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**PROGRAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SURVEYS
AND THE MEASUREMENT OF LIVING CONDITIONS
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
(ISLC/MECOVI Program)**

PROGRESS REPORT

(JANUARY 1997 - MARCH 2000)

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MECOVI Program **

IBRD



ECLAC



IDB



Prepared for presentation at the INF-WB Forum on Supporting Comprehensive and Country-led Poverty Reduction Strategy that took place on April 24-25, 2000 in Washington, D.C.

** MECOVI is short for “mejoramiento de las encuestas de condiciones de vida, Spanish translation for improvement of the surveys of living conditions (ISLC).

IDB-World Bank-ECLAC

**ISLC/MECOVI Program:
Improvement of Surveys and the Measurement of Living Conditions
in Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Progress Report
(January 1997- March 2000)**

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IDB-World Bank-ECLAC

ISLC/MECOVI Program:

Improvement of Surveys and the Measurement of Living Conditions

in Latin America and the Caribbean

Progress Report

(January 1997-March 2000)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Establishment of the ISLC/MECOVI. The Program for the "Improvement of Surveys and the Measurement of Living Conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean" (ISLC/MECOVI), was established in 1996 by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The original four participating countries were: Argentina, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Peru. The Program's activities started at the beginning of 1997.
2. ISLC/MECOVI Objectives: The Program's main objectives are to: (i) improve the quality of living conditions household surveys; (ii) assure national coverage (both urban and rural); (iii) improve the surveys thematic coverage, and all the methodological processes of the survey cycle; (iv) establish mechanisms to facilitate the interaction between data producers and users; (v) develop institutional capacity in the counterpart organizations in order to make the activities sustainable; and, (vi) promote the dissemination and wide access to the data generated.
3. ISLC/MECOVI Program Activities. The Program has two main components: (i) beneficiary country level activities, which aim at improving the design and the implementation process of the systems of household surveys in the context of institutional strengthening. As of today the beneficiary countries are Argentina, El Salvador, Paraguay, Peru, Nicaragua (since June

1998), Bolivia (since May 1999), and Guatemala (since October 1999); and, (ii) regional activities, which include workshops, training courses, and the creation of a household surveys data bank.

4. Organization of the Program within IDB, the World Bank and ECLAC. Within the IDB the ISLC/MECOVI Program is located in the Poverty and Inequality Advisory Unit (POV), headed by Nora Lustig, in the Social and Sustainable Development Department (SDS). The Program coordinator at IDB is Gilberto Moncada. At the World Bank, the ISLC Program is located in the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, in the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit. The ISLC-World Bank Program Coordinator is Haeduck Lee. At ECLAC, the ISLC Program is part of the Statistics and Economic Programs Division. The ISLC-ECLAC Coordinator is Juan Carlos Feres.
5. Steering Committee meetings. The Steering Committee has held two meetings. The first one on February 20, 1997, in which it reviewed the recommendations from the Advisory Board, formally approved the plans of action for the participating countries, and established the base procedures to incorporate new countries (two per year). The second meeting was held on July 23, 1998, in which it underlined the need to strengthen the relationship between producers and users of household surveys; recommended organizing a workshop and a training course for the English speaking Caribbean countries; and, emphasized the importance of extending access to the household surveys data bank in order to facilitate the use of the data by the research community at large, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean.
6. Advisory Board meetings. The Advisory Board has held two meetings. Its first meeting was on January 17, 1997, and the second meeting took place on November 6, 1998. In both meetings the Advisory Board made important recommendations for the improvement of household surveys in the region. The president of the Advisory Board is Oscar Altimir.

7. The ISLC Program Coordination Committee. This Committee is composed of the coordinators from the three co-sponsoring agencies. The Committee has met four times: in January and September 1997, in April 1998, and in May 1999. The Committee also maintains permanent communication throughout the development of the Program's activities.
8. IDB funding. The IDB has made available all resources necessary to finance the activities outlined in the ISLC Program's Plan of Operations: the plans of action for Argentina, El Salvador, Paraguay and Peru; the regional workshops and seminars; the regional training courses; and the regional household survey data bank. The IDB has also contributed to the financing of operations in Nicaragua (through a loan to the FISE-Nicaragua); Bolivia (through the Swedish Trust Fund and FSO); and in Guatemala (through the Swedish Trust Fund).
9. World Bank funding. The World Bank has made available IDF Grant resources for Argentina, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru. Procedures have begun to request IDF grant resources for Bolivia and Guatemala.
10. **Activities in participating countries:**
 - 10.1 *Technical assistance.* The MECOVI Program has given technical assistance through consultants with expertise in the following areas of household surveys: (i) questionnaire design and review; (ii) updating of the cartography and sample design; (iii) development of a digital cartography; (iv) field work organization; (v) development of a decentralized data entry system; (vi) development of the main consistency and quality control criteria; (vii) systematization of the data bases; and (viii) data processing and analysis.
 - 10.2 *Executed surveys.* The technical assistance provided has improved and increased the thematic coverage of the surveys. Some new modules have been incorporated in some of the participating countries, some examples are: anthropometrics (measurement of nutrition),

