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# Forty-eighth Annual Report of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA

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## INTRODUCTION

This *Forty-eighth Annual Report of the Permanent Secretariat*, to be submitted for consideration of the "50th Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council," summarizes the activities carried out by SELA during the period December 2023 - December 2024, in compliance with the mandate of the *Panama Convention*, summarized in the slogan **More and Better Integration** created at the beginning of this administration, an expression of its commitment to deepen economic, social and political integration, with a humanistic approach, of LAC and its strategic goal.

In particular, this administration focused on the execution of what was contemplated in the *Work Programme for 2022-2026*, updated for 2024, approved at the "XLIX Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council" (Caracas, 5 and 6 December 2023). The activities described in this document, in addition to being in line with the Work Programme, responded to specific requests expressed by some Member States and resulted in additional unscheduled activities, implemented in accordance with the needs, demands and expectations of the requesting countries, as well as in adjustments and variations in the implementation of some scheduled activities. All the work was carried out in accordance with the gender equity approach, based on SELA's commitment to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the strategic vision of the organisation for 2030.<sup>1</sup>

The scheduled activities formed part of the thematic areas that make up the Work Programme, namely: I. Economic Recovery (24); II. Digitalisation and Infrastructure (8); and III. Social Development (15) and were summarised in the framework of the project to which they belong, indicating the respective thematic area and the programme to which each project is associated.

In the Economic Recovery area, 19 (79%) of the 24 programmed activities were executed. These included the holding of roundtables of the chairs and secretariats of regional integration mechanisms. These roundtables, initiated in 2023, made it possible to identify priority areas in issues such as productivity, energy, migration, food security and natural disaster risk management. In 2024, new roundtables were activated to contribute to the design of strategies and public policies to boost LAC integration. With a view to promoting convergence and regional integration, the book *Latin America and the Caribbean facing the challenges of integration in the 21st Century* was published (November, 2023), which proposes complex regionalism as a new way to manage regional convergence based on the inter-secretariat coordination promoted by SELA.

In order to continue to leverage the economic recovery of LAC, in line with its commitment to stimulate the design of public policies to promote productive sectors, strengthen business models and develop new markets for SMEs in the region, and within the framework of the *Specific Cooperation Agreement SELA-ALBA-TCP-Bank of ALBA (BANALBA)*, SELA presented the results (Phase I) of the mapping of productive niches in the Member States of ALBA-TCP: Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Honduras. The structural analysis of the export basket of these countries allowed for identifying potentialities in various productive sectors, highlighting productive capacities in agricultural and livestock activities, production of chemicals, especially fertilizers and veterinary medical inputs. Phase II

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<sup>1</sup> This vision envisages the construction of a more integrated, equitable, sustainable and innovative Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), where the well-being of its peoples is at the centre of all policies and actions undertaken by its Member States. Likewise, under this vision, SELA's founding objectives and principles are being reconstituted in a new body of initiatives and commitments that combine the intraregional and global environments, leading it to balance between a strategic and flexible open regionalism and a more global, complex and interdependent one.

of the project included the analysis and presentation of results for the Eastern Caribbean countries that are members of ALBA-TCP. Phase III will conclude on December 15 of this year.

Another contribution of SELA in this area was the publication (November, 2023) of the *Mapping of Productive Niches in Latin America and the Caribbean: experiences and lessons learned*, within the framework of the "Productive articulation programme for the strengthening and development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region." This work focuses on the economic growth of the region and the role different organisations, such as SELA, can play in its economic recovery.

SELA gave a notable boost to China-LAC relations through the "First Latin American and Caribbean-China Development Forum" (Beijing, 27 and 28 August 2024), organised in partnership with the **Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)** and aimed at strengthening trade and investment ties between both blocs, as well as promoting connectivity, trade and investment in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, the cooperation agreement ILAS-CASS-SELA was signed and the book *The relationship between Latin America and the Caribbean and China: notes for a development agenda*, in which SELA proposes a deep integration between LAC and China that goes beyond the trade or tariff dimensions and advances towards the consolidation of an effectively integrated biregional economic space, with coordinated policies aimed at making complementarities bear fruit, strengthening economies of scale, developing regional value chains and increasing LAC's joint negotiating power. In addition, a study was prepared on *Strengthening economic cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean and China: a proposal for diversification and sustainability*, published in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*, which presents a series of public policy proposals aimed at strengthening economic cooperation through greater diversification and sustainability of Chinese investments in the region.

Another activity of particular interest for the region was the [XII Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition in Latin American and Caribbean \(WGTC-LAC\)](#), focused on AI and public procurement, with the collaboration of the **UN Trade and Development** and the **Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Competition (CDPC)** of Honduras and the support of the Honduran government. A total of 19 best practices in general and 13 specific ones were surveyed, six of which were associated with the use of AI in public procurement and seven with the fight against bid rigging and corruption. Immediately after the meeting, SELA opened the "First Forum on Competition in Latin America and the Caribbean," in which successful experiences in the practice of competition law were analysed and proposals were made to improve regulations and enforcement in the region. In addition, in July, it published the book *Trade and Competition: Fintech in the Latin American and Caribbean region*, a compilation of 13 texts written by specialists and regional competition authorities in which they share the regulatory principles and experiences of Fintech companies in LAC national markets and the impact of competition policies. Likewise, it published the study *Towards a fair and transparent competition policy in Latin America and the Caribbean: consolidating best practices and strengthening the regional competition regime*, in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*.

The strengthening of the cocoa and coffee industries was another topic associated with this thematic area. Thus, in January, SELA organised the Seminar on European market access for the cocoa and coffee sectors, and in July, in partnership with FAO, it organised another seminar in which specialists, producers and exporters from LAC and Venezuela assessed some best practices related to the cocoa production chain, with emphasis on the regulatory area. It also published the document *Sustainable development of coffee and cocoa: SELA's initiatives for promotion and strengthening in Latin America and the Caribbean*, contained in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. In addition, the 2024 edition of the *Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC)* was another outstanding activity. In this second edition, Brazil and Paraguay joined the seven

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initial participants of the first edition (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay), thus ensuring the inclusion of all PA and Mercosur members. Subsequently, and as a deliverable derived from the same, SELA, in face-to-face meetings, presented the specific results of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Argentina and Uruguay. In addition, the study *SME Policy Index: Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC). Towards an inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery*, was published in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. The study analyses the policies for MSMEs in the nine countries included in the 2024 edition of the IPPALC and highlights its importance by pointing out that, in addition to being a useful tool for the evaluation and comparison of policies, it is a reference for designing more coherent and effective national and regional programmes.

In the Digitalisation and Infrastructure area, **6 (75%)** of the **8** scheduled activities were implemented. The reduction of the digital divide and the dissemination of regional and international best practices in digital connectivity, with an emphasis on rural areas, remained the main focus. In order to promote the development of negotiating capacities and a better understanding of the application of diplomacy in the context of cyberspace, the Permanent Secretariat, in 2024, organised two events on governance and cyber-diplomacy in LAC, one focused on challenges and opportunities and the other on innovation and the future. In addition, in July, it published the *Manual on Cyberdiplomacy for regional convergence*; in September, the book *Artificial Intelligence and Diplomacy: international relations in the era of disruptive technologies*; and in November, the study *Cyberdiplomacy, artificial intelligence and digital governance: public policy proposals for the future of Latin America and the Caribbean, the latter in the book Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC. The study proposes the creation of a regional framework for cooperation in cybersecurity, including the signing of multilateral agreements to strengthen the capacities of States and address cyber risks. It also suggests harmonising personal data protection and privacy policies, aligning the countries of the region with international standards and improving trust in digital platforms.*

The digital transformation of ports was the theme of a seminar in which initiatives developed by companies, startups, port operators and technology centres to improve operational efficiency, productivity and port security were presented. Another initiative in the field of ports was the holding of the "VIII Meeting of Logistics-Port Communities," one of the deliverables of which was a publication containing the *Recommendations for the design of public policies in the maritime-port sector*, referring to 16 key aspects for the modernisation of the logistics-port communities (LPC) of the region. In addition, the *2030 Action Plan* was presented to strengthen the value proposition of the Network and in which goals are defined referring to the consolidation of strategic partnerships, digitalisation and the promotion of the blue economy, ensuring continuous and sustainable growth for the region.

As far as the Social Development area is concerned, **15 (100%)** of the **15** scheduled activities were implemented. One of them was the "II Seminar on Circular Economy," which focused on the management of plastics, with special reference to the *Global Plastics Treaty* and the need to strengthen the LAC agenda in this area. Another was on the design of public policies based on behavioural economics. This was the fourth workshop on this issue organised by SELA, with the support of the **IDB**, and delivered to a group of 92 Colombian public officials from eight official entities in Colombia. The geopolitical and diplomatic implications of AI were analysed in a course supported by the **European Institute of International Studies (IEEI-Sweden)** and complemented with another one on the European Union-LAC relations through the EU's Digital Alliance and Global Gateway.

In the area of disasters, and with the purpose of laying the foundations for the integration of national strategies for disaster risk reduction (DRR),<sup>2</sup> the Permanent Secretariat, with the advice of the Network of Social Studies for Disaster Prevention in Latin America and the Caribbean (LA RED), published the *Base diagnosis for the definition of a strategic framework to guide SELA's work on disaster risk management and its linkage with the thematic areas of the Work Programme for 2022-2026*. Similarly, and in order to address integrated territorial management, optimise civil protection and strengthen ISDR, with the support of the **Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil (UCSG)**, it launched a first diploma course on ISDR to examine regional public policies and their impact on PPPs. Likewise, in alliance with **ECLAC** and the **National Service for Disaster Prevention and Response (SENAPRED)** of Chile, it analysed the role of international cooperation in the area of disasters and worked on the social protection approach through a workshop organised with the support of the **CISS, Expertise France** and the **Social Policy Cabinet of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic**.

Another contribution of SELA in the area of disasters was its participation as co-organiser, in partnership with the **CopernicusLAC Panama Centre**, of the first online Hackathon on Earth Observation (EO) data from Copernicus for disaster risk reduction (DRR) in LAC.

Several events have affected the migration phenomenon, which has highlighted the need for information and data that show the reality of this complex situation. To that end, and in order to continue providing technical assistance to migration policymakers and to strengthen regional capacities for the analysis and dissemination of migration statistics, SELA delivered its second course on data management in this area. It also promoted the discussion of the most appropriate strategies to manage the integration of migrant women and girls and, with the support of **IOM, UNFPA, UN Women** and **UNICEF**, organised a workshop to make key recommendations on this issue.

In the area of international cooperation, in addition to the "XXXII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean," devoted to capacity building for the measurement, assessment and evaluation of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) as a contribution to the institutionalisation and standardisation of information to expand the results of cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is worth mentioning the publication of the comprehensive review of the *Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean - Historical Compendium 1987-2023* (*CONVERGENCIA*, No. 5, Vol. 1, November, 2024).

The foregoing shows how the promotion of international cooperation, regional convergence and synergetic and collaborative work make up one of the main lines of SELA's multi-annual work programme. For this reason, and with the purpose of giving full content to its motto **More and Better Integration**, this year, as in previous years, the Permanent Secretariat has received the collaboration of more than 30 organisations, which participated in the preparation of some of the activities and hosted their presentation. Among such organisations are: CELAC, CISS, ACS, ALBA-TCP, AP, ALADI, CAF, ECLAC, CAN, MERCOSUR, the UN and its various offices, the OECD, and IOM, among others, as well as public entities. Part of this collaborative work was based on 13 legal instruments of mutual cooperation signed by the Permanent Secretariat.

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<sup>2</sup> *CONVERGENCIA* (Vol. 1, No. 4, November 2023). SELA. Issue entirely devoted to this topic. Available at: <https://sela.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/revista-convergenia-septiembre-2023-vol-1-no-4.pdf>

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A particularly important milestone in SELA's management, as an expression of collaborative work, were the inter-secretariat activities promoted by the Permanent Secretary in his efforts to boost greater and more effective integration in LAC on the basis of joint work and cooperative convergence of the secretariats of the regional integration mechanisms. In fact, they have responded with great enthusiasm, showing their willingness to identify challenges and opportunities, reach points of convergence and strengthen their integration efforts with a regional approach that, based on a constructive and permanent dialogue, respectful of the sovereignty of the peoples and their economic, social and cultural diversity, has led to the implementation of joint actions to meet the needs of the Member States of each integration mechanism and of the region as a whole.

In 2024, these activities began with the institutional strengthening of the secretariats, based on shared experiences and the signing of the *Declaration of Saint Vincent*, at the VII CELAC Summit, which showed the progress achieved and ratified the commitment and willingness to continue building convergence. On **5 April**, the "Workshop on inter-secretariat work" was held, with the participation of seven regional integration organisations. On **30 April**, SELA signed a framework cooperation agreement with BANALBA "to promote integration and sustainable and integral development in the region."

On **7 June**, the Permanent Secretary of SELA, together with the Honourable Mr. Guillermo Daniel Ortega Reyes and the Honourable Mr. Amado Cerrud, Chairman and First Vice-Chairman of the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), respectively, assessed the progress of the Inter-Secretariat Project. On **15 August**, SELA and CAN organised, within the framework of the "Inter-Secretariat Project", the "Forum: Cross-border Cooperation and Infrastructure: Responding to the challenges of integration for the development of Latin America and the Caribbean," aimed at contributing to the construction of the regional convergence matrix, by identifying actions that have helped promote regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Of special relevance was the permanent impulse that the Permanent Secretariat gave to cooperation relations by promoting PPPs as a suitable mechanism to channel actions aimed at implementing public policies to improve the quality of life of the population, through collaborative work.

The following chart summarises the results of the implementation of the *Work Programme for 2022-2026*, 2024 update.



## II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

In line with the provisions of [Decision N°589 Restructuring of SELA](#) (XLVII Regular Meeting of the Latin American Council, Caracas, 29 and 30 November 2021), the activities carried out during the period between December 2023 and December 2024 and included in the *Work Programme for 2022-2026*, update 2024, were framed within the following thematic areas: I. Economic Recovery; II. Economic Recovery; II. Digitalisation and Infrastructure and III. Social Development. The following table indicates the projects carried out through the activities implemented during the period covered by the report, as well as the thematic area and the programme to which each project belongs.

THEMATIC AREA	PROGRAMME	PROJECT
I Economic recovery	Programme I Economic integration	Project A. Institutional convergence and cooperation for integration
	Programme II Trade facilitation	Project A. Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports
		Project B. Trade promotion in Latin America and the Caribbean
	Programme III SMEs	Project A. Productive articulation for stronger SMEs
		Project B. Seizing the opportunities of the industries of cultural and creative goods and services for economic recovery
	II Digitalisation and infrastructure	Programme I Infrastructure
Programme II Digital transformation		Project A. Leveraging digital technologies to boost development in Latin America and the Caribbean
III Social development	Programme I Sustainable and resilient development	Project A. Technical support for cooperation and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean
		Project B. Capacity building for the regional public sector
	Programme II Comprehensive disaster risk management of and climate change	Project A. Comprehensive disaster risk management in Latin America and the Caribbean
	Programme III: Promotion of an overview of human mobility	Project A. Best practices in migration policy
		Project B. Social development and migration
	Unscheduled activities	
Inter-Secretariat Activities		

Following the structure of the Work Programme, the activities implemented are summarised by thematic area, programme and project.

## THEMATIC AREA I – ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Essentially, this thematic area aims to: i) boost economic growth by strengthening regional integration processes; ii) contribute to the design of public policies that facilitate trade in LAC; and iii) promote the MSME business ecosystem. Likewise, it is expected that the results derived from the implementation of the activities included in this thematic area will contribute to the achievement of the following *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*:



### PROGRAMME I: ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

#### PROJECT A. INSTITUTIONAL CONVERGENCE AND COOPERATION FOR INTEGRATION

##### ACTIVITY 1. Monitoring regional trade and economic performance

This activity has been carried out throughout the implementation of the multi-year work programme through biannual updates of SELA's statistical and documentary database, considering that trade is a fundamental pillar for regional economic growth and an indispensable component for the evaluation of integration processes in the region. According to ECLAC's *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean 2024, Low-growth trap, climate change and employment trends*, as far as world trade is concerned, the decrease in the level of inflation this year allows for a recovery in the levels of consumption of manufactured goods, which, in turn, will stimulate trade in goods.

At the same time, according to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), trade is expected to increase by 2.6% this year. Considering that trade flows are associated with the attraction of foreign investment, which can improve infrastructure, technology and productivity in LAC countries, it is important to analyse the trade situation in the region with its main partners. In this regard, this activity makes it possible to analyse, through an *Interactive Dashboard*, different indicators associated with regional trade and to follow up on subregional integration processes.

The indicators analysed include: i) Gross Domestic Product (GDP): the behaviour of GDP by country is observed, both in terms of levels and per capita; ii) LAC subregional integration mechanisms: GDP, GDP per capita and inflation in different subregional economic integration associations; iii) Exports: the composition of exports by products classified at 6-digit HS (*Harmonized System* code); iv) Observation of the first 10 products exported by country; v) Economic complexity: the Economic Complexity Index (ECI) extracted from the Growth Lab of the Harvard Centre for International Development (CID); vi) Destination of exports by country and region; vii) Exports and imports are compared by integration mechanism; viii) Bilateral RTPI: the bilateral Revealed Trade Preference Index (RTPI) is plotted, i.e. by country of origin and destination; ix) RTPI by region: the RTPI of a country of origin in a given region of the world is observed; x) Maritime connectivity: the UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Maritime Connectivity Index (MCI) is plotted; and xi) MCI vs GDPpc: MCI and GDP per capita are compared.

These visualisations establish relationships among economic indicators, grouping related elements that by means of filters allow the user to select specific data (e.g. region, product or period). At the same time, they allow segmentations to be created to dynamically change values in the interactive dashboard, with a configuration that allows navigation between reports.

## **ACTIVITY 2. Roundtable of chairs and secretariats of regional integration mechanisms**

A particularly important milestone in SELA's management, as regards regional cooperative work during the period under review, has been the inter-secretariat activities, which began in December 2022 and have been promoted by the Permanent Secretariat in its efforts to help LAC move towards greater economic, social and human integration, which is truly perceived and appreciated by ordinary citizens, based on the joint work and cooperative convergence of the regional integration mechanisms, which have responded to SELA's call with great enthusiasm. They have shown, in practice, their greatest willingness to identify challenges and opportunities, strengthen points of convergence, minimise divergences and reinforce their integrationist efforts with a regional approach that, based on a constructive and permanent dialogue, respectful of the sovereignty of the peoples and their economic, social and cultural diversity, has made it possible to advance joint actions to meet the needs of the Member States of each integration mechanism and of the region as a whole.

The methodology used to develop the work was based on: i) the holding of face-to-face thematic seminars, promoting spaces for dialogue and exchange of experiences and the identification of points of convergence among the different subregional integration schemes in LAC, with the support of experts in each of the thematic areas; ii) the construction of a Regional Convergence Matrix (RCM), the first of its kind, to reflect the policies, programmes and actions, by theme (five), of each of the participating organisations; and iii) the representation, through diagrams, by theme, of the points of convergence between the organisations involved in the development of the work.

The RCM shows the programmatic agendas of the entities involved in order to determine the points of coincidence, with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts and facilitating a better use of the always insufficient resources. The themes and areas defined were: i) Productive chains (Area: Productive chains); ii) Disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change (Area: Disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change); iii) Cross-border cooperation and infrastructure (Area: Cross-border cooperation and infrastructure); and iv) Food security (Area: Food security).

It should be noted that the RCM is the first approximation to a regional inter-secretariat matrix, which, in itself, is a full expression of the result of the cooperative work resulting from the convergence of integration mechanisms in LAC, promoted by SELA, and whose main objective is expressed in its motto *More and Better Integration*. The RCM is a tool designed to support integration and convergence as its starting point and, in addition, to: i) avoid duplication of efforts, with the consequent better use of the always limited resources available; ii) make visible the areas of convergence that exist among integration mechanisms; iii) make it possible to formulate proposals for public policies that are better suited to the needs, demands and expectations of the population of LAC; and iv) formulate public policy proposals that are more suitable to the needs, demands and expectations of the population of LAC.

In addition, the following five thematic matrices were defined: i) Productive value chains; ii) Disaster risk reduction; iii) Cross-border cooperation; and iv) Sustainable energy. Each matrix contains the general objective and the specific objectives of the sector associated with the topic, as well as the actions foreseen by each organisation (ALADI, CAN, ACTO, MERCOSUR, SICA and SELA) in terms of the following aspects: i) Institutional strengthening. This refers to specific actions aimed at generating institutional and sectoral capacities in various topics related to the area; ii) Meetings and forums. Referring to events, meetings and other coordination mechanisms developed for the exchange of experiences, construction of joint agendas and generation of public policy recommendations; iii) Projects. Referring to specific actions proposed by the agencies, to be implemented in a coordinated manner; iv) Standards. This refers to the development of new standards, protocols and other instruments related to the area. It also refers to the implementation of existing regulatory instruments; v) Policies. Referring to existing agency policies and programmes to be implemented in a coordinated manner; and vi) Other (other issues related to the area).

These activities, which have been agreed upon and implemented with the active participation of the secretariats of the integration mechanisms of LAC, have their origin in the [Forum: Responding to the challenges of integration for development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Proposals from the regional and subregional integration mechanisms](#) (Buenos Aires, 16 December 2022), convened by the Government of Argentina and the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, with the participation of representatives of ALADI, CAN, SICA, MERCOSUR, ACS and the Argentinean Foreign Ministry, as well as delegates of the member countries of CELAC and SELA.<sup>3</sup> On this occasion, the work document *Proposal for an inter-secretariat methodology* was drafted, in which the following work areas were identified: i) Food and nutritional security; ii) Production chains; iii) Disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change; iv) (Sustainable) energy; and v) Electricity integration and cross-border cooperation and infrastructure.

The participants in this event agreed that, through inter-secretariat work, it is possible to consolidate a regional public good, as represented by the road travelled in the region's integration. Furthermore, cooperative convergence between integration mechanisms and organisations is required in order to build jointly, avoid duplication of functions, join efforts and formulate common policies so that the States can promote actions to implement them.

