



SRMUN Charlotte 2022

Reconciling the Past and Restoring Multilateral Partnerships for the Future

March 24-26, 2022

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to SRMUN Charlotte 2022 and the United Nations (UN) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). My name is Marisa Laudadio-Weaver, and I have the pleasure of serving as your Director of ECLAC this year. This is my fourth time serving on SRMUN staff, having previously served as an Assistant Director at SRMUN Atlanta 2020, and a Director at both SRMUN Charlotte and Atlanta in 2021. As an undergraduate, I double majored in Political Science and Communications with a minor in Spanish. I am also happy to introduce the Assistant Director of ECLAC, Cecilee Morris. This will be Cecilee's first time serving on SRMUN staff, having previously garnered three years of experience as a delegate. Cecilee graduated from Tennessee University in 2021 with her bachelor's in International Studies with an emphasis on Diplomacy and Strategy.

Developed in 1948 as a regional division of the Economic and Social Council, ECLAC's primary mandate is to facilitate economic and social development through regional cooperation by creating meaningful change and support through its advocacy and programs. The ECLAC mandate includes researching, studying, and reporting on the economic and developmental activities of the regions. In connection with SRMUN Charlotte's theme of "*Reconciling the Past and Restoring Multilateral Partnerships for the Future*" and ECLAC's focus on economic stability and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean, we have developed the following topics for delegates to discuss at the conference:

- I. Combating Rural Poverty through Sustainable Innovation and Inclusion.
- II. Strengthening Environmental and Biodiversity Protections through the Empowerment of Indigenous People.

This background guide provides an introduction to the committee and the topics that will be debated at SRMUN Charlotte 2022. It should be utilized as a foundation for a delegate's independent research. However, while we have attempted to provide a holistic analysis of the issues, the background guide should not be used as the single mode of analysis for the topics. Delegates are expected to go beyond the background guide and engage in intellectual inquiry of their own. The position papers for the committee should reflect the complexity of these issues and their externalities. Delegations are expected to submit a position paper and be prepared for a vigorous discussion at the conference. Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies, and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, delegates can visit srmun.org. **All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Friday, March 4, 2022, by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website.**

Cecilee and I look forward to serving as your dais and reading your forthcoming work for the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Please feel free to contact Director-General Chantel Hover, Cecilee Morris, or myself if you have any questions while preparing for the conference. Good luck in your preparation and we will see you in March!

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History of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

On February 25, 1948, the United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) produced Resolution 106 (VI), establishing the UN Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA).¹ Known in Spanish as the Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL), the commission concentrated solely on the Latin American region.² However, with the later adoption of ECOSOC Resolution 1984/67 on July 27, 1984, ECLA expanded its mandate to include Member States from the Caribbean.³ This expansion was due in part to Latin America and the Caribbean's commonality of Latin-based languages, development, and both regions having been affected by European colonialism.⁴ After this expansion, ECLA officially changed its name to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), while its Spanish acronym, CEPAL, remained unchanged.⁵ Today, ECLAC serves as one of five regional commissions within ECOSOC that advises on region-specific issues.⁶

ECLAC's mandate is to further economic and social development in Latin American and the Caribbean through regional and sub-regional advocacy, research, and programming.⁷ The body documents all services and projects, organizes and reports statistical data gathered through research, and coordinates regional efforts to reduce redundancies and identify new or continuing issues within its Member States.⁸ The majority of the body's substantive work includes offering policy recommendations to Member States regarding program planning and management.⁹ Additionally, ECLAC organizes conferences, symposia, and seminars between governments and expert groups based on regional needs and priorities, ensuring that Member States have a platform to discuss and provide a regional perspective to global problems.¹⁰

Established in 1948, ECLAC's headquarters is located in Santiago, Chile, while its two sub-regional headquarters are located in Mexico City, Mexico, and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.¹¹ Established in 1951, the sub-regional headquarters in Mexico City serves ten of its Member States: Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama.¹² In 1966, ECLAC established a second sub-regional headquarter in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, to serve all Member States of the insular Caribbean, as well as Belize, Guyana, and Suriname.¹³ ECLAC also has several Member State offices established in the cities of Buenos Aires in Argentina, Brasilia in Brazil, Montevideo in Uruguay, and Bogotá in Colombia.¹⁴ In addition to the headquarters, sub-regional headquarters, and Member State offices, ECLAC also maintains a liaison office in Washington, D.C. in the United States of America.¹⁵

¹ "About ECLAC," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <http://www.cepal.org/en/about>.

² "About ECLAC," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

³ "About ECLAC," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

⁴ Joel Quam and Scott Campbell, *The Western World: Daily Readings On Geography*, (College of DuPage Digital Press, August 31, 2020).

⁵ "About ECLAC," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <http://www.cepal.org/en/about>.

⁶ "Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC," *Economic and Social Council*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/subsidiary.html>.

⁷ "Mandate and Mission," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/mandato-y-mision>.

⁸ "Mandate and Mission," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

⁹ "Mandate and Mission," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹⁰ "Mandate and Mission," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹¹ "Headquarters and Offices," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 28, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/headquarters-and-offices>.

¹² "About ECLAC Subregional Headquarters in Mexico," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/headquarters-and-offices/eclac-mexico/about-eclac-subregional-headquarters-mexico>.

¹³ "ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, Port of Spain," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/headquarters-and-offices/eclac-caribbean/about-us>.

¹⁴ "Headquarters and Offices," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 28, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/headquarters-and-offices>.

¹⁵ "ECLAC Office in Washington, D.C.," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/headquarters-and-offices/eclac-washington-dc>.