family remittances, agricultural activities, time use by household members, access to social programs, citizen security, and management of external shocks (see Table 1). The geographical coverage of the surveys has been extended to rural areas for the first time in some countries (Paraguay and Bolivia), and the sample frame has been updated in almost all participating countries. Under this framework the following surveys have been executed (sequential order based on the date operations began):

- (i) Paraguay: “Encuesta Integrada de Hogares” (EIH), Aug.97 – Aug. 98; and "Encuesta Permanente de Hogares" (EPH), Aug.-Dec.99.
- (ii) Peru: “Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO) in the IV quarter of 1997; II, III, and IV quarter of 1998; and I, II, III y IV quarter of 1999.
- (iii) El Salvador: “Encuesta Nacional de Propósitos Múltiples (EHPM)” in May- Dec.98.; and Feb-Dec. 99.
- (iv) Nicaragua: “Encuesta Nacional de Medición de Condiciones de Vida” (ENMV), May –Aug. 1998; and May -Aug. 1999 (only for areas affected by Hurricane Mitch).
- (v) Argentina: “Encuesta Permanente de Hogares” (EPH) presently being reformulated.
- (vi) Bolivia: “Encuesta Contínua de Hogares” (ECH), Oct.-Nov.1999.
- (vii) Guatemala: "Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida" (ENCOVI), presently in the final stages of design and to be executed in June-Oct.2000.

10.3 Interaction between data users and producers. The Program has promoted a series of mechanisms to improve the relation between the producers and the users of household surveys, so that the surveys capture the relevant information for the country. With this objective in mind an Inter-institutional Committee has been created in all the participating countries. The Committee is made of individuals that represent a wide range of public and private organizations.

10.4 Training: The statistical offices of the participating countries have organized workshops and training courses for both users and producers of household surveys. The following are some of the topics that have been covered: sampling, use of software to process surveys,

conceptual aspects on living conditions, presentations of on-going research, etc.

10.5 Strengthening of data analysis capacity. With the goal of increasing the use and analysis of the information generated by the household surveys a Studies Fund has been implemented in the participating countries. These funds promote and support research done by national researchers. Presently three studies have been financed in Paraguay, and there are four studies in execution in El Salvador, 16 in Peru, and 11 in Argentina.

10.6 Improved data access. With the support provided by technical assistance the countries have improved the organization and documentation of their household surveys. A policy of wide access to the original data bases and to the final results and publications is also being promoted. The statistical offices are distributing the data bases and results to users in the government, universities, independent researchers, and to non-profit organizations.

10.7 Publications and dissemination of information. The format and content of the publications, that contain the results from the surveys, has been improved, and so have the ways in which the publications are distributed. Along this line, the participating countries have printed publications (brochures, books, press bulletins, reports, etc.) with the results from the surveys and methodological documents. The participating countries are also developing web pages to disseminate their publications and reports. Currently, some of these documents are available through the web page of the Poverty and Inequality Advisory Unit (SDS/POV) at IDB (www.iadb.org/sds/pov) with links to the statistical offices that have web pages, and ECLAC and the World Bank.

11. Regional Activities:

11.1 Regional workshops. Four regional workshops have been organized. (i) The first regional workshop took place on April 1-3, 1998, the topic was "Planning and development of household surveys for the measurement of living conditions", at the headquarters of the

Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI) in Mexico. (ii) The second workshop took place on November 10-13, 1998 in Buenos Aires, with the support of Argentina's Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INDEC), and the topic was "Measuring Household Income". (iii) The third workshop took place on May 24-28, 1999, at INEGI, and the topic was "Measuring Household Consumption". (iv) The fourth workshop took place on November 16-19, 1999, at INDEC, and the topic was "Measuring poverty: the poverty line approach". A total of 200 individuals from most countries in the Region have participated in these workshops. These workshops have been organized by ECLAC, with collaboration from the World Bank, and financing from IDB.

11.2 Regional training courses. There have been two training courses on "Design, Implementation and Analysis of Household Surveys". (i) The first training course took place on March 1-17, 1999; and, (ii) the second training course was held between August 30 and September 17, 1999. Both courses were organized in collaboration with Mexico's INEGI. The third course took place in Buenos Aires with the support of Argentina's INDEC between March 27 and April 14 2000. There have been a total of 70 participants in both courses, from most of the countries in Latin America. The courses have been organized by IDB (SDS/POV in collaboration with INT/INDES), with support from the World Bank.