A chronology of the inter-secretariat work carried out so far is summarised below. **In 2023**, between July and October, four thematic seminars were held with the presence of the secretaries of the different organisations and four meetings dedicated to the consolidation of the thematic matrices: "Food and nutritional security" (**27 September**); "Production chains" (**4 October**); "Sustainable energy and energy integration" (**6 October**) and "Cross-border cooperation and infrastructure" (**11 October**). Earlier, on **27 July**, the "Fourth Inter-Secretariat Meeting of the subregional integration mechanisms" was held at the ALADI headquarters, the central theme of which was the consideration of "Proposals for joint regional action: Production chains in Latin America and their impact on integration and trade," with the participation of SELA, SICA, CAF, MERCOSUR (Brazil as President Pro Tempore), ECLAC, ACS, ALBA-TCP, CARICOM, ACTO and FAO Uruguay.

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<sup>3</sup> Available at: <https://sela.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/dt3-informe-del-secretario-permanente-2022.pdf>

On **8 November of the same year**, SELA participated in the Workshop “Productive linkages: tools for the identification of products and sectors,” as agreed in the aforementioned inter-secretariat meeting of 27 July, organised by ALADI. In this event, SELA summarized the *Productive Articulation Project*, consisting of training activities for public sector officials and oriented towards public policies for the development of SMEs; the IPPALC project, a tool to evaluate the public policies implemented in each of the SELA countries; and an activity to map potential productive niches.

**On 1 March 2024**, progress was made in the institutional strengthening of the secretariats, based on shared experiences and the signing of the *Declaration of St. Vincent*, within the framework of the VIII Summit of CELAC (Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1-2 March 2024), where the progress, commitment and willingness to continue building convergence were demonstrated. Indeed, on that occasion, on 1 March, the Secretariats of the regional and integration organisations of LAC, namely: ACS; ALADI; CAN; CARICOM; SICA; ALBA-TCP and SELA, signed the *Joint Inter-Secretariat Declaration*.

In this declaration, among other aspects, the signatories ratified the commitment to continue working together, seeking greater efficiency and avoiding duplication of efforts in the execution of activities of regional interest, in order to make a significant impact on the cooperation and development agenda of Latin America and the Caribbean, whose ultimate goal is social inclusion; stressed the need to continue promoting cooperation and convergence among the various regional actors in order to follow up on the agreed agenda and encourage economic, social and cultural integration; and expressed their commitment to continue working on the construction of a regional agenda for integration and cooperation in order to achieve effective results, through a productive and permanent dialogue with full respect for the sovereignty of our peoples, their economic, social and cultural diversity.

**On 5 April**, the “Workshop on inter-secretariat work” was held virtually, with the participation of representatives and focal points of the following regional integration mechanisms: CAN, ALADI, SICA, ALBA-TCP, ACTO, and SELA. At the opening of this event, Ambassador Clarems Endara, Permanent Secretary of SELA, in addition to recalling the two main objectives of the inter-secretariat work (to avoid duplication of functions and promote regional convergence), said that this work “has been constructive, which was once again evidenced in the meeting held among the various secretaries and directors within the framework of the VIII Summit of CELAC, which reaffirmed the need to insist on joint work and highlighted the progress made in the search for a common regional agenda.”<sup>4</sup> He also expressed his confidence “in the commitment of the authorities and in the coordination capacity that is being generated as an expression of a new stage in the region in which regional and subregional integration mechanisms wish to work together to consolidate the relationship that will strengthen regional convergence.”

**On 30 April**, SELA signed a *Framework Cooperation Agreement* with the Bank of ALBA (BANALBA), “to promote the integration and sustainable and integral development of the region.”

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<sup>4</sup> Available at: <https://sela.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Informe-de-Relatoria-Taller-sobre-el-trabajo-intersecretaria.pdf>

**On 7 June**, the Permanent Secretary met with the Honourable Mr. Guillermo Daniel Ortega Reyes and the Honourable Mr. Amado Cerrud, President and First Vice-President of the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), respectively, to detail the progress of the inter-secretariat project. The three emphasised the importance of strengthening the coordination between the secretariats of the regional integration organisations and strengthening the joint work agenda in order to respond to the needs and demands of the Member States.

**On 15 August**, in Lima, Peru, SELA and the **General Secretariat of the Andean Community (SGCAN)** organised, within the framework of the "Inter-secretariat Project," the [Forum: Cross-border cooperation and infrastructure: responding to the challenges of integration for the development of Latin America and the Caribbean](#), whose purpose was to contribute to the construction of the regional convergence matrix, identifying actions to promote regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean. This meeting, which lasted four hours, was identified with one of the working groups (Cross-border cooperation and infrastructure) foreseen in the Forum "Responding to the challenges of integration for development in Latin America and the Caribbean" (Buenos Aires, December 2022), organised by SELA and CELAC. Participants in this event included representatives of regional, subregional and multilateral integration organisations in LAC, international organisations participating in the initiative, and the public sector of the Member States of SELA and the Andean Community related to cross-border cooperation and infrastructure.

The experts in attendance shared experiences, best practices and identified points of convergence among the various regional integration schemes in LAC, such as, in addition to the Andean Community and SELA, ALADI, ACS, ALBA-TCP, CARICOM, MERCOSUR and ACTO. For their part, participants: i) identified points of common interest among LAC integration schemes for cooperation and cross-border integration; ii) reviewed the progress and challenges in terms of cross-border integration in the region, particularly in the areas of interoperability and digital initiatives; and iii) highlighted the opportunities in the region for cross-border integration, infrastructure, transport and logistics. In addition, they proposed the creation of a technical working group on integration mechanisms to address issues such as interoperability, cross-border cooperation, digitalisation and sea routes, as well as phytosanitary control in the region.

The systematisation of the inter-secretariat work is contained in the study *Policies for convergence and cooperation based on the inter-secretariat work*, recently published by the Permanent Secretariat, in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. This study highlights the need to establish a public policy focused on institutional convergence and cooperation in order to strengthen LAC integration. It also analyses the opportunities offered by institutional cooperation within the framework of economic integration, highlighting the experiences and proposals that have emerged from the spaces for inter-secretariat dialogue, underscoring the achievements made in the creation of joint agendas and in the identification of areas of action that respond to the specific needs of the region. It also points out that cooperation stresses the need for and importance of having common platforms that enable countries to work in coordination in areas of mutual interest, such as food security, productive integration, adaptation to climate change, sustainable energy and cross-border cooperation, among others.

As a result of the inter-secretariat work, SELA, in partnership with the relevant regional institutions, has significantly contributed to the consolidation of a new space for coordination, harmonization, complementarity and convergence of the agendas of the various integration organisations, in accordance with the *Panama Convention*, Article 5, paragraph 2, which establishes that SELA must "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.”

**ACTIVITY 3. Seminar: Towards the construction of a regional integration index in Latin America and the Caribbean. Analysis and prospects.**

[Seminar on integration between the Eurasian Economic Union \(EAEU\) and Latin American and Caribbean Economic System \(SELA\)](#). Virtual (from Moscow). 3 December. This seminar was a continuation of the effort initiated by SELA in December 2021, when it held the seminar “Eurasian Economic Union - Latin America and the Caribbean (EAEU-LAC): Removing barriers and building bridges for trade cooperation” with the EAEU. On that occasion, the two bodies adopted a joint declaration in which they affirmed their commitment to promote and enhance comprehensive cooperation between EAEU Member States and Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries, while stressing the strategic importance of the partnership between the two regions. The declaration also noted that “it would be necessary to increase the number of joint events (fora) for government agencies, business, experts and academia, as well as the general public, to learn about the EAEU and LAC, as well as the economic and humanitarian opportunities that Eurasian and LAC countries have to offer. These forums should be based on new research that can be shared, thus fostering knowledge of each region's markets. The theme of each event will result from negotiations between the EAEU and SELA.”<sup>5</sup>

A special interest of SELA in advancing in its relations and cooperation with the EAEU is to explore and strengthen cooperation ties, with special reference to the eventual construction of a regional integration index for LAC. Such action would be based on SELA's learning from the knowledge, experience, best practices and lessons learned by the Eurasian Union in the application of its methodology to measure the various dimensions of economic integration.<sup>6</sup>

Participants considered the following topics in terms of possibilities and prospects for strengthening SELA-UEEA cooperation relations, namely: i) EAEU and SELA: history, models, intermediate results, assessment of the impact of integration development; ii) integration development in public procurement and competition; iii) generation of statistics; and iv) development of cooperation between the business circles of the EAEU and SELA Member States.

The EAEU representation ratified the very diverse possibilities that exist for EAEU-SELA cooperation and its willingness to optimise the conditions to promote this cooperation in areas such as, among others, agriculture, economy, tourism and public health. He also suggested a meeting in Caracas to make a presentation to LAC representatives at a seminar to discuss their experiences. To that end, he referred to the possibility of using the UN platform for a virtual-face-to-face forum at the headquarters in Santiago, Chile, in March 2025.

For his part, the Permanent Secretary of SELA said that EU-LAC cooperation is a necessity because both regions seek prosperity, resilience and sustainability for their populations, and it is a possibility because their relations can turn them into anchors for diversified supply chains, guaranteeing stability in an area of global disturbances. He also summarised the state of affairs in LAC and detailed its strengths, in a global sense, highlighting the productive and self-management capacity that has allowed for sustained

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<sup>5</sup> The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is an international organisation for regional economic integration. It was established through the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union on 29 May 2014 and consists of five countries: Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia.

<sup>6</sup> A regional integration index can be useful to measure the progress of agreements and policies that promote economic cooperation and the reduction of trade barriers between neighbouring countries.

growth and, at the same time, the need for an innovative trade policy in productive linkages and progress towards productive activities with greater economic complexity.

Finally, he explained some of SELA's initiatives included in the Work Programme for 2022-2026, 2024 update, such as the Working Group on Trade and Competition in Latin America and the Caribbean (WGTC-LAC), the updated publication of the region's economic indicators on the new Web page of the organisation, the Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC) and the project Productive Articulation for stronger SMEs.

#### **ACTIVITY 4. Forum on partnerships for strengthening trade and investment ties between China and Latin America and the Caribbean.**

[Latin America and the Caribbean-China Development Forum](#) Face-to-face. 27-28 August. Beijing, China. This event, organised with the **Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)**, was an opportunity to strengthen ties and foster cooperation among nations with diverse backgrounds and interests. Its main objective was to strengthen social, political, economic and cultural ties among the participating nations, as well as to facilitate dialogue, cooperation and sustainable development, with special reference to the following key areas: i) trade; ii) cooperation; iii) investment; and iv) energy and sustainable development. This first edition of the Forum coincided with the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the proposal to build a community of shared future between China and LAC countries.

In this connection, participants made the following considerations for the future of China-LAC relations: i) the opportunity that LAC's connection to the Belt and Road Strategy provides for infrastructure development that can boost connectivity, trade and investment throughout Latin America and the Caribbean; ii) the progress of bilateral cooperation relations initiated since the creation of the China-CELAC Forum, which have resulted in strong support for the building of the China-LAC shared future community; iii) the need to work together for an economy promoting the welfare of all peoples and to open our markets in an equitable manner to maximise our income, our exchanges, and our relations; and iv) the welfare of both blocs, which will eventually foster economic relations because the value of this forum is the economic development of the countries and the joint design of common strategic development plans on the basis of consensus around a common concept of development, promoted with an attitude of openness.

Participants shared their observations on the results of this decade of cooperation and expressed optimism about the future of the increasingly close relationship between China and Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The following are three SELA initiatives associated with the purpose that led to this Forum: the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Institute of Latin American Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (ILAS, CASS) and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), signed on 28 August 2024, in Beijing, to establish the general terms of cooperation between ILAS, CASS and SELA, in order to join efforts, resources and capacities within the scope of their respective functions, for the implementation of joint actions, programmes and/or projects in the areas of training, research, economics, international relations, culture, Latin American social problems, multidisciplinary studies, as well as Latin American integration; the publication of the book *The relationship between Latin America and the Caribbean and China: Notes for a development agenda*, which raises the need for a deep integration between LAC and China that transcends trade or tariff dimensions and moves towards the consolidation of an effectively integrated bi-regional economic space, with coordinated policies aimed

at making complementarities bear fruit, boosting economies of scale, developing regional value chains and increasing LAC's joint negotiating power.

The third initiative was the preparation of the document *Strengthening economic cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean and China: a proposal for diversification and sustainability*, in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*, which presents a series of public policy proposals aimed at strengthening economic cooperation through greater diversification and sustainability of Chinese investments in the region. Initiatives are proposed that address the diversification of the export structure, the strengthening of technological and energy infrastructures, as well as the creation of financing mechanisms that promote long-term sustainable investments.

**Participants: 63**

**SELA Member States (16):** Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Suriname, Uruguay.

**Regional organisations (5):** ACS, ALADI, CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean; CAN; OLADE

**International organisations (3):** Institute for World Economics and Policy (IWEP); China-LAC Cooperation Fund; FAO

**National organisations (6):** China: China International Contractors Association; CNPC Institute of Economics and Technology; State Council Development Research Centre (DRC); International Chamber of Commerce; Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID)-Mexico; Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA)-Brazil.

**Academic institutions (2):** China: University of International Business and Economics (UIBE); University of Agriculture (UA)

**PROGRAMME II: TRADE FACILITATION**

**PROJECT A. NETWORK OF DIGITAL AND COLLABORATIVE PORTS**

**ACTIVITY 1. Port environmental sustainability.** Activity rescheduled for 2025.

**ACTIVITY 2. VIII Regional Meeting of Port Logistics Communities**

[VIII Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of Port Logistics Communities](#). Virtual. From 16 to 18 October. This event was organized through the **Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports**, with the support of **CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean** and the **Municipality of Veracruz**, Mexico, within the framework of the *Non-Refundable Technical Cooperation Agreement* signed by SELA with this regional banking entity. The meeting brought together representatives of port logistics communities (LPCs), including customs officials; ministries or secretariats with competence in the areas of trade, transport, industry, production and maritime affairs; port and maritime authorities; port terminals; shipping companies; as well as port agents; entrepreneurs; trade union representatives; academicians; consultants and specialized media. Representatives of regional organisations such as ECLAC and ACS also attended.

This VIII Meeting was developed over six sessions, which addressed topics such as international supply chains and maritime transport in a world of disruptions; the Mexican port system; industry 4.0 in the port; maritime and port security and concessions and public-private partnerships in ports. Likewise, the new value proposition of the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports, the *Action Plan 2030* to strengthen it and the elaboration of the *Guidelines for the Formation and Development of Port*

*Communities* was announced, which will be made available to the membership, as a result of the consultancy with CAF - Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Through the papers presented and in response to questions posed by the moderators, views and reflections were exchanged on the status and prospects of the maritime-port sector and its communities: their contribution to trade facilitation, overcoming current challenges and promoting regional welfare and progress. Thus, a series of policy recommendations were compiled, including development and updating of regulations, modernisation and expansion of port infrastructure, investment in technological infrastructure, creation of corridors, established roles, collaboration among stakeholders, accessibility to data, promotion and education on digitalisation, and others, contained in the document [Recommendations for the design of public policies in the maritime-port sector](#).

**Participants:** 190 during the three days of the event.

**SELA member countries:** Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

**Other countries:** Antigua and Barbuda, Costa Rica, Spain, and the United States.

**Regional organisations:** CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Association of Caribbean States (ACS).

### **ACTIVITY 3. Maritime and port security**

[Virtual seminar on women in maritime and port security](#). Virtual. 16 and 17 May 2024. It was organised in partnership with the **Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE)** of the **Organisation of American States (OAS)**. The specialists gathered at this workshop reinforced the idea that the participation of women in the maritime and port sector, as well as gender equity: i) they bring a unique and complementary perspective to work teams, which enriches decision-making and fosters innovation; ii) by investing in equitable development, maritime organisations can benefit from a more diverse, resilient, innovative and engaged workforce; and iii) women's participation in the maritime sector can generate significant economic growth by increasing the productivity and competitiveness of companies.

Based on the contents provided by the speakers, it is worth highlighting some statements of a propositional nature: i) reconciliation of work and family life, where flexible policies are promoted to allow employees to reconcile their work and family responsibilities; ii) training and education of women in technical, business and technological management issues to improve their competencies and skills; iii) raising awareness and promoting gender diversity at all levels in the context of an inclusive organisational culture; iv) public-private cooperation to promote the implementation of certification systems to recognise companies that promote gender equality; v) providing opportunities to network with industry professionals and contribute to strengthening women's capacities to exercise effective leadership; vi) investing in gender studies to identify barriers faced by women in the maritime industry; and vii) providing mentoring by leaders, which contributes to accessing opportunities and expertise and connections that lead to personal growth.

**Number of participants: (+200)**

**Regional organisations (3):** Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE - OAS), Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM - OAS), Secretariat for Access to Rights and Social Inclusion (SARE - OAS).

**National organisations (5):** Maritime Authority of Jamaica; Empresa Portuaria Talcahuano, Chile; Observatory of Maritime and Port Activities of the University of Cartagena, Colombia; Port Authority of Peru; Network of Women in Maritime Authorities of Latin America and the Caribbean (MAMLa).

**ACTIVITY 4. Institutionalisation of the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports**

Activity rescheduled for 2025.

**PROJECT B. TRADE PROMOTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**ACTIVITY 1. XII Working Group on Trade and Competition in Latin America and the Caribbean (WGTC) on artificial intelligence and public procurement**

[XII Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition of Latin America and the Caribbean \(WGTC\): Artificial intelligence and public procurement, a regional dialogue to strengthen competition.](#)

Face-to-face. Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 7 and 8 August. Organised with UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Competition (CDPC) of Honduras, with the support of the Honduran government. Aimed at focal points in the area of competition of the Member States of SELA and international and regional organisations, as well as experts in the area and special guests, this meeting had the following main objectives: i) strengthen the understanding of the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on public procurement and competition in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC); ii) identify the opportunities and challenges posed by AI to promote competition, efficiency and transparency in public procurement in LAC; and iii) design strategies and making relevant recommendations for the responsible and effective implementation of AI in public procurement in LAC, considering its impact on competition and transparency.

It should be noted that participants referred to 19 best practices in general and 13 specific ones, six of which were associated with the use of AI in public procurement and seven with the fight against bid rigging and corruption. Of all best practices referenced in the meeting report, only two were located outside the region (Spain).

In addition, the Permanent Secretariat published the study *Towards fair and transparent competition in Latin America and the Caribbean: Consolidation of best practices and strengthening of the regional competition regime*, in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*, which proposes, among others, the following objectives: i) create a more robust and equitable competition environment through regional cooperation and the strengthening of shared regulatory frameworks; ii) create a regional competition observatory that allows for data collection and analysis, monitoring of market practices and continuous exchange of experiences among national authorities; and iii) strengthen the WGTC as a space for effective dialogue among competition authorities and integrate new actors, such as the private sector and academia, to enrich the analysis and recommendations in this area.

**Number of participants: 109**

**SELA member countries (15):** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay.

**Regional organisations (1):** Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI).

**National organisations (10):** Public bodies in Honduras: Supreme Court of Honduras (CSJ); Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS); Honduran Secretariat for Transparency and Fight against Corruption (STLCC); Catholic University of Honduras (UNICAH); Technological University of Honduras; Secretariat of Strategic Planning (SPE); Secretariat of Health Honduras (SESAL).

**Other Honduran entities:** Honduran American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM); Association for the Defence of the Basic Food Basket of Honduras (ADECABAH); Chamber of Commerce and Industry of

Tegucigalpa (CCIT); Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP); Committee for the Defence of the Honduran Consumer (CODECOH).

**ACTIVITY 2. Publication of articles on “Competition, trade and regulatory issues in financial technology markets (Fintech)”**

*[Trade and Competition: Fintech in the Latin American and Caribbean region](#)*. With this title, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA published, in August 2024, a book containing a compilation made by two specialists of the organisation and including 13 articles written by experts and national competition authorities with the purpose of disseminating the regulatory principles and experiences of Fintech companies in the national markets of LAC and how they have affected competition policies.

In addition, this work shows the heterogeneity that exists in the region, both in the problems that its authorities have to deal with and in the regulations that each country has developed to preserve competition rights and ensure consumer protection. Its authors have made an overview of the reality of our region in relation to the development of competition law, showing the different challenges that each country faces in order to guarantee a competitive market open to innovation.

The region has emerged as a major player in the global Fintech landscape, with a significant number of startups leveraging modern technology to improve financial services. The financial technology landscape in LAC has evolved significantly and the region has become a hotbed of innovation and technological advances in financial services. Despite the challenges, LAC countries, particularly Brazil and Mexico, have demonstrated resilience and adaptability, attracting significant investment and promoting a wide range of financial technology solutions. The rise of digital payments shows the transformative potential of financial technology in the region. As LAC struggles with economic uncertainties, the adoption of digital payments and the continued growth of financial technology start-ups offer promising avenues to address financial inclusion, improve access to credit and drive economic development.

**ACTIVITY 3. Panel for the exchange of experiences and academic development of studies in the field of competition.**

Panel for the exchange of experiences and academic development of studies in the field of competition. Face-to-face. Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 9 August. Organised with UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Competition (CDPC) of Honduras, with the support of the Honduran government.

**Number of participants: 109**

**SELA member countries (15):** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay.

**Regional organisations (1):** Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI).

**National organisations (10):** Public bodies in Honduras: Supreme Court of Honduras (CSJ); Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS); Honduran Secretariat for Transparency and Fight against Corruption (STLCC); Catholic University of Honduras (UNICAH); Technological University of Honduras; Secretariat of Strategic Planning (SPE); Secretariat of Health Honduras (SESAL).

**Other Honduran entities:** Honduran American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM); Association for the Defence of the Basic Food Basket of Honduras (ADECABAH); Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tegucigalpa (CCIT); Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP); Committee for the Defence of the Honduran Consumer (CODECOH).

**ACTIVIDAD 4. Training workshop on relevant antitrust issues for LAC civil servants.** Activity rescheduled for 2025.

Major collaboration agreements were made with the University of Washington and the University of Externado, Colombia, with a view to implementing a training programme, but these could not be concluded for this year. The activity is expected to be implemented for the following year with the use of an e-learning platform. It is also planned to integrate organisations such as the OECD, which already has programmes in Latin America, as the one carried out with INDECOPI in Peru, into this training.

**ACTIVITY 5. Seminar on the importance of a gender perspective in competition policy.** Activity replaced by a podcast, currently being edited for launch in January 2025.

