



**United Nations Environment Programme  
Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean**

PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE  
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT  
PROGRAMA DAS NAÇÕES UNIDAS PARA O MEIO AMBIENTE

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**Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of  
the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Panama City, Panama  
20 to 25 November 2003**

**Distribution:**

Limited

**UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XIV/Inf.12**

**Friday 7, November 2003**

**Original: Spanish**

A. PREPARATORY MEETING OF EXPERTS  
20<sup>TH</sup> TO 22<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2003

**Latin American and the  
Caribbean Proposed  
Programme on Environmental  
Education within the  
Framework of Sustainable  
Development**



This *“Latin American and the Caribbean Proposed Programme on Environmental Education within the Framework of Sustainable Development”* is a contribution of the Government of Venezuela to the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Panama City from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2003.

# Part I. Agreement for the Latin American and the Caribbean on Environmental Education in the Framework of Sustainable Development

## I. Introduction

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1. Both Latin America and the Caribbean represent one of the planet zones that contain more natural and social abundance of the world. It contains the presence of wide terrestrial and marine diversity zones, huge water reserves and ecological systems with great environmental, scientific, social, cultural and economic value. This natural wealth enhanced the presence of outstanding civilizations and aboriginal cultures; and, afterwards the arrival of European people, this wealth aided to form the basis for the creation of crossbreed societies, which have been populating the whole region, and have been enriching the knowledge of the world with their languages, traditions and with its very own perception of the world.

2. In contrast, the establishment in the whole region of developmental models based on the economical short-term exploitation, and in the desire that economical growth can solve all the damage derived from the lack of social justice and environmental responsibility, have been eroding and threatening the self existence of the biological and social wealth in all the countries of this vast territory. This situation is engraving a worse position lately with the appearance of environmental problems talking about a planet scale, and also with the appearance of chronic socio-environmental disorders: such as poverty, abandonment, draining of water sources, environmental catastrophes, epidemics, and extinction of traditional cultures<sup>(1)</sup>. In spite of the situation, only with the urgent cases, little has been done to solve the serious impacts of the current situation, such as the periodic epidemics and the environmental catastrophes, among others.

3. An answer to the planet's environmental deterioration has been found in conceiving a model of alternative develop called *sustainable or support development*<sup>(2)</sup> (henceforth SD) This term is born from the gained consciousness that the human and environmental deterioration is a consequence of the current dominant economic development, and it is based on the indefinite economic growth and in the economic, environmental and social domain of the nations and of dominant human groups above other human groups, whether if they are countries, women, or aboriginal groups<sup>(3)</sup>. In contrast, the SD assumes to be an alternative development model based on an ethical and social target that promotes the group responsibility, the social parity, the environmental justice and the seek of an improvement in quality of life of all the current persons, as well as all the future generations<sup>(4)</sup>.

4. The general idea of SD has not been always well accepted. For many persons, it is an ambiguous concept that may be understand with different meanings, sometimes

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<sup>(1)</sup> ECLAC /UNEP, 2001.

<sup>(2)</sup> This document will preferably use the term Sustainable Development which is the most published use in the international organizations documents, despite the fact that in Literature and in the current laws Sustainable and Support seem to act similarly.

<sup>(3)</sup> Gudynas y Evia, sf; Iglesias, 1999; Leff, 1997; Escobar, 1995.

<sup>(4)</sup> Regional Symposium about Ethics and Sustainable Development, 2002; Iglesias, 1999; Leff, 1997

incompatible between them; including the non-well simulated attempt of using it to pretend to cover those projects based only in the rationality and economic interest of the groups and powerful states. It is necessary, however, to publish and promote the concept of *sustainability* as basic orientation while constructing societies capable of achieving the human needs democratically and fairly, and, simultaneously, the environmental foundation and the cultural diversity of the nations<sup>(5)</sup> is being preserved in a long-term period.

**5.** The seek of sustainable societies pretends to transform the models of production and consumption, the associated values to the relationships between humans and nature, and the several ways of human interaction and communication. Moreover, this means a palpable change in the processes of making decisions about the human development, which has to democratize itself, strengthening the local communities, as well as the persons directly concerned by the processes of technological and social transformation. All this leads to thinking over about the relationships of the human communities with nature and with oneself, including all the powered relationships: man - woman, adult-child, communities - leaders, white people - other people, rich - poor, among others.

**6.** It is proved that education is the most efficient way to promote and consolidate these changes, and has been recognized by the majority of world and regional events and congresses in matter of environmental and sustainable development arrangements.

**7.** A capable education to use those changes as an impulse lever could only be that one directed toward the transformation of the nowadays social, economic and cultural dominant models with the function of the proper construction of sustainable societies. Such target obligates the education to think over and work in the democratization of the environmental knowledge, the collective construction of a human ethics, and the formation of active, participative and solidary individuals and communities able to construct sustainable societies based on their own capacities, manners, dreams and cultural particularities<sup>(6)</sup>.

**8.** Under this context, within the last years, several educative ways have been studied: among them, the one concerning the environmental education (henceforth EE). Even when the origins of this field is previous to the points of view of the sustainability, it has managed to assimilate them quickly enough, and so it has become essential part of the process of education within this framework of alternative development.

**9.** The EE has been continuously evolving and strengthening so, that nowadays it is the non-disciplinary educational field most wide published in all the countries of the world, and it is considered to be one of the first fields as a general educative need for all the inhabitants of this planet.

**10.** In spite of all these improvements, within the last years strong doubts have been produced about the future orientations and development of the education-environmental programmes, action which has started to move important processes of change in its basic orientations as well as in the ways to enforce it<sup>(7)</sup>. Inside these same matters, there is another proposed focus which task is to incorporate the EE within the raising field of education for the sustainable development<sup>(8)</sup>.