11.3 Data files. The data files for 42 household surveys (executed in 1995, 1996 and 1997) were prepared by ECLAC during 1997-99 with financing from IDB. The surveys have been properly documented according to the available ground methodology and the content of the data files. IDB (SDS/POV) has organized a data bank of household surveys available to users within IDB, which includes around 160 data bases from 21 countries (the data bank includes the 42 surveys prepared by ECLAC).

12. Incorporation of new countries. The execution of the Program's activities has generated a lot of interest from countries that are not direct participants and who wish to receive technical assistance. In accordance with the ISLC's Plan of Operations, and following the Steering

Committee recommendation to incorporate two new countries per year, efforts have been made to incorporate Nicaragua (incorporated in June 1998), Bolivia (incorporated in May 1999), Guatemala (incorporated in October 1999), and Haiti. Other countries that have expressed interest in participating in the ISLC/MECOVI Program are Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, and Venezuela.

13. Efforts to incorporate new countries in 2000-01: With the goals of exploring the interest of new countries to participate in the ISLC/MECOVI Program and develop the mechanisms to incorporate new countries, on December 13, 1999, the IDB approved a new technical cooperation (ATN/SF-6814-RG). This TC will allow to explore and identify the needs for technical, material, and financial assistance to develop a household surveys system in the countries that are candidates to be incorporated into the Program. It will also be used to identify potential sources of funds, the different possibilities to finance the national projects, and to develop a plan of action to make effective the incorporation of new countries into the Program in the period 2000-2001.

14. Evaluations. The contents of the questionnaires that have been used in the beneficiary countries were evaluated in 1998. An evaluation of the implementation of the Program in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru will take place in the year 2000.

ISLC/MECOVI PROGRAM

PROGRESS REPORT

(January 1997-March 2000)

I. Introduction

1. The Program for the Improvement of Surveys and the Measurement of Living Conditions in Latin America and the Caribbean (ISLC) was established in 1996 by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Bank, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The Program had also the direct participation of Argentina, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Peru. Mexico and Chile contributed with FSO to finance the regional workshops, the regional training courses, and ECLAC's data bank activities. The IDB approved the Plan of Operations on May 29, 1996 (ATN/SF-5240 to ATN/SF-5246-RG), and initiated technical assistance to beneficiary countries at the beginning of 1997.
2. The Program's main objectives are to: (i) improve the quality of living conditions household surveys; (ii) assure national coverage (both urban and rural); (iii) improve the surveys thematic coverage, and all the methodological processes of the survey cycle; (iv) establish mechanisms to facilitate the interaction between data producers and users; (v) develop institutional capacity in the counterpart organizations in order to make the activities sustainable; and, (vi) promote the dissemination and wide access to the data generated.
3. On September 1, 1997, the IDB transferred the ISLC Program from the Inter-American Institute for Social Development (INDES), in the Integration and Regional Programs Department (INT), to the Poverty and Inequality Advisory Unit (POV) in the Social and Sustainable Development Department (SDS). At the World Bank, the ISLC Program is located in the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, in the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Unit. At ECLAC, the ISLC Program is part of the Statistics and

Economic Programs Division.

II. Steering Committee, the Advisory Board, and the Coordination Committee

4. Steering Committee (SC)

4.1 The Steering Committee held its first meeting on February 20, 1997; it had a second meeting on July 23, 1998. At those meetings the SC issued the following decisions and recommendations:

- (i) The SC formally approved the plans of action for Argentina, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Peru. It also established the base procedures to incorporate new countries (two per year), and recommended that IDB prepared a new technical cooperation to finance the process of incorporation of new countries.
- (ii) The SC offered the following guidance: (a) place particular emphasis on the design of a panel data component; (b) improve the coverage of gender issues; (c) promote the interaction between household surveys data users and producers; (d) strengthen the relationship between producers and users of household surveys; (e) organize a workshop and a training course for the English speaking Caribbean countries; (f) edit booklets that promote and disseminate best practices in the activities related to the improvement of household surveys; and (g) publicize the activities of the ISLC/MECOVI Program through a web page.
- (iii) The SC emphasized the need to explore the possibilities of increasing support from the IDB and the World Bank to strengthen and modernize the statistical offices of the countries in the region.
- (iv) The SC emphasized the importance of extending access to the Data Bank of household surveys in order to facilitate the use of the data by the research community at large, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this context, the SC discussed the possibility of also making available to the research community the non-MECOVI household surveys that are stored in the archives of the three co-sponsoring

institutions. The Poverty and Inequality Advisory Unit at the IDB was designated to take the lead on the implementation of an initiative to create a widely accessible Latin American and Caribbean Data Bank of Household Surveys.