This activity should have taken place one day before or after the XII Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition. However, due to agenda and budget issues, the host country requested that it be rescheduled, so the Seminar was replaced by a podcast on this topic, which is currently being edited. Likewise, the workshop was rescheduled for the first quarter of 2025 in the Dominican Republic.

#### **ACTIVITY 6. Latin American and Caribbean Competition Forum**

[First Latin American and Caribbean Competition Forum](#) Face-to-face-Virtual. Tegucigalpa, Honduras. 9 August, immediately after the XII Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition in LAC. This event was organised by SELA with the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**, the **Competition Law Centre of the University of Washington** and the **Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Competition (CDPC)** of Honduras. It was aimed at focal points in the area of competition in the Member States of SELA and international and regional organisations, as well as experts in the field and special guests.

This event intended to: i) share best practices and generate an exchange of experiences among experts and academics, as well as among competition authorities, that will contribute to the proper application of competition regulations for the good functioning of markets; ii) generate a network of contacts related to competition policy that facilitates the application of transparent policies in the region that, in turn, stimulate intra-regional trade; and iii) expand spaces for discussion and consultation on the competition regime in the region.

On this occasion, experts and managers in the area met to share knowledge and successful experiences in the practice of competition law and made proposals to improve the regulation and application of competition law in the region.

#### **Number of participants: 109**

**SELA member countries (15):** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay.

**Regional organisations (1):** Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI).

**National organisations (10):** Public bodies in Honduras: Supreme Court of Honduras (CSJ); Honduran Institute of Social Security (IHSS); Honduran Secretariat for Transparency and Fight against Corruption (STLCC); Catholic University of Honduras (UNICAH); Technological University of Honduras; Secretariat of Strategic Planning (SPE); Secretariat of Health Honduras (SESAL).

**Other Honduran entities (5):** Honduran American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM); Association for the Defence of the Basic Food Basket of Honduras (ADECABAH); Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tegucigalpa (CCIT); Honduran Council of Private Enterprise (COHEP); Committee for the Defence of the Honduran Consumer (CODECOH).

**PROGRAMME III: SMEs****PROJECT A. PRODUCTIVE ARTICULATION FOR STRONGER SMEs****ACTIVITY 1. Implementation of a methodology to identify potential productive niches and the mapping of sectors for 2024.***[Mapping of productive niches in Latin America and the Caribbean: experiences and lessons learned.](#)*

November 2024. The publication of this book, within the framework of the "Project on productive articulation for stronger small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)" was another contribution of SELA in this area during the period reported. This organisation promotes the study of the relationships and interdependencies that exist among the different economic sectors of the Member States through the development of quantitative tools that make it possible to identify key sectors. This tool allows measuring the productive capacities that are rooted in a sector and thus identifying its potential. In this sense, with the implementation of the methodology for the identification of productive niches, a mapping of key sectors is carried out using figures on exports, imports and employment as inputs, thus providing policy makers with a roadmap for the design of productive development and export promotion strategies.

In the year 2024, we continued with the implementation of the aforementioned methodology with Nicaragua and Cuba, having completed these with the Secretariat of the Presidency and the Ministry of Finance of Nicaragua and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment of Cuba (MINCEX) and PROCUBA, respectively.

At the same time, and as a follow-up to this important activity, SELA signed a Specific Cooperation Agreement with the Bank of ALBA (BANALBA), SELA and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA-TCP) in order to implement the methodology and identify potential productive niches and trade exchanges for Honduras and the ALBA member countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Dominica, Grenada, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Saint Lucia. Thus, it aims to promote ties among the economic actors of the countries of the Intra-ALBA region, which in turn promote productive linkages and trade exchanges, strengthening the economic zone of the Alliance.

For this *Work Programme for 2022-2026*, it is expected to complete the process of presentation and validation of the analyses of the aforementioned countries, in addition to initiating the application of the methodology in Peru and Ecuador, which have shown interest, as well as in any other member countries that wish to develop the methodology.

In order to make public some analyses conducted on previous occasions for Bolivia and Paraguay, and as another contribution of SELA in this area, the book *Productive Articulation Programme for the Strengthening and Development of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the region* was published. This work focuses on several aspects related to the economic growth of the region and the role that organisations such as SELA can play in economic recovery. Likewise, based on the premise that the identification and exploitation of productive niches is a crucial factor to boost competitiveness and sustainable progress in LAC countries, it highlights the importance of elements such as productive diversification and articulation among sectors; economic complexity; the identification of comparative advantages and the methodology proposed by SELA. The latter focuses on the analysis of the productive capacities of the countries through the evolution of the labour factor, exports and the economic complexity of the goods produced.

## **ACTIVITY 2. Strengthening the cocoa industry in Latin America and the Caribbean: Building better production protocols and best practices**

[Workshop: Cocoa potentialities in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)<sup>7</sup>. Virtual. 22 April. Organised with the **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** in Caracas, Venezuela, the purpose of this event was to provide specialists, public and private managers and researchers, as well as producers and exporters of the cocoa industry in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), with an opportunity to exchange information and best practices in all aspects related to the cocoa production chain, with special emphasis on the regulatory area, with a view to promoting the growth of the cocoa industry in the region.

Among its conclusions, the following are worth highlighting: although LAC has suitable agro-ecological conditions for cocoa cultivation and produces high-quality varieties recognised worldwide, it requires progress in its industrialisation, adding value to production and consolidating a leading position in the international market; the development of value chains associated with fine cocoa represents one of the main opportunities for the development of a competitive and sustainable cocoa activity in the region; the innovations and ventures at the field level are increasingly large and allow adding value to the different types of organic products, including cocoa, whose added value allows the creation of wealth that enables companies and communities to continuously improve their economic conditions and, in general, their quality of life.

In addition, it was recommended that, in order to achieve a better positioning in the international cocoa market and, to that end, comply with current regulations, especially European regulations, LAC needs to: i) strengthen the institutions involved in the cocoa industry; ii) professionalise the team in charge of the Internal Management System; iii) carry out assessments in the production chain that continue with a risk-based approach; iv) maintain the reputation of the product in the international market; and v) enhance local development based on self-management generated in the production processes.

Another SELA initiative to promote the development of the cocoa and coffee industries in LAC is the publication of the document *Sustainable development of coffee and cocoa: SELA's initiatives for promotion and strengthening in Latin America and the Caribbean*, contained in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. In this study, the organisation presents the *Comprehensive proposal for the creation of an institution for the promotion of coffee and cocoa in Latin America and the Caribbean*, as a strategic solution to face the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities associated with both industries, strengthening their value chains, guaranteeing their competitiveness in the market and, at the same time, promoting social and economic inclusion of producers. It also envisages the creation of follow-up and evaluation mechanisms to measure the impact of the initiatives implemented, which could be managed by an action committee within the institutional framework of SELA, with operational autonomy and the direct participation of the countries.

### **Number of participants: 53**

**SELA member countries (2):** Brazil, Venezuela

**International organisations (1):** FAO

**National organisations (4):** Venezuela: People's Ministry for Productive Agriculture and Land (MPPAT); Ministry of Science and Technology (MINCYT); People's Ministry for Ecosocialism (MINEC); Venezuelan Cocoa Socialist Corporation (Corporación Socialista del Cacao de Venezuela).

**Private bodies in Venezuela (13):** Venezuelan-Portuguese Chamber (CAVENPOR); FEDECAMARAS; Fundación Coromotana; Association of Colombian Ladies in Venezuela; National Association of Agricultural, Industrial and Handicraft Producers of Venezuela (ASONAPAV); Chamber of Venezuelan-

<sup>7</sup> With this event, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA gave continuity to the effort started in January 2024 with the Seminar on access to the European market for the cocoa and coffee sectors.

Colombian Economic Integration (CAVECOL); Cacao Producers; Osmá-La Guaira; CACAO1903; Puente Sur Venezuela/ Diplomacia de Paz y de los Pueblos; Balloon Amarillo; Ruta del Cacao La Fundación; Asociación Civil de Productores Las Gonzáles (Cacao Carenero); Biolatina.

**Academic body (1):** Central University of Venezuela.

### **ACTIVITY 3. Seminar: Connecting Latin America and the Caribbean with Europe**

Seminar: Connecting Latin America and the Caribbean with Europe towards building business support platforms for companies in the region. This event was not implemented.

### **ACTIVITY 4. Third edition of the Diploma course for public policy makers targeting SMEs with a gender approach.**

Diploma course for the public management of policies and programmes to support sustainable MSMEs with a gender approach – 2024. Virtual. 28 May to 18 July. Organised in partnership with the **Latin American Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CELIEM)**. The objective of this course was to strengthen the participant's knowledge, technical capacities, as well as the management of tools that enable public officials and decision-makers in LAC to formulate public policies and programmes that promote and develop a better business ecosystem to promote MSMEs led by women, so that they are sustainable, innovative, inclusive and capable of impacting on the development and economic growth of the region.

This training activity was aimed at public officials of the Member States of SELA involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and programmes for the development of MSMEs. As a result of this activity, participants acquired knowledge, skills and tools for the design of policies and programmes that contribute to the promotion and development of sustainable business models in MSMEs led by women.

Another contribution of SELA in this area was the preparation of the document *Public policies with a gender approach for sustainable MSMEs*, published in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. This document analyses the relevance of public policies with a gender approach to address inequality in the MSME sector in Latin America and the Caribbean; it highlights the main challenges faced by women in the MSME sector and proposes some comprehensive measures to address them. It also proposes policies that foster more equitable access to key resources and promote a more inclusive and sustainable business environment, capable of bringing immediate benefits to women entrepreneurs and contributing to long-term environmental and social sustainability.

#### **Number of participants: 31**

**SELA member countries (11):** Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela

**National organisations (22):** Some official agencies: Vice-Ministry of Foreign Trade and Integration (Bolivia); Ministry of Equality and Equity of Colombia; Ministry of Women and Human Rights of Ecuador; Direction for Equality of Women and Men in Economic Life of Mexico; National Women's Institute of Uruguay; Vice-Ministry of Women of Colombia; FOMPYME Venezuela; Office for Multilateral Affairs of the People's Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Venezuela.

**ACTIVITY 5. Second edition of the Diploma course for public policy makers targeting SMEs in the Caribbean with a gender approach**

[Second edition of the Diploma course for public policy makers targeting SMEs in the Caribbean with a gender approach](#). This training event was organised in partnership with the **Latin American Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CELIEM)**. It was aimed at public and private organisations, companies and entrepreneurs eager to acquire knowledge and tools to promote the development of sustainable businesses and the creation of more inclusive spaces, with more opportunities for women in the Caribbean region, in order to strengthen the knowledge of public officials when making decisions and formulating public policies and programmes that promote the entrepreneurial ecosystem in MSMEs led by women to make them sustainable.

This course aimed to: i) strengthen the understanding of the impact that the implementation of sustainable practices has on the business models of the MSME business ecosystem in LAC; ii) identify the opportunities and challenges presented by the development of sustainable entrepreneurship led by women in the region; and iii) propose strategies to improve public policy to support women's entrepreneurship with a sustainable approach.

**Number of participants: 16**

**SELA member countries (4):** Bahamas, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela

**National organisations (11):** Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bahamas; Guyana: Ministry of Civil Services and Social Security; Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Ministry of Education; Trinidad and Tobago: Office of the Prime Minister - Gender Affairs Division; Ministry of Digital Transformation; Ministry of Trade and Industries; Office of the Prime Minister - Gender and Children's Affairs Division; National Enterprise Development Company; Embassy of Trinidad and Tobago in Caracas.

**ACTIVITY 6. Promotion of public policies with a gender approach: Towards narrowing the public policy gap in Latin America and the Caribbean**

[Webinar on public strategies for the promotion of sustainable women entrepreneurship in LAC](#). Virtual. 10 October. Organised in partnership with the **Latin American Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CELIEM)**. This Seminar was the follow-up to Activity 5 – *Second edition of the Diploma course for public policy makers targeting SMEs in the Caribbean with a gender approach* and its general objective was to develop and deepen the analysis of the issues addressed through the specific objectives of the Diploma Course, in order to generate a space for discussion that would allow the evaluation of sustainable entrepreneurship development projects led by women; and thus promote the design of more inclusive public policies that fully identify with the specific needs of women entrepreneurs in the region, considering the sustainability approach in MSMEs.

Participants in the seminar noted that sustainable businesses are those that operate in a responsible manner, considering not only economic, but also social and environmental aspects and that these companies seek to generate long-term benefits, without compromising natural resources or harming communities, reducing the carbon and waste footprint, thus promoting the use of renewable energies that protect biodiversity. They also explain how companies base their management on sustainable models, exhibiting a sense of social responsibility by contributing to the development of communities, the promotion of equity and the generation of quality jobs.

The speakers shared initiatives of sustainable entrepreneurship led by women at the regional level. In this regard, financing programmes granted by development banks and private banks were evaluated

and improvements in the design of public policies that support the challenges experienced in this sector were proposed.

**Number of participants: 42**

**Regional organisations (4):** IDB; ECLAC; CELIEM; CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean

**National organisations (3):** LAFISE Bank of Honduras; Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries of Ecuador; National Development Agency of Uruguay.

**ACTIVITY 7. Support schemes to speed up the post-pandemic economic recovery of MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean.** Activity rescheduled.

**ACTIVITY 8. Training seminar for the design of public policies aimed at the regional tourism sector**

[Virtual training seminar for the design of public policies aimed at the regional tourism sector](#). Virtual. 27 June. Organised with the following objectives i) to create collaborative spaces for the promotion of public policies that contribute to the development of the tourism sector in LAC; ii) to raise awareness on the obstacles that affect the development of the tourism sector and mediate initiatives aimed at promoting tourism destinations in the region; and iii) to share experiences, lessons learned, best practices, as well as policies and procedures that promote tourism in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

Both the organisers and the panellists and other participating specialists reinforced the idea that tourism can drive the economic development of the countries in the region because: i) it promotes the production and consumption of local products and services, contributing to strengthening the economy; ii) its effectiveness and impact are associated with participation and cooperation, promoting the exchange of experiences and involving citizens in the discussion between the public and private sectors and in the elaboration of public policies in the sector; and iii) leadership, training and citizen participation are key elements to boost the development of the tourism sector in the region.

Based on the contents presented by the speakers, it is worth highlighting some propositional statements expressed by them: i) the region must focus on training the human talent required in business management and tourism sustainability through the timely offer of programmes aimed at improving their competencies and skills in tourism; ii) the public-private partnership (PPP) and the academic sector must coincide in the definition of objectives and joint strategies as a basis for the design of assertive and successful public policies; iii) strengthen the research and development (R&D) effort to boost knowledge generation, base decisions on data and analysis, and create innovation ecosystems that promote the development of new proposals and digital solutions for tourism; iv) ensure access to public data, encourage the use of data for informed decision-making, and promote the creation and distribution of open data related to tourism to foster transparency and innovation; v) stimulate investment and financing, reduce the scarcity of financial resources and the difficulty of accessing credit to encourage investment in infrastructure and the creation of development funds for the improvement of the quality of tourism services; and vi) integrate sustainability criteria in all phases of the tourism product life cycle, from planning to marketing, as well as establish sustainability standards and promote compliance through certification mechanisms.

**Number of participants: (110)**

**Regional organisations: (3)** CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean; Latin American Tourism Cities Federation; Instituto Ibero-American Institute of Rural Tourism (IBEROATUR).

**International organisations: (1)** UN Tourism

**National organisations:** (4) Ministry of Tourism of Ecuador; Municipality of Sitges, Spain; Territorio Rural Inteligente; Komuni Mx.

### **ACTIVITY 9. Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC). Second edition**

[SME Policy Index Latin America and the Caribbean 2024: towards an inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery](#) Face-to-face. Valparaíso, Chile, 4 July. On this date, the regional meeting to present the results of this Index was held by the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, **CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean** and SELA. National coordinators and high-level government authorities related to MSMEs of the participating Member States of the second edition of the IPPALC, namely those that make up the Pacific Alliance (PA), i.e. Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru, as well as Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay, were convened for this meeting. **It was supported by the Ministries of Economy, Development and Tourism, and Foreign Affairs of Chile**, as well as the **Presidency Pro Tempore of the Pacific Alliance**, held by Chile.

The purpose of this Index is to gather information on the SME policies of each country in order to create a basis for consultation and guidance that will allow the membership to make comparisons, over time and across the different economies and subregions of LAC, on the functioning and development of SMEs.

This activity aimed to: i) contribute to strengthening the business environment for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean through the design, effective implementation and systematic monitoring of relevant public policies; and ii) promote dialogue among the participating countries for the formation of a joint work agenda and the creation of the "Network of Policies for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean."

The final scores obtained by each country after the application of the OECD methodology used in the *LAC SME Policy Index 2024 (SMEPI)*, known in LAC as the *Public Policy Index for MSMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean (IPPALC)*, were presented. In each dimension of the Index, namely: Dimension 1. Institutional framework; Dimension 2. Operational environment and simplification of procedures; Dimension 3. Access to finance; Dimension 4. Business development services and public procurement; Dimension 5. Innovation and technology; Dimension 6. Productive transformation; Dimension 7. Market access and internationalization; and Dimension 8. Digitalisation, key policy developments were identified and the scores obtained for the dimensions and sub-dimensions were analysed, as well as the conclusions and recommendations generated for each of the nine participating countries. In addition, an analytical section on green economy and gender mainstreaming was included.

The 2024 edition benefited from an updated methodology and also expanded coverage by introducing two additional countries, Brazil and Paraguay, to the initial seven countries that participated in the first edition (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay), thus ensuring the inclusion of all members of the Pacific Alliance and Mercosur.

It was agreed to set up a *Network of best practices in SME policies in Latin America and the Caribbean*, which would be aimed at facilitating the exchange of best practices, promoting spaces for dialogue and fostering integration and coordination among the Latin American and Caribbean countries in the area of public policies for SMEs, highlighting the importance of strengthening these policies to enhance their impact on the sustainable economic development of the region.

Subsequently, as a deliverable resulting from this meeting, national meetings were held in which SELA presented the results of the IPPALC to Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Argentina and Uruguay. In addition, another contribution to this issue was made by publishing the study *SME Policy Index: Latin America and the Caribbean 2024: towards an inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery*, in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. This paper analyses public policies aimed at improving the conditions of MSMEs in nine countries of the region: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. It also points out that, in addition to being a useful tool for the evaluation and comparison of policies, the IPPALC is a benchmark for the design of new, more coherent and effective public policies and that its regional approach fosters collaboration and the exchange of best practices, thus contributing to the creation of a more favourable environment for LAC's small and medium-sized enterprises and, consequently, for regional economic growth.

**Number of participants: 41**

**SELA member countries (9):** Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

**Regional organisations (3):** CAF; SELA

**International organisations (1):** OECD

**National organisations (13):** Secretariat of Small and Medium Enterprises, Entrepreneurs and Knowledge Economy (Argentina); Ministry of Productive Development (Argentina); Ministry of Development, Industry, Trade and Services (Brazil); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Chile); Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism (Chile); Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism (Colombia); Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investment and Fisheries (Ecuador); Secretariat of Foreign Trade (Mexico); Secretariat of Economy (Mexico); Vice Ministry of MSMEs-MIC (Paraguay); Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (Peru); National Directorate of Crafts, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (DINAPYME) - Uruguay; Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining (Uruguay).

**PROJECT B. SEIZING THE OPPORTUNITIES OF THE INDUSTRIES OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE GOODS AND SERVICES FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

**ACTIVITY 1. Compilation of information for the construction of a regional directory on the industries of cultural and creative goods and services.**

Compilation of information for the creation of the Directory of Cultural and Creative Industries in SELA countries. Activity implemented during the second half of 2024. Following a process of gathering detailed information on institutions and companies, the *Harmonised Directory of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) in Latin America and the Caribbean* was produced, covering the various industries of cultural and creative goods and services in the region. This work contains specific data on companies, educational institutions, artists, designers, producers and other key actors in these industries. It was built with the dual purpose of i) promoting articulation and collaboration between the actors involved in this sector; and ii) providing a centralised source of updated and relevant information for professionals, entrepreneurs and organisations interested in the cultural and creative field.

With a practical perspective that prioritises the impact of a first delivery and the publication of the Directory's microsite, the structuring of this directory was done with a single-level classification of 10 sectors, indicated below, which encompass the main CCIs of the region, considering an economic cycle involving production, exhibition and commercialisation.

**Number of registrations or entries:** +1500

**Participating member countries (22):** Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela.

**Other participating countries (3):** Costa Rica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Vincent and The Grenadines

**Number of sectors (10):** Arts and culture training centres; Publishing houses; Film producers; Music producers; Theatre, dance and circus companies; Video game developers; Master craftsmen; Arts festivals and fairs; Cultural sites; Cultural infrastructure, including museums, cinemas, theatres, concert venues, libraries, newspaper and periodicals libraries, and bookshops.

**Number of data (variables) per record (7):** Name; location, social networks; direct contact (telephone and e-mail); relevant data (variables according to sector); review and graphic identity.

## **ACTIVITY 2. Regional strategies to support industries of cultural and creative goods and services**

*Preparation of the Technical Report on best practices for the growth of cultural and creative industries in SELA and related countries.* This report, derived from the process referred to in Activity 1, is the first tool of its kind in LAC, whose usefulness lies mainly in the fact that it helps make visible the potential of the cultural and creative sector in the region. It is the first database on this subject with a regional scope which, duly connected to its national counterparts, would provide a complete and updated overview of the cultural industries on a regular basis, facilitating evidence-based decision-making for the formulation of effective public policies.

The proposed strategy to boost the growth of cultural and creative industries in SELA member countries is aimed at generating an ecosystem that favours both supply and demand within the sector. This will be achieved through the implementation of specific measures in several areas such as financing, data collection and the promotion of cultural consumption. This strategy will reach its regional dimension through cooperation among countries for the creation of networks of SELA member countries, which will allow for sharing best practices and joint projects that will expand markets and audiences for cultural industries. The best practices evaluated include the following: i) legislative frameworks; ii) public programmes without a legislative framework; and iii) programmes developed by non-governmental bodies or between non-governmental bodies and local, regional or national governments (private or mixed). These best practices are analysed in terms of seeking a certain balance between the sectors defined for this report: i) Training centres; ii) Video games; iii) Handicrafts; iv) Books; v) Cinematography; vi) Musical and/or performing arts; vii) Intangible cultural heritage (manifestations) and tangible cultural heritage (sites of cultural interest).