ECLAC comprises 46 Member States, 33 of which are from Latin America and the Caribbean.¹⁶ The remaining Member States are a conglomerate of Asian, European, and North American Member States that have historical, economic, and cultural ties with Latin America and the Caribbean.¹⁷ ECLAC also contains 14 Associate Members that are non-independent territories, such as Puerto Rico, Aruba, and Bermuda.¹⁸ The Commission commands eight permanent subsidiary bodies which specialize in unique public policy areas, facilitating cooperation and coordinating regional stances and missions to be proposed to the secretariat of the Commission.¹⁹ To aid in the coordination between subsidiary bodies, ECLAC's Committee of the Whole provides Member States with the opportunity to meet between sessions of the Commission.²⁰

ECLAC draws most of its funding from Member State contributions, and ensures efficiency and accountability of its financial structure through a three-phase process of "cycle planning" that includes strategy and legal framework, program and budgeting, and accountability and evolution.²¹ The first phase creates the structure of discussion for the body and initiatives that need to be addressed through a biennial system of strategic planning.²² As part of this initial planning session, the body also reviews legislative documents and mandates from the UN General Assembly (GA), ECOSOC, and Member States.²³ In the second phase, the Commission often creates a detailed logical framework addressing the priorities and strategies for each planned initiative.²⁴ The final phase, known as the "accountability and evaluation" phase, is crucial to understanding previous successes, failures, and the best practices of past initiatives.²⁵ To achieve this, ECLAC produces two reports: one on the activities of its system and one on the internal technical cooperation.²⁶

A simple majority of ECLAC Member States must be present to constitute a quorum, and each Member State is entitled to one vote.²⁷ Items proposed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can be added to the Commission's agenda if: (1) the NGO falls under category A; (2) they inform the Executive Secretary at least 63 days before the commencement of the session; and, (3) the proposal is submitted with basic documentation 49 days before the commencement of the session.²⁸ Proposals may also be added to the agenda if they are adopted by a two-thirds majority of those present.²⁹

ECLAC's recent outstanding resolutions include Resolution 739 (XXXVIII) and Resolution 750 (XXXVIII), both of which were adopted on October 28, 2020.³⁰ Resolution 739 concentrates on combating the additional threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic on women and how to promote gender equality amidst the pandemic.³¹ Resolution 750

¹⁶ "Member States and Associate Members," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/estados-miembros>.

¹⁷ "Member States and Associate Members," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹⁸ "Member States and Associate Members," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹⁹ "Subsidiary Bodies and Intergovernmental Meetings," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/organos-subsidiarios>.

²⁰ "Subsidiary Bodies and Intergovernmental Meetings," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

²¹ "Cycle planning - programme - evaluation," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/ciclo-planificacion-programa-evaluacion>.

²² "Strategy and Legal Framework," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/ambito-estrategico-normativo>.

²³ "Strategy and Legal Framework," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

²⁴ "Programme and Budgeting," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/ambito-programatico-presupuestario>.

²⁵ "Accountability and Evaluation," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed July 17, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/ambito-de-rendicion-de-cuentas-evaluacion>.

²⁶ "Accountability and Evaluation," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

²⁷ "Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, November 2015, accessed July 17, 2021, https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/15-01076-rev.9-rules_of_procedure-eclac-web_a.pdf

²⁸ "Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

²⁹ "Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

³⁰ "Resolutions Adopted at the Thirty-Eighth Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean," *Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed August 11, 2021, https://periododesesiones.cepal.org/38/sites/default/files/20-00786_ses.38_resolutions_adopted-10_nov.pdf.

³¹ "Resolutions Adopted at the Thirty-Eighth Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

is dedicated to mitigating technological divides in Central America by expanding technological advancements amongst ECLAC's Member States through collaboration and exchange in hopes to mitigate the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.³²

³² “Resolutions Adopted at the Thirty-Eighth Session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean*.

I. Combating Rural Poverty through Sustainable Innovation and Inclusion

Introduction

While extreme poverty continues to decline, the COVID-19 pandemic and the unique challenges it has produced have weakened the United Nations' (UN) efforts to eradicate poverty across the globe by 2030, especially in rural communities.³³ The United Nations Statistics Division reported approximately 79 percent of the world's poor population live in rural areas.³⁴ Additionally, compared to urban areas across the world, the poverty rate in rural areas is three times higher at 17.2 percent.³⁵ Poverty and extreme poverty have particularly devastated rural communities across Latin America and the Caribbean at alarming rates compared to previous decades, making the mitigation of rural poverty an imperative for the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).³⁶ The World Bank defined "extreme poverty" as living on less than USD 1.90 per person per day.³⁷ Of the rural population in Latin America and the Caribbean, 60 percent are living in poverty while 39 percent are living in extreme poverty.³⁸ According to ECLAC projections, it is estimated that in 2020 the extreme poverty rate for the region was 12.5 percent while the poverty rate affected 33.7 percent of the population, increasing the total population of impoverished people by 209 million.³⁹ Moreover, while 17.2 percent of the world's population is consumed by rural poverty, 29 percent of Latin America and the Caribbean's impoverished population inhabit rural locations; this 29 percent accounts for approximately 41 percent of the entire region's population affected by extreme poverty.⁴⁰

Exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the increase of rural poverty has generated growing socioeconomic tensions such as inequality and unemployment. These socioeconomic tensions are more prominent among women, and this has been translated to an increase in human and drug trafficking and female exploitation. In some scenarios, women in rural communities are enticed to trafficking as they are falsely ensured economic opportunity, safety, and security, while in other situations, women are simply exploited due to their low hierarchical status in a strict patriarchal society.⁴¹ These illegal activities are intensified by rural poverty, which in turn catalyzes the spread of insecurity and maldevelopment across the region, making this dilemma a priority for ECLAC to combat.

ECLAC's goals of social inclusion and sustainable development necessitate an addressment of rural poverty and its effects on social groups within the communities affected. To ensure rising equality, ECLAC urges Member States to integrate new social and fiscal compacts as well as sustainable measures that adapt to the new economic environment, attempting to ensure that no individual falls behind.⁴² Although rural poverty has slowly decreased

³³ "SDG Indicators," *United Nations Statistics Division*, accessed September 20, 2021, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/goal-01/>.

³⁴ "SDG Indicators," *United Nations Statistics Division*.

³⁵ "SDG Indicators," *United Nations Statistics Division*.

³⁶ "Pandemic Prompts Rise in Poverty to Levels Unprecedented in Recent Decades and Sharply Affects Inequality and Employment," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed September 20, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/pandemic-prompts-rise-poverty-levels-unprecedented-recent-decades-and-sharply-affects>.

³⁷ "Ending Extreme Poverty," *The World Bank*, accessed November 8, 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/06/08/ending-extreme-poverty>.

³⁸ "Latin America and the Caribbean," *International Fund for Agricultural Development*, accessed September 21, 2021, <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/regions/lac>.

³⁹ "Pandemic Prompts Rise in Poverty to Levels Unprecedented in Recent Decades and Sharply Affects Inequality and Employment," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed September 20, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/pandemic-prompts-rise-poverty-levels-unprecedented-recent-decades-and-sharply-affects>.

⁴⁰ "After decade of progress, rural areas of Latin America, Caribbean slide back into poverty – UN report," *United Nations*, accessed September 20, 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/11/1026261>.

⁴¹ "Trafficking of Women and Girls in Central America," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, accessed November 7, 2021, https://www.unodc.org/documents/toc/Reports/TOCTASouthAmerica/English/TOCTA_CACaribb_trafficking_womengirls_within_CAmerica.pdf.