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<sup>(5)</sup> Leff, 2000; Regional Symposium about Ethics and Sustainable Development.

<sup>(6)</sup> Fien y Tilbury, 2002; Febres-Cordero y Floriani, 2002; Tréllez, 2000; Álvarez, 2001; Mayor, 1999; Tréllez, Wilches-Chaux, 1999; Leff, 1997.

<sup>(7)</sup> Febres-Cordero y Floriani, 2002; Álvarez, 2001; Caride, 2000; Tréllez, 2000; Breitting, 1997; Calvo, 1997.

<sup>(8)</sup> Fien y Tilbury, 2002; Hesselink, van Kempen y Wals; 2000; González, 1999.

**11.** Meanwhile, in Ibero-America, and especially in Latin America, the EE has had an unequal and different development<sup>(9)</sup>. On one hand, EE has been marked by the unifying influence of the international orientations<sup>(10)</sup> and of cultural hegemonies. On the other hand, it has opposed to these tendencies its own characteristics and socio-political and cultural particularities, like regional Latin American and specific nationals. These circumstances have generated a wide medley of experiences charged with conceptual and methodological wealth, which has allowed the progressive process to become legitimate, institutional, professional, and it also became a conceptual, theoretical and methodological development in all the countries in the region. This situation has become a progressive addition of the environmental dimension in all the research programmes, environmental management processes, and development plans<sup>(11)</sup>.

**12.** In spite of which, the developmental process of the EE in the region has not been cleared of trouble. Some examples of these problems have been: the lack of permanent, sufficient and sustained political and economical support for the implementation of programmes, the existence of contradictions and blank spaces in the use of concepts and methods, the scarcity in educational training, the shortage in production, and in distribution of didactic material containing an integral and systemic vision, the absence of evaluating mechanisms and the lack of continuity in the programmes, among others. These kind of obstacles have generated weaknesses in the institutional matters as well as in the achievement of significant improvements in some key areas.

**13.** Besides the above-mentioned situations, there are also huge difficulties in matters for communication, cooperation and exchange of experiences and projects on environmental education among the different countries in the region. This situation frequently generates a conceptual and methodological dependency, and, sometimes this dependence has become economic of orientations and foreign proposals to the needs and regional particularities.

**14.** Therefore, the possibility of having influence in the international forums, and negotiate resources toward local projects has become feeble. And the possibility of managing alternative perspectives that better declare the needs and ways of regional thinking has been delayed by now.

**15.** Besides, in Latin America, the introduction of education as part of the processes directed to achieve the sustainable development has found important impediments in its way. As a consequence, its development has been obstructed. The main restrictions have been: its association with a polemic concept such as SD, the lack of a conceptual and methodological framework, and the absence of a wide argument about the range and characteristics of this field within the regional context<sup>(12)</sup>.

**16.** Under these circumstances, it is very important to establish, strengthen and consolidate de local mechanisms of cooperation that will promote the development of free spaces devoted to discuss, identify and systemize successful experiences, to make easy the exchange of acquired knowledge, as well as the coordination of policies

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<sup>(9)</sup> Read references about the development of the Latin American EE in: Álvarez (comp.) 2003; González, 1999; Pardo, 1993.

<sup>(10)</sup> Mainly the Conference in Stockholm in 1972, the International Programme on Environmental Education (IPEE) established by UNESCO and UNEP, and the Conferences in Tbilisi in 1977 and in Moscow in 1987.

<sup>(11)</sup> Álvarez (comp.) 2003. Read the Report of the Countries presented in the I Symposium about Policies and Strategies on Environmental Education.

<sup>(12)</sup> About this issue, consult: Fien y Tilbury, 2002; Hesselink, van Kempen y Wals; 2000; González, 1999; Tréllez, Wilches-Chaux, 1999.

directed to empower the programmes of education in matter of environment and of sustainable development in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

17. Following this list of exposed ideas, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela considers that the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean could be the most appropriate sub-regional instance for the dialog and the implementation of this proposal within the framework of the Latin American Initiative on Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Agreements.

## II. Background

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### A. Ibero-American Congresses on Environmental Education

18. The idea of creating, strengthening and consolidating a regional mechanism of cooperation in this field, was born out of dialogs and proposals created in the context of the succeeding Ibero-American Congresses on Environmental Education, which took place in Guadalajara, México, between 1992 and 1997. Some of the needs expressed on these events were: *to propose dialog spaces for the analysis of the educational and environmental process in Ibero-America, to establish processes of conceptual and methodological meditation or reflection; to create and consolidate exchange and cooperation bonds related with the development of a process on Environmental Education that respond to the realities of the region, to its localities and inhabitants.*

19. On the other side, it is urgent to establish, consolidate and reinforce all the support structures geared toward the publishing or difussion, and give continuity to the majority of the dialogs, proposals, and advanced actions in the region, particularly in the Congresses and in other technical meetings, because they often lose continuity due to the lack of financing, diffusion, coordination and continuation mechanisms<sup>(13)</sup>.

20. Based on this context, the Organizing Committee of the III Ibero-American Congress (Caracas, 2000) decided to present within the framework of this event a proposal called: *"Ibero-American Project on Environmental Education"*, which was projected to meet with the named needs. Under this purpose, a working Commission was created. Such Commission elaborated a preliminary document for its dialog during the Congress.

21. A meeting was set up with the object of establishing an ideal space for the technical dialog of the proposal. Such meeting was called the *First Symposium of Ibero-American Countries about Policies and National Strategies on Environmental Education*, which took part within the framework of the Congress on October 22nd and 23rd, 2000.

