by the delegations the "Audit Report on the Financial Statements of the Permanent Secretariat at 31 December 2011" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 6-12), which was approved. In this connection, the Meeting adopted Decision N° 531 "Audit Report on the Financial Statements of the Permanent Secretariat at 31 December 2011."

Audit Proposal for the year 2012

20. The Permanent Secretariat submitted for consideration by the delegations the "Audit Proposal for the year 2012" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 7-12). In this regard, the Meeting adopted Decision N° 536 "Appointment of Auditors for 2012."

ITEM VI: INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Election of a Member of the Administrative Tribunal of SELA

21. The Permanent Secretariat submitted for consideration by the delegations the document "Election of a Member of the Administrative Tribunal of SELA" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 8-12). In this connection, the Meeting adopted Decision N° 540.

Ending the blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba

22. The Permanent Secretariat submitted the document "Follow-up Report on the application of the Helms Burton Law, 2011-2012" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/Di N° 24-12). In this connection, the Meeting issued the declaration "Ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba."

ITEM VII. ELECTION OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

23. The Council considered the candidacy of Economist Roberto Guarnieri Cammilli, a national of Venezuela submitted by the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, for the post of Permanent Secretary of SELA for a four-year period from 2 January 2013 to 2 January 2017. In this regard, the Council adopted Decision No. 540.

24. During the Forum "**Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC): Direction and prospects,**" the following speakers took the floor:

a) His Excellency, Ambassador José Rivera Banuet, Permanent Secretary of SELA, welcomed speakers participating in the panel, special guests and the public attending the forum. Afterwards, he stressed that this Latin American Council meeting should focus on the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), because it represents a significant effort by the 33 countries in the region to strengthen unity and promote cooperation for greater communication, negotiation and consultation with the rest of the world. He added that CELAC will allow significant progress in expectations of Latin America and the Caribbean of becoming an area with greater presence at international level. Since the establishment of CALC and subsequently of CELAC, SELA has contributed with great enthusiasm to this task. Then he pointed out that the Permanent Secretariat has received several mandates from the delegates of the Member States of SELA, through specific decisions of the Latin American Council, to make its best efforts and work hand in hand with CELAC. In this connection, he mentioned the main activities and initiatives undertaken by the organization in its strong and permanent purpose of accompanying and cooperating with CELAC, in coordination with other regional bodies. He announced a meeting of high-level officials, to be held in November 2012 at the headquarters of the Permanent Secretariat, to discuss the eventual conduction of a Meeting of Ministers on prospects for the industrial and productive development of the region. Finally, he described and highlighted the objectives and importance of the Directory of Latin American and Caribbean intergovernmental organizations, institutions and agencies, which he said will be released soon by the Permanent Secretariat.

b) The Honourable Marisol Pérez, Representative of the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC, dealt with the background, creation, nature, organs, international competence and prospects of CELAC, stressing among its objectives the following: i) Deepen the political, economic, social, and cultural integration of the region; (ii) Reaffirm the preservation of democracy, the rule of law and full respect for human rights; (iii) Intensify the political dialogue and the coordination of regional positions to promote the interests of the region; and (iv) Increase its influence in the international arena. Promote an integrated agenda, aimed at giving continuity to the existing mandates. Then, she pointed out the main challenges of CELAC, namely: i) Build a real connection between the Caribbean and South America; (ii) Prevent the multiplicity of organizations; and (iii) Move towards the physical integration of the countries in the region. Finally, she referred to the I Summit of CELAC, scheduled to be held from 27 to 28 January 2013 in Santiago, Chile. She said that this Summit is expected to adopt the Santiago Declaration and Action Plan, documents that will contain the mandates for the continuation of the work of CELAC in 2013.

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c) The Honourable Rubén Darío Molina, Director-General of the Office of Multilateral Affairs and Integration of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Member of CELAC's Troika, focused on the role of the new organization, trying to clear up the following question: What is CELAC for? He said that much more forums about CELAC are required. As regards the Directory of Latin American and Caribbean intergovernmental organizations, institutions and agencies, submitted by the Permanent Secretary of SELA, Ambassador José Rivera Banuet, Molina considered it a very important contribution and recalled that Mexico had provided a list of 30 bodies, which in his opinion was very useful for the development of CELAC. Then, he provided an account of integration efforts, whose course of independence and history was set by our indigenous peoples and liberators and pursued further by the Rio Group and CALC. He also referred to experiences in integration gained by the various mechanisms that make up the Latin American and Caribbean institutions, such as the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and SELA with its 37 years of existence and 28 Member States. He mentioned the Unity Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in the Riviera Maya, Mexico, on 22 and 23 February 2010, to recall the moment in which the creation of CELAC was proposed. Among the challenges of the new Community, he highlighted the need to consolidate its new geopolitical positioning and status as political bloc, on the basis of a multipolar world, where Latin America and the Caribbean is at the forefront of other regions.

d) His Excellency Wilfred Elrington, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belize, congratulated SELA on its thirty-seventh anniversary, and summarizing his vision of CELAC, he pointed out that its emergence heralds a historic moment in which the countries of the region are integrating to face the future from a more independent, sovereign and secure perspective. He commended SELA for its excellent work, as well as the visionaries who created it. He said that the core ingredients of any strategy or plan are the economic component, which ensures the sustainability and viability of the plan, and the social component, which has to do with the objective, beneficiaries, people. He noted that, thanks to CELAC, for the first time in history a region of colonized peoples could break completely with colonialism and form an alliance made up exclusively of them. He added that CELAC is currently at a very vulnerable stage and we must ensure that it develops and matures. We must think carefully how to nurture and develop it, making sure that the voice of every member of the community is heard, in a truly representative and democratic atmosphere, on the basis of respect for the rule of law. Otherwise, he said, that will be a prelude to disaster. Finally, he stressed the need for CELAC to have: i) A flexible unit for preventive diplomacy, based on a closer and more harmonious relationship among its members; (ii) An efficient financial structure; and (iii) The vision of their heroes.

ITEM VIII. OTHER MATTERS

25. In view of the absence of the representation of Paraguay at the XXXVIII Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council, the draft Decision concerning the non-participation of that Member State at the meeting was withdrawn by their proponents, leaving evidence of the importance of the situation in Paraguay for the Member States.

B. DECISIONS

DECISION N° 531

**AUDIT REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AT 31 DECEMBER 2011**

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

HAVING SEEN:

Article 15, paragraph 5, and Article 31, paragraph 7 of the Panama Convention;
and,

The Financial Statements of the Permanent Secretariat at 31 December 2011 and the Auditor's Reports that form part of document "Audit Report on the Financial Statements of the Permanent Secretariat at 31 December 2011" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 6-12).

DECIDES:

Sole Article: To approve the Audit Report on the Financial Statements of the Permanent Secretariat for the fiscal year from 1 January to 31 December 2011.

DECISION N° 532
SELA-SMEs PROGRAMME

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

HAVING SEEN:

Article 5, paragraph 1 and paragraph 3, of the Panama Convention, which establishes among the objectives of SELA "to promote regional cooperation, with a view to attaining self-sustained, independent and integral development..." and "to promote the formulation and implementation of economic and social programmes and projects of interest to the Members States," respectively;

CONSIDERING:

The extensive experience gained by SELA as Management Unit of the Ibero-American Programme of Institutional Cooperation for the Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (IBERPYPME), created in 1999 on the occasion of the VIII Ibero-American Summit;

The discontinuation of the IBERPYPME Programme as of 2011 because of the financial constraints affecting its main contributor, the Kingdom of Spain;

The need to ensure the participation of all Member States interested in any programme, project, or activity carried out by SELA;

The background and results of the IBERPYPME Programme and of those programmes conducted by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA along with other institutions for the development of SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean;

The advisability of continuing and expanding efforts to promote the economic and social development of the Member States based on regional cooperation in the sector of the small and medium-sized enterprises.

DECIDES:

Article 1: To establish the Regional Latin American and Caribbean Programme for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, SELA-SMEs;

Article 2: To adopt as terms of reference for the SELA-SMEs Programme the scope described in the document "Proposal for the establishment and development of the SELA-SMEs Programme," SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 10-12, which is an integral part of this Decision;

Article 3: To instruct the Permanent Secretariat to include in its annual Work Programme the draft projects and activities of the SELA-SMEs Programme to be developed during each budget year, and submit them for consideration of the Latin American Council;

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Article 4: To request the Permanent Secretariat, in implementing the SELA-SMEs Programme, to support the use of specialized economic and technical cooperation resources that may be available at the level of Member States and regional and subregional organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean;

Article 5: To authorize the Permanent Secretariat to make arrangements to obtain regional and international cooperation for complying with the implementation of the SELA-SMEs Programme, particularly to ensure its financing vis-à-vis CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Article 6: To express its appreciation to the Kingdom of Spain, through the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development, for its very significant and valuable support to the development of the region through the IBERPYME Programme since its inception, as well as its confidence that the SELA-SMEs Programme will count on its unconditional support;

Article 7: To request the Permanent Secretary to report on the scope of this Decision at the next session of the Ibero-American Summit.

DECISION N° 533

DESIGNATION OF A MEMBER OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL OF SELA

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

HAVING SEEN:

Decision N° 370,

and the document "Election of a Member of the Administrative Tribunal of SELA"
(SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 8-12).

DECIDES:

Sole Article. Designate Dr. Patricia Sobion as Member of the Administrative Tribunal of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System for the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2015.

DECISION N° 534**ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2013****THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL;****HAVING SEEN:**

Article 15, paragraph 5; Article 31, paragraph 6, and Article 36 of the Panama Convention; Article 3 of Decision 141; Article 6 of Decision 177; and Decisions 414, 440, 449, 457, 471, and 522 of the Latin American Council;

CONSIDERING:

That it is necessary to provide the Permanent Secretariat with adequate financial resources so as to better enable it to fully comply with the functions set forth in the Panama Convention and the Work Programme approved by the Latin American Council;

DECIDES:

Article 1. To approve a budget in the amount of US\$ 2,200,000 for the period from 01 January to 31 December 2013, according to the following distribution by categories:

	CATEGORIES:	US\$
I.	LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL	20,000
II.	PERMANENT SECRETARIAT	2,180,000
	1. International Staff	499,826
	2. Local Staff	1,233,934
	3. Direct Expenses – Work Programme	323,000
	4. Official Travels	45,000
	5. General Administrative Expenses	78,240
	TOTAL	2,200,000

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Article 2. The Budget for the year 2013 will be financed with the contributions made by the Member States, according to the current system of quotas, as set out hereunder:

<u>PERCENTAGE APPLIED</u>	<u>MEMBER STATES</u>	<u>REGULAR QUOTA IN US\$ 2013</u>
36,813%	GROUP I	699.455,04
12,271%	ARGENTINA	233.151,68
12,271%	BRAZIL	233.151,68
12,271%	MEXICO	233.151,68
34,275%	GROUP II	651.219,55
6,855%	COLOMBIA	130.243,91
6,855%	CUBA	130.243,91
6,855%	CHILE	130.243,91
6,855%	PERU	130.243,91
6,855%	VENEZUELA	130.243,91
17,422%	GROUP III	331.021,05
1,161%	BAHAMAS	22.068,07
1,161%	BOLIVIA	22.068,07
1,161%	COSTA RICA	22.068,07
1,161%	ECUADOR	22.068,07
1,161%	EL SALVADOR	22.068,07
1,161%	GUATEMALA	22.068,07
1,161%	HONDURAS	22.068,07
1,161%	JAMAICA	22.068,07
1,161%	NICARAGUA	22.068,07
1,161%	PANAMA	22.068,07
1,161%	PARAGUAY	22.068,07
1,161%	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	22.068,07
1,161%	SURINAME	22.068,07
1,161%	TRINIDAD AD TOBAGO	22.068,07
1,161%	URUGUAY	22.068,07
1,312%	GROUP IV	24.903,24
0,328%	BARBADOS	6.225,81
0,328%	BELIZE	6.225,81
0,328%	GUYANA	6.225,81
0,328%	HAITI	6.225,81
10,179%	HOST COUNTRY	193.401,07
10,179%	VENEZUELA	193.401,07
100,000%	TOTAL QUOTAS	1.900.000,00

The difference of US\$ 300,000 will be financed with income stemming from the payment of outstanding quotas.

Article 3. Reiterate the obligation that Member States have to timely comply with the payments of their budget quotas, in order to help the Permanent Secretariat of SELA to efficiently perform its functions.

Article 4. Petition Member States to comply with the provisions set forth in Article 6 of Decision N° 177, which establishes that the current year's quotas should be paid as follows: a minimum of 33% prior to 31 March; another 33% prior to 30 June, and the remaining balance prior to 30 September.

DECISION N° 535**WORK PROGRAMME OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT FOR THE YEAR 2013****THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,****HAVING SEEN:**

Article 5, paragraph 2, of the Panama Convention;

Article 15, paragraph 6, of the Panama Convention, and

The document "Draft Work Programme for the year 2013" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 4-12).

The Caracas Declaration "In the Bicentenary of the Struggle for Independence Towards the Path of Our Liberators," in particular Articles 26, 27, 30 and 36.

CONSIDERING:

The contents and spirit of Decision N° 440, adopted by the Latin American Council at its XXVIII Regular Meeting, held in Caracas in April 2003;

The work carried out by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA during the year 2012, along with the Member States, in compliance with the instructions set forth in Decision No. 513 and 521 of the Latin American Council;

The scope of Decision N° 527, "Support of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and its Work Programme to the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)",

DECIDES:

Article 1. To approve the Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA for the year 2013.

Article 2. In carrying out the various activities foreseen in its Work Programme, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA will keep regular contact with the members of the Bureau of the Latin American Council and the other representatives of the Member States.

FOREWORD

The Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat for the year 2013 takes due account of the guidelines established by the XXVIII Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council, through Decision No. 440, according to which SELA's activities are structured in three areas: Intra-Regional Relations, Economic and Technical Cooperation and Extra-Regional Relations.

In approving this Work Programme, the Latin American Council took into consideration the proposal submitted by the Permanent Secretariat, which was drawn up on the basis of the guidelines set forth in Decision No. 513. That decision instructed the Secretariat, on the basis of dialogue and an evaluation with representatives of the Member States, to define a proposal focused on the organization's activities, seeking a greater impact and added value within the context of the needs for cooperation, integration and development of its Member States.

For this purpose, since late 2011 until mid-September, 2012, a total of nine meetings took place. Three of those meetings were under the format of informal consultations conducted by the Permanent Secretary with the heads of Mission of the Member States; four of them were held within the context of the Informal Reflection Group, and the other two followed the format of the Working Sub-Group. This mechanism for dialogue and interaction has turned out to be both practical and effective, not only for defining a proposal for a Work Programme conforming to the aforementioned guidelines of the Latin American Council but also to address other important issues of operational nature that are aimed at meeting the needs for greater impact and functionality in the tasks of the organization.

It is worth noting that the Work Programme for 2013, as provided for in Decision 527 adopted by the XXXVII Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council in 2011, once again weighs in the linkages that the Permanent Secretariat and its Work Programme are expected to have with the process of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), particularly as regards its contribution to the fulfilment of the 2012 Caracas Action Plan and the mandates to be adopted by the upcoming Summit of the Community, whenever it is deemed appropriate.

The Work Programme for the year 2013 is based on the regular budget of the Permanent Secretariat for that year (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 5-12), according to the financial terms indicated there, i.e. there is no budget increase, in absolute or relative terms, despite the broad range of activities that it includes, but it is rather based on an effort to attract extra-budgetary contributions and cooperation from international and regional organizations.

It should also be noted that the Work Programme for the year 2013 attaches special priority to the activities in the area of Intra-Regional Relations, and consequently to the allocation of resources in that area, responding to the demands of the historical times lived in the region. This is without prejudice to the sustained efforts that should be devoted to the area of Economic and Technical Cooperation – in which priority is given to focalization and the search for the best possible use of regional potentials – and the area of Extra-Regional Relations – which is of paramount importance to understand challenges and take advantage of the opportunities posed by the difficult and volatile international economic environment faced by Member States.

Finally, in the implementation of the Work Programme for the year 2013, the Permanent Secretariat intends to ensure communication, cooperation, coordination,

complementarity and synergy with the other regional organizations and mechanisms referred to in the Caracas Declaration, and in particular, to provide collaboration and support to the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC, as soon as it is requested.

INTRODUCTION

The Permanent Secretariat has prepared this Draft Work Programme for the year 2013 on the basis of the following parameters:

1. The mandates of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to:
 - a. "Move forward on the basis of our principles for the strengthening and consolidation of Latin American and Caribbean cooperation, in the development of our economic complementarities and South-South cooperation as an axis of integration in our common space, and as an instrument to reduce our asymmetries" (Caracas Declaration, paragraph 27).
 - b. "promote action plans for the implementation of the mandates and the fulfilment of the commitments embodied in the Salvador de Bahia and Cancun Declarations, the Montego Bay Action Plan and the Caracas Work Programme" (idem. paragraph 29).
2. **Decision 527** of the Latin American Council, which requested the Permanent Secretariat of SELA to attach priority to CELAC's activities, particularly to the decisions stemming from the December 2011 Caracas Summit;
3. **Decision 521** of the Latin American Council, relating to the Work Programme for the year 2012 and other Decisions with an impact on it;
4. The recommendations made by the Member States on the occasion of the meetings held within the context of the implementation of the Work Programme for 2012, and the informal consultations on its priorities for 2013.