⁴² "World Social Report 2020 Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World," *United Nations Department Economic and Social Affairs*, accessed September 21, 2021, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/01/World-Social-Report-2020-FullReport.pdf>.

over the last decades, the recent rise in economic hardship and deteriorating social development has begun to reverse this progress. This recent reversal is in part due to the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has produced and its effects on economies around the world. By implementing sustainable initiatives, such as infrastructure development, innovative farming methods, green career opportunities, and more, these compounding issues can be resolved.

History

The Latin America and Caribbean region experienced significant setbacks over the years in their fight against rural poverty. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reported rural poverty “grew by two million people between 2014 and 2016, reaching a total of 59 million” people, and the number continues to rise.⁴³ From 1990 to 2014, excluding the financial crisis of 2008, Latin America and the Caribbean reduced the percentage of those affected by rural poverty in the region from 65 percent to 46 percent.⁴⁴ This reduction is primarily accredited to the transition and consolidation to a democracy that took place between the 1980s and 1990s in Member States across Latin America and the Caribbean and also to the spike of economic growth in the early 2000s that led to a substantial increase in income across the region.⁴⁵ However, from 2014 to 2016, extreme poverty and poverty in rural areas increased by two percent.⁴⁶ The FAO further explained that a plethora of Member States have experienced a substantial decrease in their strides to combat rural poverty.⁴⁷ The FAO declared:

“Brazil’s rural poverty rate fell to 29 percent in 2014 from 71 percent in 1990; Bolivia’s fell to 54 percent in 2013 from 79 percent in 1997; Chile’s fell to 7 percent from 39 percent in the same time frame. Colombia reduced its rate to 42 percent in 2014 from 61 percent in 1991, while from 2000 to 2015 Ecuador reduced its rate to 27 percent from 66 percent and Paraguay to 51 percent from 70 percent. Peru reduced its poverty rate from 73 percent to 46 percent, from 1997 to 2014.”⁴⁸

Moreover, the 2008 global financial crisis was instrumental in increasing poverty, political instability, and socioeconomic tension in rural areas across the region.⁴⁹ The crisis resulted in increased unemployment across the globe, a decline in the volume of international trade, and worldwide economic turmoil.⁵⁰ Throughout the history of Latin America and the Caribbean, rural poverty has been caused by factors such as income inequality, lack of sustainable development methods for agrarian societies, and economic instability.⁵¹

Actions Taken by the United Nations

In September 2015, the UN published the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁵² Of those, the UN centered its first goal on eliminating all forms of poverty across the

⁴³ “Latin America and the Caribbean suffers historic setback in fight against rural poverty,” *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, accessed September 21, 2021, <http://www.fao.org/americas/noticias/ver/en/c/1170292/>.

⁴⁴ “Latin America and the Caribbean suffers historic setback in fight against rural poverty,” *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.

⁴⁵ “Panorama of Rural Poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean 2018,” *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, accessed December 30, 2021, <https://www.fao.org/americas/publicaciones-audio-video/panoramaruralpoverty2018/en/>.

⁴⁶ “Latin America and the Caribbean suffers historic setback in fight against rural poverty,” *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, accessed September 21, 2021, <http://www.fao.org/americas/noticias/ver/en/c/1170292/>.

⁴⁷ “Latin America and the Caribbean suffers historic setback in fight against rural poverty,” *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.

⁴⁸ “Latin America and the Caribbean suffers historic setback in fight against rural poverty,” *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.

⁴⁹ Luisa Blanco, “Latin America and the Financial Crisis of 2008: Lessons and Challenges,” *Pepperdine Policy Review*, vol. 3, art. 8 (2010), accessed November 5, 2021, <https://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/academics/research/policy-review/2010v3/content/latin-america-and-the-financial-crisis-of-2008.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Blanco, “Latin America and the Financial Crisis of 2008.”

⁵¹ “Latin America and the Caribbean suffers historic setback in fight against rural poverty,” *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, accessed September 21, 2021, <http://www.fao.org/americas/noticias/ver/en/c/1170292/>.

⁵² “History,” *United Nations*, accessed September 20, 2021, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

globe, noting poverty's outsized negative impact on developing Member States and the resulting difficulty of these Member States ability to meet basic needs such as health, education, and access to water and sanitation.⁵³

The first SDG is specifically tailored to rural areas suffering from poverty, especially those within the population who are children.⁵⁴ Within it, the UN urges for a call of action towards the younger generation, the educated, and policymakers to utilize their voice and generate awareness, support, and innovation to combat the issue of poverty.⁵⁵ Furthermore, the UN addresses Latin America and the Caribbean specifically and provides a list of recommendations of ways to accomplish SDG 1, such as: the incorporation of resilience, public poverty eradication policies, and the reduction of inequality, especially among rural areas.⁵⁶ The 2030 Agenda stated, "The incidence of poverty and extreme poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean is highest among the most vulnerable people, particularly children, adolescents and young people, women, people living in rural areas, indigenous peoples and Afro Descendant populations."⁵⁷

The United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) has organized a Regional Collaborative Platform (RCP) for Latin America and the Caribbean for UN entities to coordinate on strategies to aid in the development of the region.⁵⁸ Directing the RCP for Latin America and the Caribbean is the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed.⁵⁹ She is co-chaired by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Ms. Alicia Bárcena, and the Regional Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr. Luis Felipe López-Calva.⁶⁰ Through the RCP for Latin America and the Caribbean, entities focus on gender equality and empowerment as well as sustainable development methods, which are critical in combating rural poverty.⁶¹ The RCP for Latin America and the Caribbean was recently established in November 2020, and the first RCP annual results report will be presented to Member States in 2022.⁶²

Current Situation

While all Member States in Latin America and the Caribbean, excluding Haiti, are considered middle-income Member States, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) explained that one in four people in the region are subjected to extreme poverty.⁶³ This particular population is heavily concentrated in rural areas and tends to be comprised of minority groups such as women, indigenous peoples, and Afro-Latinos.⁶⁴ With an evolving economy and the COVID-19 pandemic, rural populations are struggling to escape poverty and are working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other bodies in an effort to transform their adversities into strengths. One NGO that specializes specifically in Latin America and the Caribbean is TECHO (meaning "roof" in Spanish), a youth-led organization that focuses on sustainable development through community networking and transformative public policy initiatives.⁶⁵ TECHO, also known as "Un Techo Para Mi País" ("a roof for my country"), is a partner in the UN's Global Compact, whose mission is to mobilize businesses across the globe to incorporate sustainable development measures through inclusion, the protection of human rights and the

⁵³ "No Poverty: Why it Matters," *United Nations*, accessed September 21, 2021, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Goal-1.pdf>.