22. Reputable representatives of the national organizations were invited and attended this Symposium. These representatives were in charge of defining the Policies on Environmental Education in every country of Ibero-America. Official representatives of eight countries of the region attended the Symposium, as well as a group of nine observers of countries that could not manage to send their own representatives.

23. During the Symposium a preliminary outline on the proposal was presented. This proposed a cooperative program which object would be: *To establish and consolidate the permanent coordination, exchange and evaluation mechanisms among the countries and communities of the region with the purpose of developing programmes and projects that*

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<sup>(13)</sup> González, 1999; Ruiz, 2000.

meet the educational and environmental needs, sharing the basis for the appreciation of plurality of stakeholders , their specific action diameters, within the framework of a complete environmental arrangement<sup>(14)</sup>.

24. Based on the discussed proposal, the participants of the Symposium considered that the development of a mechanism of integration and cooperation, just like the one presented, was of essential importance and interest for the region. The government of Venezuela was suggested to create mechanisms that will allow itself to develop a more advanced proposal for it to be discussed by the governments of the region. Also, it was suggested to clarify the objectives, the working mechanisms, and the sustainability of the proposal based on the former exposed experiences in the region. The recommendations of the Symposium were expressed through the known document: "*Caracas' Statement*", which was read and approved unanimously by the Final Plenary of the Congress<sup>(15)</sup>.

## **B. Coordination Processes and Environmental Trainers Network in Latin America**

25. The network job and the society organization of the environmental education professionals has been considered to be one of the main decisive elements that may support the consolidation of the educational and environmental processes in the region. This kind of work can make easier the exchange and communication processes of experiences, can support the professional training and can certainly promote the creation of alliances and shared projects<sup>(16)</sup>.

26. For many years, the region has had the need of establishing and consolidating permanent spaces of communication and exchange among the environmental teachers, and with this particular objective many continuity efforts have been concredited to establish networks and some other mechanisms that may help to the completion of this purpose.

27. This process was first initiated in 1982 with the creation of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean as part of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at the request of the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean. This network is currently acting as a mechanism for the coordination, promotion and support of activities within the boundaries of environmental education and training in the Region. Countries like Colombia, Costa Rica and Guatemala have established National Networks on Environmental Formation that combine governmental institutions, universities, regional corporations and civil organizations within the framework of this network.

28. On the other hand, several attempts to create regional society networks have been performed. One of these essays was the creation of the *Latin American Association on Environmental Education* (LAEE), which was created in 1989, and was ratified during the II Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education in 1997. Unfortunately, this initiative did not accomplish its definite consolidation<sup>(17)</sup>.

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<sup>(14)</sup> III Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education. 2000

<sup>(15)</sup> Álvarez, 2003.

<sup>(16)</sup> González, 1998.

<sup>(17)</sup> Ruiz, 2000; González, 1998a.



29. Although the above mentioned, it been developed in the region a different activity of sub-regional, national and local networks. Similarly, international organizations such as the World Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) through its Committee on Education and Communications have established a network among its affiliates of the Ibero-American zone, Spain and Portugal. And a huge diversity of thematic, academic, and sociopolitical networks established within the region has joined.

30. Based on this background, the Organizing Committee of the Third Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education proposed all the participants on this event the creation of a Network on Environmental Education for Ibero-America<sup>(18)</sup>. Despite the enthusiastic acceptance of this idea, this network has not been constituted or consolidated yet. Nevertheless, during this same Congress was suggested that the network proposals, as well as the proposal of creating a mechanism of regional cooperation should be expressed together in one same common idea. Likewise, on other hand, there was an alert calling that had to do with the creation of major bureaucracies that duplicate the existent experiences. Therefore, it was suggested that any new project in the field of environmental education should help to support, strengthen and consolidate the existent efforts of this field in the region.

31. Due to the latter expressed, the work and consulting performed until now reinforce the need in considering the diversity of experiences and initiatives in matter of existent network in the region, and promoting the articulation of networks, as well as establishing permanent communication mechanisms in subjects like national policies on environmental education and about sustainability, professional dialog forums, educational and environmental support networks for social projects, among others that may be considered as necessary.

### **C. Clue milestones in the Institutional Development of the Field on Environmental Education and Sustainable Development in the Global Extent as Context of the Latin American Process**

32. The institutional development of the field on EE is strongly related to the accomplishment of a series of international conferences which began in the second half of the 1970's. The *International Seminar on Environmental Education* took place on Belgrade (formerly Yugoslavia). This was followed by the *Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education* which took place on Tbilisi, (formerly Soviet Union) in 1977, and later on 1987 the *International Conference on Environmental Education and Formation* on Moscow (formerly Soviet Union), and that circle of events settled a solid conceptual and methodological foundation to this field.

33. As a result of this institutional development, a huge amount of programmes, experiences and educational activities were generated in very different local, national and regional boundaries<sup>(19)</sup>. Congruently, an important number of countries of the world established National Strategies on Environmental Education.

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(18) Alvarez, 2003.

(19) It is worth to mention the international projects, such as: "School Development through Environmental Education (SEED)", "Global Rivers Environmental Education Network" (GREEN) GLOBE, among many others.



**34.** The idea of having an *Education for Sustainable Development*<sup>(20)</sup> (henceforth ESD) appears on the international stage on the Agenda 21, approved during the "*United Nations Conference about the Environment and the Development*", known as Rio 92. In chapter 36 of the present document, is defined the commitment of promoting education on environmental subjects and sustainable development. This same document defines education as collateral to all subjects on sustainable development.

**35.** Simultaneously to the governmental summit in Rio, the "*Global Forum of the Citizen*" took place. A big number of organizations and non-governmental groups from all around the world participated. This meeting approved an agreement called: "*Agreement on Environmental Education in Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility*"<sup>(21)</sup>. This document represents the first attempt on trying to be considered as an ethical, social and political framework to the environmental education within the proposal's framework of SD.