In order to enrich activities 1 and 2, which refer to the directory of cultural goods and services, SELA prepared the document *Promotion of the creative economy in SELA countries: Strategies to strengthen cultural and creative industries*, published in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. The document aims to formulate clear objectives for cultural policies by establishing concrete lines of action to facilitate the creation of a favourable ecosystem for creative industries. To that end, it serves as a guide to orient policy decisions and provides practical recommendations that respond to the realities and expectations of the creative sector in each member country. These recommendations are based on the following three pillars: i) investment (creation and optimisation of funds dedicated to the cultural and creative industries); ii) data generation (collection of reliable data that allows for the continuous evaluation and adjustment of cultural policies); and iii) promotion of cultural consumption (adoption of measures to make cultural goods and services more accessible and stimulation of markets by creating the basic conditions for cultural consumption).

## THEMATIC AREA II - DIGITALISATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

This thematic area aims to: i) boost regional digital inclusion; ii) promote connectivity; and iii) increase the levels of productivity and competitiveness of member countries. In addition, the results derived from the activities developed will be aimed at contributing to the achievement of the following goals of the *2030 Agenda*:



### PROGRAMME I: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

#### PROJECT A. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR DEVELOPMENT

##### ACTIVITY 1. Governance and digitalisation

This activity was implemented through the organisation of the following events:

[Digital governance and cyberdiplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean: challenges and opportunities](#) Face-to-face-virtual. Asunción, Paraguay. 4 October. This event was jointly organised by **SELA** and **CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean** with the purpose of promoting regional dialogue and cooperation in the areas of digital governance and cybersecurity. It was aimed at government officials, representatives of the private sector, academicians and, in general, people interested in the issues of governance, cyberdiplomacy, artificial intelligence and digitalisation of processes.

The event focused on identifying regional and international best practices in digital connectivity, with an emphasis on rural areas, as well as on energy sustainability and the construction of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to favour digital connectivity, access and quality of electric and green energy in the region and facilitate regional cooperation efforts for the development of connectivity. It included keynote speeches and presentations by international experts in digital governance, cyberdiplomacy, artificial intelligence, and digitalisation.

Concerning the region's challenges in this area, the participants shared the conviction that LAC needs to promote digital governance in order to join efforts towards actions that respond to current needs such as the improvement of digital infrastructure, technical assistance and an effective exchange of experiences. To that end, greater collaboration with international organisations, the private sector and civil society "are essential to increase the scope of our initiatives and achieve a more effective administration that has the citizen at its centre."

Among the recommendations made by the experts, the following stand out: i) investing in regional digital infrastructure; ii) strengthening regional cooperation in cybersecurity and cyberdiplomacy; iii) promoting human resources training in digital technology; iv) developing integrated regulatory frameworks for the digital economy; v) fostering the integration of AI in key sectors; vi) ensuring inclusive access to technologies; vii) establishing cyber incident response protocols; viii) supporting regional

research and technological development; ix) including civil society in the design of digital policies; and x) strengthening collaboration with international organisations and global stakeholders.

At the end of the event, SELA presented its most recent editorial contribution on this issue: the [Manual on cyberdiplomacy for regional convergence](#), through which the organisation recognises the importance of addressing cyber-diplomacy as a necessity and as an opportunity to redefine and strengthen relations among countries and generate a space for cooperation and reciprocal understanding. Ambassador Clarems Endara, Permanent Secretary of SELA, described it as a “valuable tool for governments and private sector representatives in our region.” He also noted that SELA has created spaces for dialogue and training on cybersecurity, “understanding that strengthening regional digital resilience is essential to protect our common interests.”

[Digital governance and cyberdiplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean: innovation and future](#) Face-to-face-Virtual. Lima, 6 November. Jointly organised with the **General Secretariat of the Andean Community (CAN)**, this event was aimed at governmental and non-governmental organisations, the public and private sectors, universities and stakeholders interested in issues of digital governance, cyber diplomacy, AI and digitalisation. Its purpose was to foster dialogue and regional cooperation on digital governance and cyberdiplomacy with a view to developing strategies for the integration of these issues in the administrative systems of the countries in the region.

Participants in this event shared ideas and best practices aimed at integrating digital transformation in government administrations, promoting the responsible use of emerging technologies and fostering the development of a competitive digital economy. In addition, and looking to the future, they discussed issues related to cybersecurity, critical infrastructure protection and international cooperation to address cyber risks.

Among the recommendations made by the experts, the following stand out: i) encouraging greater investment in digital and telecommunications infrastructure; ii) reformulating regulatory frameworks for the digital economy; iii) promoting education and the development of digital skills; iv) strengthening regional cooperation in cybersecurity and cyber diplomacy; v) facilitating access to emerging technologies for MSMEs; vi) harmonising regulations for e-commerce and consumer protection; vii) designing policies for privacy protection and data security; viii) stimulating research and development in digital technologies; ix) ensuring inclusive and accessible digitalisation; and x) promoting transparent and participatory digital governance.

This issue was reinforced with the publication of the paper [Cyberdiplomacy, artificial intelligence and digital governance: public policy proposals for the future of Latin America and the Caribbean](#), in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. The document presents a set of public policy proposals to address the main challenges facing LAC in the context of digital governance, cyberdiplomacy, digital transformation and cybersecurity, so that Latin American and Caribbean countries can move forward in building strong digital governance, with a robust cybersecurity approach, and in effectively integrating AI into their economies and societies.

## **ACTIVITY 2. First Hackathon on Disaster Risk Reduction**

[First CopernicusLAC Hackathon: Disaster Risk Reduction](#). 11 and 30 October. Another contribution of SELA in the area of disasters was its participation as co-organiser, in partnership with the **CopernicusLAC Panama Centre** and the **European Space Agency (ESA)**, of this online “First Copernicus Latin America

2024 Hackathon",<sup>8</sup> focused on the theme of Copernicus Earth Observation (EO) data for disaster risk reduction (DRR) in LAC.<sup>9</sup> The main objective of this Hackathon was to boost the reach of Copernicus in LAC so that anyone interested can contribute solutions to the problems facing the region, through Copernicus and its free geospatial technologies.

Specifically, the activity aimed to stimulate innovative thinking and creative problem solving by leveraging Copernicus data and to enhance participants' skills in Earth Observation (EO) data analysis, application development and project management through hands-on activities. Participants had mentoring sessions and engaged in three thematic challenges, namely: i) securing food production and distribution; ii) predicting and preparing for future disasters; and iii) preserving biodiversity and endangered habitats.

Through the Hackathon, collaboration among diverse participants from LAC and Europe was promoted, contributing to the development of a regional EO community; raising awareness of the importance of EO data in solving environmental and socio-economic problems and generating tangible impact by developing solutions that can be implemented in our region.

This first edition of the Hackathon was attended by 448 participants in 50 teams working on the three challenges. The teams consisted of between two and six members, 50% of whom came from LAC. The participants learned first-hand about the experience of different actors in the field of space and disaster risk reduction in the region. UNDRR addressed, in a webinar, the use of DRR to save lives. The Argentinean software company Space Sur explained how to create a sustainable and successful business model with Copernicus and the company Airvantis, from Brazil, talked about the presence of LAC in the space sector.

The CopernicusLAC Panama Centre announced the winners and awarded prizes to the following teams: First prize: "Monitoreo del crecimiento urbano informal" (<https://lnkd.in/dDmyvmdn>), \$5,000; second prize: "Humedales360" (<https://lnkd.in/dvBC8qAU>), \$2,000; and third prize: "AP-MAR.IA" ([https://lnkd.in/dS\\_VAe89](https://lnkd.in/dS_VAe89)), \$1,000. The jury was composed of Itziar Alonso, ESA Manager for the CopernicusLAC Panama Centre; Gustavo Herrera, Coordinator of the Social Development Area of SELA; and Jorge Cabrera, Expert on Environmental Issues and Earth Observation.

**Number of participants:** 448

**ACTIVITY 3. Roaming as a promoter of integration in the region.** This activity was not implemented.

**ACTIVITY 4. Rural digital connectivity: initiatives to improve agri-food competitiveness and efficiency**

Panel: Promoting rural digital connectivity to boost competitiveness and agri-food efficiency in Latin America and the Caribbean. Face-to-face-Virtual. Panel of SELA included in the agenda of the II Meeting on digital inclusion, organised by **Internet for All (IPT), IDB Invest, Telefónica Hispanoamérica** and **CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean**, and held in Bogota, Colombia, on 21 October 2024. The Panel, coordinated by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, was a continuation of two

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<sup>8</sup> A type of event where several software developers collaborate with each other to address different challenges, share knowledge and network.

<sup>9</sup> One of the objectives of the Copernicus Centre is to develop Earth observation services to support Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and risk and recovery mapping, in close cooperation with national and regional organisations in LAC, as well as fostering links between the Earth observation (EO) and DRR communities in LAC.

previous initiatives of the organisation on this issue: [Rural digital connectivity: a key challenge for the development of Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (2021) and [Connectivity and regulation in rural areas as an engine for development: How to overcome the existing challenges?](#) (2023). International experts from multilateral organisations, companies, governments and civil society who attended this panel reflected on the new forms of infrastructure sharing to expand Internet access, the main enablers for advancing digitalisation, and the impact of connectivity on the development of nations.

Having pointed out that rural digital connectivity in LAC has the potential to transform the agri-food sector to improve production processes, product commercialisation and access to new markets for small farmers and agribusinesses, the panellists also highlighted the main challenges that the region faces in terms of rural digital connectivity, namely: i) lack of adequate infrastructure; ii) lagging rural areas in terms of ICT and internet access; iii) lack of digital skills among rural dwellers; iv) very high technology implementation costs for small agricultural producers; and iv) absence of a regulatory framework to stimulate the expansion of rural digital connectivity.

During the event, participants addressed the challenges related to technological infrastructure in rural areas of the region. Specifically, they focused on promoting the exchange of knowledge and experiences among all stakeholders interested in identifying and disseminating best practices in the field of rural digital connectivity and the agri-food sector.

#### **ACTIVITY 5. Digital transformation and adoption of innovative technologies in ports**

[Virtual seminar on digital transformation and the adoption of innovative technologies in the port sector.](#) Face-to-face-Virtual. 22-23 August. Organised through the **Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports**, this seminar presented innovative initiatives designed and developed by companies, startups, port operators and technology centres to improve operational efficiency, port productivity, security, the use of renewable energies and interconnection between the different port stakeholders.

During the two days of the seminar, 183 participants from 16 Member States of SELA and five non-Member States (one from LAC and four from Europe) attended. The audience was made up of representatives of customs; trade, transport, industry, tourism and foreign affairs authorities; port and maritime authorities; port terminals; shipping companies; as well as port agents, companies related to logistics and/or foreign trade; trade union representatives; academics; consultants; startups and technology centres.

Participants discussed, among others, the following aspects referring to port dynamics in the region: the state of digital transformation in LAC and the barriers that hinder it; the use of AI and digital twin technology to optimise efficiency in ports and terminals; the implementation of drones (RPA system) to improve security in port enclosures; the change of mindset required to achieve innovation; the importance of public-private partnerships (PPPs) to achieve an innovative ecosystem and support for startups; the use of AI in the generation of value in business processes; some successful cases of open innovation; recommendations for technology adoption in foreign trade and the development of innovative tools to address local issues.

Some policy recommendations were also made, such as: developing a strategic vision focused on the transformation of the sector; boosting greater investment in technological infrastructure; promoting the creation of innovation ecosystems; incorporating relevant disruptive technologies; stimulating the development of human capital; strengthening data governance; and fostering the formation of public-private partnerships (PPPs).

Another SELA initiative to contribute to the digital port transformation was the preparation of the study *Policies for the digital transformation of ports and its commercial impact in Latin America and the Caribbean*, published in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. The study is based on the premise that the digital transformation of ports towards the smart port model responds to a need in a context where efficiency, sustainability and security are relevant factors for competitiveness. It notes how SELA, in collaboration with CAF and ECLAC, has led initiatives to promote port digitalisation in the region, including the creation of the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports.

Likewise, the study, after identifying the challenges facing the digitalisation process of ports in LAC, presents proposals focused on the design of public policies that boost regional competitiveness; facilitate the transition towards digital and sustainable port infrastructures, meeting the current and future needs of international trade; and promote investment in digital infrastructure, training of personnel and regional cooperation.

**Number of participants: 183**

**SELA member countries (16):** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela.

**Other countries (5):** Andorra, Costa Rica, Spain, Netherlands, Switzerland.

**ACTIVITY 6. Latin America's energy sustainability: prospects**

This activity was incorporated into the agenda of the IX Energy Week, organised by the **Latin American Energy Organisation (OLADE)**, in conjunction with the **Ministry of Public Works and Communications** of Paraguay, the **IDB**, the **World Bank** and **CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean**. It was held in Asunción, Paraguay, from 28 October to 1 November. SELA participated in two panels. The first one, within the framework of "Activity 8. Electricity integration in Latin America and the Caribbean," was held on 28 October and dealt with the topic Evolution of the Electricity Grid: Incorporating flexibility in a cost-effective way. Its members reflected on how technologies that provide flexibility to electricity systems can be effectively integrated to face the challenges of the energy transition and move towards a greener and more resilient electricity matrix. They also discussed strategies and technologies to achieve greater flexibility and how they can contribute to the sustainability and reliability of the electricity grid.

The experts agreed that regional integration generates more efficient and socially beneficial grids and creates opportunities for rural and remote areas to join smart grids and thus improve their quality of life and boost their socio-economic development, which, in turn, highlights the importance of regional cooperation between countries to overcome technical, regulatory and political challenges.

The second panel was held on 29 and focused on Progress towards a low-carbon hydrogen economy in LAC. It highlighted the importance of green hydrogen as an efficient and sustainable renewable energy alternative for the region. Green hydrogen is achieved through a process called electrolysis, the same process that can be carried out with 100% green energy, which would significantly reduce carbon emissions and consequently, pollution and global warming.

The region has great potential for the generation of green energy, whether solar, wind or hydroelectric, but this energy, especially the first two, is intermittent and, consequently, not continuous, which creates a problem for its storage. In this regard, the use of this type of energy to obtain green hydrogen makes it possible to store this energy and even, in the event of having a surplus of it, to export it safely.

The experts underlined the importance for integration of the development of this technology, which would allow the region to enjoy sustainable and green energy security, replacing the use of fossil fuels and allowing for a better quality of life in the region.

**ACTIVITY 7. Innovation for lithium production: energy for the development of Latin America and the Caribbean.** Activity rescheduled for January 2025.

### THEMATIC AREA III – SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The objective of this thematic area is to contribute to the improvement of social development indicators in the region through the implementation of cooperation initiatives, training, agreements and exchanges of best practices, with the aim of achieving greater well-being by raising the living standards of the population. The expected results are aimed at contributing to the achievement of the following goals of the 2030 Agenda:



#### PROGRAMME I: SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

##### PROJECT A. TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR COOPERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

##### ACTIVITY 1. Virtual seminar on indicators for the comprehensive assessment of the vulnerability of agri-food systems in trade-related issues

Keynote lecture: The state of agricultural commodity markets. Virtual. 9 December. To be delivered by FAO.

##### ACTIVITY 2. II Seminar on circular economy. "Global Plastics Treaty: progress and challenges. How to strengthen the agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean"

[II Seminar on circular economy. "Global Plastics Treaty: progress and challenges. How to strengthen the agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean."](#) Virtual. 3 September. Organised in partnership with **UN Trade and Development**. In view of the need to increase tools and resources that enable LAC countries to move towards a circular economy model, SELA has proposed to support efforts to consolidate positions before the 'Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on Plastic Pollution' with the firm purpose of achieving the best results for the region.

To that end, the event, in line with its work agenda: i) identified and considered the main contributions made, from LAC, to the global treaty on plastic pollution, on the road to the 5th session of the INC; ii)

discussed the inclusion of the circular economy in the negotiation process as a contribution to sustainable development and the economic recovery process of the region; and iii) highlighted the scientific and technological contributions aimed at developing best practices and improvements in circular economy design processes.

The invited panellists presented the most relevant elements in the discussion of the INC<sup>10</sup> plastics treaty, keeping the circular economy as a central theme. During the different presentations, the ambitious and complex nature of the treaty was highlighted, as there are many difficulties in reaching a general agreement among the countries. It was highlighted that trade in plastics is one of these difficulties, as many countries have plastic pollution problems derived from the products they receive from international trade. The treaty addresses such complex issues as the production and value chain of plastics. To that end, it outlines how the plastics management process should be developed and what the assessment and governance processes should look like in order to achieve the treaty's objectives.

The importance of the circular economy was highlighted as an element to achieve a just transition in the production and marketing process of plastics and that the implementation of the treaty is related to the extended producer responsibility rules for packaging. It was highlighted that such rules could accelerate financing processes which, in turn, would facilitate the development of viable circular economy models. It was also indicated that the most important guidelines of the treaty are technological innovation for recycling and the design of circular products for the reduction of plastic pollution.

The effects of plastic pollution on human health were discussed, highlighting the role of chemicals used in the production of plastic and how these substances are transformed into so-called endocrine disruptors that affect health. It was reiterated that the treaty must contain global regulation of these substances to protect human health and the environment and the need to test all plastic products to assess their safety for humans and the environment was insisted upon. The agenda and the video of the workshop are available at <https://sela.org/agenda/ii-seminario-sobre-economia-circular-tratado-global-de-plasticos-avances-y-desafios-como-fortalecer-la-agenda-de-america-latina-y-el-caribe/>

**Number of participants: 125**

**SELA member countries (12):** Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

**Other countries (5):** Brazil, Costa Rica, Spain, Guatemala and Switzerland.

**Regional organisations (3):** AVINA Foundation, International Council of Beverages Associations ICBA, Business Coalition for a Plastics Treaty LAC

**International organisations (1):** UN Trade & Development

**National bodies (1):** National Council for Scientific and Technical Research of Argentina (CONICET).

**ACTIVITY 3. XXXII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean. "Capacity building for the measurement, assessment and evaluation of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC): A contribution to the institutionalisation and standardisation of information to increase the results of cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean"**

[XXXII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean. "Capacity building for the measurement, assessment and evaluation of South-South and Triangular Cooperation \(SSTC\): A contribution to the institutionalisation and standardisation of information to increase the results of cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean."](#) Face-to-face-Virtual. Lima, Peru. 27 and 28

<sup>10</sup>Available at: [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/45858/Compilation\\_Text.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/45858/Compilation_Text.pdf)

November. Organised in partnership with the **Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI)** and the **Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, with the support of the **Manuel Pérez Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF)**. This event was aimed at strengthening capacities for the development and application of methodologies that make it possible to know the value of SSTC and contribute to the promotion of instruments, mechanisms and procedures that are available in each of the countries and specialised organisations for the measurement, assessment and evaluation of cooperation and their alignment with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the National Development Programmes. Similarly, the space was conducive to promoting the creation of funds for SSTC and implementing programmes with greater efficiency and flexibility, in accordance with the demands of the countries.

The meeting also provided a space for specialized regional and subregional institutions to stimulate discussion on the ways to measure the investment made through cooperation and its results, as well as to make progress in the institutionalization of SSTC for a better measurement of such results, which was reflected in a *Declaration of Joint Working*, designed to better guide the public policies of each of the countries. In addition, *CONVERGENCIA* (Vol. 1, N° 5, November 2024), SELA's journal, published an extensive review of this event entitled *Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean – Historical Compendium (1987-2023)*.

During the event, progress on the global measurement framework promoted by UNCTAD was highlighted. Peru and Colombia also showed their progress. The importance of alleviating the administrative burden of recording information on cooperation to ensure a good data collection process was stressed. The importance of the use of open data was also highlighted and the need for inter-agency collaboration was emphasised. The different data collection processes are increasingly understood by the institutions that implement projects or activities linked to South-South cooperation (SSC), which allows for progress and better results and shows the benefits that they mean for sustainable development.

This activity was complemented by the publication of the document *Strengthening South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) in Latin America and the Caribbean: a public policy proposal*, contained in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. The document proposes a public policy framework aimed at strengthening South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) in LAC, stressing that this cooperation modality fosters solidarity between developing countries based on principles of unconditionality, while implementing inclusive and distributive development models governed by demand and promoting the exchange of knowledge and experiences. This proposal envisages the creation of cooperation networks; the promotion of commercial exchange; capacity building and the promotion of strategic partnerships, with the aim of consolidating an inclusive system that can be adapted to the specific needs of each country.

Another editorial contribution of SELA to the issue of international cooperation in LAC was to devote issue N° 5, Vol. 1, November 2024, of its journal *CONVERGENCIA* to the meetings held so far as a recognition to all our strategic partners in the area of international cooperation that have accompanied SELA during all this time, including institutions, organisations and agencies, both regional and international, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, non-governmental organisations, private sector entities, universities, among other actors interested in development assistance and, of course, a special recognition to the support provided by the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund, which has made it possible to successfully hold these meetings and thus contribute to maintain SELA as a regional focal point for development cooperation. It is also worth mentioning the publication, in November 2024, of the compilation *International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean - Historical Compendium 1987-2023*.

**Number of participants: 45**

**SELA member countries (17):** Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay):

**Regional organisations (4):** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Andean Community (CAN); United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR); Regional for the Americas and the Caribbean, Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), Centre for International Strategic Thinking (CEPEI).

**International Organisations (2):** United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-TOSSD)

**PROJECT B. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR THE REGIONAL PUBLIC SECTOR****ACTIVITY 1. Workshop on public policies based on behavioural economics**

[IV Workshop on public policies based on behavioural economics](#) Face-to-face-Virtual. Bogotá, Colombia, 23 and 24 April. Theoretical-practical. This training action was organised with the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)** through the **Behavioural Economics Group**. Colombian public officials in charge of the design and execution of public policies in fiscal, financial and planning matters were invited to this event.

The workshop aimed to: i) learn about the conceptual foundations of behavioural economics; ii) share best practices and experiences of public policies developed under a behavioural approach; iii) explore the design of economic policies based on behavioural economics; iv) introduce the implementation of economic policies based on behavioural economics in the Colombian context; and v) develop project proposals to address local problems using a behavioural approach.

Participants in the theoretical workshop on 23 April included 52 people (virtually) and 40 people (in person), from public entities, international organisations, academia and the private sector, from 11 member countries of SELA. It should be noted that this workshop was open to all participants.