⁵⁴ "No Poverty: Why it Matters," *United Nations*.

⁵⁵ "No Poverty: Why it Matters," *United Nations*.

⁵⁶ "Recommendations from Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve SDG 1 and its targets," *2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed September 21, 2021, <https://agenda2030lac.org/en/sdg/1-no-poverty>.

⁵⁷ "Recommendations from Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve SDG 1 and its targets," *2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean*.

⁵⁸ "Regional Collaborative Program," *United Nations Sustainable Development Group*, accessed September 20, 2021, <https://undg.org/un-in-action/rcp-latin-america-and-caribbean?tab=countries-listing>.

⁵⁹ "Regional Collaborative Program," *United Nations Sustainable Development Group*.

⁶⁰ "Regional Collaborative Program," *United Nations Sustainable Development Group*.

⁶¹ "Regional Collaborative Program," *United Nations Sustainable Development Group*.

⁶² "Regional Collaborative Program," *United Nations Sustainable Development Group*.

⁶³ "Latin America and the Caribbean," *International Fund for Agricultural Development*, accessed September 21, 2021, <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/regions/lac>.

⁶⁴ "Latin America and the Caribbean," *International Fund for Agricultural Development*.

⁶⁵ "Working to overcome poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Charities Aid Foundation America*, accessed November 6, 2021, <https://www.cafamerica.org/story/techo/>.

environment, and team collaboration.⁶⁶ Another NGO that has contributed heavily to combating rural poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean is CARE International, a humanitarian and development organization that concentrates on sustainability and the empowerment of women to combat poverty.⁶⁷ CARE International is a partner in several UN programs and initiatives focusing on accomplishing the SDGs specifically in marginalized societies and aiding communities in sustainable development strategies such as the Everyone Counts initiative and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data.⁶⁸ Overall, IFAD highlights a myriad of initiatives that are being taken by organizations to help rural areas grow, such as teaching the younger generation how to be entrepreneurs through training and education, aiding farmers in accessing markets more efficiently, and encouraging inclusive rural transformation.⁶⁹

Throughout rural areas in Latin America and the Caribbean, women are exploited and utilized for unpaid work, having less of an opportunity than men to earn a wage.⁷⁰ This is in part due to the traditional cultural concept of “machismo” in Latin America and the Caribbean, where certain social and agricultural roles are dominated by males rather than females.⁷¹ Additionally, women are much less likely to hold any economic role in the agricultural sector, with just 20 percent of those economically involved in agriculture being women.⁷² As a result, women are forced to work in vulnerable employment that lacks social protection programs and benefits, which exacerbates other prevalent issues in Latin America such as femicide and human trafficking.⁷³ ECLAC has implemented several initiatives addressing gender inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean. To educate and advocate awareness, ECLAC collaborated at its 30th session in Montevideo, Uruguay, to create the Regional Gender Agenda, a tool that allows the public to access and view commitments made by the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean on women’s rights and autonomy, and gender equality, at the meetings of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁷⁴ Created in October 2016, the Regional Gender Agenda creates a system of accountability and allows governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to collaborate on gender equality initiatives.⁷⁵ Furthermore, ECLAC has a gender affairs division that has created a Gender Equality Observatory that provides information on gender equality policies, economic autonomy, and laws of each Member State in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁷⁶ Programs focused on gender equality provide an opportunity for truly inclusive innovation and progress if intertwined with broader anti-poverty sustainable development programs at both national and regional levels.

A notable initiative to combat rural poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean is the idea of sustainable development through a bioeconomy. A bioeconomy aims to utilize the power of bioscience and biotechnology

⁶⁶ “Our Mission,” *United Nations Global Compact*, accessed December 29, 2021, <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission>.

⁶⁷ “Partner: Care International,” *Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data*, accessed November 7, 2021, <https://www.data4sdgs.org/index.php/partner/care-international>.

⁶⁸ “CARE International,” *Sustainable Development: Partnerships Platform*, accessed December 27, 2021, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/partners/?id=5073>.

⁶⁹ “Latin America and the Caribbean,” *International Fund for Agricultural Development*, accessed September 21, 2021, <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/regions/lac>.

⁷⁰ L. Azripe, “Women and development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Lessons from the seventies and hopes for the future,” *National Library of Medicine*, accessed September 22, 2021, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12279573/>.

⁷¹ L. Azripe, “Women and development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Lessons from the seventies and hopes for the future.”

⁷² “Ten things to know about gender equality and rural poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *International Fund for Agricultural Development*, accessed September 20, 2021, <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/latest/-/photo/ten-things-to-know-about-gender-equality-and-rural-poverty-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>.

⁷³ “Ten things to know about gender equality and rural poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *International Fund for Agricultural Development*.

⁷⁴ “Regional Gender Agenda,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed October 30, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/subsidiary-bodies/regional-conference-women-latin-america-and-caribbean/regional-gender-agenda>.

⁷⁵ “Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed November 9, 2021, https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/events/files/montevideo_strategy_for_implementation_of_the_regional_gender_agenda_within_the_sustainable_development_framework_by_2030_0.pdf.

⁷⁶ “Observatories,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed December 27, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/observatorios>.

through production, conservation, and regeneration of biological resources to encourage and create sustainable solutions and enable a transformation to a sustainable economy.⁷⁷ Examples include utilizing the soil microbiome for bioremediation to help restore land and ecosystem degradation, creating biologicals (biopesticides, biostimulants, and biofertilizers) for crop protection and health to prevent food loss, and the use of microorganisms in wastewater treatment to obtain nitrogen and phosphorous for fertilization.⁷⁸ In 2019, ECLAC, the FAO, and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) united to produce a report titled, *Outlook for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Americas 2019-2020*, which envisions a bioeconomy model for Latin America and the Caribbean and how such a model could catalyze sustainable rural development in rural communities.⁷⁹ Possessing 50 percent of the world's known biodiversity and 57 percent of its primary forests, Latin America and the Caribbean is a region that would benefit immensely from a bioeconomy, amplifying their strengths as rural economic sector.⁸⁰ Through a bioeconomic model, ECLAC asserts that sustainable agricultural production and food security, inclusion of women and youth, and employment opportunities could be strengthened.⁸¹

Case Study

Combating Poverty Through Youth Empowerment and Sustainable Development in Nicaragua