**36.** The resulting field of the ESD is reconfirmed during the "*International Conference on Environment and Society: Education and Sensibilization for Sustainability*" which took place on 1996 in Salonica, Greece. In this event, UNESCO, joint with the government of Greece, presents the document: "*Education for a Sustainable Future: A transdisciplinary vision for an arranged action*"<sup>(22)</sup>. Likely, the Conference approves the statement in which governments are persuaded to honor the adopted commitments on Agenda 21, particularly the related to implement strategies and processes to add environmental and developmental contents in all the formal and non-formal programmes produced in each of the countries<sup>(23)</sup>.

**37** Also, during the year 2000, a new launch of "*Earth Letter*" emerged. This document was made out of works like the World Committee on Sustainable Development, from the principles on Sustainable development defined by the Document Our Common Future, and whose only mission is to establish the ethical roots for a global sustainable society. The said document was initially subscribed by the governments of Costa Rica, Mexico, Honduras, Nigeria, as well as part of the UNESCO, and several international NON Governmental Organizations (henceforth NGO's). Based on this context, one of the associated strategies for the world implementation of these ethical principles is the use of the present document as an educational resource of huge importance<sup>(24)</sup>.

**38** In the year 2000, UNESCO and the Galicia Board de Galicia summoned to the *International Expert Meeting on Environmental Education*, which took place in Santiago de Compostela (Galicia-Spain). This represented an important support for environmental education as the fundamental element of the sustainability seeking processes, and explored the inner connections among this field and important additional subjects than those traditionally environmental such as the globalization phenomenon and the promotion of peaceful sociability<sup>(25)</sup>.

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(20) In different documents this field appears like: *Education for Sustainable Development*, *Education for Sustainability* and *Education for a Sustainable Future*. In this document will use the first term whether it is not necessarily considered as appropriate or official.

(21) International Forum of NGO's and Social Movements. 1993.

(22) UNESCO, 1997.

(23) International Conference on Environment and Society: Education and Sensibilization for Sustainability. 1997.

(24) Earth Charter Commission. s.f.; González, en prep..

(25) UNESCO / Xunta de Galicia, 2000

**39.** Later, on 2001, in the meeting of the Committee for Sustainable Development, the following document was presented: *“Education and Public Awareness for Sustainable Development”*. This is geared toward to give continuity and pursuit to chapter 36 of Agenda 21.

**40.** The previous mentioned documents represent, on one hand, the institutional framework of education on the environmental and developmental context, and on the other hand, they draw a preliminary framework for ESD. However, and in spite of the attempts of many international organizations in trying to substitute the term environmental education for education on sustainable development, this proposal has not been well accepted internationally speaking; and by doing this, many authors and international Forums have certified the validity of education, with the urgent need of strengthen its conceptual framework within the principles of sustainability<sup>(26)</sup>. Likewise, many authors sense this change as an imposed proposal of the international interests that intend to substitute an educative process based on the environmental philosophy, with one based on confuse, and frequently, controversial budgets.

The EE on SD evolution in Latin America and the Caribbean

**41.** At the beginning of 1976, started in Latin America and the Caribbean, an important process of dialog and joint work, in order to promote and strengthen the environmental education in the region. The meetings in Bogotá and in Chosica<sup>(27)</sup> were preparatory scenarios for the conference in Tbilisi in 1977. From this date on there starts a strong activity, geared to build spaces of self thinking and reflection that allowed consecutive rapprochements to a Latin American and the Caribbean standpoint in matter of EE.

**42.** A fundamental and historical milestone for EE in Latin America and the Caribbean (henceforth LAC) was the *First Seminar on University and Environment* in LAC, celebrated in Bogotá in 1985, and organized by the Environmental Training Network of the UNEP and the *International Program on Environmental Education* (UNESCO/UNEP). Right in this seminar were settled the conceptual and strategic foundations for the development of programmes on EE in universities, and caused a series of national seminars in Argentina, Brazil and México.

**43.** As a consequence of this institutionalization process, a certain number of countries in the region, established national planning mechanisms known with the terms of Strategies or National Policies on Environmental Education. Based on this context, Guatemala (1990), Dominican Republic (1992), Mexico (1993), Ecuador (1994), Cuba (1997) and Costa Rica (1998) have developed planning documents called National Strategies on Environmental Education. As far as Colombia is concerned, in 1995 were settled some *General Outlines for a National Policy on Environmental Education*, Peru in 1999 created a *National Policy on Environmental Education attached to the Environmental Agenda 2000 – 2002*. Similarly, Brazil established in 1999 a National Program on Environmental Education. The latter country also proclaimed in 1999 a Environmental Education Law (*Lei No 9.795, del 27 de abril de 1999*)<sup>(28)</sup> (SIC). Likewise, some countries acquired important educative and communicative components on the National Strategies for the Environmental Conservation, Strategies of the Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Laws. An important, and yet actual milestone in this

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<sup>(26)</sup> First Environmental Educational Congress. 2003; Sato, 2003; Tilbury, 2001; UNESCO / Xunta de Galicia, 2000; González, 1999; Sauvé, 1999; Jickling, 1992

<sup>(27)</sup> Regional Reunion of Experts on Environmental Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bogotá, Colombia) Sub-Regional Reunion on Environmental Education for the High School Teaching (Chosica, Perú).