Decision 527- SELA-CELAC Coordination

At the current stage in which the CELAC process is unfolding, and with a view to strengthening it, it is worth noting how the Permanent Secretariat has made strides with the mandate of coordination with CELAC, both at the level of mutual information and synergy of activities during the year 2012:

1. In compliance with Decision 527, the Permanent Secretariat presented a progress report on the activities for the period October 2011-April 2012 (Di N °. 6-12) and held a meeting with Member States on 3 April 2012. On that occasion, the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC reported on the progress of the implementation of the Caracas Declaration and the agenda foreseen for the Ministerial Troika and the National Coordinators.
2. In accordance with the work programme developed by the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC, with the facilitation of the General Secretariat of ALADI in organizing meetings of regional and subregional integration groupings as regards the economic and commercial dimension of integration, and taking into account the mandate of Decision 521 (Work Programme for 2012, Activity I.2.3, Analysis of the elements hindering greater integration and trade complementarity among LAC

countries), the Permanent Secretariat of SELA participated, both at the technical level and at a higher level, in consultations convened in pursuit of mechanisms and modalities to promote such integration, and has contributed with analytical documents on the topics covered in that area.

3. In the area of productive development, where the Montego Bay Action Plan assigned the role of facilitator to SELA, the Permanent Secretariat has conducted studies and analyses that will serve as a basis for the debates of the Meeting of High-Level Officials on Productive Development and Industrialization, intended to take place under the joint co-sponsorship of SELA and the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC in November 2012.

4. In the area of extra-regional relations, the Permanent Secretariat has prepared – and will submit to the Latin American Council – an analysis on the Economic Relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union in the context of the VII Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean-European Union, scheduled for January 2013, with the purpose of making a timely contribution to the preparations of CELAC in this field.

5. With respect to the international financial crisis – a particularly relevant issue in the Caracas Declaration and the Caracas Action Plan of CELAC – the *Regional Meeting: Analyses and Proposals for Strengthening the Regional Financial Architecture and Monetary and Financial Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean* was carried out on 27 and 28 February 2012. The Permanent Secretariat of SELA made available to the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC the base studies and the Conclusions and Recommendations of that Regional Meeting. Subsequently, in support to the preparatory technical meeting for the Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance of CELAC, the Permanent Secretariat updated the baseline study on the situation of the international economy, making it available to Ecuador, in its capacity as host country of the technical meeting when it will be submitted as an official document.

6. In the social area, the Permanent Secretariat has kept up-to-date the database on public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean in the area of poverty reduction, so that it can represent a contribution to the planned Ministerial Meeting on Social Development, scheduled to be held in Caracas in 2012.

7. In the area of culture, the Permanent Secretariat has encouraged regional cooperation for the development of cultural and creative industries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

8. The Permanent Secretariat keeps the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC informed of its activities on a permanent basis, sharing reports of the various meetings and seminars it holds, as well as the analytical documents it produces, so as to take full advantage of them within the context of the regional cooperation and integration process in its broadest perspective.

Taking into account the foregoing, the Draft Work Programme for 2013, in its three strategic areas, intends to:

1. Continue with the analytical activities of the Permanent Secretariat in areas of intra-regional and extra-regional interest, and in line with the mandates and activities of CELAC;

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2. Support regional coordination and cooperation in areas which are of priority interest;
3. Facilitate synergy between the activities of the various integration processes at the regional and subregional levels;
4. Promote mutual understanding among those processes;
5. Expand the scope of intra-regional cooperation, by taking full advantage of the potentials of the organization;
6. Promote complementarity and coordination with other organizations and cooperation mechanisms in the region within the framework of CELAC.
7. Provide timely and efficient technical support to the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC.

Area I – Intra-Regional Relations

Guidelines orienting this area and its projects and activities are conducted in close synergy with the process of CELAC.

The support focuses on a continuous process of analytical information on the developments of the regional integration processes and their interrelations, with special emphasis on:

1. The availability of specialized databases;
2. The productive integration (mandates from Montego Bay and the 2012 Caracas Action Plan), both in terms of the productive development and industrialization process and the factors related to it (Foreign Direct Investment, Information and Communication Technologies, Trade Facilitation, Single Window, Free Trade Zones, Value Chains, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises);
3. Integration and cooperation processes; new developments, the complementarity and convergence;
4. The development of a prospective vision on the major challenges and opportunities for the region in the long term.

Area II – Economic and Technical Cooperation

The guidelines followed by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA in this area of the Work Programme for 2013 are as follows:

1. Provide support for the process of consultation and coordination among national leaders in the area of economic and technical cooperation, both at the annual meeting of Technical Cooperation Directors and the substantive topics that such forum may select, as part of the efforts undertaken by CELAC in this subject matter;
2. Support the information flows among officials responsible for economic and technical cooperation;

3. Develop intra-regional cooperation in critical areas, in support of concerted regional and international priorities (Productive Development-SMEs, Trade Facilitation, Natural Disasters);
4. Provide support to the Member States through targeted activities for assistance and training.

Area III – Extra-Regional Relations

The general guideline orienting this area is to maintain a continuous process of assessment of the international environment in which the region unfolds, and contribute to focus the intra-regional activities and programmes through an analysis and identification of extra-regional challenges and opportunities.

In 2013, the Permanent Secretariat will continue with previous analyses, focusing on the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Member States within the context of the events held by the organization, while exploring new areas of interest as suggested by the dynamics of the region's external relations, without prejudice to the priorities or requirements that may arise from the political mandates of CELAC.

AREA I. INTRA-REGIONAL RELATIONS

PROGRAMME: SUPPORT TO INTEGRATION AND POLICIES FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (LAC)

PROJECT I.1. Support to Latin American and Caribbean integration. Deepening of coordination and convergence

Activity I.1.1. Compliance with Decision N° 527 of the Latin American Council of SELA regarding the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

A. Background and justification

As a follow-up to this Decision, the Meeting between Member States and the Permanent Secretariat of SELA in compliance with Decision No. 527 "Support of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and its Work Programme to the Establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)" was held on 3 April 2012 at the headquarters of the SELA. The basic objective of this meeting was to conduct an exchange of views about CELAC's activities and their impact on the Work Programme of SELA.

The Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC briefed on the results of the activities carried out since December 2011 to that date, when CELAC was created, highlighting the results of the Troika meeting held in Santiago, Chile, on 9 January 2012 and the Meeting of National Coordinators, held in March 2012, when the Report of the Pro Tempore Presidency on the implementation of CELAC's activities up to 18 March 2012 and its Annual Program of Activities were submitted.

Subsequently, the Permanent Secretariat has kept close contact with the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC in order to ensure the required ongoing coordination and mutual support. In fact, the Permanent Secretariat has regularly forwarded studies on subjects related to the work areas set forth in the 2012 Caracas Action Plan as well as reports on its activities in areas of mutual interest, as detailed in the report that the Permanent Secretariat is submitting to the Latin American Council (SP/CL/XXXVIII.0/Di N° 28-12).

In this context, the meeting of regional and sub-regional integration organizations in the areas of trade and economics was held on 16 and 17 August at the headquarters of ALADI in Montevideo. Proposals were made to develop common and complementary activities among the various agencies that should be taken into consideration for a similar meeting to be held in Santiago, Chile, in November 2012. The meeting will be convened by the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC, which will determine the tasks to be performed by each Secretariat or jointly by several of them in 2013.

B. Objectives

Support the implementation and consolidation of CELAC, in accordance with Decision No. 527, deepening dialogue, synergy and coordination between the Regional and Subregional Integration and Cooperation organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean, and develop specific tasks and actions according to area competence of each one of them, so as to assist in the creation of the integrated Latin American and Caribbean space proposed by CELAC.

C. Expected results

1. Support the process of the CELAC Summit at the request of the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC.
2. Permanent monitoring, support and participation, within the competences of SELA in the activities stemming from agreements and mandates of CELAC.
3. Systematization of updated information on the progress in the implementation of the mandates and agreements of CELAC, and make it available to the Member States, the regional and subregional organizations, as well as institutions and general public.

D. Budget

A total of US\$ 20,000 will be allocated to develop the activities related to the implementation of Decision No. 527.

Activity I.1.2. Drafting and distribution of regular reports of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA on the regional integration process

A. Background and justification

The Permanent Secretariat conducts a systematic monitoring and analysis of the integration process in the region, covering its main aspects and inter-relations. This is based on official reports, statistics and studies carried out by various integration and cooperation groupings in the region, the direct contacts with them and the reports from specialized organizations.

Since the regional integration and cooperation processes receive guidelines through consultation and consensus at the level of Heads of State and Government, from the orientation and implementation of the mandates of CELAC and the presidential summits with a subregional scope, the Permanent Secretariat intends to contribute through this

regular monitoring and analysis to build up an updated and comprehensive vision of the integration process for use by Member States.

B. Objectives

1. Conduct a permanent analysis of the evolution of the integration process, with emphasis on regional and subregional aspects, taking into account its multidimensional and comprehensive nature in order to report on its progress and the obstacles it faces.
2. Provide the Member States with a timely and comprehensive vision of the progress of regional integration, as well as an appreciation of the real possibilities of coordination and convergence among existing processes.

C. Expected results

1. Submittal to the Member States of an Annual Report on the Evolution of the Regional Integration Process, 2012 – 2013, which includes the status, progress and difficulties faced by this process in the various fields it covers.
2. Publication of the monthly “Bulletin on Regional Integration”, which provides a summary of the evolution of the integration and cooperation process and the main activities within the context of SELA and other regional and subregional integration organizations.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Follow-up of the integration process	On a permanent basis
Submittal of Report on the Evolution of Regional Integration, 2012 – 2013	October 2013
Bulletin on regional integration	Monthly

E. Budget

The budget to conduct the aforementioned activities amounts to US\$ 6,000, which includes three consultants' fees for three studies on specific issues related to the regional integration process, to be included in the “Report on the Evolution of Regional Integration, 2012-2013”. The other seven chapters of the report will be carried out as part of the regular duties of the Permanent Secretariat's technical staff.

Total estimated expenses: **US\$ 6,000.00**

Activity I.1.3. Development of the productive sector and industrialization (mandates of CELAC, Montego Bay, and 2012 Caracas Action Plan)

A. Background and justification

At the meeting of regional and subregional integration mechanisms of Latin America and the Caribbean, held at the headquarters of SELA, on 25 and 26 October 2010, under the Pro-Tempore Presidency of the Summit of Latin America on Integration and Development (CALC), the Permanent Secretariat of SELA was entrusted with the task of acting as facilitator of the regional dialogue on the productive dimension of Latin American and Caribbean integration.

For this purpose, the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CALC and the Permanent Secretariat of SELA organized the "Meeting of regional and subregional integration mechanisms on the productive dimension", which took place at the headquarters of SELA, Caracas, on 5 May 2011. On that occasion, the Permanent Secretariat presented the study "Coordination and convergence for productive integration in Latin America and the Caribbean". After an extensive debate on this document and the papers presented at the meeting, SELA Member States adopted the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. From the most recent experiences and changes in development strategies and policies in LAC, productive integration projects should be prioritized within subregional and regional integration processes.
2. Productive integration is crucial not only to consolidate the integration process itself, but also to achieve progress in terms of social inclusion, reduction in asymmetries within our countries, among our nations and against the world, and improve the international insertion of LAC countries.
3. The proposal for a productive integration agenda in LAC must include, among others, the following components: concepts of partnership and productive complementation as central elements for defining productive integration and development strategies and policies in Latin America and the Caribbean.
4. It is of particular relevance to review and explore regional and sub-regional mechanisms to finance projects for productive integration.
5. The Latin American and Caribbean multinational companies, arising from productive complementation, constitute a very promising tool that should be enhanced in the process of productive integration in LAC.
6. Bearing in mind the importance of the sector of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) – both in economic and social terms – participants noted the advisability of coordinating the various programmes supporting SMEs that have been undertaken in the different integration processes co-existing in Latin America and the Caribbean, in particular on productive integration. As part of these joint coordination efforts, a proposal with a regional scope could be defined, with specific initiatives to support SMEs in LAC, taking into account the lessons learned from the various existing regional and subregional projects.

B. Objectives

Follow-up of the mandates arising from the Montego Bay Action Plan and the 2012 Caracas Action Plan in the area of the productive dimension. For this purpose, the following elements should be developed:

1. Contribute to the definition of guidelines for public policies in the areas of productive and industrial development under the current conditions of our region;
2. Identify the potential contributions of its various components to develop concrete productive integration projects in Latin America and the Caribbean; and,
3. Define the most promising projects of productive integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, based on a critical review of regional and subregional efforts for cooperation in this area.

C. Expected results

1. Identification of modalities, strategies and lines of action to promote the productive and industrial integration within the framework of CELAC, based on studies carried out by the Permanent Secretary and the results of the meeting of high-level officials of ELAC and SELA, scheduled to be held in November 2012.

2. Counting on an assessment of productive development and industrialization policies applied in the region, while identifying the key elements and strategies to promote productive integration, which should serve as a basis for the debates during a possible Conference on Productive and Industrial Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, within the framework of CELAC.
3. Support the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC in organizing the Conference on Productive and Industrial Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Study-Assessment of the productive development and industrialization policies applied in the region, and to identify the fundamental elements and strategies to promote productive integration.	February-April
Facilitate the organization of the LAC Conference on Productive and Industrial Development in Caracas	To be determined jointly with the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC

E. Budget

The budget for this activity is estimated at **US\$ 21.000¹** to cover consultants' fees, per diem, air tickets, translation, interpretation and logistics.

Activity I.1.4. Cultural and creative industries in Latin America and the Caribbean

A. Background and justification

In the 2012 Caracas Action Plan, the Presidents of Latin America and the Caribbean decided to organize a meeting between regional and subregional integration mechanisms on cultural integration and incentives to the development of creative industries.

B. Objectives

Within the framework of this event, efforts will be made to shape up the elements that allow for adopting a regional consultation and cooperation work agenda on these matters, and to analyze the links between regional integration and cultural-creative industries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

C. Expected results

1. Two studies, one on cultural integration and the other one on development of creative industries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and
2. Regional Meeting within the context of CELAC.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Update of the studies conducted by SELA	March 2013

¹ Unless otherwise stated or in case of a specific breakdown, the budget for each activity covers the sum of expenses estimated for studies, air tickets and per diem expenses of consultants and experts, audio and interpretation services and miscellaneous expenses. The proportion of each expense concept within these general estimates varies in accordance with the characteristics of each activity of the Work Programme.

Regional Meeting	April 2013
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E. Budget

A global amount of **US\$ 21,000** has been allocated to conduct the Regional Meeting.

Activity I.1.5. Analysis and drafting of policy proposals for the consolidation of a regional financial architecture

A. Background and justification

The adverse impacts of the global financial crisis on the world and regional economy have prompted a series of economic and financial initiatives that seek to protect the region from the risks raised by the crisis and the unstable international economic scenario. In this regard, there have been proposals and various projects to promote the advancement and consolidation of a Regional Financial Architecture that responds to the challenges posed by the crisis. Moreover, this issue was recognized as a priority by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The Caracas Summit, held at the end of 2011, addressed issues such as the financing of intra-regional trade, crisis prevention and mitigation of its effects, and the progress made in designing a new regional financial architecture.

In this context, the Regional Meeting "Analyses and Proposals for Strengthening the Regional Financial Architecture and Monetary and Financial Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean" was held on 27 and 28 February 2012 at SELA headquarters. On that occasion, we identified measures aimed at responding to the crisis on the basis of intra-regional cooperation and the organization was invited to continue follow-up and analysis of these issues.

B. Objectives

1. Continue follow-up to major developments in the monetary and financial areas, with emphasis on the analysis of those elements that might lead to deepening regional cooperation in these areas.
2. Support CELAC's mandates in this field and respond to the requests of the Member States, as soon as they make them.

C. Expected results

1. Development of a progress report on financial cooperation and integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, including mechanisms for payment in national currencies among Member States: SUCRE, reciprocal credits and payments agreements of ALADI, local currency payment system of MERCOSUR, among others.
2. Preparation of study on innovative mechanisms for channelling funds to the productive economy in Latin America and the Caribbean.
3. Convening and holding of a meeting of experts on the debt burden in average-income countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Preparation of terms of reference for the studies to be drafted by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA	January 2013
Hiring of consultants and drafting of study	February – March 2013

Preparation and convening of meeting of experts	April 2013
Conduction of meeting of experts	May 2013
Forwarding of the Conclusions and Recommendations of the meeting of experts to the Member States and relevant regional organizations	June 2012

E. Budget

Budget resources will be required to cover consultants' fees (**US\$ 6,000**) and to conduct the regional meeting (**US\$ 15,000**).

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 21,000

Activity I.1.6. Follow-up and support to new forms of regional integration and cooperation within the framework of ALBA-TCP, UNASUR, PETROCARIBE and the Alliance of the Pacific, highlighting the possibilities for complementarity with existing integration schemes

A. Background and justification

The noticeable advances and new modalities assumed by the regional integration process, as well as the need to support processes that contribute to the creation of an integrated regional space involve specific work demands for SELA as the regional organization in charge of promoting integration through actions that contribute to the coordination and convergence of integration processes underway.

In this connection, it is advisable to conduct analytical efforts and disseminate relevant information on the newest integration processes, such as ALBA-TCP, UNASUR, SUCRE and PETROCARIBE, thus enriching knowledge among the various economic and social stakeholders in the region, as well as the process to prepare proposals on the architecture of the institutional framework for regional integration.

B. Objectives

To keep under monitoring and analysis the evolution of agreements that are developed within the framework of the ALBA-TCP, UNASUR and PETROCARIBE and Pacific Alliance in the various fields of regional integration and cooperation, in the perspective of their implications for the regional integration process.