Nicaragua is one of the most impoverished Member States within ECLAC, with 30 percent of its population living in poverty and eight percent living in extreme poverty.⁸² In rural communities alone, 50 percent of the rural population live below the poverty line and 11.5 percent live in extreme poverty.⁸³ Over the last decade, Nicaragua has shown renewed focus and dedication specifically on addressing its rural poverty crisis, most notably through youth empowerment and sustainable development efforts. Some of the Member State's most successful youth empowerment programs have sought to aid youth in overcoming socioeconomic barriers and encourage goal-setting and hone leadership skills. One such program is modeled after the US youth development program 4-H.⁸⁴ Nicaragua's version, 4-S, which stands for *saber* (knowledge), *sentimiento* (feelings), *salud* (health), and *servicio* (service), empowers Nicaraguan youth to advocate for community and agricultural development through service and collaboration.⁸⁵

Within Central America, an area called the Dry Corridor has an outsized impact on Nicaragua's agricultural sector.⁸⁶ The Dry Corridor is a strip of land that runs from Panama to Guatemala along the Pacific coast, and is subjected to severe drought and sporadic and unpredictable rainfall.⁸⁷ In Nicaragua, the Dry Corridor has left part of the country facing serious degradation and erosion which has led to food insecurity and economic hardship.⁸⁸ Initiated in 2016, the IFAD and the Nicaraguan government launched the Nicaraguan Dry Corridor Rural Family Sustainable

⁷⁷ "Sustainable and circular bioeconomy for food systems transformation," *Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations*, accessed October 29, 2021, <https://www.fao.org/in-action/sustainable-and-circular-bioeconomy/en/>.

⁷⁸ "Bioeconomy for a Sustainable Future," *Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations*, accessed December 27, 2021, <https://www.fao.org/3/cb6564en/cb6564en.pdf>.

⁷⁹ "Bioeconomy, a Key to Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed October 30, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/bioeconomy-key-rural-development-latin-america-and-caribbean>.

⁸⁰ "Bioeconomy, a Key to Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

⁸¹ "Bioeconomy, a Key to Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

⁸² "5 Causes of Poverty in Nicaragua," *The Borgen Project*, accessed November 9, 2021,

<https://borgenproject.org/5-causes-of-poverty-in-nicaragua/#:~:text=Overall%2C%2030%25%20of%20Nicaraguans%20live,11.5%25%20live%20in%20extreme%20poverty>.

⁸³ "5 Causes of Poverty in Nicaragua," *The Borgen Project*.

⁸⁴ "What is 4-H?," *4-H*, accessed November 9, 2021, <https://4-h.org/about/what-is-4-h/>.

⁸⁵ C. Millares Forno, "Creating Community Capacity Through Youth Development: A Case Study in Rural Nicaragua," *Journal of Youth Development*, vol. 12, no. 2 (2017).

⁸⁶ "Nicaraguan Dry Corridor Rural Family Sustainable Development Project," *International Fund for Agricultural Development*, accessed November 3, 2021, <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/-/project/2000001242>.

⁸⁷ "Nicaraguan Dry Corridor Rural Family Sustainable Development Project," *International Fund for Agricultural Development*.

⁸⁸ "Nicaraguan Dry Corridor Rural Family Sustainable Development Project," *International Fund for Agricultural Development*.

Development Project (NICAVIDA), which educates small farmers on resource management, climate change adaptation, and public service investment.⁸⁹ NICAVIDA is scheduled to continue until 2023.⁹⁰

Conclusion

ECLAC has emphasized the issue of rural poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean and its accompanying effects throughout its history and mission, but it is only through collaboration amongst Member States and their support that rural poverty can be mitigated across the region. For rural poverty to be combatted throughout the region, it should be addressed and managed through fortified sustainable development initiatives, inclusive of gender equality, educational opportunities, and community collaboration. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, rural poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean has been exacerbated and is in desperate need of attention from Member States across the globe.

Committee Directive

Rural poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean is detrimental to the development and growth of the region as a whole and leaves huge populations at risk. When conducting research, delegates must consider the following: What existing national programs and initiatives can be improved upon to combat rural poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean? What policies or efforts of other Member States can be expanded upon or utilized and expanded in Latin America and the Caribbean's efforts in mitigating rural poverty? Delegates should also familiarize with existing ECLAC efforts that could be refocused or expanded. What have been the reasons for the obstacles in eliminating rural poverty before and after COVID-19? What can be done to promote youth empowerment and gender inclusion in the region to specifically aid in the fight against rural poverty? What other innovative sustainable development alternatives and ideas can be introduced into areas affected by rural poverty in the region?

⁸⁹ "Nicaraguan Dry Corridor Rural Family Sustainable Development Project," *International Fund for Agricultural Development*.

⁹⁰ "Nicaraguan Dry Corridor Rural Family Sustainable Development Project," *International Fund for Agricultural Development*.

II. Strengthening Environmental and Biodiversity Protections through the Empowerment of Indigenous People

Introduction

Indigenous peoples that have relied on traditional knowledge of resource management possess a great body-of-knowledge of the behavior of the complex ecological systems in their own local and regional environments.⁹¹ Such historical observations are of significant value and complement the achievements of western environmental science.⁹² For centuries, indigenous societies have depended on their local environments for a multitude of resources and as such, these people have developed a great stake in conserving and enhancing biodiversity.⁹³ Indigenous societies have transformed their lands to expand the heterogeneity and restore biodiversity in degraded lands as these societies have learned that biological diversity is highly impactful in generating the natural resources on which they rely upon.⁹⁴ From generation to generation, indigenous societies' practices of conservation of biodiversity have been developed through long bouts of experimentation and trial and error processes.⁹⁵ This generational experimentation involves significant interplay between their knowledge base, their implementation of such environmental practices, and their belief systems.⁹⁶ As such, this knowledge-practice-belief system of indigenous peoples relating to environmental conservation and biodiversity is not often palatable for western environmental science and therefore it is imperative that the value of this system be recognized and be managed sustainably.⁹⁷ Empowering indigenous people and societies through promoting the knowledge-practice-belief system coupled with the implementation of western science can serve to strengthen environmental and biodiversity protections in vulnerable indigenous environments across the globe.⁹⁸

History

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has seen significant social and economic development in the regions it supports.⁹⁹ While ECLAC has observed progress in poverty reduction, economic growth, and social advancement, it has also observed the challenges arising from this progress such as gaps developing from structural heterogeneity, external vulnerability, and overall inequality.¹⁰⁰ ECLAC has continued to acknowledge that indigenous people are historically one of the most marginalized and disadvantaged groups which has fed into present day discriminatory practices that have involved in systematic dispossession of their territories and the subsequent consequences that come with.¹⁰¹ With the more recent emergence of the recognition of indigenous rights globally, ECLAC has focused greatly on advocating for development and equality

⁹¹ "Forum Discussed Challenges Faced by Environmental Defenders in South America," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, November 5, 2020, accessed December 30, 2021, <https://www.cepal.org/en/news/forum-discussed-challenges-faced-environmental-defenders-south-america>.

