



REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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UNITED NATIONS



Background

This is a management and administrative review, undertaken by the JIU as part of its programme of work of 2019. It builds up on issues raised in previous JIU reviews and the ones of other oversight bodies of the United Nations.



Objectives

The main objective of the review is to provide an independent assessment of the regulatory frameworks and related practices concerning the management and administration of ECLAC, highlighting areas of concern and those in need of improvement and the challenges faced, with a view to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of ECLAC.



What the JIU found

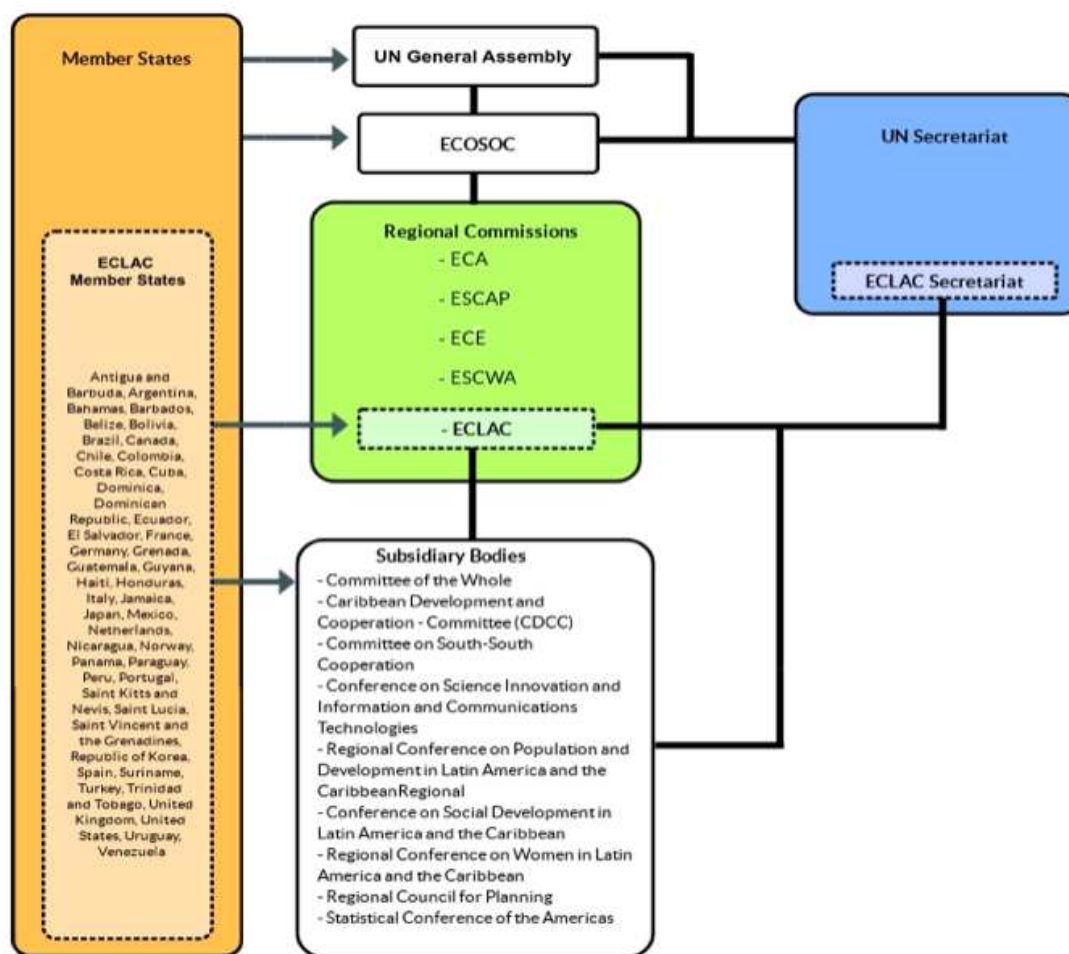
1. ECLAC continues to be responsive to regional needs providing valuable support and services to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean region in key areas like the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda or the efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

ECLAC places integration and regional cooperation as the foundations for successfully implementing the 2030 Agenda. Its role convening the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development is praised by member States of the region. The Forum is a regional multi-stakeholder mechanism to follow up and review implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals and its objective is to generate a regional platform for peer-learning and exchange, enabling the countries of the region to share experiences and good practices.

ECLAC has realigned its programme of work on the Sustainable Development Goals and it is very active supporting the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in their respective efforts towards the 2030 Agenda.