C. Expected results

1. A comprehensive study on the experiences and evolution of the agreements developed by ALBA-TCP, SUCRE, UNASUR, PETROCARIBE, and the Pacific Alliance, as well as their impacts on the regional integration process.
2. Regional proposals to bring about a progressive coordination and convergence of integration processes in the region, based on the experiences of the new modalities for integration and cooperation being applied.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Terms of reference for the study	February 2013
Submittal of the study	March -June 2013

E. Budget

The budget to cover consultant's fees for conducting the study amounts to **US\$ 6,000**.

Activity I.1.7. Prospective analysis on the economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean

A. Background and justification

The great uncertainty created by the global crisis and the challenges that it has posed demand for analysis on economic growth and long-term development, which transcends the studies and estimates that focus almost exclusively on the short and medium-term problems facing the region. The Permanent Secretariat intends to complement its situation analyses with this important issue, in order to facilitate the availability of a strategic long-term perspective as a support for scenario analyses.

B. Objectives

Perform a regional prospective analysis on the dynamics and trends in economic growth and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

C. Expected results

1. Prepare an economic and social prospective study in Latin America and the Caribbean.
2. Hold a Regional Meeting on economic and social perspectives in Latin America and the Caribbean, with the participation of regional experts, in line with the mandates of CELAC.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Terms of reference	January 2013
Hiring of consultants	February–March 2013
Convening of the meeting	May 2013
Conduction of the meeting	June 2013

E. Budget

The amount of **US\$ 21,000** has been allocated for the conduction of the Regional Meeting.

Activity I.1.8. Maintenance of information tools designed by the Permanent Secretariat to support its programmes and projects and provide Member States with up-to-date information on key aspects of the Latin American and Caribbean integration process

A. Background and justification

The Permanent Secretariat, in order to support research, analysis and decision-making in the areas that define the Objectives of the Panama Convention, has developed databases that both individually and as a whole are valuable resources for strategic information. They require permanent updating and improvement in terms of their functionality. In the context of the new process of CELAC and the broad scope of its objectives, these resources, found in the Digital Information and Knowledge Centre of SELA (CEDIC-SELA) in Regional Cooperation and Integration, are considered to be a unique contribution in terms of its nature and coverage, but also necessary to ensure the success of this process.

B. Objectives

Permanent maintenance and updating of a series of tools of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), integrated into SELA's Web site (www.sela.org) and containing relevant, up-to-date, reliable information to effectively support decision-making and development of initiatives and efforts aimed at promoting integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

C. Expected results

1. Database on Information and Knowledge about Cooperation and Integration, which contains all the intellectual production of SELA and similar organizations, focuses mainly on the regional and subregional integration processes. This database refers users to the catalogue descriptions and full texts of over 5,000 documents, with most of them being SELA technical documents of various kinds. It also contains key documents generated by the main Latin American and Caribbean institutions linked to the regional and subregional integration processes, and in general, to sustainable development and growth in the region.
2. Database on Public Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is an updated inventory for quick consultation as regards policies, programmes, projects and services aimed at combating poverty, including the regional and local levels in the Member States of SELA.
3. Database on Foreign Trade Flows. This database contains data on imports, exports and trade balances among the Member States of SELA and between different integration schemes, based on the information contained in the Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
4. Updated Regional Observatory on Summit, reflecting timely information concerning the actions, decisions, resolutions and news of interest for the user registered in the Observatory.
5. Database on Public Policies on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Social Economy Enterprises (SEEs). This database is the result of the systematization of public policies related to ICTs for SMEs and SEEs in the 33 countries in the region. This tool allows user to have access to a complete inventory of public policies published on ICTs, thus becoming an important input for strategic decision-making.
6. Updated profile of each one of the Member States of SELA.
7. Reference service and guidance to users in promoting the efficient and profitable use of both relevant information and ICT tools that SELA provides to Member States, researchers, academicians and the general public interested in the most relevant topics associated with integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.
8. SELA Bibliographical Bulletin, containing recently drafted documents and received by SELA, to be distributed to regional information services related to the process of regional and subregional integration.

D. Budget

The amount of **US\$ 6,000** has been allocated for maintenance of databases.

PROJECT I.2. Analysis, systematization and preparation of policy proposals for strengthening economic and commercial relations among Latin American and Caribbean countries

Activity I.2.1. Analysis of trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) flows between Central American countries and Mexico; Mexico and South America, Cuba and Latin America and the Caribbean, and Dominican Republic and Latin America and the Caribbean. Mechanisms and modalities to promote complementarity and convergence

A. Background and justification

This activity forms part of the 2012 Caracas Action Plan, in line with the dialogue and cooperation required among regional and subregional bodies of Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of CELAC.

In 2012, the Permanent Secretariat conducted the studies entitled "Mechanisms and modalities to promote trade among South American countries" and "Mechanisms and modalities to develop trade between the countries of the Central American Common Market and the Caribbean Community", which include an analysis of foreign direct investment flows between these groups of countries. With the preparation of the study referred to in this activity we would be covering commercial exchanges of goods among all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

B. Objectives

1. Assess trade in goods and FDI flows, and identify their composition and main trends among the aforementioned countries.
2. Define the institutional and regulatory elements that would be affecting the dynamism and nature of such flows, with the purpose of gaining knowledge about the points of convergence of different trade policies and applied investments.
3. Review of the mechanisms for promotion and facilitation that could encourage trade relations and direct investments among the aforementioned countries.

C. Expected results

An study-assessment of trade flows and FDI for each of the following groups: Central American countries and Mexico; Mexico and South American countries; Cuba and Latin American and Caribbean countries; and Dominican Republic and Latin American and Caribbean countries. The study should present policy proposals and lines of action to enhance and project, in the medium and long term, existing linkages and foster the emergence of new relations and economic interdependencies in the area of regional integration.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Terms of reference for the study	February 2013
Hiring of consultants	March 2013
Submittal of report	June 2013
Regional meeting	July 2013

E. Budget

An amount of **US\$ 6,000** has been allocated to cover consultant's fees.

Activity I.2.2. Free trade zones, export diversification and challenges of international integration of Latin American and Caribbean countries**A. Background and justification**

This activity, being developed in more than 400 free trade zones established in 23 countries of the region, largely supports the attraction of investments for productive development of Latin America and the Caribbean, the generation of jobs, the linkages to international value chains, and the international insertion of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. In this connection, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA organized the First Conference of Government Authorities of free trade zones of Latin America and the Caribbean, on 20 and 21 September 2012, in Cali, with the support of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism of Colombia and the Association of Free Trade Zones of the Americas (AZFA).

B. Objective

Develop the activities mandated in the Conclusions and Recommendations stemming from the aforementioned Conference and serve as its Technical Secretariat hereinafter.

C. Expected results

1. Establish a database for exchange of knowledge and information on free trade zones in the region.
2. In its capacity as technical secretariat of the Conference, the Permanent Secretariat should follow-up public policies and instruments relating to free trade zones in the region, their integration with the productive sector of each country and the trends of business within those areas, while developing common indicators to measure their performance and development.
3. Organize the II Conference of Government Authorities of Free Trade Zones in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the city of Ponce, Puerto Rico, in October 2013, within the framework of the XVI Conference of the Association of Free Trade Zones of the Americas (AZFA).

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Construction and feeding of database	On a permanent basis
Hiring of computer information assistant	
II Conference	October 2013

E. Budget

The Permanent Secretariat will make the necessary arrangements to obtain extra-budgetary resources in order to establish the database and keep it up-to-date, and to hire an assistant.

PROJECT I.3. Development of International Trade Single Windows within the framework of international trade facilitation and cross-border paperless trade

Activity I.3.1. V Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on International Trade Single Windows: Interoperability in regional digital integration

A. Background and justification

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have positive side effects on the whole social and economic fabric. However, their impact on the productive and social processes can bring about equally profound inequalities. In the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, the effects of technologies are distributed in an asymmetrical and fragmented way, thus deepening asymmetries within the region and with the rest of the world.

The design of public policies aimed at encouraging innovative capacities, as well as the creation and transfer of knowledge and ICTs, is a decisive factor in poverty reduction and in promoting economic and social development. ICTs also have enormous potential for contributing to the regional integration processes and, in particular, a growing impact on the trade facilitation, as illustrated by the development of International Trade Single Windows. Under the impetus provided by the Permanent Secretariat, Single Windows have become a shared effort with the governments of the Member States of SELA, and the cooperation between public and private entities in the region linked and interested in trade facilitation turns out to be a key path towards sustainable development and growth in the region. To date, three Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meetings have been conducted on Single Windows, as well as the "Pilot Project for Interoperability and Harmonization of International Trade Single Windows in the framework of the Latin American Pacific Rim", together with CAF - Development Bank of Latin America.

With the conduction of the V Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on International Trade Single Windows: Interoperability in regional digital integration, the Permanent Secretariat responds to the mandates received from its Member States on this subject.

B. Objectives

1. Contribute to the progressive coordination of regional efforts for the development of International Trade Single Windows, and the digitization of foreign trade procedures, in line with international standards for interoperability, harmonization and facilitation of cross-border paperless trade.
2. Organize the V Regional Meeting on the development of International Trade Single Windows, in Mexico City, Mexico, dealing with progress and regional strategies, with the participation of representatives of the Member States linked with the design and execution of Single Windows and the digitization of trade procedures, as well as with representatives of international and multilateral organizations related to these processes.
3. Organize and execute the technical training actions required by Member States concerned, in the area of facilitation of cross-border paperless trade.

C. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Conduction of the V Regional Meeting on Single Windows	29 and 30 October 2013 Mexico City, Mexico
Preparation for framework training activities for development of Single Windows in Latin America and the Caribbean	5 to 8 March 2013

D. Budget

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 10,000

PROJECT I.4. Knowledge and ICTs for development and integration of Latin America and the Caribbean**Activity I.4.1. III Regional Seminar on e-Health and Telemedicine in Latin America and the Caribbean: Innovation practices for a regionally interconnected health service****A. Background and justification**

With this Regional Seminar, SELA, within the framework of the project "Integration and Convergence of Latin America and the Caribbean of in area of health (INCOSALC)", created through Decision 512 of the Latin American Council, seeks to support regional coordination for the creation of a socially-inclusive cooperation agenda based on Regional Digital Integration, through dialogue, dissemination of information and transfer of best practices, and the creation and consolidation of cooperative networks for work, teaching, research and management, and to promote human rights to health, under the essential designs to reduce poverty and seek sustained and sustainable development of the region.

The seminar will focus on the development and dissemination of innovative practices to facilitate progress towards the development of an inter-connected regional health system. As a matter of fact, it will be aimed at the promotion of the regional dialogue started with the first seminar (Caracas, 22-23 October 2009), based on the exchange and dissemination of experiences and best practices relating to the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the provision of medical services, with particular emphasis on innovation, new tools and supports and new regulatory developments, in support to the social integration processes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

B. Objective

Contribute to regional dialogue, based on the exchange of experiences and best practices related to the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in providing medical and sanitary services, with special emphasis on innovation, the new tools and supports for regional interconnectivity in health.

C. Expected results

Organization of the "III Regional Seminar on e-Health and Telemedicine in Latin America and the Caribbean: Innovative practices for regionally interconnected health", with a retrospective and prospective vision in order to define the challenges that influence or will influence on the development of the e-Health and Telemedicine, as fundamental tools to

build a truly effective interconnected health system and also as key factors for promoting health as a human right in Latin America and the Caribbean health, as well as the achievement of the relevant Millennium Development Goals.

D. Activities and schedule

Activity	Dates
III Regional Seminar on e-Health and Telemedicine in Latin America and the Caribbean: Innovative practices	16 and 17 July 2013 Caracas, Venezuela

E. Budget

Total estimated expenses: **US\$ 10,000**

AREA II. ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION

PROGRAMME: SUPPORT TO ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO REGIONAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

PROJECT II.1. Strengthening economic and technical cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, in line with the mandates of CELAC

Activity II.1.1. XXIV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean

A. Background and justification

The issue of cooperation has been a top priority for the organization since its very inception in 1975, and is one of the objectives and fundamental purposes set forth in the Panama Convention. Such priority was ratified on the occasion of the IX Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council (1983), whose Decision No. 156 designates the organization as the "Regional Focal Point for the exchange of information on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries".

In compliance with these mandates and with the purpose of promoting regional and international cooperation, SELA has promoted since 1987 the Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean, which provides a space for rapprochement of cooperation stakeholders and for the exchange of ideas, experiences and best practices from a Latin American and Caribbean perspective. Each year, the meeting selects a topic considered to be of high priority for the region and evaluates the various sectoral cooperation initiatives undertaken by the different regional and subregional integration mechanisms and groupings.

In 2013, the XXIV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean will also review a broad range of issues of regional priority and it is expected to be held in El Salvador, during the first half of the year, in coordination and with the co-sponsorship of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador.

B. Objectives

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The general objectives of the Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean are as follows:

1. Provide a space for rapprochement between authorities and national focal points responsible for international cooperation so that they can exchange ideas, experiences and best practices as regards priority issues on the cooperation agenda, development assistance, as well as South-South cooperation and Triangular cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean;
2. Identify areas and define actions and initiatives that allow for greater coordination and synergy among the various cooperation stakeholders at the regional, subregional and international levels;
3. To promote the identification of bilateral and multilateral sources of cooperation for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the opportunities for South-South and Triangular cooperation, which can be taken advantage of within the region;
4. Identify proposals and policy recommendations for strengthening regional cooperation.

C. Expected results

Expected results are as follows:

1. Conduction of the XXIV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean;
2. Preparation of a study on the status of cooperation on issues considered to be of top priority on the regional cooperation agenda;
3. Follow-up of the conclusions and recommendations stemming from the XXIII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean, related to food security.

D. Activities and schedule

The XXIV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean will last two days. Participants will include the national focal points responsible for international cooperation in the Member States of SELA, representatives of regional and international organizations, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, regional and international organizations, as well as experts, academicians, and cooperation stakeholders.

Activities	Dates
Convening of the XXIV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean	March 2013
Conduction of the XXIV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean	June 2013

E. Budget

The budget for conducting this Regional Meeting is broken down as follows: **US\$ 15,000** to cover the costs of mobilization of international cooperation directors, and representatives of regional and international organizations, as well as logistical and operational expenses; and **US\$ 6,000** for the preparation of a study on the base issue to be determined later on. The Permanent Secretariat will make the necessary arrangements to obtain complementary resources and coordinate the participation and co-sponsorship of other regional and international organization specialized in the subject to be analyzed.

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 21,000.

Activity II.1.2. Promotion of the exchange of information on international cooperation and South-South cooperation

A. Background and justification

The current economic and financial crisis has had a significant impact on development assistance policies and international cooperation. This situation highlights the importance that South-South and Triangular cooperation have gained over the last several years for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, as swift, dynamic and efficient cooperation mechanisms, which can be adjusted to the realities and needs of the region, and are characterized by the principles of solidarity and sovereignty that guide this kind of cooperation.

Taking advantage of such cooperation requires coordination and swift and permanent information exchange mechanisms. This has evidenced the importance of creating a digital space for cooperation directors and making information resources available to the Latin American and Caribbean States. This activity was entrusted to the Permanent Secretariat of SELA within the framework of the XXI Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean of 2010 (Suriname) and was launched during the meeting of 2012 (Belize). Its execution has been materialized through the construction and maintenance of a digital space to disseminate information from national cooperation authorities of the Member States of SELA, concentrating in one place the various efforts undertaken in the region as regards this issue. This is expected to progressively contribute to an exchange of offers and demands for cooperation and technical assistance in the region, in those areas and sectors considered to be a priority for economic and social development.

Cooperation and coordination with regional and international institutions specializing in the cooperation, particularly with the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation of the UNDP, the Perez-Guerrero Fund Trust of the Group of 77, the Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (ECLAC), and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) will be sought for the development of these activities in order to avoid duplication of efforts and take full advantage of the initiatives already underway.

B. Objectives

Maintain and further develop the Subportal on South-South cooperation, and to offer and disseminate information to the International Cooperation Directors of the Member States of SELA and its network of users of the organization's cooperation database.

C. Expected results

1. Maintenance and further development of the Subportal of International Cooperation Directors for LAC on SELA's Web page.
2. Prepare a bulletin on cooperation to disseminate information about the network of cooperation of SELA among the International Cooperation Director in Latin America and the Caribbean.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Maintenance of the Portal of the International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean on SELA's Web page	November 2012
Bulletin on Cooperation	November 2012

E. Budget

The budget for maintaining this Subportal of international cooperation directors for Latin America and the Caribbean will amount to approximately **US\$ 3,000**, to cover expenses in designing and programming this digital space on SELA's Web site.

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 3,000.

Activity II.1.3. Partnership between public and private sectors for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean. Promoting strategic alliances with the private sector

A. Background and justification

Based on the mandates stemming from the Latin American Council, over the past few years, the Permanent Secretariat has been working on the issue of risk management closely with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR). This was formalized through the signing of a memorandum of understanding for the period 2011-2015 to promote cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction.

In addition, the issue of "Partnership between public and private sectors for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean" is of high priority for Latin American and Caribbean institutions specialized in disaster risk reduction (CAPRADE, CEPREDENAC, CDEMA, REHU, among others), which have supported and developed internal initiatives to take advantage of the potential of the private sector in supporting policies and actions for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian aid at the national and regional level.

The importance of this issue was ratified during the conduction of the "V Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms of Humanitarian Assistance", which took place in the Panama City, from 28 to 30 March 2012, and was organized by the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the government of Panama. As a matter of fact, that regional meeting formed part of the commitments taken on by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), as reflected in the 2012 Caracas Action Plan, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean, who gathered in Caracas, on 2 and 3 December 2011, on the occasion of the "III Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean on Integration and Development" (CALC) and the "XXII Summit of the Group of Rio".