⁹² "Forum Discussed Challenges Faced by Environmental Defenders in South America," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, November 5, 2020.

⁹³ "Forum Discussed Challenges Faced by Environmental Defenders in South America," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, November 5, 2020.

⁹⁴ "Forum Discussed Challenges Faced by Environmental Defenders in South America," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, November 5, 2020.

⁹⁵ "Forum Discussed Challenges Faced by Environmental Defenders in South America," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, November 5, 2020.

⁹⁶ "Forum Discussed Challenges Faced by Environmental Defenders in South America," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, November 5, 2020.

⁹⁷ "Forum Discussed Challenges Faced by Environmental Defenders in South America," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, November 5, 2020.

⁹⁸ "Forum Discussed Challenges Faced by Environmental Defenders in South America," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, November 5, 2020.

⁹⁹ "Guaranteeing indigenous people's rights in Latin America: Progress in the past decade and remaining challenges," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, November 2014, accessed December 26, 2021, https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/37051/4/S1420782_en.pdf

¹⁰⁰ "Guaranteeing indigenous people's rights in Latin America: Progress in the past decade and remaining challenges," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹⁰¹ "Guaranteeing indigenous people's rights in Latin America: Progress in the past decade and remaining challenges," *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

with a rights-based approach.¹⁰² Most notably, ECLAC has undertaken significant strides in the empowerment of indigenous peoples in order for their contributions of ancestral knowledge, innovation, and traditional practices of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to address the challenges that currently face Latin America and the Caribbean.¹⁰³ ECLAC has recognized that the empowerment of indigenous peoples will not only serve to address environmental and biodiversity protections but will strengthen equality, human rights, political participation and social justice in the region.¹⁰⁴

Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC)

In July 1992, the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC) was established to promote self-development and the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹⁰⁵ The FILAC serves to bridge the gap between States and Indigenous Persons and provides assistance through financial assistance, crafting public policy, and generating dialogue to promote and encourage the self-development of indigenous peoples.¹⁰⁶ FILAC in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) released the publication, *Forest governance by indigenous and tribal peoples: An opportunity for Climate Action in Latin America and the Caribbean*, which was published to showcase the need for climate action initiatives as it pertains to protecting the forests of the indigenous and tribal territories.¹⁰⁷ The publication further highlights the paradoxical situation of the region in being rich in natural and cultural resources but being monetarily poor and lacking access to substantial public services.¹⁰⁸ This report is important not only to the region but also to indigenous peoples as it further proposes measures that take advantages of the aforementioned riches “to mitigate and adapt to climate change and protect wildlife and biological diversity, while reducing extreme poverty, food insecurity and social conflict.”¹⁰⁹ The FILAC as an example is just one of many groups designed to work on the myriad of issues for the region.

On the international scale, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was entered into force in 1992 who’s aim is to conserve biological diversity, sustain use of the earth’s components and the “fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.”¹¹⁰ In highlighting this document is Article 8(j) which is important to that of indigenous populations in that it calls for the CBD to “subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge, innovations and practices.”¹¹¹ As well, the CBD has held the Working Group on Article 8(j) which was established in 1998 and through this Working Group has enhanced and implemented new voluntary guidelines in respect to Indigenous

¹⁰² “Guaranteeing indigenous people’s rights in Latin America: Progress in the past decade and remaining challenges,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹⁰³ “Guaranteeing indigenous people’s rights in Latin America: Progress in the past decade and remaining challenges,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹⁰⁴ “Guaranteeing indigenous people’s rights in Latin America: Progress in the past decade and remaining challenges,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹⁰⁵ “FILAC: 25 Years Working for the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples,” *Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2017, accessed <http://www.filac.net/publicaciones/101-fi-brinst-in.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ “FILAC: 25 Years Working for the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples,” *Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹⁰⁷ “Forest governance by indigenous and tribal peoples: An opportunity for climate action in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2021, Accessed January 5, 2022, <https://www.fao.org/3/cb2953en/online/cb2953en.html>.

¹⁰⁸ “Forest governance by indigenous and tribal peoples: An opportunity for climate action in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹⁰⁹ “Forest governance by indigenous and tribal peoples: An opportunity for climate action in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹¹⁰ “Convention on Biological Diversity,” *United Nations*, 1992, accessed January 8, 2022, <https://www.cbd.int/doc/legal/cbd-en.pdf>.

¹¹¹ “Convention on Biological Diversity,” *United Nations*.

Populations which include such guidelines as “Akwe: Kon Voluntary Guidelines,” “Tkarihwaie:ri Code of Ethical Conduct” and “Mo’otz Kuxtal Voluntary Guidelines,” just to name a few.¹¹² The document is now well over 20 years old and showed that the issue of Biological Diversity is an ongoing issue as biodiversity is deteriorating worldwide and is expected and projected to worsen and as such the CBD over the years has undergone various Conference of the Parties. The most recent one labelled the UN Biodiversity Conference is occurring in two parts, the first part was held online due to COVID-19 from October 11-15, 2021, and the second part is scheduled to be held in-person in Kunming, China from April 25, 2022, to May 8, 2022.¹¹³ This original document and its continuous Conference of the Parties is important not only to the global landscape and region of Latin America and the Caribbean but further as well to those of indigenous peoples as these conferences since its inception have included those from all different levels.

The last landmark document that is of high importance is A/RES/61/295 which is most notably known as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007.¹¹⁴ Article 29 of the document provides for “the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources.”¹¹⁵ Further is indicated that “states shall establish and implement assistance programmes for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.”¹¹⁶ This document is a great foundation for the indigenous population but there remains the issue of protections for this group in general and further in the space of environment concerns and biodiversity.