The practical session on 24 April was held only in person and was attended by 30 Colombian public officials, representatives of the following entities: the Bank of the Republic; the Directorate of National Taxes and Customs (DIAN); the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit; the Finance Secretariats of the Mayors of Bogotá, Medellín and Santiago de Cali; the Secretariat of Culture of Bogotá and the Public Innovation Laboratory of Bogotá-IBO, as well as officials from the IDB.

Regional interventions by the IDB group, the Directorate of National Taxes and Customs (DIAN) and the Externado University of Colombia were presented, in which a behavioural approach was used to obtain successful results in areas such as tax collection and to create a tax formalisation pathway in Colombia. In addition, some examples of intersections between tax policy and behavioural economics were presented.

Through practical exercises, each participant addressed a case study from their own field of work and, with the support of the trainers, designed public policy strategies that could be applied in the Colombian context. Among the challenges identified and developed during the workshop, the following can be mentioned: i) increasing ICA filing and payment rates; ii) increasing the participation rate of natural and legal persons in the simple taxation regime; iii) reducing the high levels of non-conformity and lack of informed decision making by public administrators; iv) reducing tax evasion of industry and commerce tax by SMEs in the service sector; and v) reducing productive exploitation in environmental conservation areas.

**Number of participants: 92** (52, virtual mode) and 40 (face-to-face mode)

**Member countries of SELA (1):** Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Venezuela.

**Regional organizations (1):** IDB

**National organisations (8):** Public entities of Colombia: Banco de la República; Directorate of National Taxes and Customs (DIAN); Ministry of Finance and Public Credit; Finance Secretariats of the Mayors' Offices of Bogotá, Medellín and Santiago de Cali; Secretariat of Culture of Bogotá and the Public Innovation Laboratory of Bogotá-IBO.

## **ACTIVITY 2. Geopolitical and diplomatic implications of artificial intelligence**

This activity was implemented through the following two courses:

[Artificial Intelligence and Diplomacy: international relations in the era of disruptive technologies](#). Virtual (Open call). 1 and 2 July Organised with the **European Institute of International Studies (IEEI-Sweden)**, this course aimed to familiarise participants with the challenges that AI represents for diplomacy on the basis that, in today's digital age, cyberspace has become one of the main fields of action for governments, public institutions, companies, civil society and citizens.

Participants discussed the following topics: AI, disruptive technologies and international relations; techplomacy (AI and diplomacy); relevant government initiatives to regulate AI; international initiatives for ethical regulation of AI and regional integration bodies and AI, with special reference to the *EU Artificial Intelligence Act (EU AI Act)*, drafted by the European Union and the first instrument of its kind in the world.

**Number of participants: 98**

**SELA member countries:** Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela. Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Venezuela.

[European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean relations in the digital era: EU-LAC Digital Alliance and Global Gateway](#). Virtual (Open call). 3 and 4 July. The global dynamics demand that the institutions responsible for the international agenda place the issue of Internet governance and international cybersecurity at the centre of their foreign policies and international strategies, as well as the interrelationship they must develop with the technology industry. To that end, there is a strong need for personnel specialised in the progress and development of the technology industry, with the knowledge and skills to play an effective role in managing international governance and online security.

**Number of participants: 115**

**SELA member countries (14):** Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela. Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Venezuela.

The Permanent Secretariat of SELA, continuing with its training programme for diplomats and high-ranking officials in areas related to diplomacy, technology and cyberspace governance, in alliance with the **European Institute of International Studies (IEEI-Sweden)** and with the collaboration of the **Pontifical University of Salamanca (UPS)**, organised the above-mentioned courses.

The digital era is led and governed by the so-called Big Tech Companies, which are intensively using AI to produce goods and services. Their growing economic power and external action have major

geopolitical implications that affect states, societies and individuals. Moreover, AI impacts sectors such as transport, banking, finance, education and health, among many others, modifying traditional economic, financial and commercial systems, and its use is causing changes in the political systems of countries through the actions of companies or groups of power and influence that carry out information and disinformation campaigns, even altering electoral processes.

With these training actions, SELA aims to promote the development of negotiation skills of public officials of its Member States with a view to achieving a better understanding of the application of diplomacy to political and geopolitical problems arising in cyberspace and the application of diplomacy to political and geopolitical problems arising in the digital context, with particular reference to AI and the new challenges that the overwhelming presence and actions of large technology companies pose to diplomacy in the handling of international relations.

### **ACTIVITY 3. Training in integration for the development of Latin America and the Caribbean**

This activity was developed through the participation, as guest speaker, of Ambassador Clarems Endara, Permanent Secretary of SELA, in the following events:

*The challenges of integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.* Andrés Bello Catholic University (UCAB) of Venezuela, 13 June 2024. He outlined the socio-economic outlook of the region and emphasized convergence as a “fundamental element to boost integration.” Participants: 40 students, online

*SELA and its linkage with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* “Jornadas de Actualización Académica de las Facultades de Administración y Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad Tecnológica de México (UNITEC),” 23 July 2024. Noting that LAC needs **More and better integration**, he stressed that the region has integration mechanisms with great capacity to boost productive articulation in the region. Participants: 52 students, online.

*Possible convergence of Latin American integration agreements.* Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP) and the LATN Network, 24 September 2024. He underscored the need to seek “our own voice as a region” and urged to articulate a vision of regional development, based on diversity and subregional realities. He also reaffirmed SELA’s vocation as a permanent observatory for regional convergence in Latin America and the Caribbean, under the auspices of the coordination of the Inter-secretariat Project. Participants: 45 students, online.

*Convergence for integration in a global world.* II International Seminar: Integration and Convergence of Latin America and the Caribbean, organised by the Externado University of Colombia (UEC), 23 July 2024. He emphasised the benefits of promoting greater integration in LAC, among which he highlighted the following: i) greater regional convergence; ii) an increase in intra-regional trade; iii) the strengthening of institutional efficiency; and iii) the development of productive linkages. Participants: 40 students, online.

*Regional fabric, integration and development.* Master Lecture on the challenges of integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, given at the Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences of the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés (UMSA) in Bolivia. 22 November.

In addition, Gustavo Herrera, Coordinator of Social Development, on behalf of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, on 29 October 2024, delivered the *Keynote Speech on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public administration*, on the occasion of the “Day of the Public Administrator” at the School of Public Administration of the Regional University Centre of San Miguelito (CRUSAM), of the University of

Panama. He explained the current state and potential of AI in public administration, offering an analysis of the opportunities, challenges and the way forward. He highlighted that AI improves operational efficiency by reducing bureaucratic workload through the automation of repetitive processes and facilitates interaction between governments and citizens. Participants: 45 students, online.

**Total participants: 222**

## **PROGRAMME II: COMPREHENSIVE DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **PROJECT A. COMPREHENSIVE DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

#### **ACTIVITY 1. First Diploma in Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management in Latin America and the Caribbean: Reflections, challenges and proposals for innovation in regional public policies and their impact on public-private partnerships**

[First Diploma in Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management in Latin America and the Caribbean: Reflections, challenges and proposals for innovation in regional public policies and their impact on public-private partnerships](#). Virtual (open call). 21 August to 28 November. Organised with the **Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil (UCSG)**, this course was designed as a response to the critical need to address comprehensive territorial management in the region and improve civil protection by strengthening comprehensive disaster risk management (DRM) systems. In line with the purposes of the course, the expert facilitators shared with the participants some reflections on the current situation of risk management in LAC. They also presented theoretical elements and appropriate practical references to promote innovation in regional public policies, reiterating the importance of PPPs and integrated territorial management in the region to strengthen civil protection in ISDRM systems.

As general objectives, this training activity was aimed at: i) providing the necessary knowledge to provoke reflection among participants on the current situation of risk management in Latin America and the Caribbean; and ii) promoting innovation in regional public policies, highlighting the importance of public-private partnerships (PPPs); integrated territorial management in the region and the improvement of civil protection, strengthening Integrated Disaster Risk Management (IDRM) systems.

Specific objectives included, among others: i) to review the different management models of DRM systems implemented in LAC: typologies, effectiveness or obstacles in their application; ii) to analyse the policies for innovation and knowledge transformation in DRM systems, especially those related to PPPs; and iii) to highlight the relationship between DRM systems and the territory, as a scenario for the implementation of initiatives, progress and sustainability results. This training activity benefited 20 students from SELA Member States, who successfully completed the programme.

**Number of participants: 20**

**Member countries (8):** Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

#### **ACTIVITY 2. Forum “Continuity of government and operations in disaster situations: progress and challenges for international cooperation”**

[Forum “Progress and challenges of international cooperation in disasters”](#) Santiago, Chile, 11 and 12 March 2024. Face-to-face-Virtual. Organised in partnership with **ECLAC** and the **National Disaster Prevention and Response Service (SENAPRED)** of Chile. Considering that much remains to be done in terms of infrastructure and quality services available to all, and that many countries in the region have

a deficit of infrastructure assets, efficient maintenance and quality in the provision of services, SELA, ECLAC and SENAPRED staged a debate to address the progress and challenges of international cooperation in disasters, with special emphasis on the inclusion of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the construction of a resilient infrastructure that allows for the optimisation of services in LAC and favours inclusive growth so that the entire population has effective access to quality infrastructure.

The following recommendations emerged from the presentations of the invited experts: i) redoubling efforts to meet and align the goals of the 2030 Agenda in relation to Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management (DRM); ii) systematise relevant information through tools that facilitate its access, use and exploitation as a first step of disaster risk management and its territorialisation; iii) moving towards a governance system characterised by having laws and instruments for DRM, defining roles and responsibilities and a coordination structure; iv) considering social innovation as an example of adaptive action from the grassroots that develops actions to strengthen the social fabric and lead to a change in the risk management system for greater effectiveness; v) mainstreaming risk reduction measures in the design of infrastructure works and social interventions within urban regeneration operations, contributing to the safety of the neighbourhood and its community; vi) promoting a change of mindset in disaster reduction prevention; and vii) assuming the territory as a multi-actor and multi-dimensional social construction process.

**Number of participants: 63**

**SELA member countries (1):** Chile

**Regional organisations (6):** United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction – Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean (UNDRR); Latin American Association of Financial Institutions for Development (ALIDE); Research Centre for Integrated Disaster Risk Management (CIGIDEN); ECLAC; UNDP Chile, IDB.

**National organisations (29):** National Service for Disaster Prevention and Response Chile (SENAPRED); Climate Change Division of the Ministry of Environment of Chile; Resilience and Risk Management Unit of the Undersecretariat of Energy of the Ministry of Energy of Chile; Institute for Disaster Resilience (Itrend Chile); Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of Chile; Environment, Risk Management and Emergencies Programme (MAGRE) of Caritas Chile; Department of Forest Fire Prevention of CONAF of Chile; Department of Geophysics of the Faculty of Physical and Mathematical Sciences of the University of Chile.

**ACTIVITY 3. Working Group for the design of the Protocol for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) for Disaster Risk Reduction in Latin America and the Caribbean**

Formation of the Voluntary Commission for the Evaluation of the Progress of the Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Americas and the Caribbean. In June 2024, SELA and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) expressed their willingness to continue collaborating in the regional implementation of the *Sendai Framework 2015-2030*, in order to further strengthen regional action on disaster risk reduction and as a contribution to the sustainable development of Latin America and the Caribbean.

To achieve this objective, they decided to form the “Voluntary Commission for the Evaluation of the Progress of the *Regional Plan of Action* for the implementation of the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Americas and the Caribbean*, in accordance with the provisions of the “Eighth Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas,” in section 49, which proposes the creation of a Voluntary Commission to design a mechanism to monitor the progress of the Regional Plan of Action (RAP) and to evaluate such progress with a view to the next regional platform. To this end, the focal points of the region were invited to form part of the Commission, noting that their

participation would be of great value for the implementation of the RAP and would contribute significantly to the strengthening of disaster risk management in the region.

From July to September 2024, the Voluntary Commission held five meetings. The monitoring process involved, on a variable basis, 18 countries from the Americas region, namely: Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, the USA, and Uruguay.

On 5 December 2024, in St. Kitts and Nevis, SELA and the UNDRR presented the instrument for the Evaluation of compliance with the Regional Action Plan for the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, within the framework of the "Sixth High-Level Meeting of Ministers and Authorities on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Americas and the Caribbean."

**Number of participants: 18**

**SELA member countries (14):** Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia; Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay.

**Other countries (4):** Canada, Costa Rica, St. Kitts and Nevis, USA.

**ACTIVITY 4. Workshop on disaster risk management with a social protection approach**

[Workshop: Disaster risk management with a social protection approach](#) Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 16 and 17 April. Face-to-face-Virtual. It was organised in partnership with the **Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS)**, with the collaboration of **Expertise France**, the French agency for international technical advice and the **Social Policy Cabinet of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic**.

Participants in this workshop reinforced the idea that, in disaster and crisis contexts, social protection (SP): i) plays a major role in promoting access to livelihoods and opportunities for recovery and growth for people exposed to risks and who are vulnerable due to poverty and other social factors; ii) is an indispensable public policy instrument to address economic, health and medical impacts, among others; and iii) its effectiveness is associated with participation and multi-sectoral coordination, e.g. between risk management systems and civil protection bodies.

Based on the contents provided by the trainers and the discussions during the workshop, some significant conclusions can be drawn: i) the timely capture, compilation, systematisation and dissemination of relevant information, implemented through tools that facilitate its access, use and exploitation, constitute the initial steps of disaster risk management and its territorialisation and, at the same time, facilitate the assessment of any disaster; ii) the conviction that DRM is a key factor for development processes has led to the adoption of intra-regional policies aimed at integrating sectoral approaches with a concrete territorial basis to boost coordination and promotion actions, as well as to make decisions in core areas not addressed in previous strategies; iii) there are numerous examples of diverse community-led risk prevention strategies that build capacity and optimise existing resources, which have motivated local institutions to provide support in terms of training and resources.

Participants also recommended: i) promoting the binding protagonist participation of communities for community strengthening; ii) stimulating local risk governance processes; iii) strengthening the search for advocacy in decision-making; iv) promoting epistemological pluralism; v) fostering territorial relevance; and vi) assuming and ensuring compliance with the commitment to Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals.

A complementary contribution by SELA on this issue was the preparation of the document *Public policy proposals for disaster risk management in Latin America and the Caribbean*, published in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. The document raises the need to promote the integration of social protection in disaster risk management policies. It also complements SELA's compendium of good practices, prepared in collaboration with the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS) for Disaster Risk Management with a Social Protection Approach. In addition, it synthesises lessons learned and offers recommendations for the implementation of public policies focused on the protection of vulnerable populations from natural disasters.

**Number of participants: 61**

**SELA member countries (2):** Dominican Republic; Mexico

**Regional organisations (3):** Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS), ECLAC; Network of Social Studies for Disaster Prevention in Latin America and the Caribbean (LA RED).

**International organisations (4):** Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS), Expertise France, the French international technical advisory agency, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

**National organisations (1):** Cabinet of Social Policy of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic.

**Academic bodies (1):** Institute of Geography of the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

**PROGRAMME III: PROMOTING A COMPREHENSIVE VISION OF HUMAN MOBILITY**

**PROJECT A. BEST PRACTICES IN MIGRATION POLICIES**

**ACTIVITY 1. Regional meeting on best practices implemented for the socio-economic inclusion of migrants in host societies.**

The following activities were carried out with a view to launching efforts to hold a regional meeting in February 2025: i) holding four meetings, between October and November, with authorities of the South American Conference on Migration (CSM)/International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, in preparation for the *Regional Forum on Best Practices on Consular Cooperation in the area of Migration*, in **February 2025**; ii) presentation on *Best practices for the socio-economic inclusion of migrants in host societies*, on **12 November 2024**, by Mr Gustavo Herrera, Coordinator of the Social Development Area of SELA, within the framework of the activity 'Migration from the perspective of SELA and IOM', an event co-organised by SELA and the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences (UPC). On that occasion, the vision of SELA in the area of migration and the activities carried out by the organisation in this area were explained. The event was attended by 45 students of the UPC; iii) SELA's participation, as observer, in the "V Plenary Meeting of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM)" and in the "South American Conference on Migration (CSM)," held on **10 and 11 October 2024**, in Bogotá, Colombia, and iv) SELA's participation, as observer, in the "XXII South American Conference on Migration (CSM)," in Bogotá, Colombia, on **4 and 5 December 2023**.

**ACTIVITY 2. Virtual preparatory workshop towards the 2024 Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)**

Keynote Conference: Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Virtual. 4 October. As part of the strategic partnership between the **International Organisation for Migration (IOM)** and SELA, a Virtual Master Conference was held on "The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration," in order to learn about the progress made and share successful experiences, ahead of the second review of the Compact, to be held in March 2025. The Conference was delivered by ECLAC, UNDP, ILO and IOM officials to 47 public officials from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile,

Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Venezuela, as well as representatives of the Andean Community (CAN).

**Number of participants: 39**

**SELA member countries (8):** Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru and Venezuela.

### **ACTIVITY 3. II Virtual Training on Migration Data**

[II Virtual Training on Migration Data](#). Virtual (Closed call) Caracas 1 and 2 October. This event was organised by the Permanent Secretariat of SELA jointly with the **International Organisation for Migration (IOM)** with the triple purpose of: i) continuing to provide technical assistance on migration data to those responsible for and formulators of migration public policies; ii) strengthening capacities for the collection, analysis and dissemination of migration statistical data by updating knowledge; and iii) exchanging information about successful experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean in the management of migration data systems in order to achieve concrete results in terms of governance and effectiveness for people in a situation of human mobility and their host societies.

The course allowed participants to learn new tools for the processing and presentation of data in the field of migration in order to improve the narrative on human mobility and promote a better understanding of this phenomenon to highlight positive aspects for the development of more appropriate public policies for migrants.

This course is particularly relevant in view of the diversity of events that have affected human mobility, emphasising the need for information and data that fully show the reality of such a complex situation.

**Number of participants: 25**

**SELA member countries (9):** Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela

**Regional organisations (1):** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), International organisations (1): IOM Global Data Institute; United Nations Population Fund UNFPA.

## **PROJECT B. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION**

### **ACTIVITY 1. III High-Level Dialogue: towards the socio-economic inclusion of migrants and their insertion in the Social Security system**

Discussion: towards the socio-economic inclusion of migrants and their insertion in social security. Virtual. 7 October. Meeting held within the framework of the "III High-Level Dialogue: Towards socio-economic inclusion of migrants and their insertion in Social Security," organised by the **Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS)**, in alliance with **SELA**, the **Guatemalan Institute of Social Security (IGSS)**; the **State Distance University (UNED)** and the **ILO**. This event staged an open dialogue to make visible and address, in a comprehensive and effective manner, the specific aspects of the issue of human migratory movements and conducted an analysis of existing public policies to promote improvements, as well as to raise awareness about this movement and its needs.

Ambassador Clarems Endara, Permanent Secretary of SELA, said that dialogue on cooperation actions and spaces for common advocacy among the different actors, both at the national and regional levels, will always be a priority for SELA and emphasized that "the path of regularization of migrants is fundamental, but it must be complemented by policies and programmes for socio-economic integration."

Having reached a consensus on the importance of making visible the challenges and contributions of migrants in host countries, the participants made the following recommendations: i) drafting a collaborative handbook of best practices focused on the socio-economic inclusion of migrants and their insertion into social security; ii) organising a second edition of this dialogue within the framework of the Fourth High Level Dialogues in March 2025, with a focus on the visibilisation of migrants in their return and their insertion into social security; iii) designing communication campaigns and mapping key persons and institutions to facilitate outreach to decision-makers, as well as to a diverse audience of students, academics and experts; and iv) adopting multidisciplinary approaches that integrate fair public policies adapted to the realities of each migratory context, which is why work should continue on this issue that is so important for the subregion.

Mr. Gustavo Herrera, Coordinator of Social Development, participated in the panel discussion "Towards the socio-economic inclusion of migrants and their insertion in social security."

**Number of participants: 52**

**SELA member countries (2):** Guatemala, Mexico

**ACTIVITY 2. Virtual Workshop: Strategies for the integration of migrant women and girls**

[Virtual Workshop: Strategies for the integration of migrant women and girls](#) 16 July. Organised with the **National Institute for Women (INMUJERES)** of Mexico, with the support of the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)**; the **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**; **UN Women** and **UNICEF**, this event provided a space in which specialists in the field, representatives of Member States and regional and subregional organisations reflected on the main initiatives that have been implemented in this area in LAC, as well as the challenges that remain to be addressed to ensure migrant women and girls effective access to the human rights agenda.

This workshop aimed to: i) learn about successful programmes that have been implemented in the Member States through the intervention of governments, international agencies, civil society and/or private actors, to promote the integration of migrant women and girls; ii) promote initiatives that strengthen the design of migration integration policies based on human and gender rights, with emphasis on women and girls; iii) exchange information on best practices in this area; and iv) maintain an open dialogue to analyse and disseminate cooperation actions and common advocacy spaces between the different actors, both at the national and regional levels.

Participants recommended: i) designing public policies that support the integration and regularisation of migrants and facilitate access to employment and basic services; ii) working on support networks as a strategy for social inclusion; iii) addressing psychosocial issues for working with women in mobility; iv) promoting human security with a rights perspective; v) promoting inclusive access; and vi) fostering daily care management as substantive elements for women to undertake empowerment processes or continue their migratory transit in safety.

**Number of participants: 185**

**SELA member countries (18):** Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela.

**Other countries (4):** Brazil, Costa Rica, Spain, South Africa.

**Regional organisations (2):** UNICEF LAC

**International organisations (2):** United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); UN Women.

## II. UNSCHEDULED ACTIVITIES

In addition to the activities contemplated in the Work Programme for 2022-2026, and always in accordance with its execution, as well as in response to requests made by the Member States of SELA, with special attention to their expectations and the needs of the region as a whole, the Permanent Secretariat organised the activities summarised below:

### SEMINAR EUROPEAN MARKET ACCESS FOR THE COCOA AND COFFEE SECTORS

Face-to-face. 29 January. This event was organised by SELA to discuss and understand the new European Union regulation on imports and the impact on non-deforestation in value chains. The event was attended by Emmanuel Winkler, Counsellor of the General Directorate of the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry for Latin America; Nubia Durán, Coordinator of Integrated Landscape Management in the Andean-Venezuelan region; Eladys Córcega, Value Chain Specialist of the GEF - Andes Project; and Alexis Bonte, representative of FAO.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Clarems Endara, Permanent Secretary of SELA, explained that the EU's European law against deforestation prohibits its Member States from importing products from deforested areas, which is of great concern to several LAC countries that consider themselves directly affected, such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru. He also explained that these countries, along with six others (Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Malaysia, Nigeria and Thailand), sent a joint letter to the EU in which they warn that "small producers may end up excluded from international value chains, not because they have deforested their land, but because of their inability to comply with the strict requirements imposed" by European regulations.