As a result of the V Regional Meeting, the “Panama Declaration” and the “Action Plan of the V Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms of Humanitarian Assistance” were adopted, focused on four priority areas. Within the framework of the issue “Integral Risk Management and Participation”, and specifically the “Private Sector: Encouraging Strategic Partnerships with the Private Sector”, the Permanent Secretariat actively joined such regional process, by coordinating those actions and conducting the Regional Seminar “Partnerships between the Public and Private Sectors for Disaster Risk Reduction: Continuity of Government and Continuity of Operations during Disasters”, which took place in Lima on 7 and 8 June 2012. The event was jointly organized by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR), the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID-OFDA), and the Government of Peru through the National Institute of Civil Defence (INDECI) and the National Centre for Estimation, Prevention and Disaster Reduction (CENEPRED).

In 2013, the Permanent Secretariat is expected to continue with the tasks of facilitating and monitoring public-private meetings for the creation of partnerships and coordination of actions against disasters by lending support to the national authorities in charge of disaster risk reduction, while promoting synergies with specialized regional and subregional institutions, as well as private sector associations and enterprises.

B. Objectives

1. Deepen coordination and cooperation relations between governments and the Latin American and Caribbean institutions specialized in disaster risk reduction and the private sector;
2. Follow up on the conclusions and recommendations stemming from the Regional Seminar on “Partnerships between public and private sectors for disaster risk management: Continuity of government and continuity of operations during disasters” (Lima, Peru, 7 and 8 June 2012), as well as the commitments derived from the V Regional Meeting on International Mechanism for Humanitarian Assistance (Declaration of Panama and Action Plan) mandated by CELAC.
3. Identify successful cases of public-private cooperation mechanisms for the disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean;
4. Continue to analyze continuity of government, business and operations in case of disasters, from a prospective and integral perspective.

C. Expected results

1. Conduction of the Regional Meeting for the Promotion of Public-Private Partnerships for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean, so as to deal with topics considered a priority by Member States and the regional and subregional institutions specialized in this area.
2. Preparation of a study on the status of cooperation between the public and private sectors for disaster risk reduction in areas of high priority for regional and subregional institutions specialized in this field.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Conduct the Regional Meeting for promoting strategic alliances with the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean	July 2013

E. Budget

The total budget for conducting this Regional Meeting will be **US\$ 21,000** to cover the mobilization costs for national authorities in charge of disaster risk reduction and representatives of specialized regional and subregional institutions, as well as logistical and operational expenses. The Permanent Secretariat will make the necessary arrangements to obtain complementary resources and coordinate participation and co-sponsorship of other regional and international organizations specialized in the subject to be deal with.

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 21,000

Activity II.1.4. Supporting regional and subregional institutions for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean in building strategic alliances with the private sector

A. Background and justification

In view of the priority that has been given to the issue of building strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors and the international relevance of this topic, especially within the United Nations, and particularly the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as well as regionally, especially for those institutions in charge of disaster risk reduction, it was deemed important to make progress in the construction of a digital space that allows for access to all the regional efforts being undertaken to promote partnerships between the public and private sectors for risk management and humanitarian aid.

The importance of these issues was evident not only in the meetings held by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA in this area – particularly in the “Regional Seminar: Cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Focus, progress and challenges” (Panama, 17 and 18 November 2011) and the Regional Seminar on “Partnerships between public and private sectors for disaster risk management: Continuity of government and continuity of operations during disasters” (Peru, 7 and 8 June 2012) – but it was also ratified at the “V Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance” (Panama, 28 to 30 March 2012).

The Permanent Secretariat intends to work in coordination with Latin American and Caribbean institutions specializing in disaster risk reduction, and particularly to support the efforts being made at the international level by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR), through the “Disaster Risk Reduction Private Sector Partnerships for the Americas”.

B. Objectives

1. Support the creation of strategic partnerships among regional and subregional institutions for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean (CAPRADE, CDEMA, CEPREDENAC, REHU, CELAC, as well as UN/ISDR and OCHA) and private sector associations and enterprises in the region;
2. Identify sensitive enterprises and private sector associations in Latin America and the Caribbean which are interested in contributing and cooperating in the area of disaster risk reduction, and in supporting mechanisms for humanitarian assistance with a global, comprehensive and prospective approach, in coordination with national authorities in charge of risk management.
3. Promote an exchange of information about initiatives and successful experiences for disaster risk reduction among regional and subregional focal points.

C. Expected results

1. Design of a digital space to publish and disseminate information on the efforts underway to encourage the construction of strategic partnerships between the region's public and private sectors.
2. Preparation of a directory of enterprises and private sector associations concerned with disaster risk reduction, and dissemination of information to those actors.
3. Support to regional and subregional institutions for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean (CAPRADE, CDEMA, CEPREDENAC, REHU, CELAC, as well as UN/ISDR and OCHA) in complying with their mandates.
4. Support the work carried out within the context of the "Forum on coordination and cooperation of sub-regional mechanisms for disaster risk management of the Americas", of the "Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction" and the "Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance".

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Digital space to encourage the construction of strategic partnerships between the regional private and public sectors	July 2013
Directory of enterprises and private associations interested in disaster risk reduction	July 2013

E. Budget

The budget for designing, constructing and programming the digital space has been estimated at **US\$ 3,000**. In order to prepare a directory of enterprises and private associations linked to disaster risk reduction, the Permanent Secretariat will make the necessary arrangements to obtain complementary resources and will coordinate the participation and co-sponsorship of other regional and international organizations and private sector representatives for materializing these activities.

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 3,000.

PROJECT II.2. SELA-SMEs Project: "Inter-institutional cooperation for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean"

Activity II.2.1. Strengthening of capacities of institutional and business bodies that implement programmes to support SMEs**A. Background and justification**

During the past 13 years, SELA has encouraged the dissemination of strategies and public policies applied in the countries of the region for SMEs, in issues related to partnership, coordination and productive integration, clusters, business networks, export consortiums, innovation and productivity, productive chains, and guarantee and financing systems for SMEs.

In 2013, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA deems it necessary to capitalize on the experiences gained and to establish the SELA-SMEs programme as an essential element to support the establishment of a productive integration process in Latin America and the Caribbean, while taking advantage of the successful experiences and preserving the activities agreed to with national counterparts.

B. Objective

Contribute to strengthening institutional capacities of government and business focal points, as well as other bodies concerned with promoting and implementing programmes to support SMEs. Among other things, efforts will be made to undertake projects to encourage the creation of new productive units, expand existing ones, partnerships, technological transformation and productive articulation of SMEs.

C. Expected results

1. Capacity-building of focal points in SELA's Member States responsible for programmes for developing SMEs in matters relating to productivity, internationalization, innovation and financing.
2. Exchange of institutional experiences as regards programmes to promote improvements in the offer of products and services of SMEs.
3. Support to the creation of thematic networks on SMEs.
4. Encourage cooperation among the Member States of SELA.
5. Timely and concrete technical assistance in accordance with the demands of Member States for cooperation in developing projects for SMEs.

D. Budget

A total amount of **US\$ 30,000** is expected to be allocated for organizing and developing the activities described below, which constitute the first formulation of the SELA-SMEs programme. Efforts will be made to complement financing of the programme through international cooperation sources.

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 30,000

Activity II.2.2. Analysis and design of public policies to support SMEs and their participation in regional value chains**1. PUBLIC POLICIES****A. Background and justification**

Public policies to support SMEs, aimed at facilitating and promoting consolidation of this industry, must make available tools that encourage and contribute to the substantial improvement of business efficiency, based on more and better production infrastructure, access to information for decision-making, better knowledge management and access to technology, innovation, credits and markets.

SELA has carried out several activities with government representatives on the issue of SMEs to public policy development in this area. Example of this work is the Project of Transfer of Best Practices in Public Policies to support SMEs, conducted in 2010 by Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Uruguay.

B. Objectives

The general objectives of this activity are as follows:

1. Exchange information on the design and implementation of public procurement policies that encourage the development of SME supplying goods.
2. Promote technical assistance and advisory directly or through triangular cooperation to stimulate the organization of SMEs in the region, with a view to improving their joint supply capacity for participating in the markets.
3. Draft an action plan, along with government representatives of SMEs in the region, so as to define actions, strategies and instruments to encourage the development of suppliers.

C. Expected results

1. Holding of forum on Public Policies aimed at developing suppliers, along with government representatives.
2. Develop an Action Plan for SMEs in the region, based on the requirements of Member States.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Organization of the Forum on Public Policies for the development of SMEs suppliers	March 2013
Preparation for technical assistance and advisory on public policies, based on the requirements of the Member States	April – October 2013

2. PRODUCTIVE COORDINATION

A. Background and justification

One of the fundamental characteristics of the SME sector is the flexibility and swiftness they have in responding to changing market demands. This feature, in terms of generating economies of scale, limits their ability to be competitive in world markets. As a solution, all analyzes and successful experiences conclude that "partnerships" are the most suitable mechanism.

The opportunities offered by partnerships are viewed as a collective learning, which expands into innovative management processes, and are derived from the coordination of models with a long-term impact on economic growth and competitiveness.

SELA has been conducting seminars and workshops on inter-entrepreneurial cooperation and partnerships, with a view to strengthening productive integration capacities of SMEs into value chains, thus favouring the formation of sectoral production chains.

B. Objectives

1. Contribute to developing and strengthening government and business institutional capacities to develop productive integration projects, such as clusters and productive consortiums.
2. Spread information about productive coordination strategies such as joint development of clusters, chains, local production developments, industrial districts, among others, which have been successful in the region.
3. Identify productive coordination projects in the countries of the region that require assistance and direct technical assistance or through triangular cooperation that encourages partnerships among SMEs in the region.

C. Expected results

1. Conduction of a Seminar on ongoing productive coordination projects in Central America.
2. Facilitate the direct assistance and technical advisory required by the countries of the Central American region to develop projects for productive articulation.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Organization of the Seminar on experiences and opportunities of SMEs in productive coordination projects in Central America	May 2013
Preparation for technical assistance and advisory on productive coordination, based on the requirements of the Member States	April – October 2013
Preparation of document on the assessment of productive coordination capacities in Central America	September 2013

3. INTERNATIONALIZATION

A. Background and justification

Small and medium-sized enterprises confront the challenge of exporting, and to achieve that goal they must outline strategies with well-defined long-term objectives, with a view to searching for new markets, well-trained staff at all levels, who act in an integrated way and establish various forms of sectoral links.

The experience gained by SELA in this subject is well recognized, as the organization has been conducting courses and workshops on SMEs internationalization, supported by experts from various public and private organizations of several countries in the region. A significant number of these that have successfully promoted strategies, programmes and instruments to facilitate the inclusion of SMEs in international markets. For example, the Latin American Seminar on SMEs Export Consortiums was held in June 2012, UNIDO, which created a Latin American Network of Export and Origin Consortiums made up by Latin American public and private institutions promoting the formation of consortiums. This network aims to promote the exchange of experiences and foster best practices in promoting export and origin consortiums in Latin America and Caribbean.

B. Objectives

1. Promote productive development strategies, forming export and internationalization consortiums of SMEs for their foray into international markets.
2. Encourage the exchange of goods and services among Latin American and Caribbean countries, in order to strengthen productive integration in the region.
3. Form business missions and encourage SMEs participation in fairs and business events.

C. Expected results

1. Training of officials and Latin American and Caribbean businessmen on internationalization strategies for SMEs, especially on the issue of logistics channels and promotion of goods and services within the region.
2. Direct or triangular assistance to officials and businessmen of the countries of the region, who might require technical support to implement strategies and programmes for internationalization of SMEs, forming consortiums and partnerships with foreign clients.
3. Dissemination of information and operation of the online platform to promote exchanges of knowledge, experiences, publications and activities conducted by the members of the Network of Consortiums.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Conduction of a workshop on intra-regional logistics and promotion of goods and services among SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean	September 2013
Preparation for technical assistance and advisory on internationalization of SMEs, based on the requirements of the Member States	September – December 2013
Feed and promote the Network of Export and Origin Consortiums of Latin America	October 2012 – October 2013

4. INNOVATION, PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPETITIVENESS

A. Background and justification

SMEs face the challenge of seeking for constant improvements of their products and services, which is essential for encouraging innovation processes. Such processes involve, in most cases, the implementation of changes (technological and organizational changes) to respond to the problems derived from competition and market changes. Moreover, ongoing technological changes have contributed to a rapid transformation towards a market economy in “real time”, thus improving business productivity.

In order to meet the demands from employers and governments on this issue, SELA has been organizing courses, seminars and other training activities that have tried to convey the concepts and methodologies to promote innovation and to boost productivity and competitiveness, favouring a more efficient business management by SMEs. An example of those activities was the Seminar-Workshop on Innovation, Local Productive Arrangements and Productivity for SMEs, held in April 2012, which allowed for exploring business innovation in Latin America from the perspective of the various stakeholders and instances of innovation systems.

B. Objectives

1. Share experiences and provide working methodologies to promote innovation processes and knowledge management in areas such as productivity, quality and competitiveness, in order to outline activities, programmes and training workshops focused on the areas identified.
2. Train officials and businessmen to develop mechanisms for technology transfer, innovation processes and improvement of competitiveness and productivity in SMEs.

C. Expected results

1. Spread information about some technology transfer mechanisms that have been undertaken, and examining the possibility of replicating these experiences in other SMEs in the region.
2. Provide assistance and direct technical advisory through triangular cooperation to encourage the development of SMEs in the region.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Organization of the "Seminar on technology transfer mechanisms for SMEs", aimed at SMEs associations in Latin America and the Caribbean	May 2013
Preparation of activities on technical assistance and advisory in innovation, competitiveness and productivity of SMEs, based on the requirements of the Member States	June - October 2013

5. FINANCING**A. Background and justification**

One of the most recommended actions to facilitate SMEs access to credit is strengthening security systems in the region, by increasing the levels of support for funding, creating regional guarantee mechanisms, refinancing, insurance and reinsurance, and diversifying the types of customers.

Guarantees are mechanisms traditionally used by the financial system to cover the risks of financial operations. More recently, they have been recognized as useful to overcome information asymmetry problems between lenders and borrowers. This instrument is considered within the standards of solvency regulation of financial institutions and taken into account in credit risk assessments. Hence, the guarantees have the expected effect of reducing capital requirements and provisions of financial institutions.

For the last fifteen years SELA has actively participated in the organization of the Annual Forums on Guarantees and Financing for SMEs, gaining recognition about the role that the institution has played in this area. The Training Course on Guarantee Systems to Support SMEs was held in July 2012, analyzing the possibility of undertaking an initiative for the creation of a regional guarantee system in the Caribbean.

B. Objectives

1. Disseminate information about the progresses made in creating guarantee systems and innovative financial instruments for SMEs in the region.
2. Foster the development of new initiatives, both institutional and instrumental for providing financing and guarantees to support SMEs in the region.
3. Promote the training of officials and businessmen for the creation and implementation of guarantee systems, upon demand from Member States.

C. Expected results

1. Evaluate the possibility of creating a guarantee system in Central America.
2. Train staff of Central American and Caribbean guarantee systems supporting SMEs.
3. Assistance to officials and businessmen of the Member States demanding technical support for creating guarantee systems to support SMEs in the region.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Conduction of a Seminar-Workshop on Credit and Guarantee System in Central America, with a view to developing a Central American Programme on Guarantees	December 2012
Preparation for technical assistance to the Caribbean region in order to develop a pilot programme on guarantee systems for SMEs in the Caribbean	March – October 2013

6. ENTREPRENEURSHIP**A. Background and justification**

Entrepreneurship provides an opportunity for the population excluded from the formal labour society to enter national or local productive chains, by increasing not only the added value of goods and services within the economy, but also improving the quality of life of its inhabitants and inserting them into the productive chain, thus reducing poverty.

Most programmes and public policies to promote entrepreneurship focus only on the last stage of the entrepreneurial process, once the company is installed. That is why we recommend outlining public policies that address development of enterprises ventures beyond the development of SMEs, such as the creation of incubators of second-generation enterprises, education and training, promotion of business networks, among others.

SELA has gained extensive experience in this area. For instance, the Course on Entrepreneurship Strategies for the Development of New Entrepreneurs, held in Guatemala in late 2011, served to provide information to representatives from universities and public and private entrepreneurship promoters, on successful methodologies in some countries in the region.

B. Objectives

1. Encourage business organizations in sectors that represent economic and social opportunities, and promote the creation of national systems of business incubators, among other mechanisms to foster entrepreneurship.
2. Propose new forms of financing for the entrepreneurial process, as seed capital funds, angel investors' networks, and risk capital funds.

C. Expected results

1. Promotion of corporate training programmes and national incubation systems in sectors that offer economic and social opportunities in the countries of the region.
2. Conduction of a Regional Workshop on Entrepreneurship for Caribbean countries, focused on the development of projects for creating business incubators in the countries of the region.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Conduction of a Workshop on entrepreneurship for the Caribbean region, focused on the development of projects for the creation of enterprise incubators in the countries of the region.	May 2013
Preparation for technical assistance and advisory focused on the promotion of entrepreneurship and formulation of enterprise incubator projects	May – October 2013

Activity II.2.3. Training and direct technical assistance**A. Background and justification**

The training and technical assistance activities are the result from the activities carried out as regards various topics in previous years. Based on these activities, direct technical assistance projects have emerged in specific areas for the development of SMEs, as requested by government counterparts, including CARICOM and of some of its member countries.