The Escazú Agreement

On March 4, 2018, the Latin American and Caribbean region adopted the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, which became known to be called The Escazú Agreement.¹¹⁷ The Escazú Agreement is an international treaty signed by 24 Latin American and Caribbean Member States seeking a multilateral approach for sustainable development.¹¹⁸ It sets forth the necessity to combat inequality and discrimination and guarantee the rights of every person to a healthy environment and to sustainable development.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, the agreement seeks to increase public access to environmental information, environmental policy and decision-making, and legal protection and recourse concerning environmental matters.¹²⁰ Lastly, the Escazú Agreement takes into account the stakes of current and future generations and their right to a healthy and sustainable environment.¹²¹ Notably, the Escazú Agreement was the first international treaty in Latin America and the Caribbean concerning the environment and the first international treaty to include provisions on the rights of environmental defenders.¹²² This agreement devotes particular attention to persons and groups in vulnerable situations, such as indigenous persons, and places equality at

¹¹² “Working Group on Article 8(j),” *Convention on Biological Diversity*, accessed January 11, 2022, <https://www.cbd.int/convention/wg8j.shtml>.

¹¹³ “Overview: Conference – UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) 25 April – 8 May 2022, Kunming, China,” United Nations Environment Programme, Last modified August 18, 2021, accessed January 8, 2022, <https://www.unep.org/events/conference/un-biodiversity-conference-cop-15>.

¹¹⁴ “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” *United Nations*, September 13, 2007, accessed January 11, 2022, https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf.

¹¹⁵ “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” *United Nations*.

¹¹⁶ “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” *United Nations*.

¹¹⁷ “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, March 4, 2018, accessed December 27, 2021, https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43583/1/S1800428_en.pdf

¹¹⁸ “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹¹⁹ “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹²⁰ “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹²¹ “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹²² “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

the core of sustainable development.¹²³ When providing access of environmental information, disagreement seeks to guarantee that indigenous peoples and ethnic groups receive assistance in preparing their requests and obtaining responses.¹²⁴ The agreement as well seeks to increase public participation in the environmental decision-making process and provides clauses that guarantee that the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are observed.¹²⁵

Current Situation

To advance global climate, biodiversity and development goals, securing land rights for indigenous people is imperative in tackling the issues of climate change and inequality.¹²⁶ The crux of the matter is that billions of indigenous people live on and manage lands that are unrecognized.¹²⁷ This insecurity undermines global efforts to protect, manage, and restore ecosystems consistent with addressing climate change, increasing biodiversity efforts, and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹²⁸

Customarily, indigenous people hold and use land through community arrangements as opposed to individual land ownership.¹²⁹ This creates issue as lands managed by local people with secure land rights have seen lower rates of deforestation, held more biodiversity, and have benefitted more people than lands managed by either public or private entities.¹³⁰ Indigenous people are often last to receive public investments in infrastructure and environmental protection which creates barriers for them to participate fully in the formal economy and prevents them from participating in political processes and environmental decision-making.¹³¹ This history of inequality and political exclusion has disproportionately subjected indigenous communities to the implications of climate change and other natural hazards.¹³² The irony faced here is that indigenous people hold traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and advanced expertise on how to adapt, mitigate, and reduce climate risks and disaster risks yet they are overlooked and suffer the consequences that come with a lack of legal land-use recognition.¹³³

Indigenous communities safeguard approximately 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity, yet their governments typically only legally recognize a fraction of this land to belong to these communities.¹³⁴ This subjects these indigenous communities – and the forests and biodiversity they protect – to conflict, environmental degradation, and weak economic and social development.¹³⁵ Further, as indicated previously, the FAO and the FILAC came together to create the report *Forest governance by indigenous and tribal peoples: An opportunity for Climate Action in Latin America and the Caribbean* which not only talks about the current challenges of the current topic at hand but further gives insight from the COVID-19 pandemic and the solution to this is clear according to them, indicating “donor nations should support Latin American efforts to recognize and enforce the rights of

¹²³ “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹²⁴ “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹²⁵ “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*.

¹²⁶ “Securing Land Rights for the Poor: Nicaragua’s Land Administration, Regularization, and Titling Experience,” *The World Bank*, October 16, 2020, accessed December 26, 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2020/10/16/securing-land-rights-for-the-poor-nicaragua-land-administration-regularization-and-titling-experience>.

¹²⁷ “Securing Land Rights for the Poor: Nicaragua’s Land Administration, Regularization, and Titling Experience,” *The World Bank*.

¹²⁸ “Securing Land Rights for the Poor: Nicaragua’s Land Administration, Regularization, and Titling Experience,” *The World Bank*.

¹²⁹ “Securing Land Rights for the Poor: Nicaragua’s Land Administration, Regularization, and Titling Experience,” *The World Bank*.

¹³⁰ “Securing Land Rights for the Poor: Nicaragua’s Land Administration, Regularization, and Titling Experience,” *The World Bank*.

¹³¹ “Indigenous Peoples,” *The World Bank*, last modified March 19, 2021, accessed December 27, 2021, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/indigenouspeoples#1>.

¹³² “Indigenous Peoples,” *The World Bank*.

¹³³ “Indigenous Peoples,” *The World Bank*.

¹³⁴ “Indigenous Peoples,” *The World Bank*.

¹³⁵ “Indigenous Peoples,” *The World Bank*.

Indigenous Peoples to their territories, while also investing in the people who are already keeping the forests standing.”¹³⁶ This, however, is just a starting point and one idea to mitigate the issue at hand.

Conclusion

Indigenous people worldwide account for 20 percent of the earth’s territory and although they are becoming more and more recognized worldwide, regionally, and locally, there remains issues and require strengthening of their protections not only for their own rights but for the overall benefit of the carbon footprint. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs lists that some of the remaining issues for the group is 1) land rights in law, but not in reality, 2) new technologies forcing resettlement, 3) the cost of unsustainable development, 4) the implementation gap: much talk, little action, 5) climate change threatens the very existence of indigenous peoples and 6) the severe impact on women.¹³⁷ Further, it lists the emerging issues to be 1) lands, territories and resources, 2) conservation, 3) Agenda 2030 specifically target 2.3, 4) violation of rights, 5) autonomy and self-determination, 6) extractive industries, 7) community-based mapping, monitoring and information systems and 8) climate change itself.¹³⁸ The background guide topic is just the beginning the conversation that needs to be had on the pressing issue at hand and, its true importance as the population in question provides traditional knowledge in protecting the plant’s biodiversity and maintenance of the overall health of the ecosystem.