5. Advisory Board (AB)

5.1 The Advisory Board met for the first time on January 17, 1997. A second meeting took place in November 1998. Oscar Altimir is the president of Advisory Board. Orazio Attanasio, Nancy Birdsall and Francois Bourguignon joined the Advisory Board in 1998.

5.2 The Advisory Board's main recommendations were to:

- (i) Incorporate a panel data component into the household surveys.
- (ii) Improve the data regarding gender issues.
- (iii) Gather information on household and community assets, agricultural activities, access to institutions, access to credit, expenditures, availability of remittances and migration support nets more systematically, in order to facilitate the analysis of the determinants of poverty. Members of the AB also emphasized the need to capture information to look into the mechanisms that households use to cope with shocks, and their access to the means to deal with them.
- (iv) Improve data quality by: formalizing quality and consistency control methods; comparing the data with data from other sources; analyzing non-sampling errors; fostering interaction between data users and producers; making sure that methodological documentation for the surveys is available; and improving the way questions are formulated.
- (v) Create inter-institutional working groups that incorporate other participants in addition to the counterpart agency, to reinforce the institutionalization of the household surveys.
- (vi) Encourage the training of national technicians by emphasizing the importance of effective instruction mechanisms and the coverage of relevant topics.

- (vii) Improve international comparability of household surveys to facilitate analysis from a regional perspective. In this respect, the AB recommended that the Program sponsors the creation of a core survey module, which will guarantee a minimum base of comparative indicators, which countries can use to build up by adding other modules.
- (viii) In regards to what kind of survey (an integrated household survey or a system of household surveys with rotating modules) the Program should encourage, the members of the AB recommended the following: evaluate the alternatives based on the experience in the beneficiary countries, the quality of the data produced, and the informational needs to analyze living conditions.
- (ix) Evaluation on the implementation of the Program in the beneficiary countries should be based on what is stated in the Plans of Action. Specifically, it is necessary to evaluate the Program's progress in building institutional capacity in the execution agencies, training human resources, the relevance to the users of the data produced, and the data dissemination policies and actions.
- (x) The members of the AB emphasized that the process to widen access to the data bank should be done in close coordination with the statistical offices from the region. It was recommended that the household survey databases are made available to the public should have all the necessary documentation and information to ease their use. Responsibility over technical support to users should be well defined. The criteria to choose a repository institution for the data bank should be the following: easy and efficient access to the data at the lowest cost.

6. Coordination Committee

6.1 The ISLC Program Coordination Committee is composed of the coordinators from the three co-sponsoring agencies. The Committee has met four times: in January and September 1997, and in April 1998, and May 1999. The main recommendations from the Coordination Committee were:

- (i) Emphasized the need to speed up the Program's implementation. To do so, it was agreed to decentralize the activities as stipulated in the Plan of Operations. However, to preserve the sense of teamwork, the Committee pointed the need to keep information flowing continuously among the three institutions.
- (ii) Agreed that all methodological publications should be published under the ISLC/MECOVI Program name, and those documents dealing with analytical issues should be published under the name of the institution responsible for writing and editing them.
- (iii) Agreed that the IDB and the World Bank should reinforce efforts to guarantee the technical comparability between the World Bank's LSMS surveys and those done under the ISLC/MECOVI Program.
- (iv) Agreed that the IDB and the World Bank should always maintain the technical responsibility for implementing the ISLC/MECOVI Program, in those cases in which other institutions co-finance a particular country's participation.

III. Financial Resources for the Program

7. Allocation of resources at the IDB

7.1 The IDB has made available all the necessary resources to finance the activities outlined in the ISLC Program's Plan of Operations. These include: (i) plans of action for Argentina, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Peru; (ii) regional workshops and seminars; (iii) regional training courses; and (iv) the regional household survey data bank. The IDB has also contributed to the financing of operations in Nicaragua (through a loan to the FISE-Nicaragua); Bolivia (through the Swedish Trust Fund and FSO); and in Guatemala (through the Swedish Trust Fund).