B. Objectives

Encourage, educate and promote programmes and technical assistance actions, in accordance with the requests made by Member States for the development of SMEs in specific areas.

C. Expected results

1. Channel the technical support and assistance required by government agencies of SMEs to respond to specific needs as regards productive coordination, internationalization, financing, entrepreneurship, innovation and competitiveness, with the purpose of strengthening specific sectors and regions of interest for the Member States.
2. Promote mechanisms for access to financing for SMEs in priority sectors, according to the country's needs.
3. Encourage potential entrepreneurs to seek business opportunities and foster the creation of business incubators.

D. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Conduct a Workshop on Guarantee Systems for micro-producers in Haiti	November 2012
Homogenize and distribute the projects submitted by Cuban authorities to international cooperation bodies for development of Agro-Food Mini-Industries in that country.	February 2013
Conduct a training seminar on mechanisms for innovation and entrepreneurship for SMEs in Suriname.	April 2013
Conduct a Workshop on e-Health and Telemedicine in Jamaica	June 2013
Organize a Workshop on Experiences of SMEs in the promotion and internationalization of agricultural production in Belize.	August 2013

E. Budget

For organizing and developing the activities above, the Permanent Secretariat has allocated an amount of **US\$ 10,000**. Arrangements will be made to obtain the remaining resources from various bilateral cooperation sources.

Activity II.2.4. Cooperation of Latin America and the Caribbean in trade and competition. UNCTAD-SELA joint project. Working Group on Trade and Competition (GTCC)

A. Background and justification

Since 4 July 2011, the Working Group on Trade and Competition in Latin America and the Caribbean has been conducting its consultation and coordination activities. The Group held its second general meeting on 18 and 19 June 2012. Noteworthy, the work of this Group in the region can help foster a culture of competition, improve the institutional framework in this area and favour consumers, SMEs and productive and commercial integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

B. Objectives

Make strides with the study of policies, regulations and sectoral experiences in the region in the area of trade and competition, at the global, thematic and sectoral levels, in line with the activities of the Working Group on Trade and Competition in Latin America and the Caribbean.

C. Expected results

Organization of the III Regional Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition of Latin America and the Caribbean

D. Budget

The budget allocated by the Permanent Secretariat for developing this Activity amounts to **US\$ 6,000**, to be complemented by extra-budgetary resources.

AREA III. EXTRA-REGIONAL RELATIONS

PROGRAMME: SUPPORTING THE ANALYSIS AND DRAFTING OF POLICY PROPOSALS TO PROMOTE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN EXTERNAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS AND THE REGION'S PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS ON THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC AGENDA

PROJECT III.1. Evaluation, promotion and diversification of extra-regional economic relations of Latin American and Caribbean countries

A. Background and justification

The Permanent Secretariat has analyzed the historical trends that have prevailed in our region's economic relations with two key extra-regional members - the United States and the European Union – and more recently it has started to systematize information and propose actions to promote and strengthen relations of our countries with China, India, Russia, the Middle East and the African nations.

Similarly, in view of the uncertain evolution of the global economy, the Permanent Secretariat has strived to keep track of the dynamics of the international economy with a view to providing an updated overall perspective of the macroeconomic environment and the current situation in which the economies of the region are operating.

These processes of analysis require continuity to contribute to the purpose of a more effective consultation and coordination, particularly by deepening the study on the environment and external relations, as required and suggested by the various regional forums addressing these issues within the framework of SELA.

Activity III.1.1. Permanent analysis of the dynamics and trade policies of the United States and their impact on Latin American and Caribbean countries. Prospects for relations in the context of the global post-crisis scenario

A. Objectives

Keep on monitoring and analyzing the dynamics of the U.S. economy, and the adoption of trade policy actions that could have an impact on the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

B. Expected results

1. Preparation and dissemination of the quarterly SELA Antenna in the United States of America.
2. Conduction of a study on the economic relations (including trade, financing and cooperation) between the U.S. and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.
3. Convening a regional meeting to review the status and prospects of U.S. economic relations with Latin America and the Caribbean.

C. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Design of a preliminary thematic structure for the four issues of SELA Antenna in the United States	January 2013
Delivery of the quarterly issues of the SELA Antenna.	March, June, September and December 2013
Preparation of terms of reference for the study	November 2012
Hiring of consultant and preparation of the study	November 2012 – January 2013
Preparation and convening of the Regional Meeting	January 2013
Conduction of the Regional Meeting	February 2013
Forwarding the Conclusions and Recommendations stemming from the Regional Meeting and its Final Report to the Member States and relevant regional organizations	March 2013

D. Budget

The budget required to finance this activity can be broken down as follows: **US\$ 6,000** to cover fees of consultant in charge of the study; **US\$ 12,000** for the preparation of the quarterly issues of SELA Antenna, and **US\$ 15,000** for conducting the regional meeting.

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 33,000

Activity III.1.2. Analysis and monitoring of economic relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and Canada**A. Objectives**

Keep track of economic and cooperation policies between Canada and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and to identify regional and subregional cooperation proposals.

B. Expected results

Update of the study on economic and cooperation relations between Canada and Latin America and the Caribbean.

C. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Preparation of terms of reference for the study	November 2012
Hiring of consultant and preparation of the study	November 2012 – January 2013
Forwarding of the document to the Member States of SELA, and dissemination through the Web portal	February 2013

D. Budget

The budget to conduct this activity amounts to **US\$ 6,000**, which will be used to cover an external consultant's fees.

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 6,000.

Activity III.1.3. Analysis of economic relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union**A. Objectives**

To continue monitoring and analyzing the current situation and prospects of economic relations and cooperation between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union, in light of the current crisis in the euro area countries and the Bi-Regional Summit of 2013.

B. Expected results

1. Preparation of an evaluation study on the Bi-Regional Summit EU-Latin America and the Caribbean, including the impact of the financial crisis in both regions.
2. Conduction of a Regional Seminar on economic relations and cooperation between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean, as a follow-up to the Bi-Regional Summit of 2013.

C. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Preparation of terms of reference for the study	February 2013
Hiring of consultant and preparation of the study	March 2013
Preparation and convening of Regional Seminar	May-June 2013
Conduction of Regional Seminar	July 2013
Forwarding the Conclusions and Recommendations stemming from the Regional Seminar and its Final Report to the Member States and relevant regional organizations	August 2013

D. Budget

The budget required to implement this activity amounts to **US\$ 6,000** to cover consultant's fees in charge of the study. The Permanent Secretariat hopes to count on extra-budgetary resources for conducting the Regional Seminar.

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 6,000

Activity III.1.4. Analysis of the economic relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and the People's Republic of China, the Russian Federation and India

A. Objectives

Continue analyzing and monitoring the current situation and prospects of economic relations between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, China, the Russian Federation, India and South Africa, in view of their systemic importance within the regional and global economy.

B. Expected results

1. China: a) Update of the study on relations of Latin America and the Caribbean with the People's Republic of China, drafted in 2012, and b) convening a regional meeting to discuss the relations of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean with China (with regional organizations and CELAC).
2. Russian Federation: a) Monitoring Report on the relations of Latin America and the Caribbean with the Russian Federation, within the context of Eurasian integration, while identifying new realities and trends, b)-SELA-ILA Seminar (Latin American Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Russia) to identify possible areas of cooperation and financial mechanisms;
3. India: a) Conduct a study on the economic relations between Latin America and the Caribbean with India and its potentials, and b) Convene a regional meeting to discuss the relations of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean with India (with regional organizations and CELAC).
4. South Africa: conduct a study that addresses the main elements of the economic relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and South Africa, as well as the possibilities for improving them.

C. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Preparation of terms of reference for the studies to be drafted by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA	November 2012
Hiring of consultants and preparation of studies	January 2013
Preparation and convening of China/India Regional Meeting with Latin America and the Caribbean	February 2013
Conduction of the Regional Meeting	April 2013
Forwarding the Conclusions and Recommendations stemming from the Regional Seminar and its Final Report to the Member States and relevant regional organizations	May 2013

D. Budget

The budget required to implement this activity amounts to **US\$ 6,000** to cover consultant's fees in charge of updating the studies. The Permanent Secretariat hopes to count on extra-budgetary resources for conducting the Regional Seminar and the Seminar between SELA and the Latin American Institute (ILA) of the Academy of Sciences of Russia.

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 6,000

Activity III.1.5. New forms of economic and cooperation relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and other emerging countries and regions

A. Objectives

Explore through studies the economic and cooperation relations between Latin America and the Caribbean with emerging countries and regions.

B. Expected results

1. Preparation of study on economic relations and cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean and the countries of the Pacific Rim.
2. Update of study on the economic and cooperation relations between Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa.
3. Conduction of a Regional Seminar on the relation between Latin America and the Caribbean and the countries of the Pacific Rim.

C. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Preparation of terms of reference for the study	December 2012
Hiring of consultant and preparation of the study	January 2013
Forward the analytical document to the Member States of SELA and disseminate it through the Web Portal	April 2013

D. Budget

The budget to carry out this activity can be broken down as follows: **US\$ 6,000** to consultant's fees in charge of drafting the study on the Pacific Rim; and **US\$ 9,000** for the conduction of the Regional Seminar.

Total estimated expenses: US\$ 15,000

Activity III.1.6. Strengthening relations with United Nations agencies

A. Objectives

Strengthen synergies between the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System and the United Nations system as regards issues related to the Work Programme. In 2013, the Permanent Secretariat has planned to execute an activity centred on the issue of trade in services at the regional level with the support of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Such activity focuses on the preparation and holding of the first regional event on the services sector, and would have the following objectives:

1. Review the various integration processes, at the subregional and sectoral levels, concerning the integration of the services sector, in order to consider ways to incorporate this sector within the creation of the Latin American and Caribbean productive and commercial integration process of CELAC.
2. Promote the design of a long-term work agenda, under a regional view, based on the progress achieved and ongoing activities.

3. Seek a symmetrical and harmonious development of the services sector among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.
4. Promote the strengthening of productive, commercial and investments integration, in order to overcome development, trade and investment asymmetries and foster productivity in the region.

B. Expected results

Preparation of studies on the services sector in Latin America and the Caribbean. as well as a regional meeting with trade and planning authorities.

C. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Preparation of terms of reference for the study on services	January 2013
Hiring of consultants and preparation of the studies	February 2013
Preparation and convening of Regional Meeting	May 2013
Conduction of the Regional Meeting	June 2013
Forwarding the Conclusions and Recommendations stemming from the Regional Meeting and its Final Report	July 2013

D. Budget

An amount of **US\$ 3,000** has been allocated for the base study. The rest will be complemented with extra-budgetary funds for the regional event on trade in services.

PROJECT III.2. Follow-up, evaluation and preparation of proposals on the central elements of the international economic agenda

Activity III.2.1. Analysis and monitoring of the international economic agenda and its impact on Latin America and the Caribbean

A. Objectives

Keep tracking of the main issues and trends of the international economic agenda and its impact on the region.

B. Expected results

1. Quarterly publication of the Bulletin "Strategic Outlook".
2. Follow-up report on initiatives and proposals by Latin America and the Caribbean at the G-20.
3. Analysis of the effects of the international economic situation on the migration of human resources from Latin America and the Caribbean.

C. Activities and schedule

Activities	Dates
Design of the thematic structure of the four issues of the bulletin "Strategic Outlook"	January 2013
Submittal of the quarterly issues of the bulletin "Strategic Outlook"	March, June, September and December 2013
Preparation of the terms of reference for the follow-up reports on the proposals of Latin America and the Caribbean at the G-20	November 2012
Forwarding of the follow-up reports on the proposals of Latin America and the Caribbean at the G-20.	December 2012 – July 2013
Preparation of the terms of reference of the study to be conducted by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA	January 2013
Hiring of consultant and preparation of the study	February 2013
Forwarding analytical document to the Member States of and dissemination of it through the Web Portal	April 2013

D. Budget

The budget to conduct the tasks associated with this activity amounts to **US\$ 6,000**.

DECISION N° 536

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS FOR 2012

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

HAVING SEEN:

Article 34 of the Permanent Secretariat regulations which, among other provisions, stipulates that "in selecting the external auditor, an attempt will be made to rotate the position among the Member States, as far as it is possible, and considering the financial implications", and

The audit services bids received by the Permanent Secretariat, encompassed in document "Audit proposal for the year 2012" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 7-12).

DECIDES:

Sole Article.- To designate PKF Cabrera, Colmenares y Asociados as the firm in charge of auditing the Financial Statements of the Permanent Secretariat for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2012, bearing in mind the rules that govern the System.

DECISION N° 537**ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EVALUATION METHODOLOGY
FOR THE WORK PROGRAMME OF SELA**

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

HAVING SEEN:

Article 15, paragraph 6, of the Panama Convention, and

The document entitled "Draft Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat for the year 2013";

CONSIDERING:

The contents and spirit of Decision No. 521 – as adopted by the Latin American Council in its XXXVII Regular Meeting, held in Caracas in October 2011 – particularly its Article 3, related to the implementation of a mechanism for evaluating the results of the work carried out by the organization and its impact on supporting integration, cooperation and economic development with social inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean; and its Article 4, related to the search for a definition of an outcome assessment methodology, based on quantitative and qualitative parameters;

The conduction, throughout this year, of several sessions of the Informal Working Group on the Work Programme of SELA and the Informal Working Sub-Group to discuss the proposal on a results-based evaluation methodology;

The work carried out by the aforementioned Group and Sub-Group on the results-based evaluation methodology, particularly the contributions made by the mission of the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada - IPEA) in Caracas and by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA on issues related to the results-based evaluation methodology;

DECIDES:

Article 1: To adopt the methodology proposal suggested by the mission of IPEA in Caracas, attached to this Decision, without detriment to new and eventual adjustments that might be made to the proposal, bearing in mind that evaluation systems are perfectible and that their implementation must be based on the development of quantitative and qualitative parameters in order to evaluate the products and services offered by SELA.

Article 2: To instruct the Permanent Secretariat to convene an Informal Working Group so as to make progress in the discussion of the implementation of the evaluation methodology, particularly the creation of a tripartite evaluating body, made up by the Permanent Secretariat, an independent evaluator and the Member States of the Latin American Council who so decide it. The Group can start to hold meetings even during the year 2012.

DECISION N° 538**MEETINGS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DIRECTORS
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN****THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,****HAVING SEEN:**

That Article 3 of the Panama Convention establishes the objectives of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System as follows:

- a) To promote intra-regional cooperation in order to accelerate the economic and social development of its members;
- b) To provide a permanent system of consultation and coordination for the adoption of common positions and strategies on economic and social matters in international bodies and forums as well as before third countries and groups of countries;

RECALLING:

That the Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean are being held within the framework of SELA since 1987 and the Latin American Council, at its IX Regular Meeting (Caracas, September 1983), adopted Decision N° 156, which designated SELA as the "regional focal point for the exchange of information on technical cooperation among developing countries."

CONSIDERING:

That the Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean represent a regional forum for the promotion of cooperation and coordination in the area of international cooperation, South-South cooperation and Triangular cooperation;

That the Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean are a space of encounter, where all 28 Member States of SELA participate and discuss the problems of regional cooperation from a strictly Latin American and Caribbean perspective.

RECOGNIZING:

The contribution of the Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean to the strengthening of intra-regional cooperation, the support they have provided to the national focal points in charge of cooperation in the Member States of SELA and the need to reinforce these efforts in view of the challenges posed by the international financial and economic crisis to the region's future.

DECIDES:

Article 1. To welcome and take note of the decision of the Government of El Salvador of co-sponsoring and hosting the XXIV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean, expected to take place in San Salvador during the second Quarter of 2013.

Article 2. To express its appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Guatemala for its decision to co-sponsor and provide the venue for the XXV Meeting of International Cooperation Directors of Latin America and the Caribbean, which would be held in that country in 2014.

Article 3. To take note with satisfaction of the activities carried out by the Permanent Secretariat in the field of international cooperation, in particular by way of the Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean, and within this context, to underscore the scope of Decision N° 527 of the Latin American Council, "Support of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and its Work Programme to the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)", requesting the Permanent Secretariat to continue providing support to the CELAC through the Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean in coordination with the Working Group on Cooperation created within the Community.

Article 4. To recognize the support provided by the Group of 77, through the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF), to the Permanent Secretariat in backing the meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean, and to urge that international grouping to continue to provide the required support so as to allow the national cooperation authorities of the Member States of SELA to continue to promote the analysis and treatment of high-priority topics on the international and South-South cooperation agenda , from a Latin American and Caribbean perspective.

DECISION N° 539**FOLLOW-UP TO DECISION N° 527 "SUPPORT OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT OF SELA AND ITS WORK PROGRAMME TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES (CELAC)"**

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

HAVING SEEN:

Paragraph 2 of Article 5 of the Panama Convention, which indicates that one of the objectives of SELA is "to support the integration processes of the region and encourage coordination among them, or with Members States of SELA, particularly with respect to those activities aimed at promoting greater harmonization, duly respecting the commitments made within the framework of such processes";

The documents establishing the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, particularly the Caracas Declaration and the Caracas Action Plan 2011; and

The document "Compliance with Decision N° 527 'Support of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and its Work Programme to the establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)'", (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DI N° 28-12).

CONSIDERING:

That some of the mandates and issues contained in the Montego Bay Plan of Action, in the Caracas Action Plan 2011 and the results of the meetings of regional and subregional integration organizations convened by the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC are related to projects and activities envisaged in the Work Programme of the Permanent Secretariat for 2013;

That it is advisable to pay heed to the decisions adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the region at the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), to be held in Santiago, Chile, in January 2013.