For his part, the Regional Director of the International Regional Organisation for Plant and Animal Health (OIRSA), Carlos Urias, stressed that the organisation maintains an early warning system for new regulations on food imports and exports that are approved around the world. Alexis Bonte also pointed out that there is strong pressure from environmental activists in Europe and that consumers of chocolate and coffee in the EU do not want to feel guilty about consuming these products from deforested areas in other countries.

Another contribution of SELA to this issue is the preparation of the document *Sustainable development of coffee and cocoa: SELA's initiatives for their strengthening and promotion in Latin America and the Caribbean*, published in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. In the aforementioned study, SELA presents the *Comprehensive proposal for the creation of an institution for the promotion of coffee and cocoa in Latin America and the Caribbean* as a strategic solution to face these challenges.

The new institution would focus its efforts on ensuring the economic, social and environmental sustainability of both industries, promoting capacity building and the integration of producers into the international market. The implementation of this proposal is expected to improve the competitiveness of the coffee and cocoa industries, while promoting the social and economic inclusion of producers. Ensuring that they receive a fair price for their work and products will not only contribute to their quality of life but will also benefit millions of families in the region who depend on these activities for their livelihoods. Similarly, strong institutions are essential to support producers and encourage innovation, as well as to promote responsible agricultural practices that minimise environmental impacts.

## THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Face-to-face-Virtual. 24 May. This event was attended by the former President of Colombia and Chairman of Corporación Escenarios, Ernesto Samper, who shared the event with Ambassador Clarems Endara, Permanent Secretary of SELA. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Diplomatic Corps in Venezuela, authorities and special guests, with the purpose of analysing the regional context, as well as discussing strategies to promote cooperation and convergence in the region.

Former President Samper proposed the construction of a regional convergence matrix to find common paths that will allow us to advance in a new model of integration for Latin America and the Caribbean, stressing that this model must work on three things: value, social inclusion and human mobility in the region. For his part, Ambassador Endara stressed that our integration has basically been built with an extra-regional vision, which has been one of the obstacles that has prevented it from being much more solid, and that “we must respond to this situation with more integration” so that we can avoid duplication of functions and be much more effective in ensuring that the ordinary citizen understands what integration is and that he or she can effectively benefit from it.”

## MAPPING OF PRODUCTIVE NICHEs IN FIVE ALBA-TCP COUNTRIES

30 April 2024. For the implementation of this activity, on this date SELA signed a *Framework Cooperation Agreement* with the **Bank of ALBA (BANALBA)** to promote integration and sustainable development in the region. The agreement establishes that the parties will carry out cooperation activities in the area of productive coordination in LAC; identification of potential productive niches and promotion of links between economic actors in the countries of the region that can boost trade exchanges.

On 16 May of the same year, SELA signed a *Specific cooperation agreement* with the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - Peoples' Trade Treaty (TCP) and BANALBA with the purpose of establishing the legal framework of reference on the basis of which the parties will carry out specific actions related to the project “Productive coordination in the Intra-ALBA area: Identification of potential productive niches and trade exchange” for Honduras and the 10 member countries of the alliance: Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela. The objective is to promote links between the economic actors of the countries of the Intra-ALBA region that can promote productive chains and commercial exchange and, thus, strengthen the ALBA economic zone.

In addition, SELA conducted the study *Mapping of potential productive niches in the ALBA-TCP Member States, namely Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Honduras*.

## PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE MAPPING OF PRODUCTIVE NICHEs TO FIVE ALBA-TCP COUNTRIES

15 October 2024. In order to continue promoting the economic recovery of the region and in line with its commitment to stimulate the formulation of public policies to promote productive sectors, strengthen business models and develop new markets for SMEs in the region, the Permanent Secretariat presented the results of the mapping of potential productive niches of the ALBA-TCP Member States, namely: Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Honduras, within the framework of the *Specific Cooperation Agreement* signed by SELA, ALBA-TCP and the Bank of ALBA (BANALBA).

This result is part of the first phase of the project, where the structural analysis of the export basket of these countries identified potential in various productive sectors. Among the main findings are the productive capacities in agricultural and livestock activities, chemical production, specifically fertilisers and veterinary medical supplies.

The identification of these key sectors is a fundamental tool for building productive linkages of greater value added among the member countries of the bloc, in addition to promoting the development of intra-regional trade complementarities. The second phase of the project provides for the analysis and presentation of results for the Eastern Caribbean countries that are members of ALBA-TCP, namely: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

In 2024, SELA expanded its contribution to the development of productive niches in the region by preparing the study *Public policies for the development of productive niches in Latin America and the Caribbean*, published in the book *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC*. The study presents the results and recommendations of the project for mapping productive niches in LAC, carried out by SELA in order to identify productive sectors with development potential in the region. It analyses the methodology created and used by the organisation for the detection of productive niches and concludes that it can serve as a tool to guide the formulation of public policies. In addition, SELA, with the support of external partners, is in a position to lead a regional effort to complete a broader mapping that allows reaching a profile of productive articulation throughout the region.

### **SEMINAR ON FINANCIAL TOOLS AS AN ALTERNATIVE FOR THE PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

Seminar for the establishment of a payment clearing system for Latin America and the Caribbean. Face-to-face. Brasilia, Brazil. 27 November. This seminar was organized by SELA within the framework of the "XXIX International Congress of the Latin American Centre for Development Administration (CLAD)." Participants in this meeting included representatives of public organisations involved in the execution of international transactions, as well as individuals from the public sector and academia, linked to export promotion.

Within the framework of this activity, SELA sponsored the presentation of the paper *South American Economic and Financial Council of Unasur: History and Legacy*, written by Pedro Silva Barros, Sofia Escobar Samurio and Leandro Fontes Corrêa, from the Research Institute of Applied Economics (IPEA, for its acronym in Portuguese).

In this paper, the authors describe the role of the South American Economic and Financial Council (CSEF), established in August 2011 in Buenos Aires, which represents a step forward in the institutionalisation of economic and financial cooperation in South America. Through its structure, which includes working groups focused on international reserves, payment agreements and intra-regional trade, the CSEF seeks to strengthen financial stability and foster sustainable economic development in the region.

One of the main contributions of the CSEF was the creation of a space for regional dialogue that includes diverse economic actors, making it possible to address not only immediate economic problems, but also structural challenges that have historically affected the region. The CSEF's legacy is evident in its ability to generate a framework for cooperation that transcends economic crises, promoting public policies that seek to reduce external vulnerability and foster social development. For example, the CSEF has worked on the formulation of strategies for the management of international reserves and the creation

of payment compensation mechanisms, which has allowed member countries to access financing under more favourable conditions.

It became evident in the workshop that the CSEF is not only a space for discussion and formulation of economic policies, but that it has also left an important legacy in terms of institutionalising cooperation in South America. In this regard, it is essential to highlight the importance of this council in promoting economic and financial integration, as well as the challenges and opportunities it faces in the future. Discussions on its legacy and its potential to address the region's current challenges are essential to understand its role in building a more cohesive and sustainable future for South America.

In the current context, it is important to stress the importance of addressing the issues that CSEF developed at the time, which represent a regional problem and an obstacle to both intra-regional and extra-regional trade, such as access to foreign currency for the purchase and sale of goods. In this regard, it is worth highlighting the relevance of revisiting issues that were discarded at the time for political reasons and that are now being revisited because of the need to find solutions for the entire region.

The debate led to a recognition of the important role Brazil has to play in taking up these initiatives and leading a consensus in the region that facilitates regional financial integration with a view to strengthening trade and integration ties, over and above political objectives.

### III. INTER-INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

#### 1. Instruments of cooperation signed by SELA in 2024

In 2024, Ambassador Clarems Endara, Permanent Secretary of SELA, signed 13 cooperation instruments that have allowed the organisation to participate beneficially in exchanges of knowledge, experiences, resources and technologies that, when used in key national and regional projects for development, will translate into multiple benefits for the Member States of the organisation, in particular, and for the region, in general. The following are the cooperation instruments signed during the period covered by this report:

- 1) *Cooperation Agreement*. Signed on 19 January with the company [www.mascontainer.com](http://www.mascontainer.com), to mutually collaborate in the promotion of activities related to international trade and logistics. In addition, each party undertakes to publish the contents produced by the other. Ambassador Clarems Endara, Permanent Secretary of SELA, while pondering the usefulness and importance of this agreement, said that "we are working on the economic recovery of the region and half of the work is to communicate, which is why this agreement with MasContainer is so important, for the exchange and visibility of contents." For his part, Jorge Opazo, CEO of Mas Container and signatory for the company, said that they are proud to have the opportunity to support SELA. The agreement is part of the work carried out by the "Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports," created and coordinated by SELA, and includes various activities, including the organisation and promotion of events, as well as the generation of content such as notes, columns, interviews and articles related to economic issues in the region.
- 2) *Memorandum of Understanding*. Signed on 1 March with the **Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)** to deepen the support that SELA will provide to the community under the Presidency Pro Tempore (PPT) of the Republic of Honduras. This MOU is aimed at supporting ministerial meetings on issues such as infrastructure, energy, competitiveness and migration, among others, in order to strengthen convergence in key areas for the promotion of regional integration.

This instrument is an expression of the will of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA to comply with the mandates stemming from CELAC and, thus, facilitate the activities of this regional entity.

- 3) *Letter of Intent*. Signed on 14 March with the **Venezuelan Colombian Chamber of Economic Integration (CAVECOL A.C.)**. Both parties are committed to work on, among others, the following items: i) promotion of production chains, especially cocoa and coffee; ii) ecotourism; iii) business roundtables with the chambers of Latin America and the Caribbean; iv) niches and production chains based on complementarity; v) development and dissemination of public policies aimed at sustainable trade and production; and vi) development of research projects, workshops, courses, seminars and other educational and training activities and the generation of valuable content in the areas/topics of interest of both organisations.
- 4) *Framework Cooperation Agreement*. Signed on 30 April with the **Bank of ALBA (BANALBA)** to promote integration and sustainable development in the region. The agreement establishes that the institutions will carry out cooperation activities in terms of productive articulation in Latin America and the Caribbean; identification of potential productive niches and promotion of links among economic stakeholders in the countries of the region that can boost commercial exchange.
- 5) *Framework Cooperation Agreement*. Signed on 3 May with the **George Washington University Competition Law Centre (CLC)** to promote and strengthen SELA's relations with CLC through its participation in activities related to trade and competition developed by the organisation.
- 6) *Addendum N° 3 to the Interinstitutional Cooperation Agreement*. Signed on 3 May with the **European Institute of International Studies (EIS-Sweden)** to regulate the organisation of the specialisation courses on *Artificial Intelligence and Diplomacy: international relations in the era of disruptive technologies* and *European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean relations in the digital era: EU-LAC Digital Alliance & Global Gateway*.
- 7) *Specific Cooperation Agreement*. Signed on 16 May with the **Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - Peoples' Trade Agreement** and the **Bank of ALBA (BANALBA)** to establish the legal framework of reference on the basis of which **BANALBA** and **SELA** will develop specific actions related to the project "Productive coordination in the Intra-ALBA area: Identification of potential productive niches and trade exchange", for Honduras and the 10 member countries of the alliance. This agreement, which is part of the *Framework Agreement* signed on 30 April this year by the three institutions, aims to promote links among the economic actors of the member countries of the alliance that contribute to the promotion of productive linkages and trade exchanges, and thus strengthen the economic zone comprising Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Grenada, St. Lucia and Honduras.
- 8) *Interinstitutional Framework Cooperation Agreement*. Signed on 17 June with the **Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil (UCSG)**, of Ecuador, to establish the terms of mutual cooperation between the UCSG and the organisation in order to join efforts, resources and capacities within the scope of their respective competencies.
- 9) *Interinstitutional Framework Cooperation Agreement between the National Chamber of Commerce of Bolivia and SELA*. Signed on 11 July 2024 to establish the general terms of mutual cooperation between the **CNC-Bolivia** and SELA to join efforts, resources and capacities within the scope of their respective competences, in order to carry out joint actions, programmes and/or projects in the areas of trade, tourism, training and provision of services.

- 10) *Specific Agreement for Training*. Signed on 20 August 2024 with the **Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil** to acquire the virtual training programme “*Diploma in Integrated Disaster Risk Management in Latin America and the Caribbean: Reflections, Challenges and Proposals for Innovation in Regional Public Policies and their Impact on Public-Private Partnerships.*”
- 11) *Interinstitutional Framework Cooperation Agreement between the Institute of Latin American Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (ILAS, CASS) and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA)*. Signed on 28 August 2024, in Beijing, China, to establish the general terms of cooperation between ILAS, CASS and SELA in order to join efforts, resources and capacities within the scope of their respective functions for the implementation of joint actions, programmes and/or projects in the areas of training, research, economics, international relations, culture, social problems of Latin America, multidisciplinary studies, as well as Latin American integration.
- 12) *Memorandum of Understanding between the Administration of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and the Catalan Competition Authority (ACCO) of the Kingdom of Spain* to establish the legal framework of reference on the basis of which the signatories will carry out technical and institutional cooperation actions, including, among others, joint work on issues such as promotion of competition or competitive functioning of markets in all productive sectors of the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean and Catalonia.
- 13) *Exchange of letters of commitment* with the **United Nations Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean (UNDRR)** to contribute to reducing disaster risk in the region, in line with the regional implementation of the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2023*. Both parties expressed their readiness for mutual cooperation and commitment to strategic initiatives based on the results of the actions undertaken within the framework of the MoU signed by them in October 2011 and endorsed in December 2015.

Among the strategies proposed are: i) the review of the progress of implementation of the *Regional Action Plan (RAP)*; ii) the development of public-private partnerships (PPPs) for building resilience to disasters; iii) the implementation of initiatives in governmental, financial, national and international bodies, in terms of integrated disaster risk management and reduction and infrastructure; and iv) the promotion of mechanisms and instances of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) for the strengthening of regional action.

<b>Cooperation instruments signed by SELA in 2024</b>			
	<b>Instrument / date</b>	<b>Counterpart</b>	<b>Objective</b>
	Cooperation Agreement 19-01-24	Company Mascontainer.com	Promote activities related to international trade and logistics.
	Memorandum of Understanding 01-03-24	CELAC	Deepen SELA's support to the PPT of Honduras.
	Letter of Intent 14-03-24	Venezuelan Colombian Chamber of Economic	Promote productive chains, especially cocoa and coffee.

		Integration (CAVECOL A.C.)	
	Framework Cooperation Agreement 30-04-24	Bank of ALBA (BANALBA)	Promote integration and sustainable development in the region.
	Framework Cooperation Agreement 03-05-24	George Washington University Competition Law Centre (CLC)	Promote and strengthen SELA-CLC relations.
	<i>Addendum</i> N° 3 to the Interinstitutional Cooperation Agreement 03-05-24	European Institute of International Studies (EIS- Sweden)	Support the courses on “Artificial Intelligence and Diplomacy” and “EU-LAC relations in the digital era”.
	Specific Cooperation Agreement 16-05-24	ALBA and BANALBA	Legal framework for the project “Productive articulation in the Intra-ALBA area”
	Interinstitutional Framework Cooperation Agreement 17-06-24	Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil (UCSG)	Establish the terms of UCSG-SELA cooperation.
	Interinstitutional Framework Cooperation Agreement 11-07-24	National Chamber of Commerce of Bolivia CNC-Bolivia	Establish the terms of CNC-SELA cooperation.
	Specific Agreement for Training 20-08-24	Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil (UCSG)	Acquire the virtual training programme “Diploma in Integrated Disaster Risk Management in LAC”.
	Interinstitutional Framework Cooperation Agreement 28-08-24	Institute of Latin American Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (ILAS, CASS)	Establish the general terms of ILAS/CASS- SELA cooperation.
	Memorandum of Understanding	Catalan Competition Authority (ACCO) - the Kingdom of Spain	Establish the legal framework of reference for technical and institutional cooperation actions.
	Exchange of letters of commitment	United Nations Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean (UNDRR)	Contribute to disaster risk reduction in the region.

## 2. SELA's partner institutions in the execution of some activities of the organisation

As it has done throughout the current administration, which began on 2 August 2021, the Permanent Secretariat has partnered with various regional, extra-regional and international entities to participate in the organisation and execution of some of SELA's activities. Following is a list of the various entities that participated as co-organizers and co-hosts of one or more activities of the organisation during the period reported.

### Regional

**1) Pacific Alliance (PA)**

[SME Policy Index 2024: towards an inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery](#). Valparaíso, Chile. 4 July 2024.

**2) Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)-Behavioural Economics Group**

[IV Workshop on public policy instruments based on behavioural economics](#). Guatemala City, Guatemala, 23 and 24 April 2024.

**3) CAF- Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean**

[SME Policy Index 2024: towards an inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery](#). Valparaíso, Chile. 4 July 2024.

**4) Latin American Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CELIEM)**

[Second edition of the Diploma course for public policy makers targeting SMEs in the Caribbean with a gender approach](#). 22 November 2023 to 8 March 2024.

Diploma course for the public management of policies and programmes to support sustainable MSMEs with a gender approach – 2024. Virtual. 28 May to 28 July.

**5) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

[Forum on the progress and challenges of international cooperation in disasters](#). Santiago, Chile, 11 and 12 March 2024.

**6) Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS)**

[Workshop on Disaster Risk Management with a social protection approach](#). Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 16-17 April 2024.

**7) Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports (D&C Port Network)**

[Virtual seminar on digital transformation and adoption of innovative technologies in the port sector](#). Face-to-face-Virtual. 22-23 August 2024.

**8) Network of Social Studies in Disaster Prevention in Latin America (LA RED)**

[Workshop on Disaster Risk Management with a social protection approach](#). Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 16-17 April 2024.

**International**

- 1) **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**  
[Virtual Workshop: Strategies for the integration of migrant women and girls.](#) 16 July 2024.
- 2) **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**  
[Virtual Workshop: Strategies for the integration of migrant women and girls.](#) 16 July 2024.
- 3) **Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF)**  
[XXXII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean. "Capacity building for the measurement, assessment and evaluation of South-South and Triangular Cooperation \(SSTC\): A contribution to the institutionalisation and standardisation of information to increase the results of cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean."](#) Face-to-face-Virtual. Lima, Peru. 27 and 28 November 2024
- 4) **UN Trade and Development**  
[XII Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition \(WGTC\) of Latin America and the Caribbean: Artificial Intelligence and Public Procurement, a regional dialogue to strengthen competition.](#) Virtual. 7 and 8 August 2024.  
  
[First Latin American and Caribbean Competition Forum.](#) Face-to-face-Virtual. Tegucigalpa, Honduras. 9 August 2024.
- 5) **UN Women**  
[Virtual Workshop: Strategies for the integration of migrant women and girls](#) 16 July 2024.
- 6) **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)**  
[Workshop "Strengthening the cocoa industry in Latin America and the Caribbean."](#) Caracas, Venezuela, 22 April 2024.
- 7) **International Organisation for Migration (IOM)**  
[Virtual Workshop: Strategies for the integration of migrant women and girls.](#) 16 July 2024.
- 8) **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**  
[SME Policy Index 2024: towards an inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery.](#) Valparaíso, Chile. 4 July 2024
- 9) **Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) of the OAS.**  
[Virtual seminar on women in maritime and port security.](#) 16 and 17 May 2024.

**Extra-regional**

- 1) **Competition Law Centre (University of Washington)**  
[First Latin American and Caribbean Competition Forum.](#) Face-to-face-Virtual. Tegucigalpa, Honduras. 9 August 2024.
- 2) **Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).**  
[Latin American and Caribbean Development Forum with China.](#) Beijing, China. 21 and 28 August.
- 3) **European Institute of International Studies (IEEI-Sweden)**

[Course "Artificial Intelligence and Diplomacy: international relations in the era of disruptive technologies"](#). Virtual. 1 and 2 July 2024.

[Course "European Union - Latin America and the Caribbean relations in the digital era: EU-LAC Digital Alliance and Global Gateway"](#). Virtual. 3 and 4 July 2024.

**4) Pontifical University of Salamanca (UPSA) - Spain**

[Course "European Union - Latin America and the Caribbean relations in the digital era: EU-LAC Digital Alliance and Global Gateway"](#). Virtual. 3 and 4 July 2024.

**National**

**1) Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation of the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

[XXXII Meeting of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean. "Capacity building for the measurement, assessment and evaluation of South-South and Triangular Cooperation \(SSTC\): A contribution to the institutionalisation and standardisation of information to increase the results of cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean."](#) Face-to-face-Virtual. Lima, Peru 27 and 28 November 2024.

**2) Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Competition (CDPC) of Honduras**

[XII Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Competition \(WGTC\) of Latin America and the Caribbean: Artificial Intelligence and Public Procurement, a regional dialogue to strengthen competition](#). Virtual. 7 and 8 August 2024.

[First Latin American and Caribbean Competition Forum](#). Virtual. Tegucigalpa, Honduras. 9 August 2024.

**3) Social Policy Cabinet of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic**

[Workshop on Disaster Risk Management with a social protection approach](#). Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 16-17 April 2024.

**4) National Institute of Women (Mexico)**

[Virtual Workshop: Strategies for the integration of migrant women and girls](#). 16 July 2024.

**5) Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism of Chile**

[SME Policy Index 2024: towards an inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery](#). Valparaíso, Chile. 4 July 2024.

**6) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile**

[SME Policy Index 2024: towards an inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery](#). Valparaíso, Chile. 4 July 2024.

**7) National Service for Disaster Prevention and Response (SENAPRED) of Chile**

[Forum "Progress and challenges of international cooperation in disasters"](#). Santiago, Chile, 11 and 12 March 2024.

**8) Catholic University of Guayaquil (UCSG) - Ecuador**

[First Diploma in Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management in Latin America and the Caribbean: Reflections, challenges and proposals for innovation in regional public policies and their impact on public-private partnerships](#). Virtual. 21 August to 23 November.