8. Allocation of resources at the World Bank and ECLAC

- 8.1 In accordance with the ISLC Program Plan of Operations, to finance country-specific activities, the World Bank will contribute US\$1.2 million from the Institutional Development Fund (IDF), US\$970,000 in direct staff costs and US\$200,000 in travel expenses. If new countries are incorporated into the Program's country-specific component, the World Bank will consider granting US\$400,000 per country in IDF resources to finance country-specific activities, and assigning more staff time to monitor and coordinate activities in those new countries.
- 8.2 The World Bank has disbursed IDF grant resources for Paraguay (US\$200,000), Peru (US\$400,000), Argentina (US\$400,000), and Nicaragua (US\$450,000). It is also working to request IDF grant resources for Bolivia (US\$360,000), Guatemala (US\$495,000), and a second grant for Paraguay (US\$200,000). The World Bank also contributes with staff costs and travel expenses for monitoring and participation in the regional activities (workshops and training courses).
- 8.3 According to the ISLC Program's Plan of Operations, ECLAC will contribute US\$720,000 in direct staff costs (72 staff/months), and US\$32,000 in travel expenses. ECLAC is currently disbursing these resources on schedule.

IV. Activity reports for participating countries

Currently, the participating countries in the ISLC Program are Argentina, Bolivia (since May 1999), El Salvador, Nicaragua (since June 1998), Paraguay, Peru and Guatemala (since October 1999). The arrangement of the countries is based on the chronological order in which the Program's operations began.

9. *Paraguay*

Counterpart institution	Dirección General de Estadísticas, Encuestas y Censos (DGEEC)
Beginning of activities	The end of 1996
Fieldwork	A Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (EIH), which has national coverage (urban and rural): August 1997 – August 1998. "Encuesta Permanente de Hogares" (EPH), national coverage, August -December 1999.
Questionnaires	Household, community (rural area), prices, and anthropometric questionnaires.
Data base availability	The data base for the EIH 1997-98 is available to users.
Technical assistance	With technical assistance, the following items have supported: (i) Improving the topics covered by the survey; (ii) updating the cartography and the design of the sample; (iii) development of a digitalized cartography; (iv) organization of field work; (v) decentralized data entry; (vi) development of the main criteria to do consistency and quality checks in the field; (vii) organization of the databases; and, (viii) data processing and analysis.
Training and workshops	Training courses have been organized on the use of data processing software and on sampling techniques. Furthermore, technicians have benefited from on-the-job-training through the presence of national and international consultants, through the workshops held at DGEEC, and through the regional workshops and training courses.
Studies and publications	The following publications have been produced: i) "Divulgación Popular", documents (Num.1 and 2); ii) living standards profile for 1995; iii) living standards profile for 1996; iv) descriptive studies on the labor force, health, and education for 1996; v) living standards profile for 1997-98; and, vi) dissemination brochures.
Inter-Institutional Committee.	The Inter-Institutional Committee has actively participated in the design of the questionnaires and in other elements of the survey. The Committee members are: Secretaría Técnica de Planificación de la Presidencia de la República, Banco Central de Paraguay, Centro de Documentación y Estudio (CDE), Universidad Nacional de Asunción, and DGEEC.
Studies Fund	The Studies Fund was activated in 1998, using data from the "Encuesta Integrada de Hogares" 1996. The following studies have been financed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Molinas, José. "Internal migration in Paraguay: An economic analysis". ▪ Barán, Benjamín. "Welfare and poverty in Paraguay". ▪ Galeano, Luis y Federico Barrios. "Social vulnerability and urban poverty".

Evaluation	The questionnaire was evaluated in 1998. In 2000 an evaluation of the ISLC-Paraguay Program will be conducted.
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10. *Peru*

Counterpart institution	Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (INEI)
Beginning of activities	February 1997.
Fieldwork	A Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO), which has national coverage (urban and rural), was completed for the IV quarter of 1997; the II, III, and IV quarters of 1998; and the I, II, III, and IV quarters of 1999.
Questionnaires	Household, community (rural area), and prices questionnaires are being used.
Data base availability	The data base for the ENAHO IV quarter of 1997; II, III, IV quarter of 1998, and I quarter 1999, are available to users.
Technical assistance	Technical assistance has focused on: (i) improving the contents of the questionnaire; (ii) improving the design of the sample; (iii) improving the training methodologies used to train surveyors and supervisors; (iv) developing quality control systems for all stages of the survey, including a data base of questions and answers that is used to share problems and solutions related to the survey (this base is available through the Internet to the central office and the 24 regional offices); and, (v) improving data processing and analysis.
Training and workshops	The skills of INEI's technicians and data users from other institutions have been strengthened through the development of national workshops and training courses, dealing with methodological issues (sampling, software use, handling of data bases, uses of the ENAHO); and through on-the-job training in the presence of national and international consultants. Also through participation in the regional workshops and training courses.
Studies and publications	Studies on the measurement of living conditions and poverty were done for 1996, 1997 and 1998. Descriptive documents on education, health, employment, demographics, and migration, have been published. A series of methodological documents has also been published.