Committee Directive

Indigenous communities have been caretakers of the environment, protecting their lands, respecting wildlife, and utilizing traditional ecological knowledge passed down through generations. Today, indigenous peoples continue to safeguard some of the most biodiverse areas on the planet. Though indigenous peoples comprise only around six percent of the global population, they protect 80 percent of biodiversity left in the world. As delegates conduct research, they should become fluent in their understanding of how the knowledge-practice-belief system of indigenous communities coupled with the implementation of western science can serve to strengthen environmental and biodiversity protections in vulnerable indigenous environments across the globe. Delegates should consider the social, political, legal, and economic barriers that prevent indigenous peoples from safeguarding their environments. Delegates should be mindful of the frameworks and programs already in place and ask themselves where these frameworks and programs need to be improved to further safeguard the environmental rights of indigenous peoples. What efforts would be most effective in empowering indigenous peoples to continue to safeguard their environment and biodiversity? Is there a comprehensive solution for all indigenous communities? Will Member States outside of Latin America and the Caribbean be impacted by these efforts?

¹³⁶ Kaimowitz, David, “To help the planet, help the forest protectors,” *Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean*, accessed January 5, 2022, <https://www.filac.org/to-help-the-planet-help-the-forest-protectors/>.

¹³⁷ “Environment,” *United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Indigenous Peoples*, accessed January 11, 2022, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/environment.html>.

¹³⁸ “Environment,” *United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Indigenous Peoples*.

Annotated Bibliography

I. Combating Rural Poverty through Sustainable Innovation and Inclusion

OECD et al. (2021), *Latin American Economic Outlook 2021: Working Together for a Better Recovery*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5fedabe5-en>.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), along with other agencies such as the Development Bank of Latin America and the European Commission, published the *Latin American Economic Outlook 2021* that detailed a "strong, sustainable, and inclusive recovery" for the region from the COVID-19's harmful effects. The Latin American and Caribbean region was already struggling with numerous issues before the pandemic, but the coronavirus amplified socio-economic challenges. The report highlights the obstacles and a pathway to recovery for the region. According to the report, the youth, women, elderly, indigenous, and migrant populations were "disproportionately" affected by COVID-19, and living in rural areas can exacerbate the disparities.

Padilla Pérez, Ramón, *Rural industrial policy and strengthening value chains*, *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*, Santiago, August 2017, https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/42074/6/S1700274_en.pdf

For 2017, the Latin American and Caribbean region were expected to witness an economic growth of one percent. The reasons for the slow growth were "insufficient investment, poor productivity growth, widening structural gaps and the risk of social conditions" because of public spending cuts and a rise of unemployment. The report acknowledged that ECLAC called for "progressive structural changes" but implementing such change in rural areas have proved to be a challenge. The 2017 report noted 46.2 percent of the Latin American rural population lived in poverty, whereas 23.8 percent of the urban population. The report includes plans on addressing the rural area challenges with innovative ideas and policies.

"IFAD Launches The Second Edition of the Rural Youth Innovation Award in Latin America and the Caribbean With the Collaboration of IICA," *Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture*, accessed December 31, 2021, <https://iica.int/en/press/news/ifad-launches-second-edition-rural-youth-innovation-award-latin-america-and-caribbean>

The United Nations (UN) agency for rural development, known as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), launched an initiative with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) to identify and reward youth-driven and innovative ideas for the rural areas affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Rural Youth Innovation Award in Latin America and the Caribbean According to the IFAD Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Rossana Polastri, rural communities can be "prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable places" if there's investment for rural youths, and initiative could ease climate change's impacts on the region. In this article, delegate can obtain additional information about rural youths' engagement for inclusion to improve their communities.

"Overview of rural poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean. Solutions for eliminating rural poverty in the 21st century," *Food and Agriculture Organization*, (2019), <https://www.fao.org/3/ca2275en/ca2275en.pdf>

In 2018, the FAO reported the Latin America and Caribbean region has been falling short of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1 to end poverty despite more than two decades of progress. Extreme rural poverty increased by two percentage points between 2014 and 2016, with 2017 having an estimated 59 million poor and 27 million "extreme poor" in rural areas of the region. The report highlights the calls for the elimination of rural poverty through commitment and action across local and international engagement.

II. Strengthening Environmental and Biodiversity Protections through the Empowerment of Indigenous People

United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC). *Forest Governance by Indigenous and Tribal Peoples: An Opportunity for Climate Action in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Santiago, Chile: FAO, 2021.

The culmination of an analyses of over 300 studies on climate change, indigenous peoples, and/or deforestation and forest management, this report thoroughly introduces the cultural and geographical history of indigenous peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, and scientifically justifies why they are the best protectors of the environments in which they live. Highlighting that of all the carbon stored in tropical forests around the world, 14 percent is stored in the tropical forests in Latin America and the Caribbean, this report lends new urgency to the addressment of increased tensions between indigenous peoples and those who wish to develop or repurpose the territory on which they live. Five far-reaching policies are proposed as feasible mechanisms to mitigate climate change, empower indigenous peoples in the Latin America and Caribbean region, and strengthen community forest management in an economically prudent and socially just manner.

United Nations General Assembly resolution 61/295, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, A/RES/61/295, (September 13, 2007), http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

This declaration serves as a foundation United Nations (UN) document in recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples as equal to the political rights of non-indigenous people, particularly in political rights such as including self-determination, international human rights to legal protection, and freedom from discrimination. Article 11 guarantees indigenous people's right to traditional cultural and legal practices, while Article 26 aims to grant claims on traditional lands, territories, and resources. These rights set the precedent for further international indigenous law and are often referred to in even the most recent UN documents and publications on indigenous rights.

United Nations, Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean. *Knowledge Management for Development: Towards a practical approach for the Caribbean*. Port-of-Spain: ECLAC, March 2010. https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/38264/1/LCCARL234Rev1_en.pdf.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) report argued for a comprehensive report on the inclusion of traditional knowledge and its management as an alternative form of development. To do this, it examines the relationship between inputs, processes and tools, outputs, environmental factors, and knowledge management initiatives, with a particular emphasis on Latin America and the Caribbean. Indigenous knowledge systems are thoroughly examined, with supporting case studies from Suriname and Costa Rica. This paper doesn't just provide insights into how indigenous knowledge systems preserve unique methods that are highly specialized to certain climates and environments, but also how to best manage that knowledge.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Policy Brief #101: Challenges and Opportunities for Indigenous Peoples' Sustainability*, April 2021, accessed December 3, 2021, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/PB_101.pdf

This document from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs outlines the difficulties currently facing indigenous peoples and the role that traditional knowledge can serve in addressing climate change and its consequences on indigenous populations. Some of the major problems facing Indigenous communities are discussed, such as deforestation, pollution, encroaching development, and losses in natural biodiversity. The document highlights the role that indigenous people can play at an individual and group level in fighting climate change effects. Particular attention is paid to the vital role of indigenous women in preserving traditional knowledge. The paper concludes with a set of policy recommendations to successfully overcome pressing issues through the empowerment of indigenous people.