	<b>Partner organisations in the implementation of some of SELA's activities. December 2023-December 2024.</b>
1	Pacific Alliance (PA)
2	Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI)
3	Association of Caribbean States (ACS)
4	Latin American Integration Association (ALADI)
5	Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)-Behavioural Economics Group (BEG)
6	CFKD CHINA
6	CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean
7	Latin American Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CELIEM)
8	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
9	Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Competition (CDPC) of Honduras
10	Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS)
11	Competition Law Centre of the University of Washington
12	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)
13	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
14	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
15	Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF)
16	Social Policy Cabinet of the Presidency of the Dominican Republic
17	Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)
18	Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA)
19	European Institute for International Studies (IEEI-Sweden)
20	National Women's Institute (Mexico)
21	Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism (Chile)
22	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile
23	UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
24	UN Women
25	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
26	International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
27	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
28	Pontifical Catholic University of Peru
29	Network of Social Studies in Disaster Prevention in Latin America (LA RED)
30	Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports (D&C Port Network)
31	National Service for Disaster Prevention and Response (SENAPRED) of Chile
32	Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) - OAS
33	General Secretariat of the Andean Community (SGCAN)
34	Central American Integration System (SICA)
35	Catholic University of Santiago de Guayaquil (UCSG) - Ecuador
36	University of San Andrés (UdeSA)
37	Externado University of Colombia
38	Pontifical University of Salamanca (UPSA)
39	National Autonomous University of Mexico
40	Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU)

***P R E S S   A N D   P U B L I C A T I O N S***

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**PRESS, PUBLICATIONS AND DISSEMINATION**

#### IV. PRESS, PUBLICATIONS AND DISSEMINATION

As part of the strategy to reposition the organisation in the different media and communication platforms, the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, during the year 2024, decided to contribute to the promotion and dissemination of knowledge with the publication of eight books and two journals on issues of regional interest. Among these publications, the book entitled *Strategies and public policy proposals for the integration of LAC* stands out, which is the first in its series and aims to contribute to sustainable and resilient development through regional proposals.

These nine publications address crucial issues such as regional integration, competition in the Fintech sector, cyberdiplomacy, SME policies, economic relations with China, artificial intelligence in diplomacy and public policy strategies for integration. It also includes case studies on various aspects of economic and social development in the region.

Through its publications, SELA provides its Member States with essential tools and knowledge for the formulation of effective public policies. By addressing issues of regional and global relevance, these publications facilitate informed decision-making and promote cooperation and sustainable development.

It should be noted that, through a dynamic management of communications, SELA has managed to record a sustained growth in the production of content for both the web and social networks in the last year. A total of 127 press releases and 225 regional bulletins have been published on the web, in addition to 453 publications on Instagram, 1,495 on Twitter, 404 on Facebook and 214 on LinkedIn. In addition, five institutional videos and a newspaper have been produced and are shared monthly with our Member States.

##### 1. INFORMATION PRODUCTS

During the last year, SELA has focused on communicating regional integration through the promotion of its *Work Programme for 2022-2026*, 2024 update, with a series of information products, aimed at both internal and external audiences.

###### 1.1. Internal communication:

- Monthly internal bulletin
- Daily information summary

Considering the importance of internal communication as a key factor to strengthen coordination within the organisation, the graphic image for meetings, virtual seminars, presentations, as well as for the reports and rapporteur's reports originating from the activities of SELA's Work Programme has been standardised.

In addition, 15 internal bulletins have been published to keep SELA officials informed about the activities carried out and the work agenda of the organization.

## 1.2. External communication:

### 1.2.1. Web portal

### 1.2.2. Monthly newsletter to Member States

### 1.2.3. Social networks (*Instagram, X, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube*)

### 1.2.4. Daily regional bulletin

### 1.2.5. Publication of rapporteur's and final reports

### 1.2.6. *Convergencia* journal

### 1.2.7. Books

#### 1.2.1. WEB PORTAL

SELA's Web site was redesigned this year for its new launching and with the purpose of presenting its contents in a fresher and more user-friendly way. In addition, 127 press releases and 225 regional bulletins were published on our Web site, with a total of 1,530,154 views, which represents an increase of more than 3.4% in traffic compared to the previous year, with users coming mainly from Venezuela, Argentina and Ecuador.



##### 1.2.1.1. New portal

In order to offer a better interaction with users and present a more user-friendly design, with economic indicators of the region, we carried out a re-engineering process of our Web site that includes a modern redesign with a much more interactive content distribution with our users.

##### 1.2.2. Monthly newsletter

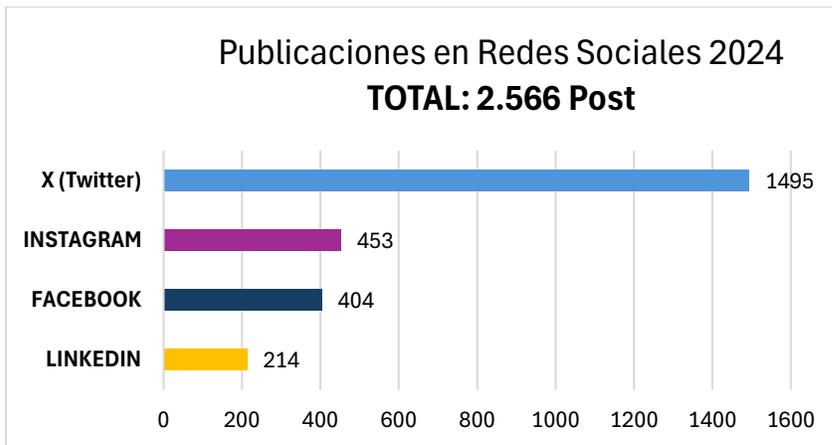
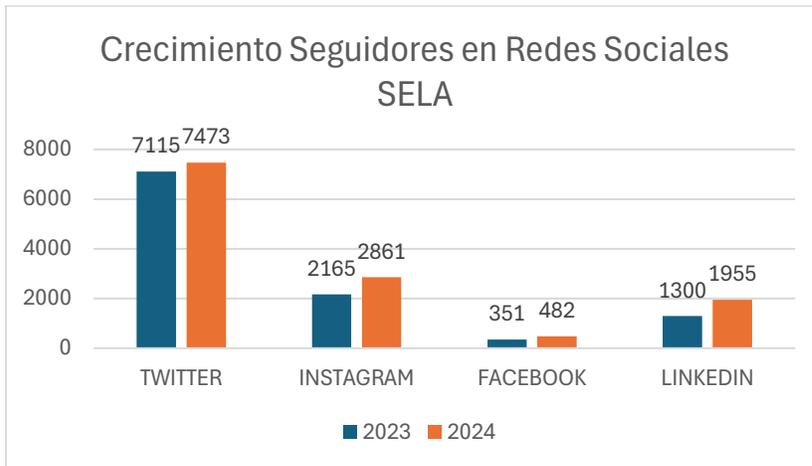
In order to maintain better communication with our Member States and to make the implementation of our Work Programme more visible, we have sent out 12 monthly newsletters this year, summarising SELA's activities.

##### 1.2.3.- Social networks

Likewise, SELA's social networks have shown sustained growth as a result of constant updating and a strategy focused on promoting and positioning SELA's activities and Work Programme as a fundamental actor for the convergence and integration of the region.

**1.2.3.1. Statistics**

- *Instagram* 2,861 followers (+32.1%)
- *X* 7,473 followers (+5%)
- *Facebook* 482 followers (+37,3%)
- *LinkedIn* 1,955 followers (+50,4%)



**1.2.4. REGIONAL BULLETIN**

Over the past year, we have published daily on our Web site a regional summary (225 in total) with the five most important news releases of the day, dealing with issues of interest to Latin America and the Caribbean.

### 1.2.5. RAPPORTEUR'S AND FINAL REPORTS

In order to offer the contents of the reports and rapporteur's reports in a more user-friendly way, a different design was created for each document generated as a result of the activities of SELA's *Work Programme for 2022-2026*, to be published on the Web with a sober and attractive graphic line.

### 1.2.6. JOURNAL ON MEETINGS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DIRECTORS FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



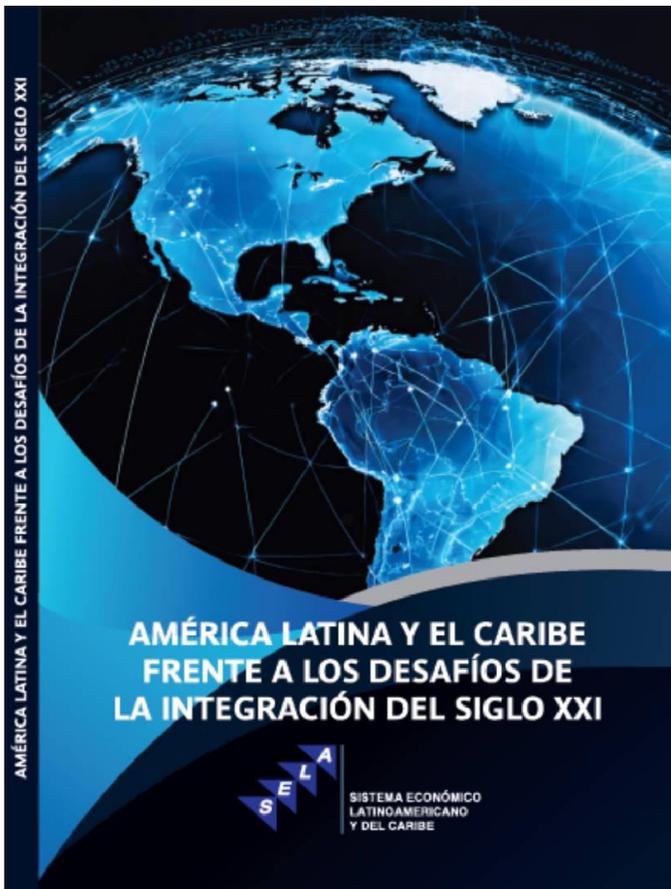
In order to reaffirm its commitment with cooperation and integration to face challenges and strengthen relations among the countries of the region, SELA published in its journal *Convergencia* (Vol 1, No. 5, November 2024) the document *Meetings of International Cooperation Directors for Latin America and the Caribbean - Historical Compendium 1987-2023*, which commemorates more than three decades of meetings to promote regional integration and cooperation. These meetings, based on SELA's main lines of action, have been an essential platform to debate, exchange and consolidate proposals to promote intra-regional integration and cooperation. The journal acknowledges the valuable contribution of strategic partners, including regional and international institutions, development agencies, NGOs, the private sector and universities, with special emphasis on the support of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund.

The historical compendium highlights significant milestones such as the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the Second UN High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation in 2019, underlining how South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) has become a key mechanism for advancing towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The publication also highlights the role of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) in promoting SSTC and the importance of cooperation and integration to address regional challenges.

This editorial effort of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA not only makes visible the work of the organisation in the area of international cooperation, but also reaffirms its commitment to continue generating conditions for an effective cooperation platform, facilitating processes and opportunities for the benefit of the countries of the region. The journal is a testimony to the value of cooperation and integration as essential tools to strengthen relations and address the situations that affect Latin America and the Caribbean

### 1.2.7. BOOKS

#### LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN FACING THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY



Within the framework of the effort to promote reference publications for the region, stemming from the implementation of our Work Programme, SELA published the book "Latin America and the Caribbean facing the challenges of integration in the 21st century," a renewed compass for regional integration and glossary for unification. The publication provides guidelines for regional convergence and promotes global regionalism as a strategy to strengthen integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This book addresses the challenges and opportunities of regional integration in the current context. Throughout its pages, it analyses the need for a resignification of regionalism in Latin America and the Caribbean, proposing an approach of complex and global regionalism as a new form of governance for regional integration blocs. In addition, it emphasises the importance of inter-secretariat coordination promoted by SELA together with the region's integration mechanisms to manage

convergence, and presents an analytical model based on a weighted SWOT matrix to establish preliminary interventions and a roadmap towards more effective integration

This book offers a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of the challenges and opportunities of regional integration in Latin America and the Caribbean. It provides an analytical and strategic framework for addressing these challenges, highlighting the need for greater coordination and cooperation among the countries of the region.

SELA's commitment to regional integration is reflected in its focus on promoting convergence, research and analysis, and inter-secretariat coordination. This book is a manifestation of that commitment, offering practical and theoretical guidance for moving towards more effective and sustainable integration.

The book is aimed at decision-makers, academics, regional integration experts and all those interested in the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean. It is a valuable tool for understanding integration processes and for formulating policies and strategies to promote greater cooperation and development in the region.

## TRADE AND COMPETITION: FINTECH IN THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGION



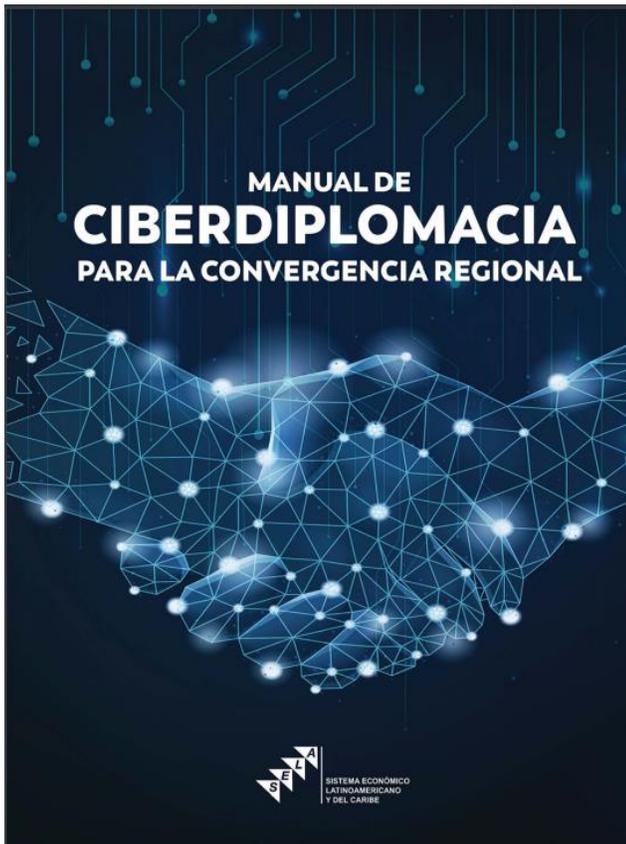
Rapid technological progress poses significant challenges in terms of regulation and competition. It is therefore essential to promote fair competition and to guarantee the protection of consumers of these services, ensuring that companies of this nature operate within a clear and transparent regulatory framework, fostering innovation and fair competition and safeguarding the rights of users.

Aware of this need, SELA is publishing the book *Trade and Competition: Fintech in the Latin American and Caribbean region*, a compendium of specialised articles sharing the experiences of different regulatory authorities that work on a daily basis, both in the generation of related regulations and in the solution of derived problems that affect competition and, therefore, users.

This publication provides the contributions of the different authors who have participated in the preparation of this book in order to have a

broader vision of the challenges that must be faced in the sector in relation to competition, being a significant contribution to the knowledge of the policies that exist on this issue in LAC. It also shows the heterogeneity that exists in the region, both in the problems that its authorities must deal with and the regulations that each country has developed.

## [HANDBOOK ON CYBERDIPLOMACY FOR REGIONAL CONVERGENCE](#)



**The Handbook on Cyberdiplomacy for Regional Convergence** is a comprehensive work that deals with the importance and potential of cyberdiplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean. This handbook is presented as an essential resource for diplomats, government officials, academics and other actors interested in the region's digital future.

The handbook begins by highlighting the cultural and natural wealth of LAC and the importance of regional cooperation for sustainable development. It highlights how the digital revolution has transformed interactions and the need to adapt to these transformations in order to promote effective regional convergence. Definitions and differences between cyberdiplomacy, digital diplomacy and e-diplomacy are explored. Cyberdiplomacy is defined as the strategic use of cyber technologies in international relations, encompassing cybersecurity, cyberspace governance and critical infrastructure protection.

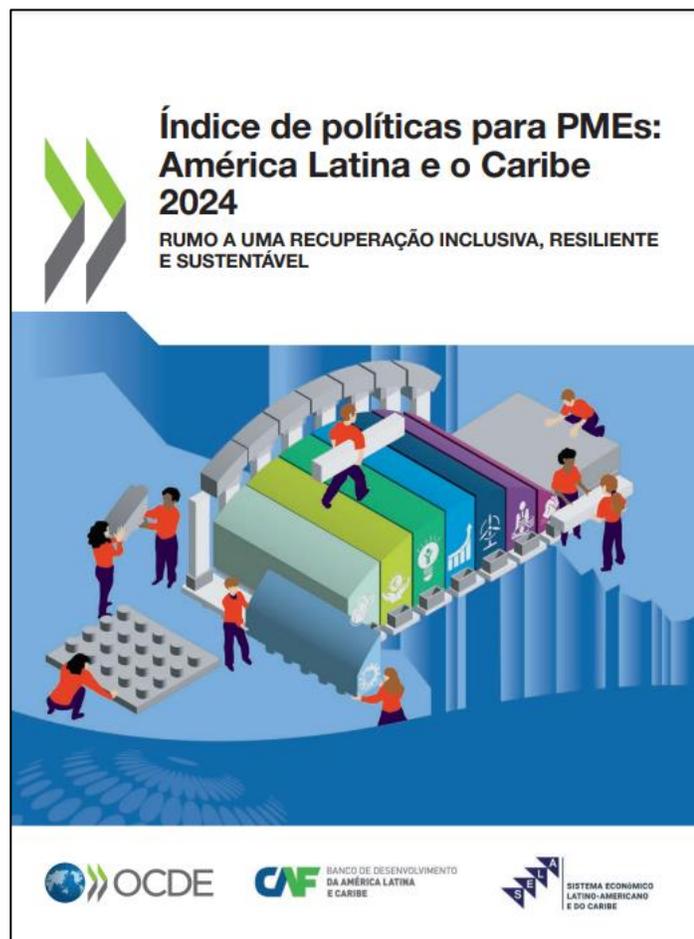
The handbook emphasises the relevance of e-diplomacy for strengthening regional cooperation and integration, highlighting its potential to catalyse economic development and innovation. It also addresses the protection of human rights and democratic governance online. It details effective social media communication strategies and the use of digital platforms in diplomacy. In addition, it looks at metaverse diplomacy and how emerging technologies are redefining international relations.

The handbook dedicates a section to cybersecurity and foreign policy, exploring cyber threats and their impact on regional security. It also discusses strategies for strengthening cybersecurity at the regional level and collaboration among countries to address cyber threats. The intersection between cyberdiplomacy and human rights is examined, highlighting the importance of protecting privacy and promoting digital inclusion. It also addresses the digital economy, techplomacy and the use of digital currencies, highlighting their impact on regional economic development.

SELA plays a crucial role in promoting cyberdiplomacy in LAC. In line with the work programme, this publication is offered as a strategic contribution to face the challenges of digital transformation and strengthen regional integration. SELA has developed courses and activities in partnership with academic institutions and has promoted technical cooperation and policy harmonisation in cybersecurity and digital governance.

This handbook is a comprehensive guide that not only provides a theoretical and practical framework for cyberdiplomacy, but also highlights the importance of regional cooperation and SELA's role in this area. It is a call to action for LAC countries to work together in building an inclusive and secure digital future.

## SME POLICY INDEX: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



This second edition of the SME Policy Index: Latin America and the Caribbean (SME PI) provides information on policies affecting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in nine countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay), and offers regional trends together with country-specific analysis and recommendations.

The book SME Policy Index: Latin America and the Caribbean is released against the backdrop of the economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions and the reconfiguration of global value chains. The publication concludes that, in the aftermath of the pandemic, LAC governments are giving higher priority to SME development. Based on the recommendations of the 2019 edition, countries have improved their policy frameworks over the past five years, albeit at different speeds and with different approaches in the context of budgetary constraints. Brazil and Paraguay, participating for the first time, have shown a strong commitment to SME development. All nine governments have taken significant steps to strengthen their operating environments, improve e-government services and support programmes that boost innovation and technology.

This publication seeks to contribute to joint efforts to design and implement better policies that foster a successful transition to inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery in LAC countries.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN AND CHINA: NOTES FOR A DEVELOPMENT AGENDA



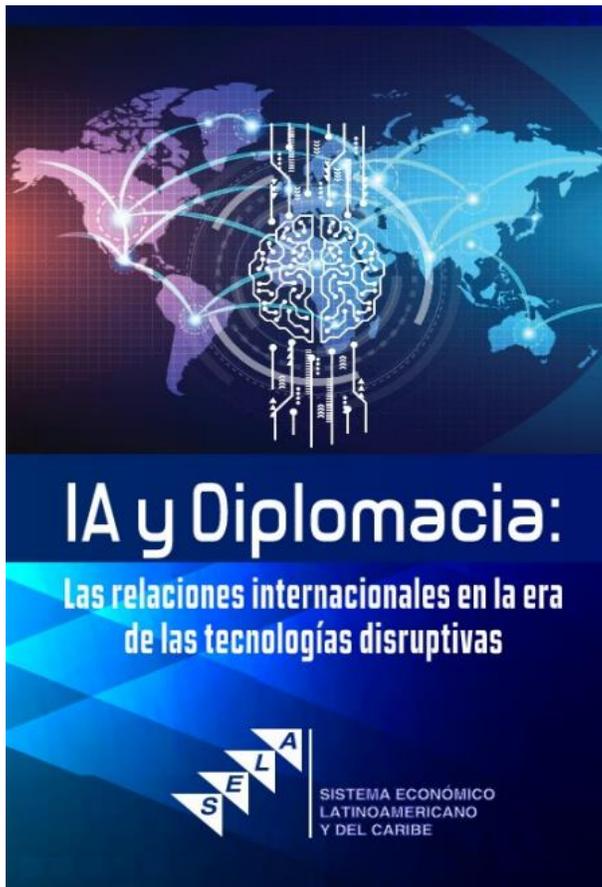
In an increasingly interconnected world, China has become a major global player in trade, investment, financing and cultural cooperation, with a profound impact on the economic dynamics of our region. In this book, we explore in detail the relationship between Latin America and the Caribbean and China, examining both the challenges and opportunities presented by this interaction. This book provides a comprehensive overview of the relationship between the two regions and proposes recommendations for strengthening and making the most of this strategic partnership.

This editorial effort offers a journey that traces the complex interaction between Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and China, through a detailed and comprehensive look at the relationship between LAC and China in different areas, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges that this strategic partnership presents for both parties.