Inter-Institutional Committee.	The Inter-Institutional Committee has actively participated in the design of the survey. The members of the Committee are: Ministerio de la Presidencia, Ministerio de Trabajo, Ministerio de Salud, Ministerio de Educación, Ministerio de Transporte, Ministerio de Vivienda y Construcción, Ministerio de Promoción de la Mujer y Desarrollo Humano, Ministerio de Economía, Banco Central de Reserva, Fondo de Compensación para el Desarrollo Social (FONCODES), Instituto Nacional de la Salud, Universidad del Pacífico, Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE), Asociación Laboral para el Desarrollo (ADEC-ATC), and INEI.
Studies Fund	The Studies Fund was activated in 1999. Currently 16 research proposals are being financed, and it is expected that the final reports will be ready by June 2000.
Evaluation	The questionnaire was evaluated in 1998. In 2000 an evaluation of the ISLC-Peru Program will be conducted.

11. *El Salvador*

Counterpart institution	Dirección General de Estadística y Censos (DIGESTYC).
Beginning of activities	September 1997.
Fieldwork	A Encuesta Nacional de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples (EHPM), which has national coverage (urban and rural): May - Dec. 1998, and Feb.-Dec. 1999. Survey for 2000 on the field.
Questionnaires	Household, community (rural areas), prices and anthropometric questionnaires.
Data base availability	The EHPM 1998 database is available to users.
Technical assistance	Technical assistance has focused on: (i) updating the sampling frame; (ii) improving the topic contents of the questionnaires; (iii) sample design; (iv) organizing the field work and the data entry; (v) systematizing quality control methods; (vi) defining a plan aimed at creating a digitized cartography; and, (vii) use of software to handle data bases (ISSA, SPSS); and, (viii) data processing and analysis.
Training and workshops	Methodological workshops have been held to discuss the questionnaires, the sample, quality control issues, and the results of the surveys. Technicians have also participated in the regional workshops and training courses.
Studies and publications	Monthly estimates of the unemployment rate. Main cross-tabulations, and descriptive analysis of living conditions indicators and child nutrition.

Inter-Institutional Committee	The Inter-Institutional Committee has participated in the design of the survey. The Committee members are: Ministerio de Salud, Ministerio de Educación, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Ministerio de Trabajo, Banco Central De Reserva, FUSADES, Fondo de Inversión Social (FISDL), Universidad José Simeón Cañas, and DIGESTYC.
Studies Fund	The Studies Fund was activated in 1999. Four research proposals have been financed, it is expected that the final reports will be available in June 2000.
Evaluation	The questionnaire was evaluated in 1998. An evaluation of the ISLC-El Salvador Program will be conducted in 2000.

12. Argentina

Counterpart institution	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INDEC).
Beginning of activities	November 1998.
Fieldwork	"Encuesta Permanente de Hogares" (EPH) which is executed twice a year (May and October). The questionnaire is being reviewed with the objective of having a continuous survey starting in May 2000.
Questionnaires	Household questionnaire for the EPH (income-employment) and Living Standards Survey questionnaire (to be implemented in 2001).
Data base availability	Available three months after completing the field work operations.
Technical assistance	It has focused on: (i) updating of the sample frame; (ii) redesign of the EPH questionnaire; (iii) strategy for an integrated household surveys system; (iv) design of a follow up consumption module; (v) review of the measurement of income; (vi) socio-demographic indicators; and, (vii) publications design.
Training and workshops	During 1999 a national workshop and a sampling training course were organized. In March 2000 a regional training course will be hold at INDEC.
Studies and publications	(i) Study on households' income and expenditures (ENGHO 1996-97); and, (ii) labor market analysis.
Inter-Institutional Committee	It is being formed. It will start functioning in March 2000.
Studies Fund	The fund was activated in 1999. Currently 11 research proposals are being financed (five of them are graduate students thesis). The final reports will be available in July 2000.

13. Nicaragua

Counterpart institution	Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC).
Beginning of activities	May 1998
Fieldwork	“Encuesta de Medición de Niveles de Vida” (EMNV), in urban and rural areas, in May – Aug. 1998; and May - Aug. 1999 (follow up survey in the areas affected by hurricane Mitch).
Questionnaires	Households, prices, and anthropometric questionnaires.
Data base availability	The EMNV1998 database is available to users.
Technical assistance	Focused on the following topics: (i) questionnaire redesign; (ii) sample design; (iii) fieldwork organization; (iv) data base organization; and, (v) data processing and analysis.
Training and workshops	Training course in the use of SPSS. In 1999 workshops on sampling and on the methodology of household surveys were organized.
Studies and publications	A study of rural poverty, a descriptive analysis of living conditions, and a poverty map are being prepared. A popular dissemination booklet and the main tabulations were published.
Inter-Institutional Committee	Members: Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC); Ministerio de Economía y Desarrollo (MEDE); Ministerio de Educación (MED); Ministerio de Salud (MINSa); Ministerio de Trabajo (MITRAB); Instituto de fomento Municipal (INIFOM); Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería (MAG) ; Banco Central de Nicaragua (BCN); Fondo de Inversión Social de Emergencia (FISE); Ministerio de Acción Social (MAS); United Nations Development Program (UNDP); Fondo de Población de las Naciones Unidas (FNUAP); y Banco Mundial.
Studies Fund	The fund will be activated in 2000.