<sup>(28)</sup> Álvarez, Ruiz y Benayas. 2000; Benayas y Ruiz. 2000. Ruiz. 2000; Ruíz, Álvarez, y Benayas. 1999

process, is the appearance of the environmental education in the constitutional frameworks of the countries in the region like the case of the Constitution of 1999 in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

44. In the American Continent, the idea of education and public awareness as clue elements for the achievement of sustainability is ratified during the *America's Summit on Sustainable Development*, which was celebrated in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in 1996<sup>(29)</sup>.

45. On this occasion, the "*Action Plan on Sustainable Development of the Americas*" was approved. This was geared to confirm the commitment of all the American nations in implementing the recommendations of Agenda 21. This document contains, among its fundamental aspects:

- a) To adequate the programmes on education, in order to give them a better orientation about sustainable development, based on the different needs and realities of the Hemisphere, looking at the same time for a major designation of funds for the primary or basic education.
- b) To create a mechanism for the exchange of experiences on primary education and functional alphabetization, as well as support the creation of promotion exhibitions of educative materials, specifically about education and sustainable development.
- c) To establish an **Strategic Alliance on Education and Communication, related with Sustainable Development**, with the active participation of the international and inter American organizations, both specialized and financial organizations, as well as NGO's and private foundations, in order that, jointly with the Governments, the policies contained in Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 get settled down effectively (bold letters are our)

46. In this same meeting, the *Inter American Program of Public Participation* was established. The purpose of this program is to develop processes to impulse the active participation of the civil society in the public level decision-making. Likewise the OEA got the mission of coordinate the continuity of the decisions of the Santa Cruz Summit, particularly through the contribution of the *Inter American Committee for Sustainable Development* (ICSD).

47. Later, in 1998, in the Ministers of Education board, celebrated within the framework of the Summit of the Americas, and which took place in Brazil, a document called: "*Education for a Sustainable Future in Latin America and the Caribbean*"<sup>(30)</sup> was presented. This was achieved thanks to the efforts of UNESCO and ASO, in which fundamental elements to guide the educative processes within the framework of sustainable development in the region are compiled. The present document may be considered the first contribution to the development of a Latin American thought on ESD, and simultaneously draws possible action lines to advance in this field.

48. Talking about this same occasion, the resolution: "*Education for the Sustainability of the Americas*"<sup>(31)</sup> is approved. This one commits to emphasize all the activities on environmental education.

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<sup>(29)</sup> ASO 1996.

<sup>(30)</sup> Trélez, Wilches-Chaux, 1999.

<sup>(31)</sup> Resolution CIDI/RME/RES.5 (1/98).

49. This framework allows the development of a series of projects and regional initiatives that go on advancing in the development of events related to ESD in the region. Among them, in 1999, in Bogotá, Colombia, was celebrated the *International Reunion on Education for America's Sustainability*. This event presented a basic proposal for the execution of activities led to promote the transformation of scholar curricula in the region with the keen purpose of adapting them to the standpoints of sustainability. In the same context, in 1999 the Seminar – Workshop *“Innovative and Educative Experiences in matter of Environmental Education for a Sustainable Future”* had the particular function of recognizing the existence of experiences in the area of environmental education in the framework of sustainable development in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

50. Parallel to this activity celebrated within the framework of the so-called America's Summit, in 1995, while the *9th Meeting of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean* was taking place in Havana, Cuba, in 1995, the participants approved the execution of the nominated Forum: *Environmental Citizenship in Latin America*. This initiative has the objective of establishing a dialog with representatives of the society, with regard to the regional Environmental Agenda.

51. Another organizations, such as the World Union for the Conservation of Nature, (IUCN), through its Committee of Education and Communications (CEC), in 1995 organized the *“Reunion on Arrangement of National Programmes on Education and Communication for the Environment and the Development of Latin America”*, celebrated in Quito, Ecuador in 1995<sup>(32)</sup>. Participants to this reunion presented studies of cases in which they had to do with policies and strategies on education and communication in their own countries, and recommendations were made to impulse and strengthen these kind of efforts in the region.

52. Similarly, in the framework of the II Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education (Guadalajara, México, 1997), the IUCN coordinated a Working Table called: *“Regional Position on the Tbilis Proposals towards the XXI Agenda”*.

The general purpose of this activity was: to achieve profits (opinions, suggestions) in order to have an Ibero-American position of the CEC that will be taken into the Conference of Salonica of 1997. Besides settling the purposes, proposals for an international programme in matters of education and communication for sustainable development<sup>(33)</sup> were discussed.

53. Even more recently, during the *13th Reunion of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean*, which took place in Rio de Janeiro in October of 2001, it was decided to establish some ethic principles geared to underline the environmental policies and of sustainable development of the countries in the region. As a consequence of this decision, in May of 2001, in Bogotá, Colombia, the *Symposium about Environmental Ethics and Sustainable Development*<sup>(34)</sup> is celebrated. Among the products of this events, there was the creation of the *Manifest on Ethics for Sustainability*, which defines all the applicable ethic principles to sustainable development. In this same text are being examined the values that should serve as a framework for the education for sustainability.

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(32) IUCN / UNESCO, 1996.

(33) IUCN-CEC. 1997.

(34) Regional Symposium about Ethics and Sustainable Development, 2002.

54. Similarly, in 2002, the First Extraordinary Reunion of the Forum of Ministers for the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was performed. This activity had the objective of discussing a document called: "Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development", which purpose was of presenting a position within the region before the World Summit for Sustainable Development of Johannesburg. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Section of this document, the general objective for all countries is stated: "To improve and strengthen the incorporation of the environmental dimension in the formal and non formal education, in economics, and in society". Within the Action Plan of this Initiative, there are being presented as priority issues for the region: 1) The Biological Diversity; 2) The structure of water resources; 3) The vulnerability, the human settlements and sustainable cities; 4) The social issues, including health, inequality and poverty and 5) The economic issues, including the competitiveness, the commerce and the production and consumption patterns (emphasizing the energy). Clearly, it is stated that is necessary the design and the implementation of ideal educative programmes as part as the action programmes in each of these issues.