DECIDES:

Article 1: To request the Permanent Secretariat, when implementing its Work Programme for 2013 and within its competence, to provide the technical support and collaboration required by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) for conducting its activities during the year.

Article 2: To request the Permanent Secretariat to keep the Member States of SELA duly and timely informed about the activities and tasks that it carries out within the context of this Decision.

DECISION N° 540

ELECTION OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

THE LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL,

HAVING SEEN:

Paragraph 2 of Article 15 and Article 28 of the Panama Convention; and

The document "Election of the Permanent Secretary" (SP/CL/XXXVIII.O/DT N° 09-12/Rev.1)

DECIDES:

Article 1° To elect, by acclamation, Economist Roberto Guarnieri, a national of Venezuela, as Permanent Secretary for a four-year term, beginning on 2 January 2013.

Article 2° The Latin American Council thanked Ambassador José Rivera Banuet for his efforts and dedication during his successful management at the helm of the organization.

C. DECLARATIONS

DECLARATION

“ENDING THE ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND FINANCIAL BLOCKADE IMPOSED BY THE UNITED STATES AGAINST CUBA”

The **Latin American Council of SELA**, gathered in its Ministerial Session, in Caracas on 19 October 2012.

RECALLING

- The mandate given by the Member States of SELA to the Permanent Secretariat (Article 4, Decision No. 377) to submit an annual report on the application of the Helms-Burton Law and the economic sanctions of the United States of America against Cuba;
- That the adverse effects of such sanctions of the United States not only affect one Member State of SELA, but also impose certain rules to the international community as regards economic relations with Cuba;
- Decision No. 112 of the Latin American Council, “Imposition of Economic Measures of a Coercive Nature”, as well as Decisions Nos. 356 and 360, which reject the implementation of unilateral measures that may affect the free development of international trade, in violation of international law and the most basic principles of regional coexistence;
- Decisions Nos. 377, 390, 401, 421, 432, 438, 444, 453, 463, 477 and 482 of the Latin American Council, on the “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba;”
- The Declarations “Ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba”, adopted by consensus by the Member States of SELA in the XXXVI and XXXVII Regular Meetings of the Latin American Council (Caracas, 29 October 2010 and 21 October 2011, respectively);
- The corresponding resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly over the past 20 years urging to put an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States of America against Cuba.

BEARING IN MIND

- The need to reaffirm, among other principles, the sovereign equality of the States, non-interference in the countries’ internal affairs, and the freedom of trade and navigation, as established in numerous international legal instruments.
- That despite the expectations of the international community, the administration in the United States has not eliminated the series of rules and laws governing the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States against Cuba; instead it tightens them;
- That the decision taken by the current U.S. government on 10 September 2012 to extend the implementation against Cuba of the Trading with the Enemy Act, on which the other laws and regulations on the sanctions imposed against Cuba since 1962 are based, is evidence that the legal framework supporting that policy is still in place;

That during the last year, harassment of international financial transactions in Cuba, the implementation of extraterritorial regulations and increased fines and penalties for performing operations related to Cuba have been the most significant features of the blockade and that according to the annual report published by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Department of the Treasury, the total amount of Cuban funds frozen in U.S. banks at the end of 2011 amounted to US\$ 245 million, thus hampering the economic, social and scientific-technical development of Cuba.

- That the analysis contained in the document drafted by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA "Follow-up report on the application of the Helms Burton Law, 2011-2012" presents a detailed description of the impacts of the blockade on various economic sectors of the Republic of Cuba, as well as the extra-territorial nature of some of the measures and provisions adopted in this connection by the United States of America.

DECLARES:

1. The economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States of America against Cuba violates the International Law and is contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the rules of the international trade system and the freedom of navigation.
2. The Latin American Council strongly condemns the application of any law or measure contrary to the International Law, such as the Helms-Burton Law and the Torricelli Act, and in this connection, it calls upon the Government of the United States to put an end to their implementation.
3. The Permanent Secretariat must continue to examine this issue of special relevance for the external relations of the region, in accordance with Decision N° 482, and keep the Latin American Council informed about its evolution, with a view to making a decision during the XXXIX Regular Meeting of 2013.

The Permanent Secretariat calls SELA Member States to adopt or implement legislative, administrative and/or judicial measures, as appropriate, so as to prevent the implementation within the framework of the extraterritorial regulations that affect or may affect the economic, financial and commercial relations with Cuba.

4. The Latin American Council makes a call to the Government of the United States so that it complies with the provisions of a number of consecutive Resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly to put an end unconditionally and immediately to the economic, commercial and financial blockade that it keeps in force against Cuba.

A N N E X I

SPEECHES DURING THE MINISTERIAL STAGE

**Speech by His Excellency Ambassador José Rivera Banuet,
Permanent Secretary of SELA**

Mrs. Verónica Guerrero, Vice-Minister for Latin America and the Caribbean of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Your Excellency, Mr. Wilfred Elrington, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belize and Chairman of the Latin American Council;

Members of the Bureau of the Latin American Council;

Ministers and Vice-Ministers participating in this activity;

Ambassadors and delegates of the Member States of SELA;

Distinguished Ambassadors and Representatives of the diplomatic corps;

Representatives of international organizations;

Special guests;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Welcome you all to the XXXVIII Meeting of the Latin American Council, marking almost four decades of operation of SELA, as reflected in its actions to support our region's development, integration and unity.

I appreciate the participation of Mrs. Verónica Guerrero, Vice-Minister for Latin America and the Caribbean, representing the government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Noteworthy, on 7 October there was an exemplary democratic process in Venezuela, in which broad sectors of the population participated peacefully. For this, we congratulate the government and the people of this country.

We also welcome the election of Mr. Wilfred Elrington, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belize, as Chairman of the Latin American Council, which is a distinction for his country and for him, in recognition of his valuable and useful participation in the activities of our organization.

Likewise, we congratulate the other members of the Board, as we are confident that, along with the Chairman of the Latin American Council, they will play an active part in providing firm support to the Permanent Secretariat to undertake the road that stretches out ahead.

We would also like to thank the Plurinational State of Bolivia for having chaired the Latin American Council last year, as well as the rest of the outgoing Board. Ambassador Jorge Alvarado Rivas effectively promoted the activities of SELA and directed the Permanent Secretariat's work with great sensitivity.

We have submitted the report of activities of the Permanent Secretariat for consideration of the Member States. In our opinion, it shows satisfactory results in terms of compliance with the Work Programme that was outlined in consultation with the countries and approved by the Latin American Council in October last year.

The agenda of our meeting also includes the election of a new Permanent Secretary, thereby closing the cycle of my mandate. Holding this position has been the greatest honour I have received. I must thank the government of Mexico for the support that it

gave me at all times, as well as Venezuela, host country of SELA, for its encouraging collaboration during my tenure; and I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to all Member States for their staunch efforts to consolidate and strengthen our institution.

In evaluating the tasks of SELA – which I had the honour to direct – it can be seen that our organization took back its course; acted in harmony with its Member States; and became a reference for governments, private sectors and civil society organizations. It reinforced its presence by conducting activities in the various countries of the region and by being represented at the different summits that take place in the region. Moreover, SELA created various institutional niches such as those related to International Trade Single Windows; gave a boost and organization to the private sector in supporting the States to face disaster risks, fostered public policies to support SMEs and the external relations of Latin America and the Caribbean; and, additionally, it is one of the most active regional organizations in supporting the activities of CELAC.

The recent international financial crisis showed that proper management of macroeconomics by the countries of the region mitigated the most serious effects of the recession.

Among the factors that contributed to recover growth were: internally, a combination of policies that maintained private consumption and gross capital formation; and externally, the increase in commodity prices and the expansion of trade mainly as a result of the high demand from Asian countries.

The crisis caused an economic contraction in the region in 2009 with a negative growth rate of 2 percent, which reverted the following year with a positive growth rate that will continue in 2012 at around 3.3 percent and an average of about 4 percent throughout most of this decade.

This growth, however, will not be enough to create the required jobs or to address the situation of poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean, or to bridge the gap that characterizes it as the most unequal region in the world in terms of income distribution.

In Latin America and the Caribbean there are social circles that live in the most advanced modernity of the 21st century, coexisting with other social strata that remain in backward conditions, as if lagging behind countless decades. Nevertheless, Latin America and the Caribbean have the human and physical conditions to pursue a better and more inclusive economic development.

Thus, broad sectors of the world's population – also in Latin America and the Caribbean – is outraged and protest against global and local problems that have caused discontent and demand changes; particularly, poverty and inequalities, young people without opportunities, the weaknesses of civil society, corruption and environmental destruction.

The global economy is marred by slower growth and uncertainty regarding the future. The only thing that is certain about the global economy is its uncertainty.

Europe is stagnant, the United States has a weak performance, emerging economies are less dynamic and only Latin America and the Caribbean and Asian countries will be able to maintain significant levels of growth in this difficult global context.

To replace part of the demand from industrialized countries, the region is seeking to intensify its current presence and open up new markets, mainly in Asia, Africa and the

Middle East, in an attempt to reduce risks, diversify its export basket and pursue lasting competitive advantages.

The region has options that would allow it to move towards a new phase of growth, including the possibility of financing current account deficits and a margin for a less restrictive monetary policy, with international reserves of great magnitude.

It is also crucial to give impetus to a new era of productivity and competitiveness that allows for boosting our foreign trade and encouraging an expansion of domestic markets.

Latin America and the Caribbean is not a homogeneous region. While there are common purposes, some factors that separate and divide the countries persist. Moreover, national interests do not always match, nor do their modalities foreign relations.

There are governments that propose projects for national cohesion and social participation different from those of other nations. Similarly, they have different approaches as regards sovereignty of natural resources, the size and scope of the State intervention and the limits of the market.

However, there exists the conviction that, in today's world, isolated policies and fragmented markets end up intensifying the risk of vulnerability for countries. And this has renewed the quest for regional integration. Our destiny is to become a great nation of countries, which will renew our strength at the regional and global levels.

In view of such different visions of integration, one of the main challenges is to reach a state of conciliation and complementation of the various schemes into a single common platform.

The integration process must be accelerated. Priority should be given to the creation of a free trade area in the region as a whole, and to cooperation in the areas of energy, physical infrastructure, reduction of asymmetries among countries and the creation of a regional monetary area.

It will also be very important to share common stances as regards issues of collective interest, such as climate change, the global economic realignment, and the region's position vis-à-vis China and other emerging economies.

Compounding this challenge there are problems that should be solved in tandem with the international community, such as the adverse effects of globalization on our societies, the stagnation of multilateral trade negotiations, the technological gap in our region, and the intensification of natural disasters.

The policies that must be followed by our countries to achieve higher and sustainable growth, as well as a better international insertion, should be aimed at strengthening regional integration and cooperation, encouraging investment and productivity, and promoting education, science and technology – which would usher us into the knowledge economy.

However, integration in our region should not be limited to economic and commercial aspects. If regional integration does not imply social integration as well, it is not real integration.

In this connection, it is necessary for SELA to foster joint reflection on regional cooperation as regards measures for social cohesion, to help identify national best practices in the

field of social programmes and to maintain an information network on their scopes, while generating initiatives and contributing to capacity-building.

Better educated and skilled people will be the greatest wealth for the region, as they will be the leaders who will shape up the future. This will be the most far-reaching effort in favour of the social integration of our countries.

In view of the effects of the global financial crisis, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean outlined national public policies and proposed them at the multilateral level, and the region grabbed unprecedented attention.

As set forth in the Caracas Declaration of 2011, such situation encouraged the region's countries "to launch CELAC as a representative mechanism for political consultation, integration and cooperation of Latin America and Caribbean States, and as a common space to ensure the unity and integration of our region"

CELAC – which inherited the Rio Group and the Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean on Integration and Development – lays the groundwork for promoting multidimensional linkages among the 33 countries that form part of it.

For this purpose, we inform about our work programmes and share them with the rest of the regional and subregional organizations, while expressing our willingness to have inter-institutional coordination and cooperation, bearing in mind that SELA – as stated in its name – was conceived as a "system"; that is, as a network of organizations.

We endorse the purposes and goals of CELAC and, in this spirit, we are conducting several activities in coordination with its Pro Tempore Presidency and have expressed our readiness to support the upcoming Presidency as of January next year.

Within the framework of CELAC, SELA has been identified as a facilitator of the axis of Productive and Industrial Development. In this regard, in conjunction with the Presidency of CELAC, we have convened a meeting of senior officials on this issue, in our headquarters in November, which will provide guidelines to be evaluated in order to eventually call for a Conference of Ministers in the area of productive and industrial development.

We face the challenge of enhancing competitiveness and productivity, strengthening micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and other forms of productive partnerships, as well as outlining programmes and projects for developing value chains and clusters.

The elements that we consider as starting points for a reflection on the productive development of the region are as follows:

First, improvements in the pattern for international insertion of Latin America and the Caribbean must be in line with the transformation of the regional productive structure, so that the region can develop competitive products and services in the global market.

Second, economic growth has to be conceived as a result of the interaction of various factors: accumulation of capital, accumulation of knowledge applied to production, and institutional development.

And third, Latin America and the Caribbean can accelerate its economic growth through policies that promote not only an increase in investments, but also the best possible use of the resources already existing in their economies.

The Panama Convention was an expression of the will of Latin American and Caribbean countries to have an exclusively regional organization grouping all the nations of our region.

At present, SELA has 28 Member States and there is the political will to invite those countries that have not adhered to the Panama Convention yet – such as Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines – so that they join our organization.

For this purpose, we met with leaders of the Caribbean Community with the Secretariat of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, with which we signed a collaboration agreement, and we invariably invite it to participate in our activities. Additionally, we have visited those countries and we have addressed correspondence to their highest authorities inviting them to form part of SELA.

However, reality can overshadow intentions and, in this case, the international situation has severely impacted Eastern Caribbean countries and made their economies more vulnerable. This is why they have not taken the decision to form part of SELA yet.

The Latin American Council could provide guidelines to the Permanent Secretariat on possible ways to facilitate the entry of these countries in our organization, because we wish SELA will gather all of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The IBERPYME Programme has operated for more than one decade at SELA. It was attached to the Ibero-American General Secretariat, which provided training and technical assistance in the area of small and medium-sized enterprises only to Ibero-American countries, excluding English-speaking countries.

In this Latin American Council, we are proposing to create the SELA-SMEs Programme, which includes all our Member States.

The Permanent Secretariat maintains a close and very friendly relationship with the Caribbean countries, as reflected in the fact that in the past four years we have conducted more activities in these countries than in the entire history of our organization.

With the Central American countries we have also maintained a focus on dealing with issues that are of their interest, such as those related to natural disasters, energy insufficiency, food security and promotion of foreign trade.

Precisely this month, SELA conducted in Belize the XXIII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors, which focused on cooperation in the area of food security.

The Panama Convention establishing SELA included the idea that the unity of all our countries was possible despite their differences. It also reflected the notion that self-confidence, regional identity, the defence of own interests and the pursuit of opportunities among our countries would open up huge spaces.

I am still convinced – as I was as when I started my term – that without unity there is no future for the region and that SELA should be ready to provide its support to those members countries who may so require it, in order to become a space for reflection, consultation and negotiation of initiatives, within its scope of action, to contribute to that goal.

The pursuit of common goals within the economic, political and social diversity of its Member States is the main asset of the organization; that is, unity within plurality.

In long-term scenarios and vis-à-vis the strength gained by other regions, the presence of Latin America and the Caribbean will continue to be modest, unless we act with the appropriate vision to reverse those forecasts.

This is one of the areas in which SELA can best serve countries. But it will require the preparation of agendas and institutional activities that, far from confrontations, will provide spaces for action to governments.

A multidimensional integration will contribute to effectively raise the living standards of the population. To that end, we have fostered greater participation of business, labour and academic sectors and other social actors in the process of integration and cooperation that we are promoting.

SELA provides a fertile ground for promoting regional cooperation – a task that has been one of its hallmarks and that led to the creation of Action Committees and joint ventures on a wide range of issues.

There is still margin to reactivate the Action Committees, which are made up only by interested countries and have proved their effectiveness in the past.

I am sure that there would be interest in creating Action Committees for the development of topics such as International Trade Single Windows, paperless trade and protection of traditional knowledge, or for Latin American and Caribbean programs on applications using information and communications technologies, such as telemedicine.

Ladies and gentlemen:

At the beginning of my mandate, I pointed out – and today I am still convinced about it – that in view of the new challenges faced by the region, both internally and externally, it is necessary to prepare ambitious proposals for SELA's activities, and to introduce new modalities of work, which could be analyzed by the governments.

Today, I would like to reiterate some of those proposals and modalities:

At the request of two or more countries wishing to hold consultations or informal negotiations to deepen their integration or cooperation purposes, SELA could become a flexible forum for such purposes, by offering political spaces to governments, while bypassing the formality of declarations, resolutions or even voting processes, and counting with the technical support of the Permanent Secretariat.

The absence of a regional dispute settlement mechanism could be offset by turning SELA into a flexible consultation body to settle economic disputes among Member States.

SELA may also convene specialists from the public and private sectors, experts from the academic sector and consultants, all of them with a high level of excellence, to participate as speakers in brief courses, aimed at national top-ranking officials responsible for public policies.

I believe that, in these four years, significant efforts have been deployed so that SELA can effectively work for the benefit of our region, and at present we can affirm that SELA has

made considerable progress towards that goal and has achieved greater relevance, as well as a new and much better horizon.

Finally, I must express my appreciation to my colleagues of the Permanent Secretariat, who, every day during my term, devoted their best efforts to serve the countries of the region and to make our institution transcend and reach higher levels of efficiency and quality.