Thus, we understand in these lines that betting on More and better integration also depends on strengthening the bi-regional relationship between LAC and Asia, and especially between Latin Americans and Caribbeans and China, conceived as one of the incubators of opportunities available for growth, development and well-being in our region.

From the analysis of Chinese trade, investment and financing in the region to the exploration of cultural cooperation and the challenges and policy proposals to strengthen this relationship, this book provides a comprehensive and rigorous overview of an issue of vital importance for the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly considering the fact that LAC is positioned as the second most important destination for Chinese foreign investment, with more than 2,700 Chinese companies operating in the region, especially in transport and energy infrastructure (SELA, 2022).

## **AI AND DIPLOMACY: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE ERA OF DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES**



It is presented as a seminal work that explores the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of international relations and diplomacy. This book aligns with the organisation's commitment to foster the development of negotiating skills and understanding of the application of diplomacy in the context of emerging technologies, as set out in its Work Programme for 2022-2026.

The book addresses different aspects of AI and its influence on diplomacy and international relations. From a historical and analytical perspective, the authors examine how AI is transforming the way diplomats collect and analyse data, predict trends and make decisions. AI not only improves efficiency in negotiations, but also raises new ethical and governance challenges that need to be addressed by the international community.

One of the highlights of the book is the analysis of government initiatives to regulate AI. It discusses the different approaches of countries and regions, such as the European Union, the United States, Brazil, Canada, India and China, in

creating regulatory frameworks that ensure the safe and ethical development of AI. These frameworks seek to balance technological innovation with the protection of human rights and safety.

SELA, as an organisation committed to regional development, has played a crucial role in promoting digital cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean and other regions of the world. The publication of this book is an example of SELA's commitment to capacity building in the regional public sector, especially at a time when international relations are being redefined by the rise of new technologies such as AI. SELA has identified areas of opportunity and improvement for the benefit of the region, promoting projects such as the EU-LAC Digital Alliance and the Global Gateway, which seek to strengthen cooperation in digital matters and move towards an inclusive and sustainable digital agenda.

## **STRATEGIES AND PUBLIC POLICY PROPOSALS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF LAC**



Public policies are the cornerstone for the functioning and development of countries. Through them, an attempt is made to respond to the multiplicity of needs, interests and preferences of groups and individuals that make up a society. Public policies are the leitmotiv, the pivot around which SELA's Work Programme for 2022-2026 revolves. This is so because its conception was based on the premise that only through adequate and well-structured public policies, in objective and balanced harmony with the environment at which they are aimed, can the path be opened to convert an idea or an approach into an assertive and transforming action that, based on a properly guided and planned intervention in reality, translates into changes that improve the living conditions of the members of a society and facilitate their progress, and that of their descendants, in a sustainable manner.

Thus, the effectiveness, impact and value of the activities included in SELA's work programme, as a promise to improve the lives of the inhabitants of its Member States, depend to a great extent on the degree to which it manages to promote, among its Member States, the design of timely

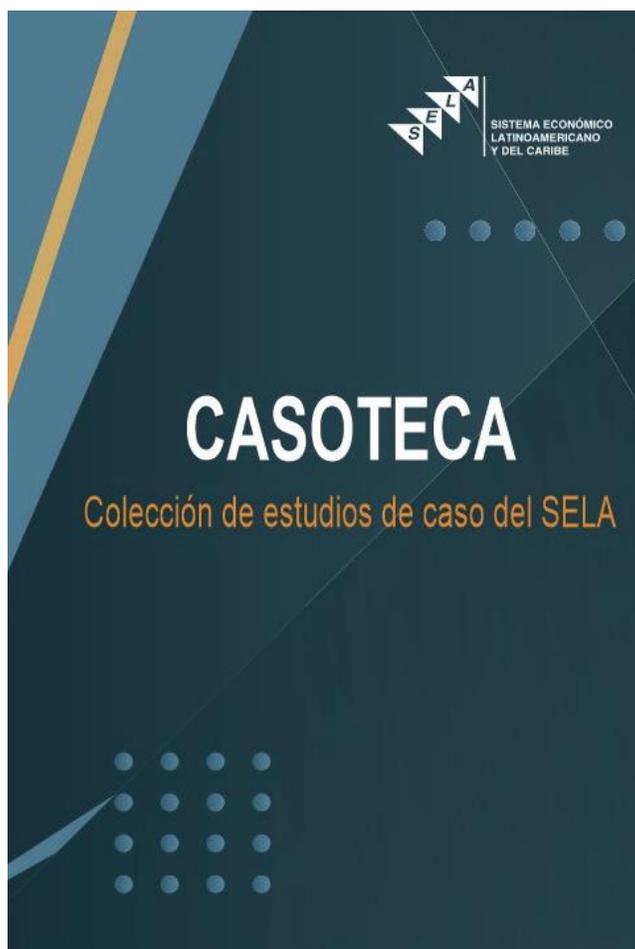
and assertive public policies that are materialized in systematic government actions reflected in programmes, projects and initiatives aimed at satisfying the needs, demands and expectations of the population. In this way, a contribution is made to the fulfilment of the main objective of the organisation, expressed in its motto *More and better integration*, for the benefit of the member countries of SELA, of the region as a whole and, most especially, of the citizens living in the region.

As part of the efforts made in the design and execution of its Work Programme, the Permanent Secretariat of SELA prepared this book, which is made up of 12 documents containing public policy proposals related to an equal number of issues associated with several crucial areas for the sustainable development of its Member States and, in general, of the region, as perceived from the perspective of the aforementioned Work Programme and present in the programmes, projects and activities included therein. Such proposals aim to form a solid basis for the formulation of public policies, based on the conviction that building a better future for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is a collective process.

Following are the issues included in the aforementioned proposals: i) convergence and cooperation based on inter-secretariat work; ii) development of productive niches; iii) public policy index for MSMEs; iv) fair competition in LAC; v) digital port transformation; vi) gender approach for sustainable MSMEs; vii) creative economy and cultural industries; viii) sustainable development of coffee and cocoa; ix) LAC-China economic cooperation; x) SST cooperation; xi) disaster risk management; and xii) cyber-diplomacy, AI and digital governance.

In each case, in addition to referring to the relevance, usefulness and importance of the issue for the development and integration of LAC, in view of the current regional context, SELA's previous initiatives associated with each element are discussed, evaluated and related; the main challenges to be faced and the opportunities to be taken advantage of are commented upon; some considerations are made about the strategy and feasibility of the proposal, and reference is made to the main legal, regulatory, political, financial, training and technical training of talent, and institutional conditions, among others, that must be met for the successful implementation of the proposed policies. Finally, some considerations are made regarding the potential impact of each proposal.

### COLLECTION OF SELA CASE STUDIES



In order to promote economic cooperation and integration in the region through practical and detailed case studies, SELA published the book *Casoteca: Collection of SELA case studies*, a compilation of case studies that analyse crucial issues for the economic and social development of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The book addresses issues such as cyberdiplomacy, digital transformation of ports, public value chains, mapping of productive sectors, regional competition and trade, gender policies, state capacities, MSME development, inter-ministerial convergence, trade relations with China and disaster risk management.

Aimed at government officials, academics and economic development practitioners, this book serves as a practical guide and educational resource. By presenting success stories and lessons learned, it fosters the exchange of experiences and collaboration among SELA member countries, contributing significantly to the resolution of common problems and the strengthening of regional integration.

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### **JOURNAL CONVERGENCIA: MSMES WITH A GENDER APPROACH IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) account for 99.5% of the business fabric in Latin America and the Caribbean, according to figures from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), generating most jobs in the region. In this regard, it is important to promote robust public policy practices and strategies that respond to the needs of the sector. The regional public agenda aims to promote incentives for entrepreneurs, where strategies to support women-led entrepreneurship stand out.

Through this publication, the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System seeks to contribute to the achievement of gender equality, a cross-cutting issue in the organisation's Work Programme, with which it seeks to promote public policies that respond to the specific needs of companies led by women and that guarantee the sustainability and development of the business ecosystem in the region.

This edition of *Convergencia* journal reviews the female entrepreneurial ecosystem in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, based on the importance of articulating public policies that promote the reduction of the regional gender gap with projects that help these enterprises face the challenges present in the adoption of sustainable practices to add value to their operations and strengthen the growth of the region.

#### **1.2.6. PRESENCE IN THE MEDIA**

In addition to the publication of 127 press releases, 225 regional bulletins and more than 2,566 posts in our social networks, SELA has had a significant presence in the media of the region, through exclusive interviews, international agencies and local media, to disseminate the Work Programme of the organisation and its activities in the areas of Economic Recovery, Social Development and Digitalisation.

Exclusive interview to the Bolivian public television channel 'Bolivia TV,' where the Permanent Secretary presented an overview of the region and highlighted the management of inflation in Bolivia.

Participation of the Permanent Secretary of SELA in the SPIEF2024 in Russia, coverage by Sputnik.

Exclusive interview with Sputnik Agency, in which Ambassador Clarems Endara stressed that Latin America and the Caribbean discussed the 'new financial structure.'

Interview for Venezuelan media from the Forum "The challenges of integration in Latin America and the Caribbean," with the presence of Ernesto Samper.

Exclusive interview for CGTN, within the framework of the first "China-Latin America and the Caribbean Development Forum," where Ambassador Clarems Endara highlighted the importance of China and its leadership in the world.

In an interview for the television programme "Embajadas y embajadores" on Globovisión, the Permanent Secretary dealt with the cultural fabric and integration, the way in which SELA works with the embassies, and the functions and integration objectives of the organisation.

In addition, several reviews and press releases on events, activities, the agenda of the work programme and SELA's anniversary week were published in local and international media.

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[https://www.economiaydiplomacia.info/secretario-permanente-del-sela-en-spief-2024-necesitamos-establecer-un-mecanismo-regional-de-pagos/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaam64Iz8fjsertFY6MVU6Vi-bT2rRQnKwerUMOIWPJZ3QC4Tc1b8hAqTBM\\_aem\\_Oy3SuQIU Bef93WafPLpPBg](https://www.economiaydiplomacia.info/secretario-permanente-del-sela-en-spief-2024-necesitamos-establecer-un-mecanismo-regional-de-pagos/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaam64Iz8fjsertFY6MVU6Vi-bT2rRQnKwerUMOIWPJZ3QC4Tc1b8hAqTBM_aem_Oy3SuQIU Bef93WafPLpPBg)
- 20) Ambassador Clarems Endara in SPIEF 2024: "We need to establish a regional payment mechanism"  
[https://socialite360.com/mundo-diplomatico/embajador-clarems-endara-en-spief-2024-necesitamos-establecer-un-mecanismo-regional-de-pagos/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaArgwj2FvOdadndNxrSNyHhLEtuWmnbRqxrNHjG9a5ogSX7cRb14\\_gNw\\_aem\\_VgPENqi8PEC66jgFulizoQ](https://socialite360.com/mundo-diplomatico/embajador-clarems-endara-en-spief-2024-necesitamos-establecer-un-mecanismo-regional-de-pagos/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaArgwj2FvOdadndNxrSNyHhLEtuWmnbRqxrNHjG9a5ogSX7cRb14_gNw_aem_VgPENqi8PEC66jgFulizoQ)
- 21) Latin America and the Caribbean discuss with Russia "the new financial structure". Video.  
[https://noticiaslatam.lat/20240607/latinoamerica-y-el-caribe-discute-con-rusia-la-nueva-estructura-financiera-1155320148.html?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaasjLRtpeNHPJGeQHqIt2H4IZKJEfsdi5vEgWvYI3GOQF0IaiJBltjGie0\\_aem\\_bWCoUie5BpABnFH67FVEDg%23pv%3Dg%3D1155320148%2Fp%3D1155320346](https://noticiaslatam.lat/20240607/latinoamerica-y-el-caribe-discute-con-rusia-la-nueva-estructura-financiera-1155320148.html?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaasjLRtpeNHPJGeQHqIt2H4IZKJEfsdi5vEgWvYI3GOQF0IaiJBltjGie0_aem_bWCoUie5BpABnFH67FVEDg%23pv%3Dg%3D1155320148%2Fp%3D1155320346)
- 22) Permanent Secretary of SELA and authorities of the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN) in working meeting during the "XXVII St. Petersburg International Economic Forum."  
<https://eldariano.com/secretario-permanente-del-sela-y-autoridades-del-parlacen-en-reunion-de-trabajo-durante-el-xxvii-foro-economico-internacional-de-san->

[petersburgo/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAabgVhhGfhAWYzY3Jfy-vsaaLQahLJn6IpYEl-Wumbyi6yrPuwNDRJQQ9is\\_aem\\_OyRYfSX0sVdQjOuwu6ITiA](https://petersburgo/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAabgVhhGfhAWYzY3Jfy-vsaaLQahLJn6IpYEl-Wumbyi6yrPuwNDRJQQ9is_aem_OyRYfSX0sVdQjOuwu6ITiA)

- 23) SELA opens registration for Seminar to promote Latin America and the Caribbean as a tourist destination  
[https://socialite360.com/mundo-diplomatico/sela-abre-registro-para-seminario-para-potenciar-a-america-latina-y-el-caribe-como-destino-turistico/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaYCYJ74fglO86oJ2H0Iz9Kc3xq-4V\\_9la4ufvSoGDQyo7p2H1uyzrLo1kg\\_aem\\_xPpoJtUgBRzB3I2dqW2HMw](https://socialite360.com/mundo-diplomatico/sela-abre-registro-para-seminario-para-potenciar-a-america-latina-y-el-caribe-como-destino-turistico/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaYCYJ74fglO86oJ2H0Iz9Kc3xq-4V_9la4ufvSoGDQyo7p2H1uyzrLo1kg_aem_xPpoJtUgBRzB3I2dqW2HMw)
- 24) Clarems Endara of SELA: "It is imperative that the region develops inclusive and participatory digital governance strategies"  
[https://mascontainer.com/clarems-endara-y-las-estrategias-de-gobernabilidad-digital-inclusiva/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaaryFifuas-NbJfs8AFDJJCwbVf9Tbu-8KeyLslvFS2SeFMLHiXekafS8\\_aem\\_woo0JZ1RVzRzgjmw3GUvcw](https://mascontainer.com/clarems-endara-y-las-estrategias-de-gobernabilidad-digital-inclusiva/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaaryFifuas-NbJfs8AFDJJCwbVf9Tbu-8KeyLslvFS2SeFMLHiXekafS8_aem_woo0JZ1RVzRzgjmw3GUvcw)
- 25) SELA and CAF organise the VIII Regional Virtual Meeting of Port Logistics Communities  
[https://mascontainer.com/sela-caf-y-el-encuentro-de-comunidades-logisticas-portuarias/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaa4jSV9Bsm4C4k3BPDpz1c\\_FFO-LcEeaIqV8xuYJKk\\_acPDeBWeDmyrCGw\\_aem\\_kvsHBmCS33BiTT1icZ-Ekg](https://mascontainer.com/sela-caf-y-el-encuentro-de-comunidades-logisticas-portuarias/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaa4jSV9Bsm4C4k3BPDpz1c_FFO-LcEeaIqV8xuYJKk_acPDeBWeDmyrCGw_aem_kvsHBmCS33BiTT1icZ-Ekg)
- 26) SELA: Regional Meeting of Port Logistics Communities addressed the challenges of the industry in the face of constant disruptions  
[https://www.mundomaritimo.cl/noticias/sela-encuentro-regional-de-comunidades-logisticas-portuarias-abordo-los-desafios-de-la-industria-ante-constant-disrupciones?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaY6lCem95S-ELRTbn4jWoL2yJVU-ltGMoyoUnby1UXySO5eKMOzcWi0TAs\\_aem\\_iKaftrYuLNkgo596RzG8lg](https://www.mundomaritimo.cl/noticias/sela-encuentro-regional-de-comunidades-logisticas-portuarias-abordo-los-desafios-de-la-industria-ante-constant-disrupciones?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaY6lCem95S-ELRTbn4jWoL2yJVU-ltGMoyoUnby1UXySO5eKMOzcWi0TAs_aem_iKaftrYuLNkgo596RzG8lg)
- 27) Disruptive technologies would help move towards smart ports  
[https://t21.com.mx/tecnologias-disruptivas-ayudarian-a-transitar-hacia-puertos-inteligentes/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaZzXfvT5ZyPgrVlzSxh985XYIji7la944IxiXoa1kUzzuEaiHjteXADFac\\_aem\\_zWkLzqMuWV2mviWyCi8olg](https://t21.com.mx/tecnologias-disruptivas-ayudarian-a-transitar-hacia-puertos-inteligentes/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaZzXfvT5ZyPgrVlzSxh985XYIji7la944IxiXoa1kUzzuEaiHjteXADFac_aem_zWkLzqMuWV2mviWyCi8olg)
- 28) SELA presents the book *Tejido Regional, integración y desarrollo de América Latina*, by Ambassador Clarems Endara, Permanent Secretary of SELA  
[https://mppre.gob.ve/publicacion/3428-sela-presenta-libro-tejido-regional-integracion-y-desarrollo-de-america-latina?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaZqxz5WoY3LETWC0BSYNkLiJNWwCh9R2gyh1ZQNxT39sGQKGpHij9ixIpQ\\_aem\\_TISXxnE\\_mEwPVUkNS8yl7g](https://mppre.gob.ve/publicacion/3428-sela-presenta-libro-tejido-regional-integracion-y-desarrollo-de-america-latina?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaZqxz5WoY3LETWC0BSYNkLiJNWwCh9R2gyh1ZQNxT39sGQKGpHij9ixIpQ_aem_TISXxnE_mEwPVUkNS8yl7g)
- 29) International cooperation, a tool to overcome inequality  
[https://publica.prensa-latina.cu/pub/cooperacion-internacionaluna-herramienta-para-superar-la-desigualdad?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaazx3q0-Rax3j\\_so\\_xhGSFSQaVDgaLysqKpFlve\\_wnzsolQEu4fTnTClfA\\_aem\\_F5StyCiiqfggswEvNdTUA](https://publica.prensa-latina.cu/pub/cooperacion-internacionaluna-herramienta-para-superar-la-desigualdad?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaazx3q0-Rax3j_so_xhGSFSQaVDgaLysqKpFlve_wnzsolQEu4fTnTClfA_aem_F5StyCiiqfggswEvNdTUA)

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- 30) SELA reaffirms its commitment to promote the inclusion of women in the maritime and port industry  
[https://socialite360.com/mundo-diplomatico/sela-reafirma-su-compromiso-con-la-promocion-de-la-inclusion-de-las-mujeres-en-la-industria-maritima-y-portuaria/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaG9fXwoepSjq3iQWCHkA7-jmJy0VqIZh7UKsN6pdD\\_ErcK1VvEONZiAUk\\_aem\\_x7pjDMv4pD5nzCe6ZT7k1g](https://socialite360.com/mundo-diplomatico/sela-reafirma-su-compromiso-con-la-promocion-de-la-inclusion-de-las-mujeres-en-la-industria-maritima-y-portuaria/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaG9fXwoepSjq3iQWCHkA7-jmJy0VqIZh7UKsN6pdD_ErcK1VvEONZiAUk_aem_x7pjDMv4pD5nzCe6ZT7k1g)
- 31) SELA: Integration and cooperation are the solution to the challenges of Disaster Risk Management in the region  
[https://www.elnacional.com/mundo/sela-integracion-y-cooperacion-son-la-solucion-a-los-desafios-de-la-gestion-del-riesgo-de-desastres-en-la-region/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaAbEYpsHGoI3DcXfkYmpa9CUk7Tpg2kmv1hrdXzM\\_Tq5MmHBRpweWn0TD8\\_aem\\_m7C4v4uY1I5VNk\\_kfIpUxw%23google\\_vignette](https://www.elnacional.com/mundo/sela-integracion-y-cooperacion-son-la-solucion-a-los-desafios-de-la-gestion-del-riesgo-de-desastres-en-la-region/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaAbEYpsHGoI3DcXfkYmpa9CUk7Tpg2kmv1hrdXzM_Tq5MmHBRpweWn0TD8_aem_m7C4v4uY1I5VNk_kfIpUxw%23google_vignette)
- 32) SELA and CELAC sign Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen regional integration  
[https://socialite360.com/mundo-diplomatico/sela-y-celac-firman-memorando-de-entendimiento-para-fortalecer-integracion-regional/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaYddEJRDKV9FRSSyq25mJvPN3lwwG33RI1G7hop0\\_czog-UWLpRxbEtxlQA\\_aem\\_Mbu1jSEqdzPx-F-GNkr0dag](https://socialite360.com/mundo-diplomatico/sela-y-celac-firman-memorando-de-entendimiento-para-fortalecer-integracion-regional/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaYddEJRDKV9FRSSyq25mJvPN3lwwG33RI1G7hop0_czog-UWLpRxbEtxlQA_aem_Mbu1jSEqdzPx-F-GNkr0dag)
- 33) Brazil highlights SELA's role in strengthening regional integration  
[https://socialite360.com/mundo-diplomatico/brasil-destaca-rol-del-sela-en-el-fortalecimiento-de-la-integracion-regional/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaJRrCYdET6\\_qbbEEErjpuEP0JG-hDHT7q6RtQ6qditAkrd7jhjz9RYM\\_aem\\_kCV0n6vCVPjJgyUgd1cchA](https://socialite360.com/mundo-diplomatico/brasil-destaca-rol-del-sela-en-el-fortalecimiento-de-la-integracion-regional/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaJRrCYdET6_qbbEEErjpuEP0JG-hDHT7q6RtQ6qditAkrd7jhjz9RYM_aem_kCV0n6vCVPjJgyUgd1cchA)
- 34) SELA: any coercive measure against a member country affects the region  
[https://elpitazo.net/economia/sela-cualquier-medida-coercitiva-hacia-un-pais-miembro-afecta-a-la-region/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaZj6ipT6CExEffJD3A47McHJz9ehOZfMIVVMMfgBI3lt\\_ErslmnoDSxsAro\\_aem\\_5bo-nw32P9w1gGI5s1-syA](https://elpitazo.net/economia/sela-cualquier-medida-coercitiva-hacia-un-pais-miembro-afecta-a-la-region/?fbclid=PAZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAaZj6ipT6CExEffJD3A47McHJz9ehOZfMIVVMMfgBI3lt_ErslmnoDSxsAro_aem_5bo-nw32P9w1gGI5s1-syA)