55. The Latin American and the Caribbean contribution to the Johannesburg Summit, along with other regional blocks, as well as other international organizations, promoted that in the final statement of the Summit would be included aspects related to education, despite the fact that education was not within the main issues to be discussed in this world event. This document expresses that: "*education is determinately important to promote the sustainable development*". And so it is suggested to keep practicing the work program on ESD of the Committee on Sustainable Development, and to suggest the United Nations Assembly to take into consideration the possibility of declaring an ESD decade starting in 2005<sup>(35)</sup>.

56. Even more recently, in 2003, a project is initiated between the Environmental Training Network and the Secretariat of the Ibero-American Cooperation (SEIBC) for the production of text books on environmental education for the system of primary or basic education.

### III. An Approach to the need of Integration in matter of EE and Sustainable Development

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57. The current needs in matter of regional integration, within the fields of environmental education and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean, could be established in the presented compilation of the previous section, as well as in the documentary sources about these fields, both of regional<sup>(36)</sup> and global scale<sup>(37)</sup>

58. In Latin America and the Caribbean are important advances in the following aspects:

- a) An important process of professional legitimating, institutionalization, and strengthening within the field of environmental education. In some countries of this region, this effort has been materialized in the appraisal of the EE as a constitutional right, in the approval of law support to this field, in the

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<sup>(35)</sup> United Nations. 2002.

<sup>(36)</sup> Álvarez, 2003, Febres-Cordero y Florianí, 2002; Caracas Statement, 2000. Ruiz, 2000. González, 1999; 1998a, 1998b, Tréllez, Wilches-Chaux, 1998.

<sup>(37)</sup> Fien y Tilbury, 2002; Hopkings y McKeown, 2002; Bowder y Tilbury, 2001.

- implementation of strategies and National Policies of EE, in the “adjusting to environment” of scholar programmes, as well as in the growth of social support to the programmes and the activities of the EE.
- b) A growing community of people, institutions, and organizations are currently executing an important number of programmes and experiences related with education within the framework of the sustainable development. It is noticeable the development of practical standpoints related to the participation of the communities in the decision-making that have to do with the improvement on their quality of life, the interrelation among environmental, social, economic and cultural issues, in the development of strategies for the empowering of social groups, whether if they are excluded or weak, and also the impulse of focal points of genre and intercultural dialog.
  - c) A solid political consensus about the need of motivating educative programmes as essential elements for the accomplishment of sustainable societies in the region. This consensus is stated through agreements, pacts and regional and sub-regional initiatives to the highest political level.
  - d) Important cultural values in knowledge, experiences, reflections, and conceptual and methodological contributions compiled in congresses, events, and publications in the subject of environmental education and sustainable development.
  - e) A great interest on the network job, development of alliances, and work programmes of inter institutional and intersectional value, as well as the gremial integration of environmental educators.
  - f) A progress in the efforts for formation, professionalism and the up to date actualization of the educators who work on different sorts of environmental education and for the sustainable development. This impulse is certified in the important growth of all countries which offer academic programmes (pre and post graduate courses) and extra academic programmes (extension courses).
  - g) A conceptual and methodological transformation of the educative processes to incorporate social elements, such as the common and citizen participation processes, the equality in genres, the empowering, among others.

**59.** In spite of these undeniable advances, it is necessary to recognize that there still exist important and huge obstacles to achieve a major effectiveness and impact in the undertaken actions. Some of these are:

- a) Insufficient investment in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programmes, as well as in the development, support, and planning for a long-term period. Frequently these programmes have a deficiency in administrative continuity and so they depend on the political and administrative changes. Many projects depend on the extra regional financing, and so they neither generate internal commitments nor favor the strengthening of the completed programmes with local resources.
- b) Many programmes present perplexity, ambiguity and omissions in the management and use of the concepts and methodologies. Frequently it is observed the use of speeches and practices, where conceptual, ideological and contradictory methodological elements got mixed.
- c) There are no conceptual and methodological frameworks clear enough for the implementation of programmes on education in the matters of sustainable development. There is perplexity in the use of concepts such as *education for*



*sustainable development*, as well as the articulation among programmes of environmental education and its relation with the clue issues on sustainable development, like: poverty, responsible consumption, globalization, inter culture, genre equality, enterprise responsibility, among others. An international sector repels the extermination of the concept environmental education and its perception as education for sustainable development. Therefore, this proposal has been rejected within Congresses and other events celebrated in the region.

- d) Still there are no signs of big obstacles for the integration of efforts and joint work, whether internally in the countries or among organizations and institutions in different countries. Yet there are barriers for the integration of work among sectors, particularly the govern sector, and that one of the Non governmental organizations. The organizations in charge of the environmental education and the sustainable development have difficulties in keeping a continuous communication and interrelation with some other equal organizations of the region, in such manner that they exchange experiences and compile the necessary information and support for their labors.
- e) There is not enough capacity for divulging, supporting, and sustaining the commitments, agreements and contributions produced by the events, reunions and academic or political programmes, in national, sub regional or regional scale.
- f) There are no permanent mechanisms of communication and exchange among educators and managers of the environmental education and for sustainable development in the region. The produced efforts have not had the necessary support and continuity in order to consolidate.
- g) The training programmes addressed to docent and other professionals are still insufficient when speaking of quality and range.
- h) Some social sectors are still poorly attended. Particularly, there are some deficiencies in the popular and indigenous field, as well as in the education for sustainable development field.
- i) The research in clue areas of the EE, as well as in other fields of the applied education to the achievement of sustainability is insufficient, and inexistent in some cases. The resources for the researching development, as well as the media for publishing the works, are limited, and have difficulties in accessing to them too. There are no incentives for the formation of researchers in these areas.
- j) In most of the countries in the region, and specially in the poorest ones, there are important scarcities on production, edition and distribution of documentary materials. There is little access to the bibliography and technical documentation in issues of EE and ESD. For the exception of the countries containing editorial tradition, there is a very low production of documentary material which purpose is to support programmes for the EE and the ESD.
- k) There is no actual continuity or proper evaluating processes within the projects of environmental education.
- l) The programmes that manage the environment not very often include convenient educative and communicational components well financed and supported. In most of the countries, there is an absolute divorce among environmental managers and educators, and environmental communicators;