14. *Bolivia*

Counterpart institution	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE).
Beginning of activities	May 1999
Fieldwork	“Encuesta Continua de Hogares ” (ECH), in urban and rural areas, Oct.-Nov. 1999.
Questionnaires	Household Survey.

Data base availability	Three months after the conclusion of the field work.
Technical assistance	On the following topics: (i) questionnaire design; (ii) sampling; (iii) field work organization; (iv) data consistency methodologies.
Training and workshops	To be defined.
Studies and publications	Presently none.
Inter-Institutional Committee	To be formed.
Studies Fund	The fund will be activated in 2000.

15. *Guatemala*

Counterpart institution	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE).
Beginning of activities	October 1999
Fieldwork	"Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Vida" (ENCOVI) to be executed in June-Oct. 2000.
Questionnaires	Household, community (rural areas), prices and anthropometric questionnaires
Data base availability	Three months after the conclusion of the field work.
Technical assistance	Focusing on: (i) questionnaire design; (ii) sampling framework design; (iii) field work organization; and, (iv) data analysis.
Training and workshops	To be defined.
Studies and publications	A study on living conditions using the data from the income and expenditure survey "Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos Familiares" (ENIGFAM) 1997-98 is in process.
Inter-Institutional Committee	Members: Ministerio de Salud, Ministerio de Trabajo, Banco de Guatemala, FONAPAZ, INCAP/OPS, SEGEPLAN, GTZ, Fundación Soros, CIEN, Universidad del Valle, Universidad Rafael Landívar, UNFPA, PNUD, UNICEF, USAID, FLACSO, DIACO, Instituto Nacional de Estadística..
Studies Fund	The fund will be activated in 2000.

V. ISLC/MECOVI regional activities

The ISLC Program has three regional activities; (i) organizing regional workshops; (ii) organizing regional training courses; and (iii) developing a data bank of household surveys.

16. Regional workshops

14.1 According to the ISLC Program's Plan of Operations, ECLAC is responsible for the organization of eight regional workshops during the term of the Program, in direct collaboration with the other co-sponsoring organizations. To execute these workshops, ECLAC has a total budget equivalent to US\$740,000, which comes from IDB's Technical Cooperations ATN/SF-5240-RG and ATN/SF-5242-RG. During 1998 and 1999 ECLAC organized four of the eight planned workshops.

14.2 The first regional workshop took place on April 1-3, 1998, at the headquarters of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI) in Aguascalientes, Mexico. The title was "Planning and development of household surveys for the measurement of living conditions". Fifty-four participants representing 19 countries in the region attended.

14.3 The second regional workshop was held on November 10-13, 1998, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with the collaboration of the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INDEC). The central topic was "Measuring Household Income". There were fifty participants from 18 countries in the region.

14.4 The third regional workshop took place at INEGI in Aguascalientes, Mexico, on May 24-28, 1998. The central topic was "Measuring Household Consumption". There were fifty participants from 18 countries in the region.

14.5 The fourth regional workshop took place at INDEC in Buenos Aires, Argentina on November 16-19, 1999. The central topic was "Measuring poverty: The poverty line approach.". There were fifty participants from 19 countries in the region.

17. *Regional training courses*

17.1 The Program contemplates the organization of six regional training courses. Four of these courses will be organized in accordance with the agreement between IDB and Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI). For their execution the IDB will contribute the equivalent of US\$300,000 to INEGI. The agreement between IDB and INEGI was formalized in March 1998 (ATN/SF-5240-RG). The other two courses will take place in Argentina with support from the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INDEC). IDB will contribute US\$240,000 to finance them (ATN/SF-5242-RG). All regional training courses will be organized in collaboration with IDB's Inter-American Institute for Social Development (INDES), and support from the World Bank.

17.2 The first training course on the "Design, Implementation and Analysis of Household Surveys" took place on March 1-17, 1999. It was organized in collaboration with Mexico's INEGI in the city of Aguascalientes. There were 35 participants from 13 countries in the region. The second training course took place on August 30-September 17, 1999. There were 35 participants from 16 countries in the region. The third training course was organized in collaboration with Argentina's INDEC in Buenos Aires from March 27 to April 14. There were 38 participants from 19 countries in the region.