Once again, many thanks to all of you.

Speech by His Excellency Mr. Wilfred Elrington, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belize and Chairman of the Latin American Council

Honourable Mrs. Veronica Guerrero Rodríguez, Vice-Minister for Latin America and the Caribbean of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Honourable Mr. Rubén Darío Molina, Director-General of the Office for Multilateral Affairs and Integration of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

His Excellency Ambassador José Rivera Banuet, Permanent Secretary of SELA;

Distinguished representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Distinguished representatives of international organizations;

Ladies and gentlemen:

I will be very brief this afternoon. It seems to me that I forgot to congratulate President Hugo Chávez and his party for the great success he had at the polls. I was here, I think last year, when they had also national elections. And one thing that impressed me tremendously was the huge amount of people, young people that were receiving instruction of one type or another in this country. I think that education is the only solution to the poverty problem that we have, and apparently Venezuela is determined to ensure that its citizens are well educated. And so, I must congratulate them and tell them that we are certainly happy that they are giving the government another term for continuing the extraordinary work they are doing. I would like to thank the Member States of SELA for electing me as a Chairman and I would like to promise that, during the course of my Chairmanship, I will stick scrupulously to the letter of our Convention, which really is the Bible of SELA, to guide me as what to do and what not to do, and I will be as fair and efficient as is possible in my position.

I just want to say in a few words that we are all one people. No matter where we are located, people are one and rely on the same planet, the same sun, the same moon, the same sea. The so-called differences are truly skin-deep for persons of African descent. We have gone through long years of discrimination based essentially on the colour of skin, but the true is that this is God's design. Almost everything on Earth has coloration, but it has nothing to do with your mental capacity, it has nothing to do with your heart, it has nothing to do with what you have inside of you. When we are dead, we all look the same regardless of our colour. At that time we are the same.

I simply want to point out that the differences that we deem so significant are really insignificant. What is so powerful among us is the commonality. And so we need to deal with commonalities. We need above all to deal with the existential threat of global warming. The planet really is in serious trouble, and when that is gone all is gone. Of course, we need to ensure that we treat everyone else the same as we want them to treat us.

I think that this is only possible through education. I have found that the more educated people are, the less prejudiced they are and the less dogmatic they are. Education seems to free the rude and bring him to his senses. When I see people who behave rude and who behave violent and who behave indiscriminately, I regret it. Of course, it seems to me that they really need to further develop to understand that we really are one.

So, while I am here as Chairman of the Latin American Council, I will try to work with my colleagues, bearing those values in mind, and to do all in my power to ensure that they work for the region in terms of education, research and knowledge, three elements that are so needy to transform our society and really free us and be true owners of this wonderful heritage that we have. I am very optimistic about this future and about this region, and I trust that you are likewise optimistic.

Thank you and good evening.

**Speech by the Honourable Mrs. Verónica Guerrero, Vice-Minister for Latin America
and the Caribbean of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela**

Good afternoon.

Your Excellencies and Honourable representatives of Member States attending this meeting of the Latin American Council of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA);

Your Excellency Mr. Wilfred Elrington, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Belize and Chairman of the Latin American Council;

Ambassador José Rivera Banuet;

Special guests:

Within the framework of the installation of the XXXVIII Meeting of the Latin American Council of SELA, it is a huge honour for me as representative of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to warmly welcome all of you, our illustrious visitors, Latin American and Caribbean sisters and brothers, to Caracas, the birthplace of our Liberator Simón Bolívar and the city where the original ideas of Latin American and Caribbean freedom, independence and integration were forged for the construction of the Great Land, Our America.

The most universal Venezuelan of all time, our Liberator Simón Bolívar, is a reference par excellence of the Latin American and Caribbean integration and unity, with initiatives such as the creation of the Gran Colombia or the proposed Amphictyonic Congress of Panama. In his writings, letters and texts of different types, we find samples of his integrationist thought; documents such as the Jamaica Letter or the Address at Angostura, among others, which have become a must for all who pass through the paths of integration of Our America.

Other Latin American and Caribbean founding fathers and leaders, such as Martí, San Martín, O'Higgins, Artigas, Petición, Morazán, Sandino, as well as other heroes and heroines of the continent, were big enthusiasts of integration and cooperation among the countries in our region. And like Bolívar, they did not plough the sea. They ploughed this rich American soil, sowed the seed of the union of our peoples and now reap the fruits of their efforts, with their present generations joining together in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, CELAC, which was established in December 2011 in this city of Caracas.

In fact, a high-quality forum on the course and prospects of CELAC has just come to an end with the participation of some representatives of the Troika of CELAC. We thank Dr. Marisol Pérez, representative of the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC, for her remarks, as well as my dear friend Rubén Darío Molina, Director-General of the Office of Multilateral Affairs and Integration of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the CELAC Troika comprised of Chile, Cuba and Venezuela, with the special collaboration of our current Permanent Secretary of SELA, Ambassador José Rivera Banuet, and our Chairman of the Latin American Council, His Excellency Foreign Minister of Belize, Wilfred Elrington.

A great historical objective of Latin American and Caribbean governments and peoples is undoubtedly to achieve the full and true integration of our region under the premises of South-South Cooperation and complementarity. Not only is this possible and feasible, but it is also a necessity, an essential condition for the comprehensive development of our countries.

The Revolutionary Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, led by Commander Hugo Chávez, conscious and committed to this idea, is actively working on

the strengthening of innovative mechanisms, such as ALBA, MERCOSUR, UNASUR, and now CELAC, which have been established in the region for our countries to advance together, leaving aside differences and working under the guidance of those principles that unite us, such as complementarity, cooperation, solidarity and respect for the sovereignty of peoples.

But, above all, we must stand together to face the serious crisis of the capitalist model in its neoliberal form today plaguing much of Europe and in general the so-called "first world," where millions of human beings are added to the numbers of those unemployed, underemployed, losing their homes, excluded from the educational system, with their pensions reduced, and excluded totally or partially from the social care, while economic benefits are directed to the speculative financial capital, namely the banks.

We in Venezuela are convinced that only transcending the capitalist logic, the logic of profit and gain, the logic of competition and the free market or free trade, it is possible to achieve comprehensive economic and political formulas that ensure the happiness of our peoples.

To that end, SELA has a lot to contribute as a space for reflection and creation of bold proposals for the generation of thinking and the joint economic action of our region at both the intra-regional and extra-regional levels.

To achieve the full integration and the unity of Our America, it is necessary to take concrete steps towards the establishment of a new world order, aimed at reaching harmony among nations, the peaceful coexistence among human beings and a new relationship of humanity with the environment and nature.

There is no doubt that Latin America and the Caribbean is passing through very positive moments, has managed to overcome a dark period of colonialism and is recovering from long decades of economic and political crises, military dictatorship, frequent coups, social outbreaks and above all extreme poverty, against which we are still fighting an uphill battle to pay off the social debt of our continent.

We have reached important levels of integration and union through both bilateral and multilateral agreements on political, economic, commercial, social, cultural and environmental issues, among others. We have made some progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. We have growing economies, strong democracies in the region and, above all, we have recovered the hope, because we know that the future belongs to us.

In the context of this historic moment for integration, it is essential to transform and strengthen multilateral systems and spaces in the region that contribute to the consolidation of CELAC, as the great mechanism that synthesizes the Latin American and Caribbean union.

In this connection, SELA, as intergovernmental regional body in which almost all Latin American and Caribbean countries are represented (and I join the call of the Permanent Secretary to continue the joint efforts for the five countries that have not yet acceded the Panama Convention to do it as soon as possible), should play an essential role in promoting a Latin American and Caribbean agenda for the integral development of its people. That should be the focus. Every economic policy must include that goal.

SELA must become the fundamental support to CELAC, to the governments of its 33 member countries, as regards guidance, recommendations, advice on effective and

efficient economic policies to deal with the global crisis and ensure the well-being and good living of all, through economic policies for productive and commercial complementarity, linkage of productive chains and the scientific, technological and industrial strengthening of our countries.

And it should transcend the merely economic matter to move towards the development of policies for education and training of our human resources, research for the development of science and technology based on our needs and potential, design of policies for industrial development, follow-up of productive chains in the region, inclusive social policies, among other aspects.

We are aware of the technical and professional expertise of SELA, the experience gained over these years and its interest in joining the consolidation of CELAC, betting on a strong and effective regional integration. That is why we are confident that, during the new period that is about to start at SELA, every effort will be made for the activities and research carried out by this important organization to be in line with that goal.

On several occasions, in this space, the member countries were called on to give their full political support to the work developed by SELA. And on several occasions, we have heard that its members ratify such willingness. Today the scene is different. Less than a year ago CELAC was born, and SELA has the real chance to become a fundamental support to this new hope for integration through the formulation of effective and innovative proposals and the specialized technical support to its member countries.

As you all know, Venezuela has proposed Dr. Roberto Guarnieri as a candidate for Permanent Secretary of SELA for this new term. He is a man with recognized professional, political and moral credentials to take on this challenge, so we submit the proposal for consideration of this Council. In addition, I would like to greet, thank and congratulate Ambassador José Rivera Banuet for his commendable work at the helm of the Permanent Secretariat during his term.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reaffirms its strong support to SELA in this new stage of reconstruction and redefinition, and I am sure that other Member States will join and put their hearts into this.

Thank you very much.

A N N E X I I

**FORUM: COMMUNITY OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN STATES (CELAC):
DIRECTION AND PROSPECTS**

**Speech by His Excellency Ambassador José Rivera Banuet,
Permanent Secretary of SELA**

Honourable Mrs. Verónica Guerrero, Vice-Minister of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Honourable Mr. Carlos Roverssi, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica;

Honourable Mrs. Norma B. Pensado Moreno, Undersecretary for Latin America and the Caribbean of Mexico;

His Excellency Mr. Wilfred Elrington, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belize and Chairman of the Latin American Council;

Honourable Mrs. Marisol Pérez, representative of the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC;

Honourable Mr. Rubén Darío Molina, Director-General of the Office of Multilateral Affairs and Integration of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Member of the Troika of CELAC;

Distinguished delegates of Member States of SELA;

Distinguished Ambassadors and representatives of the rest of the diplomatic corps;

Ladies and gentlemen:

We considered that this Meeting of the Latin American Council should focus on the theme of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), because this Community represents a significant effort by the 33 countries in the region to strengthen unity and promote cooperation for greater communication, negotiation and consultation with the rest of the world, with different regions, with different countries. I believe that, with great wisdom, the Heads of State and Government designed this mechanism to allow significant progress in expectations of Latin America and the Caribbean of becoming an area with greater presence at international level, i.e. a partner of greater relevance, with greater vigour, with major initiatives and with greater and better proposals in the international arena.

Since the establishment of the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC) and subsequently of CELAC, SELA has contributed with great enthusiasm to this task. Related mandates were adopted by the Latin American Council, our governing body. In addition, several mandates adopted by representatives and delegates of our Member States request us to bear in mind the work of CELAC, to prioritize and monitor its activities and to make the best of our efforts to materialize its objectives and tasks, defined in the corresponding Plan of Action and the Caracas Declaration.

We have undertaken different tasks, met with other organizations and carried out events here in Caracas: First, within the framework of CELAC, and then among institutions to analyze the various dimensions identified in the activities to be developed by this mechanism. We have met with other organizations to see how we can share tasks. We have done this within the framework of the Latin American Integration Association (ALADI) and CELAC in different meetings of experts and representatives of organizations. We will meet again in the coming weeks in Santiago, in an activity of inter-agency coordination. We actively participate in these tasks with great interest. We are part of the work being developed and we are entrusted with tasks clearly defined in these areas. A particular task is related to the promotion of development in the productive and industrial field. This

is a task in which we are engaged through the production of several documents and the conduction of queries.

The documents we have produced cover several areas. In the financial and monetary field, we have worked hard to provide CELAC with documents on international monetary and financial cooperation and on the global situation, in particular the international crises, to be presented at its meetings. These documents are neither reviews nor reports on activities or ideas proposed by other institutions. They include concrete proposals to be put on the table, and all documents we prepare are of the same nature.

We have also prepared documents in the cultural area to promote creative and cultural industries. In addition, we have provided documents on health, housing, culture, and social development that we prepared for three to four years. In summary, we have made every effort at the Secretariat, through the development of several programmes, for CELAC to produce better results. We have brought our enthusiasm, our effort and our interest in these tasks.

We have also participated in meetings on infrastructure and provided a document on border infrastructure. All this is reflected in the set of documents that are available to you at this Meeting of the Latin American Council.

Several years ago, SELA received the mandate to determine how many intergovernmental organizations, institutions and agencies were in the region and make a survey. We resumed this task to send our Member States and CELAC a "photograph" of all intergovernmental bodies in Latin America and the Caribbean at the hemispheric, regional and subregional levels. The document will be ready in a few days. To date, we have identified 136 organizations, an amount that reflects that we are very creative in our region as regards the creation of institutions, mechanisms and bodies. We want to give an account on the situation for the benefit of our governments and societies and to allow better coordination, a closer relationship and a better understanding among the various organizations co-existing in Latin America and the Caribbean.

I have four slides to show. In the first one, there is a list of organizations by name. In the following, they are listed by geographic location as hemispheric, regional, belonging to the Andean region, Central America, the Caribbean, South America. Then, they are listed by their area of responsibility: finance, trade, science and technology, environment, among others. Then, we sorted them by country and headquarters in Latin American and Caribbean countries. And, finally, they are listed by their goal: purposes, nature, creation date, headquarters and contact information. We are enriching and deepening this task. We already have a number of identified bodies that might be a good reference for achieving better and greater links among organizations, which could be more useful depending on the objectives pursued with the creation of CELAC.

Finally, I just wanted to refer to these issues in this introduction before giving the floor to our consultants, who will present their points of view. I warmly welcome you and thank you for your presence.

Thank you very much.

Speech by the Honourable Mrs. Marisol Pérez, Representative of the *Pro Tempore* Presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

Good afternoon to all of you, thank you very much for being here;

Ambassador José Rivera, Permanent Secretary of SELA, thank you for the invitation to the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC;

Greetings to Rubén Darío Molina, who shares the Troika of CELAC, and His Excellency Mr. Wilfred Elrington, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belize and Chairman of the Latin American Council.

Well, I will try to be very brief.

Chile holds the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC in 2012. Let us recall some background facts. CELAC emerges from the Rio Group and the Unity Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Rio Group existed from 1983 with the Contadora Group and the Contadora Support Group. Then, the Unity Summit of Latin American and the Caribbean is, of course, the result of the efforts made by Brazilian President Ignacio Lula Da Silva and Mexican President Felipe Calderón, who were interested in creating a bigger intergovernmental entity in the region. The Unity Summit was held within the framework of the CALC Summit in the Riviera Maya, in Mexico, on 23 February 2010 and represented the start of the preparation process for the creation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which was born in the Caracas Summit on 2 and 3 December 2011 and released its first mandates through the Caracas Declaration.

What are the goals of CELAC? The Community will make emphasis on the political, economic, social and cultural integration of the region, inspired by its two predecessors, especially the Rio Group, which always worked as a group of political coordination and was extremely important for the democratic process in the region. Precisely, CELAC will reaffirm the preservation of democracy, the rule of law and full respect for human rights; it will work hard to intensify the political dialogue and the coordination of regional positions to promote the interests of the region and to increase its influence in the international arena. We are doing this vigorously, and this is the first time in history that the region of Latin America and the Caribbean appears as a crucial actor in the international arena. We also are here to promote an integrated agenda, aimed at giving continuity to the existing mandates.

One of our major goals is regional integration, which is our first aspiration. We must create, we must build a real connection between the Caribbean and South America, we must prevent the multiplicity of organizations. We heard the Permanent Secretary of SELA saying that we have 136 regional and subregional bodies and that it is necessary for them to work for the good of all the inhabitants in this region. It is necessary to move towards the physical integration, because Latin America and the Caribbean is very rich and has capabilities that, necessarily, must be shared. Thus, CELAC incorporates 33 Member States, wants to become a guiding entity, to give continuity to the mandates and to coordinate the existing mechanisms and organizations in the region.

How does CELAC work? And what have we been doing for this first foundation year? The highest body is the Summit of Heads of State, which ratifies the decisions being made in other instances. We have a Meeting of Foreign Ministers; the I Meeting of Foreign Ministers was held on 25 September in New York. The Pro Tempore Presidency is rotary. We also have meetings of National Coordinators, in which all countries participate and an agenda is discussed on the most important issues in the region.

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We held two meetings of national coordinators, both in Chile, one in Viña del Mar and the other in Santa Cruz. Simultaneously, we conduct a series of specialized meetings, which submit their conclusions for consideration of the meeting of National Coordinators and the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. Finally, the Summit of Heads of State makes the decisions. We have a Troika made up of Venezuela, the former headquarters of CALC; Cuba, which is going to continue the work to make CELAC grow; and Chile; which assumed the task of developing the founding year.

CELAC, as the Rio Group, has international powers and develops a very fruitful political dialogue with other international actors. At the last meeting in New York, Latin American and Caribbean Foreign Ministers had the opportunity to meet with China, the Russian Federation, the Union of African States and the Gulf countries. With each of these international actors, CELAC has designed a series of specific agendas that will give it a boost in a number of areas, from international trade to natural disasters and food security. Then, we had coincidences in international and multilateral forums. We work hard to provide Latin America and the Caribbean with a position of greater relevance vis-à-vis international developments of major significance. We will organize the CELAC-European Union Summit, a dialogue in which we have participated for years, but now, for the first time, will take place in Santiago of Chile. In addition, we coordinate annual dialogues with other countries and groups of countries of the United Nations.