reason why the environmental programmes are very little known and valued by the communities in the zones where they attempt to implement.

- m) Many educative programmes that have attempted to implement within the region, particularly those proposed through international organizations or cooperative organizations outside of the region, are not adapted yet to the cultural and social realities of the localities and communities where they take place. Some of them are based on inadequate, or in some cases, negative cultural budgets.
- n) In the regional institutions there is a lack of a participative culture, and frequently the decisions, commitments, and programmes are based on decisions that do not consider the involved stakeholders in the processes of environmental and/or educative management.

**60.** These "*strengths*" and "*weaknesses*" in the development of the environmental education and the development in the region mark a boundary of a working area that results particularly important to support, in order to strengthen and maintain the accomplished advances, and overcome the deficient areas. By doing this, it is possible to define a series of decisive areas that is necessary to consider. These zones are the following:

- a) It is necessary to support and strengthen the institutional capacities of the governments and other regional institutions in order to promote the development of long-term programmes of, national and international programmes. It will be essential to understand and direct a proper and long-term financing for the development of priority programmes in the region, emphasizing in the national policies development and multinational projects.
- b) It is very important to establish spaces specially designed for the dialog of conceptual and methodological frameworks, adapted to the region, including the establishment of sub regional, national and local contexts. It has become mandatory to redefine the concepts that form the EE in order to articulate them to the world movement for the achievement of sustainable societies, as well as frame the educative proposals that derive of the Agenda XXI. It is also importantly necessary to settle an articulating frame among the necessary "educations" for the accomplishment of a sustainable development, such as: environment, development, peace, human rights, etc.
- c) There is urgent to identify, promote and consolidate educative programmes that support the management work in the priority areas defined by the Latin American Initiative and the Johannesburg Action Plan.
- d) It is primordial the construction of inter governmental alliances, with the support of international organizations and private enterprises, as well as the restoration of professional networks of environmental educators, environmental education managers and of sustainable development, and some other components of the civil society. May be valuable, in this aspect, the use of informational and communicational electronic devices.
- e) The importance on strengthening the existent programmes geared to maintain the regional mechanisms of integration and communication in the field of education and its relationship with environmental issues is of main priority.
- f) It is essential to define mechanisms that allow a wide compilation and publication of the agreements, pacts, contributions and dialogs celebrated in

regional governmental reunions, congresses and other meetings. It is also necessary to establish programmes that support the implementation and continuity of the commitments accomplished in these events.

- g) It is very important to establish strategies to strengthen and consolidate the existent mechanisms to support the training and the professional update of the personnel working in environmental education projects and of sustainable development. Based on this context, it is important to consolidate the projects of development of alliances among educative institutions, promotion of sub regional programmes of training, as well as for the academic exchange among the institutions of the region. It will be likely necessary to encourage and support the development of research projects in decisive areas that concern the mentioned context and regional chancy.
- h) It is also mandatory to establish mechanisms for the compilation, production and distribution of the documentary materials and other supportive resources for the fulfillment of programmes on environmental education and sustainable development.

**61.** Based on these priorities, and considering the proposals and mentioned recommendations of the successive Ibero-American Congresses on Environmental Education, and accepting the contributions of other meetings and international congresses, like those celebrated in Tbilisi, Moscow, Tesalonica, as well as the contributions of other reunions and Summits of Head of the States in the Ibero-American and American boundaries, it is possible to define a proposal of Latin American and the Caribbean Agreement on Environmental Education within the framework of Sustainable Development which objectives and ranges are to be presented as follow.

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## **Part II. Latin American and the Caribbean Proposed Agreement on Environmental Education within the Framework of Sustainable Development**

### **A. General Objective**

62. It is proposed the development of an agreement in the boundaries of Latin America and the Caribbean, framed in the principles of Sustainable Development, as well as the Latin American Initiative for Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Action Plan, and will have as objective:

To establish a permanent regional mechanism that fosters the coordination of policies, stimulates the development of programmes and projects, and fosters the communication; and exchange and mutual support among regional governments, as well as other social stakeholders involved in the development of environmental educational programmes.

### **B. Specific Objectives and Proposed Actions**

63. In order to comply with the proposed general objective, the specific objectives, as well as suggested actions to achieve each one of them, are proposed as follows.

64. **Specific Objective 1.** *To consolidate the public policies on environmental education within the framework of sustainable development.*

#### **Actions**

- a) To establish a permanent work mechanism, certified by the principles of democratic participation of other stakeholders, national and regional, including universities, organizations of the civil society and other organizations; whose purpose may be to promote the exchange, communication, and mutual support among the management organizations of national policies in issues of environmental education, as well as among these institutions and other organizations of the civil society.
- b) To create or consolidate a group of work that will have the target of compile and analyze the educative policies related to environmental education within the framework of sustainable development in the countries in the region, so that, the common needs and support priorities and cooperation among the countries or chapters that form part of the Agreement will be well established.
- c) To establish a technical group of work that will be in charge of the compilation, publication and continuity of the proposals related to environmental education that will or have been made in the region, as well as stimulate the articulation and synergy among the present educative aspects within the different Conferences, Congresses, Agreements, and other instruments of global or regional nature. Likewise, the consolidation and the development on environmental education programmes should be promoted in priority areas defined by the Latin American Initiative and the Johannesburg Action Plan.