17.3 In accordance to the recommendation issued by the SC the World Bank through the World Bank Institute will finance the development of a workshop/training course program for the English speaking Caribbean countries during the first semester of 2000. The process of identifying the institution, which will in charge of implementing the workshop/training course, is underway. The potential candidates include the University of the West Indies -

Barbados, the Caribbean Development Bank, and The Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD).

18. *Household Surveys data bank*

18.1 According to the ISLC/MECOVI Program Plan of Operations, ECLAC is responsible for maintaining, improving, and updating a data bank of household surveys from countries in the region. ECLAC is also responsible for making this data bank available to the co-sponsoring organizations and other interested parties. To execute this activity, the IDB has given ECLAC a total budget equivalent to US\$540,000, from the Regional Technical Cooperation ATN/SF-5245-RG, for the Program's four-year period.

18.2 According to the understanding established in the IDB-ECLAC agreement, the data files for 42 household surveys (executed in 1995-97) were prepared in 1997-99. The surveys have been properly documented according to the available ground methodology and the data files content.

18.3 In order to make the household surveys databases available to users within the IDB, the MECOVI-IDB has organized a data bank that includes the databases provided by ECLAC plus other surveys provided directly by the countries. As of today this internal data bank comprises around 160 databases from 20 countries. Out of which about 100 have complete information and documentation.

18.4 Following the guidelines from the SC that emphasized the importance of extending access to the Data Bank in order to facilitate the use of the data by the research community at large, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Poverty and Inequality Advisory Unit (POV) has requested the authorization of the governments in Latin America and the Caribbean to expand the benefits of the Data Bank to researchers in the wider academic community. As of today 20 countries have responded authorizing the inclusion of their data in the Data Bank, and not one has responded negatively.

18.5 This Data Bank could include around 100 surveys spanning the 1980s and 1990s. For that the MECOVI-IDB team is working on the organization, documentation, and classification of the available databases. Most of the available surveys correspond to the second half of the 1980s and particularly to the 1990s.

VI. Progress reports on the incorporation of new countries

19. Efforts to incorporate several new countries started in 1997, in accordance with the ISLC Program Plan of Operations, and following the Steering Committee's recommendation to incorporate two new countries per year. These efforts are at various stages.

19.1 Nicaragua

National authorities and co-sponsoring institutions formalized the project that incorporated Nicaragua into the ISLC/MECOVI Program in June 1998. Financial resources to cover the cost of the Program include resources from the local counterpart, from international organizations (World Bank, UNDP and FNUAP), and from bilateral donors (Sweden, Norway and Denmark).

19.2 Bolivia

Bolivia was incorporated into the ISLC/MECOVI Program in May 1999. Financial resources to cover the cost of the Program include funds from the local counterpart, from international organizations (IDB, World Bank and UNDP), and from bilateral donors (Sweden, and GTZ-Germany).

19.3 Guatemala

Guatemala was incorporated into the ISLC/MECOVI Program in October 1999. Financial resources to cover the cost of the Program include funds from the local counterpart and from IDB (Swedish Trust Fund), World Bank, UNDP, USAID, UNICEF, and the Soros Foundation.

19.4 Dominican Republic

A first effort to coordinate its incorporation into the Program in 1997 was not successful. The government has requested again its incorporation into the ISLC/MECOVI Program.

19.5 Haiti

A joint mission IDB, the World Bank and UNDP took place in October 1998. However, the current situation in the government has not permitted any further progress.

19.6 Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela

These countries are presently coordinating with IDB (RE1/OD5) the development of a project of institutional strengthening of the national statistical offices in the Andean region.

It would include a household survey system component. Ecuador has formally requested its incorporation into the ISLC/MECOVI Program.

19.7 Other countries

Other countries have shown interest in joining the ISLC Program: Costa Rica, Guyana, Honduras, and Panama.

20. Efforts to incorporate new countries in 2000-01: With the goals of exploring the interest of new countries to participate in the ISLC/MECOVI Program and developing the mechanisms to incorporate new countries, on December 13, 1999, the IDB approved a new technical cooperation (ATN/SF-6814-RG). This TC will allow to explore and identify the needs for technical, material, and financial assistance to develop a household surveys system in the countries that are candidates to be incorporated into the Program. It will also be used to identify potential sources of funds, the different possibilities to finance the national projects, and to develop a plan of action to make effective the incorporation of new countries into the Program in the period 2000-2001.

VII. Program evaluation

21. Experts in the fields evaluated the content of the questionnaires that have been used in the beneficiary countries in 1998. During 2000, the implementation process of the ISLC Program in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru will be evaluated, based on the Plan of Action and the technical assistance provided.