In the founding year of CELAC, we have developed several events of importance, among which stand out the following: a meeting on the environment in Quito in February; a meeting on humanitarian assistance and natural disasters in Panama City; an extremely important meeting of regional and subregional integration mechanisms in Montevideo in August. Other events included a meeting on migrants in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, on 20 and 21 August, and a meeting on infrastructure for the physical integration of transport, telecommunications and border integration in Santiago from 29 to 31 August. Soon, another meeting will be held in Santiago, at the headquarters of CELAC. Next, in November, a symposium will take place in Santiago and will be considered the scientific contribution of the founding year to the advances and challenges of research on treatments, drugs and vaccines against the drug addiction. The holding of a meeting of Finance Ministers is scheduled for December. We hope to conduct a meeting on social development in Caracas and a meeting of Ministers of Culture in Paramaribo, Suriname, in a date to be determined.

As you can see, the founding year of CELAC has been very intense. During that year, a hard work has been developed in all areas considered for the mandates of the Heads of State. What is going to happen now? How does this foundational first year end? The I Summit of CELAC will mark the end of the founding year and will take place in Santiago de Chile on 27 and 28 January 2013. The 33 Heads of State from Latin America and the Caribbean are expected to attend. Mandates and the Caracas Action Plan will be complied with and decisions will be made within the framework of meetings of Ministers, technical ministerial meetings and those of experts and national coordinators. The I Summit is expected to incorporate an innovative element, which will be a retreat for the Heads of State scheduled to take place on Sunday 27 January and to last approximately 3 hours. This Summit will end with the adoption of the Santiago Declaration and Action Plan, documents that will contain the mandates for the continuation of the work of CELAC in the future. Then, we, with great joy and great faith, will also hand over the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC to Cuba.

We hope that the Santiago Declaration is a very short and specific document, with conclusions and recommendations in the areas that have been negotiated during the year 2012 for Cuba to continue with the work of CELAC.

In addition, we hope that a series of special communiqués are adopted at this I Summit of CELAC: one on the Malvinas Islands; a special communiqué on the support for the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations; another on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba; as well as some regulatory agreements. Among them, a very important one that was approved in the I Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which is the extension of the Troika so that a member of CARICOM is present in the deliberations and the progress of the entity. The Troika is a fundamental element in the progress of CELAC, the deliberation among Venezuela, Chile and Cuba this year has been fundamental to carry out the works that have been made.

Thank you all for your patience. It has been a very intense year and we hope to hand over the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC to Cuba on 28 January.

Thank you very much.

**Speech by the Honourable Mr. Rubén Darío Molina, Director-General of the Office
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of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela
and Member of the Troika of CELAC**

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Honourable Mrs. Verónica Guerrero Rodríguez, Vice-Minister for Latin America and the Caribbean of the People's Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Your Excellency Ambassador José Rivera Banuet, Permanent Secretary of SELA;

Distinguished representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Distinguished representatives of international organizations;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Thank you all for attending this Forum. Our people in the Bolivarian Government often ask us what is the Community of Latin American and the Caribbean States (CELAC) for. I suppose that your peoples also ask the same question. It is incredible what the Permanent Secretary said about the existence of 134 organizations in our region. I consider the document prepared by SELA and presented by the Permanent Secretary very important. We will monitor its progress. I remember that Mexico provided us a list of 30 bodies, which was very useful for the development process of CELAC. Let me tell you that, as regards the direction and prospects referred to in the title of this Forum, our liberators were those who marked the course 200 years ago and, if we go further back, we will find in our indigenous peoples the pioneers who set that course, pursued further in the struggles of our independence. Such is the case of Haiti, which set up the first independent Republic of people of African descent.

Mr. Ambassador, as we have said in another Forum, part of the great suffering of the Haitian people, among other things, was due to their desire for freedom. To achieve this freedom, people are working hard in the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean, as Bolívar did in his time. Thus, we have a course of independence and we have a course of history, and this independence is what leads to freedom. We have gone through independence processes, such as that of Mexico, that have lasted 200 years. Other examples include Venezuela, Colombia, Argentina, i.e. almost all of the South, but there are also very young processes or those aimed at greater independence that started about 60, 40, 50 years ago. But we also have challenges in the region, as it is the case with Puerto Rico, which is right here with respect to Venezuela. There is a course to build. There are potentials. As the Permanent Secretary and Marisol said, we also have a course outlined as a result of the experiences gained by integration and cooperation mechanisms, such as the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), established more than 50 years ago, and the Latin American Pacific Arch. I do not know if there is an institution older than IICA. It is worth mentioning the case of SELA, with its 37 years of existence and 28 Member States. I wish I had more time to give details of the tremendous work behind the proposal made by Brazil, with the Latin American and Caribbean Summit (CALC), and Mexico, which resulted in the creation of CELAC. The Rio Group operated for 25 years and CALC just for 3, but both formed a very rich heritage we are developing within CELAC.

I must refer to the Unity Summit, held in Cancun, the Riviera Maya, Mexico, on 23 February 2010. This event is part of our historic legacy for the unity of Latin America and the Caribbean, a unity we must build around a wide variety of governments, because there was opposition to the conduction of the Caracas Summit and the establishment of

CELAC, but the political will to make it happen prevailed. Thanks to the action of an open-ended working group co-chaired by Chile and Venezuela, we build the institutionalization of CELAC.

In examining prospects of CELAC, we find the challenges it faces. The main of these challenges is the geopolitical positioning, its status as political bloc, on the basis of a multipolar world, where Latin America and the Caribbean is going to be or already is at the forefront of other regions, as evidenced recently during the meetings of the Troika in New York. Several countries in the region accompanied us at those events, including the meeting with the Gulf Cooperation Council. However, for many reasons, we could not hold a meeting with the African Union. We could not hold a meeting with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The same happened with some bilateral meetings, such as that scheduled with Canada, for example. As regards Europe, we are planning the I CELAC-EU Summit.

The geopolitical positioning of CELAC depends on its relations with China and India, which combined have more than 2,500 million people, as well as Russia, Brazil and South Africa. We have to negotiate with the major economies. Another challenge is the fight against the neocolonialism, an expression of which is the Malvinas Islands issue. We have declared that they belong to Argentina. Here we have an example of how an ancient empire intends to maintain its dominance in our region. The independence of Puerto Rico remains a pending matter, as it is the goal for the Latin American Parliament to become the Parliament of CELAC. Another aspect to be taken into account is the need to avoid repeating the bad experiences of other regional bodies.

A pending issue of great importance is the proposal by Trinidad and Tobago for the Troika of CELAC to be expanded with the entry of the representation of CARICOM. In addition, we must decide on the proposal by President of Panama, Ricardo Martinelli, for CELAC to have a Secretariat, an issue that requires further evaluation. We should also consider the four mandates issued by the Heads of State and Government and set forth in the Caracas Declaration regarding regional and subregional integration mechanisms in the economic and commercial areas based on the principles of convergence, complementarity and cooperation among such mechanisms, as well as the rationality of costs. Another challenge would be to solve the communication failure in order to stimulate the participation of all peoples from access to timely information that enables them to know what CELAC is doing, and above all, what CELAC can do for them.

**Speech by His Excellency Mr. Wilfred Elrington, Minister of Foreign Affairs
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Distinguished representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

Distinguished representatives of regional and international organizations;

And most importantly, citizens of the region:

Let me start by wishing SELA a wonderful 37th anniversary. That is a hallmark achievement. From what I have seen of the work being done by SELA this is an excellent organization. I really commend it. I would also like to commend the visionary members of the hemisphere who had the idea to form SELA and the current staff of the organization.

I would also like to thank our host country, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. I am told that it has been unstinting in its support to SELA and, if it were not for that support, we probably would not be having an efficient and effective organization. So I think we should be thankful for that.

Other core ingredients in any development of strategy or plan are the economic and social components. The economic component speaks essentially and primarily of the sustainability and the viability of the plan. The social component deals with the purpose of the plan, the beneficiaries, the citizens of our countries, which represent our most valuable and cherished assets.

And it is with the sole purpose of enhancing the status of our people that all our heroes, past and present, starting with Simón Bolívar, have fought tirelessly for us to find the ways to put our differences behind us and to unite and integrate our forces and resources, because only by so doing we will be stronger and we will enable our people to attain to their fullest potential. In this regard, the birth of CELAC was a monumental historic occasion which brought great joy to all our leaders a year ago. For the first time in history, a region of colonized people was able to make a complete break with colonialism and to form an organization made up essentially of independent former colonized countries.

The most vulnerable stage of life is when one is giving birth and perhaps the first six years of life. So CELAC is in a most vulnerable stage, an extremely vulnerable stage, and we have to do all in our power to ensure that it develops, grows and matures.

I can tell you that many young people in my country are so disillusioned that they tell you: "If I make it through 21 years of age, I will live a long life." They are so disillusioned. The same thing that happens to our youth will be reflected in our institutions. Therefore, it is very important that we give very careful and clear thought to the development of CELAC. We have to avoid what has happened in the United Nations. We do not want five powerful permanent members against a majority of weak countries that is given scanty attention.

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CELAC will have to be very democratic and give the same treatment to the smallest members as to the biggest members. In that regard, I would like to commend the Troika of CELAC for taking seriously the proposal made by Trinidad and Tobago, because some members in CARICOM were wondering whether we have made a mistake or we were making a mistake in being part of CELAC.

In this world, a tiny country like Japan is really a giant, so is Taiwan, so is Singapore, so is Luxembourg. We need to understand that size is not significant. You may be small in size but huge in heart. That is what makes the difference.

My first advice would be that in CELAC we have to make sure that we are completely democratic, representative and everyone's voice is heard. We also have to make sure that we are completely guided by the rule of law. Democracy is underpinned by the rule of law, and if we are not disposed to obey the law, that is going to be a prelude to disaster. This is an organization of sovereign countries who can walk out any time. If we are to stay together, we have to set separate rules or laws which guide us and by which we all have to be prepared to be bound.

As regards enforcement, we find the case of the United Nations. There was a suggestion that the biggest forces manipulated the Charter to allow for justice to be done on Libya. That caused controversy. Some people said that the action was unlawful, while others considered it lawful. The consensus seemed to be that the law was broken. That can happen. Any lawyer will tell that people can bend the law, but this is not the right way. You cannot pretend that this action was done under the cover of law.

My second advice has to do with the fact that our region is wealthy, perhaps one of the wealthiest regions in the world. We also know that here reside powerful intellectual forces. So we have wealth and we have the mental capacity. But we also know that this is the hemisphere with the greatest disparity. The world's richest man lives in Mexico and the poorest people are in Haiti. We are the ones who can change this situation. But to do it, we all should have a very big heart. And we should not be fooled into thinking that by assisting our brothers, we are being altruistic and it is not to our benefit, because when our brothers are indigent, poor, ignorant, uneducated and have to resort to criminal activity to survive, this is going to affect all of us.

What happens in Haiti affects the people in England, Russia, China. This is an interconnected world. We breathe the same air and we share the same sun and moon. We need to promote preventive diplomacy, which means to be aware of what is happening in any part of the world and move quickly to deal with certain situations and prevent them from getting worse. As soon as we get word that there is a problem in another country, we need to send a mission there to try to avert a rupture of relations. It is always cheaper and more effective and conduces to a closer and more harmonious relationship among us.

Mr. Rubén Darío Molina, who preceded me, spoke about the need to keep our people informed. This is a topic that I have spoken about endlessly for the last years in international forums. All we have to do is to emulate what other countries have achieved, have done and are doing. The British have had the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). I grew up listening to it. I heard it so much that I sometimes felt like a British man. I knew their values and I could live them in my little room, because I had my radio tuned to the BBC in London and later to the BBC television channel. It was not by accident that the BBC broadcasted all over the world. At that time the British were a power that controlled the world and wanted to continue to control the world. They wanted to spread their values all over the world.

We in our region remember the Voz de América, something that Americans did. They also wanted to spread their values, and in doing so they created that radio station. Today we have CNN. These are very thoughtful things created to spread values, to spread practices and to spread culture. What we need to do, and CELAC has the perfect opportunity to do so, is to build a broadcasting network like CNN, BBC or Voz de América for our hemisphere.

I am told that Comandante Fidel Castro became famous for speaking to his people regularly, for hours, to discuss everything that was going on in the world and his country. And I am also told that in Trinidad there was a Prime Minister, Eric Williams, who used to do the same thing at a site called Woodford Square.

It is very difficult to find people better informed than Cubans. People will only learn if you informed them. We have to find a way that allows us to communicate and inform. I am happy to be able to say to the Caribbean that now our news broadcasting is awaited throughout the world. Now we know what is happening in all the islands of the Caribbean, and every night everybody is in front of their television waiting for the news from the Caribbean.

I would feel very happy if I could listen to news coming from South America. Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, all those countries are doing wonderful things. Europeans know what you are doing, the Chinese know what you are doing, the Indians also, but your neighbours do not know it. For us it is urgent and imperative that we get the means of communication to educate our people.

If in fact we want to make CELAC work, we need to establish a sound and equitable financial structure. Everyone has a capacity to pay, we are not beggars. Everyone has a capacity to pay. If we think that something is valuable, we have to pay for it. I think we need to sit down and contemplate seriously our obligation. If we believe in this new organization, we have to pay our part and we cannot expect others to pay the bill. We must be prepared to pay for it and that should be clear from the beginning.

We in the region must not become captives of fear. The leadership of this region is fearful, almost paranoid. We are fearful of our own neighbours and brothers, we are a paranoid society. No country has been more brutal and bloody than the European ones, but these have left that behind and transcended their fears. They have worked together to solve their problems in a rational manner. They are not captivated by fear.

The only thing to fear is fear. That is the worst thing in life. Fear generates more fear. The colonial period was terrible, but we have to forget it. If Simón Bolívar had been fearful, we had not had his guidance and leadership. He was a fearless person and that is why he was our leader, our hero. He was afraid of nobody. Let us emulate Bolívar and the other leaders who have in fact defied all the hardships and negative parts of life. Let their vision be our guide.

Let me end by saying that we need to stay true to the vision of our heroes. They managed to pass the test of time. I am not a preacher, but I do have some knowledge of the Bible, and there are two passages in it that I find particularly attractive: "Love thy neighbour as thyself" and "Be your brother's keeper". That is what integration is about.

We say that we want to improve the fate of our people, but we keep distant from them. People are you and me. Some even do not want to sit in the same room. There is inconsistency. We do not practice what we preach. We should start practicing what we preach. I urge you to take seriously the love of our neighbours as ourselves. Some people

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are very difficult to love, I know that. Some people are very difficult to love, but when you get to know them, you find that there is something you may love in those people. It may take time, but unless we love them as ourselves and unless we see them as our keepers, they will not love us. There will never be peace.

Thank you very much.

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Working Documents:

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- DT 2 Annotated provisional agenda and organization of works
- DT 3 Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Permanent Secretariat
- DT 4 Draft Work Programme for the year 2013
- DT 5 Draft Administrative Budget of the Permanent Secretariat for the year 2013
- DT 6 Audit Report on the Financial Statements of the Permanent Secretariat at 31 December 2011
- DT 7 Audit Proposal for the year 2012
- DT 8 Election of a Member of the Administrative Tribunal of SELA
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Informative Documents:

- Di 1 Final Report on the XXII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Di 2 Final Report on the Seminar-Workshop "International Cooperation and strengthening of Cuban agri-food mini industries"
- Di 3 Final Report on the Regional Seminar "Cooperation between governments and the private sector for disaster risk reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean: Focus, progress and challenges"
- Di 4 Final Report on the III Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on International Trade Single Windows: Paperless Trading and Risk Management in Trading Operations
- Di 5 Final Report on the Course on Entrepreneurship Strategies for the Development of New Entrepreneurs
- Di 6 The vision of the green economy in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Di 7 Final Report on the Regional Workshop on Cyberlaws
- Di 8 Final Report on the Regional Meeting "Analyses and Proposals for Strengthening the Regional Financial Architecture and Monetary and Financial Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean"
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- Di 13 Final Report on the Regional Meeting on recent developments in economic relations between the Russian Federation and Latin America and the Caribbean
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- Di 18 Final Report on the Latin American Seminar on SME export consortiums
- Di 19 Final Report on the II Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition of Latin America and the Caribbean
- Di 20 Final Report on the Training Course on guarantee systems to support SMEs
- Di 21 The euro zone crisis and its impact on the European integration process and bi-regional relations between Latin American and the Caribbean and the European Union. Lines of action from the Latin American and Caribbean perspective
- Di 22 Prospects for economic growth: Long-term development challenges for Latin America and the Caribbean
- Di 23 Report on the Regional Integration Process, 2011-2012
- Di 24 Follow-up Report on the application of the Helms Burton Law, 2011-2012
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- Di 26 Final Report on the Regional Seminar "Partnerships between public and private sectors for disaster risk management: Continuity of government and continuity of operations during disasters"
- Di 27 Situation and challenges of the current institutional architecture of Latin American and Caribbean integration
- Di 28 Compliance with Decision No. 527 "Support of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA and its Work Programme to the Establishment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)"

- Di 29 Latin American and Caribbean cooperation in the area of food security
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- Di 33 Influence of free trade zones in the productive diversification and the international insertion of Latin American and Caribbean countries
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- Di 35 Productive development and industrialization in Latin America and the Caribbean
- Di 36 Report of the Informal Working Group on the compliance with Decision No. 521 of the Latin American Council
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- SELA Antenna in the United States
 - Bulletin on Integration in Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Strategic Outlook
 - "Avances" Electronic Bulletin