- d) To establish a technical group that promotes the implementation of criterion and mechanisms for the evaluation of the environmental educative processes, as well as the continuity and systematization of the implemented projects.
- e) To establish a mechanism that allows to compile and systemize the experiences related to environmental education in the region. This mechanism should permit the appropriate identification of projects and subjects of important matter for the region, as well as proper mechanisms and adequate focal points for its implementation.
- f) To establish a regional agreement to increase the financial resources of each of the countries dedicated to the institutional strengthen and the introduction of long-term projects related to environmental education.

**65. Specific Objective 2.** *To establish and consolidate mechanisms for the network job, fostering integration and increase the communication among public and private organizations in the region.*

**Actions**

- a) To consolidate mechanisms for the network job of environmental educators within the region, including inventory, evaluation and strengthening of the existent networks, to establish networks in priority subjects, as well as support the development and consolidation of educators' networks and organizations of the civil society working in the field of environmental education and sustainability, at both regional and sub regional scale.
- b) To establish a platform dedicated to divulge regional experiences related to environmental education, as well as the development of forums, exchange of information, divulging of interesting documents, among other aspects.
- c) To establish mechanisms that make easier the incorporation to the networks and to other mechanisms of open participation in the decision-making about the management of the environmental education, at both national and regional scale.
- d) To create a regional directory of organizations, institutions and professionals that are in charge of laboring in environmental education.

**66. Specific Objective 3.** *To strengthen the conceptual and methodological aspects of environmental education within the framework of sustainable development and under a regional vision.*

**Actions**

- a) To strengthen a group of work that will be in charge of preparing regional proposals related to environmental education framed in the Education Decade for Sustainable Development geared to strengthen the conceptual and methodological aspects of EE.
- b) The establishment of mechanisms to encourage and support the creation of research programmes in the field of environmental education within the frame of sustainable development.
- c) The establishment of a permanent seminar to discuss epistemology, axiology, and the construction of concepts on environmental education in the frame of sustainability, and

- d) The support, reinforcement, consolidation and creation of some specialized regional magazines, as well as support bibliography on subjects like environmental education in the frame of sustainable development.

**67. Specific Objective 4.** To reinforce the training and continuous actualization of the educators and other stakeholders involved in the environmental-educational processes in the region.

**Actions**

- a) To reinforce and consolidate strategies geared toward to achieve the publication of existent programmes in the region directed to the formation, related to environmental education, as well as the interconnectivity and communication among educative institutions who develop these programmes.
- b) To strengthen and expand the existent mechanisms to facilitate and promote the exchange of professionals and researcher of the environmental-educational field among the countries in the region.
- c) To identify organizations and institutions that may function as regional and sub regional scale focal points for the development of pilot programmes related to actualization, training, and certification of the personnel that have to do with environmental education in priority subjects.
- d) To establish and reinforce mechanisms for production, edition and publication of documents, materials and bibliographical and non bibliographical resources, whether if they are printed or like those existing nowadays in electronic formats.

**68. Specific Objective 5.** To foster the development of financing mechanisms and implementation for the development of the Agreement.

**Actions**

- a) To establish a Latin America and the Caribbean fund for the financial support of projects and programmes of regional interest.
- b) To create or consolidate an organized and coordinated structure, geared to comply the mentioned actions in the Agreement and create a Working Programme with financial aid to achieve advances in the matter and concrete products.

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# **Annexes**



## **Annex I**

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## **Annex II**

### **Decision of the Representatives of the Fourth Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education**

**The delegates and representatives from the countries at the Fourth Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education, held in Havana, Cuba, from 3 to 5 of June 2003,**

**Considering:**

- 1.** That in the continuation of the movement, which started since the I Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education, and established in the II Symposium of Ibero-American Countries on Policies and National Strategies on Environmental Education, celebrated within the frame of the III Ibero-American Congress in Caracas, Venezuela in the year 2000, the representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela elaborated the Proposal of the Latin American and the Caribbean Agreement on Educative Integration for the Environment and Sustainable Development, and was presented in the IV Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education in Havana, Cuba.
- 2.** That the representatives of the participant countries in the IV Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education have discussed and expressed their opinions in regarding to the Proposal of the Agreement presented by the Venezuelan representatives.
- 3.** That this Proposal of the Latin American and the Caribbean Agreement is a process in construction of policies and national strategies on environmental education.
- 4.** That this proposal of the Agreement and its modifications will be presented imperatively in the Forum of Ministers for the Environment that will take place in the Republic of Panama, with the purpose of using it as policy of environmental education in each country with the Ibero-American cooperation, including Spain and Portugal.
- 5.** That this Proposal of the Agreement will be discussed in the Forum of Ministers for the Environment after PNUMA/ORPAL elaborate the Executive Document related to this proposed Agreement.

**DETERMINE:**

**First:** To certify the original text along with the presented modifications by the group of work of the Symposium, in the extent of recognize that this implies a process in construction, which will encourage the creation of a permanent forum of dialog among all the Ibero-American countries.

**Second:** To request the PNUMA/ORPAL, based on this Proposal of the Agreement, to elaborate the corresponding Executive Document to be presented in the Forum of Ministers for the Environment, which will take place in the Republic of Panama.

**Signed in Havana, Republic of Cuba, on June 5th, 2003, by the underneath representatives signers**

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