In response to a request from the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, ECLAC has established the COVID-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean to better support member States in the region and to monitor the evolution of the crisis. The Observatory compiles the relevant public policies put in place by countries of the region in their efforts to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. It also provides a sectoral and national analysis of the potential economic and social impacts of the pandemic.

2. The regional context in which ECLAC operates has significantly shaped its mandate and objectives.



3. ECLAC launches its Caribbean First strategy aimed at addressing the specific and enduring challenges of the Caribbean subregion.

Back in 2012, a previous JIU review (JIU/NOTE/2013/2) concluded that ECLAC faced a considerable challenge in activating the participation of the Caribbean subregion in a more inclusive manner. In the current review, the Inspectors describe and welcome the initiatives launched by ECLAC in 2018 in the context of its Caribbean First strategy. However, they conclude that the long-awaited strategy should translate into specific results, which should be monitored and reported on regularly to the Commission.

4. ECLAC has been impacted by the liquidity crisis and by the reform efforts within the Secretariat.

ECLAC is facing serious liquidity problems in its main source of funding, the regular budget. Despite having a budget for the 2018–2019 biennium approved by the General Assembly, cash flow constraints have affected the whole financial structure of ECLAC at the end of the 2018-2019 biennium. The review found that considerable effort was expended by ECLAC management in monitoring and reallocating resources; if this situation continues, ECLAC, like other departments of the Secretariat, will be forced to divert its focus from delivering its programme of work to managing the financial crisis, adjusting plans and priorities based on cash flows.

The Inspectors believe that it is too early to determine the real impact of the Secretary-General's reform efforts. However, they have noted that there are too many elements and processes being reformed concurrently and that there are gaps in the change management approach and in the communication and implementation of the various reforms and changes within the Secretariat.



What the JIU Recommends

The report contains 4 formal recommendations addressed to the Executive Secretary of ECLAC.

1 The Executive Secretary of ECLAC should monitor and report on the impact and specific results achieved by the Caribbean First strategy as part of regular reporting to the Commission.

Self-explanatory (see above point 3 on Caribbean First strategy)

2 The Executive Secretary of ECLAC should prepare, before the end of 2021, an action plan to facilitate coordination and integration of the activities of the national offices in the respective United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks for the countries in which those offices are located.

The review of the functions undertaken by the national offices shows that the ECLAC national offices are performing as they were designed to do. However, the current reform of the resident coordinator system suggests that these functions need to be re-examined in the context of calls for coordination and unified action at the national level. Additional benefits could derive from the integration of the activities of the national offices into the respective United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks.

3 The Executive Secretary of ECLAC, in consultation with the Secretariat, should devise a change management plan to address the impact of the current reform process on the regional commission's activities and report the relevant results to the Secretary-General and the Commission as part of regular reporting activities.

Self-explanatory (see above point 4 on liquidity crisis and Secretariat reform impact)

4 The Executive Secretary of ECLAC should ensure that staff performance appraisals are carried out timely, as required for all staff at the end of each performance cycle.

This recommendation is intended to address the issue of the low rate of compliance of ECLAC with the staff performance management system established within the Secretariat. This is a recurrent issue that needs to be addressed by ECLAC management.



Approach and Methodology

The methodology applied in the review combines **qualitative and quantitative approaches** for data collection and analysis. JIU follows a **collaborative approach** with its stakeholders and ECLAC cooperated during the review process.



A desk review of the documentation of the relevant governing bodies was undertaken, mainly the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the different ministerial meetings in the region, including governance reports and decisions;

A desk review of internal policies in the form of organizational directives, administrative instructions and other relevant internal documents of the Secretariat.



A questionnaire for member States of the Latin American and Caribbean region on the value of ECLAC;
A questionnaire for ECLAC management;
Approx. +75 documents reviewed;
Approx. +50 interviews conducted.



Missions carried out to New York, where the JIU team conducted preliminary consultations, **interviews and focus groups with member States and relevant officers** of the United Nations; and, **subsequently interviews** were held **with ECLAC senior management and other personnel** in charge of the main administrative, management and oversight functions at the headquarters in Santiago de Chile and at the two subregional offices of ECLAC located in Mexico City, and Port of Spain.



In an effort to observe the support provided by ECLAC to countries in the region, **the JIU team selected a country where there is no physical presence of ECLAC** (i.e. Guatemala) and **conducted interviews** in Guatemala City **with relevant stakeholders and partners**, including representatives of the national government and institutions benefiting from ECLAC operational activities, such as universities and the national bank.



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