



**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

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

Caracas, Venezuela

31st October to 4th November 2005

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Limited

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Information for Participants



Date and Place of the Meeting

1. The Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean will be held in Caracas, Venezuela, from 31 October to 4 November 2005 at the facilities of the:

Gran Meliá Caracas

Hotel, Suites & Conference Center
Avenida Casanova calle El Recreo
Urbanización Sabana Grande

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Contacts for the Delegates

Forum of Ministers Secretariat

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National Organization for the Meeting

Lic. Lissett Hernández Directora General (E)	Lic. Aleidi Sangronis Directora de Gestión Internacional
<p>Oficina de Gestión y Cooperación Internacional Ministerio del Ambiente y de los Recursos Naturales (MARN) Teléfonos: (58 212) 408 1501 / 1502 Fax: (58 212) 408 1503 C.E.: osgci@marn.gov.ve</p>	

Documents

2. UNEP/ROLAC will send the working documents to the delegates and observers directly accredited by the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers. It is recommended that you bring these working documents with you, since a limited number of documents will be available at the meeting.
3. For further information on the documents for this meeting, see the following website: www.pnuma.org/foroalc/esp/.

Accreditations

4. All accreditations of the official delegations and guests for the Fifteenth Forum should be sent to the UNEP/ROLAC Secretariat, with a copy to the National Organization for the event, indicating the names and positions of the participating delegates.

Registration and Schedules

5. The Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers will consist of two (2) working sessions: the preparatory segment of government experts, which will take place from 31 October to 2 November 2005, and the ministerial segment, which will be held on 3 and 4 November 2005 and will be inaugurated on 2 September, in the evening, by the President of Venezuela, Mr. Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías.
6. The registry of participants for the Preparatory Meeting of Experts will take place from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. on Monday 31st of October 5.
7. The registry of participants for the Ministerial Segment will take place from 17:00 to 17:45 p.m. on Wednesday 2nd November 2005.
8. The Order of the Day will be distributed on a daily basis.

Visas

9. A passport issued in the country of origin and valid for at least six months is required to enter the country.
10. Participants from the following countries do NOT need a visa: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, and Uruguay.

11. Citizens of countries that do not appear in the above list need a visa granted by a Venezuelan Consulate. For purposes of this meeting, the Government of Venezuela has advised its diplomatic and consular missions that the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean will be held in Venezuela, and it is consequently recommended that the delegates needing a visa present the letter of invitation UNEP/ROLAC sent to the governments of the region. Should any problem in the granting of visas arise, please contact the National Organization for the meeting.

Airport

12. Upon arrival at the Simón Bolívar International Airport in Maiquetía, the delegates and observers will be met by duly identified staff provided by the Government of Venezuela.

13. It is recommended that the participants in the Fifteenth Forum notify the National Organization for the event of the date and time of their arrival. Otherwise, the necessary assistance, including free airport-hotel transport upon arrival, cannot be guaranteed.

14. The Government of Venezuela will not recognize any expenses for the transport indicated. Advance notification of any changes in the flight itinerary of delegates is also suggested.

15. At the airport, it is recommended that you rent luggage carts, which cost 10,000.00 bolívares, the equivalent of approximately US\$4 (four dollars). You will need to exchange money at the airport in advance to pay for these carts, since the machines only take local currency. There are also free luggage carts, but they are not allowed outside the immigration area. Personnel in the airport can also help you with your luggage. The rate is calculated by piece of luggage and, since it varies, should be agreed on in advance.

Hotels

16. UNEP/ROLAC will be in charge of coordinating the hotel and airline ticket reservations of all the delegates receiving UNEP/ROLAC financing. These delegates will have reservations at the Hotel Meliá Caracas. For reasons of organization, logistics and the work of the Fifteenth Forum, it is recommended that the participants stay at the Official Headquarters Hotel of the Meeting.

17. All delegates not receiving financing from UNEP/ROLAC should make their own hotel reservations, indicating that they will be participants in the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean in order to obtain the preferential rate the Hotel Gran Meliá Caracas has granted for this event (US\$ 110, including breakfast and taxes). The rates of other hotels where delegates might choose to stay appear below:

Hotel	Single Room (US\$)	Double Room (US\$)
Hotel Lincoln Suite	81.00	95.00
Hotel Cumberland	84.00	87.00
Hotel Presidente	133.00	149.00
Hotel Embassy Suite	167.00	167.00
Hotel Altamira Suite	184.00	184.00

Business Hours

17. Most offices open Monday thru Friday from 8:00 am to 12:00 p.m. and from 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Main banks open Monday thru Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and on weekends from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 in the most important malls.

Communications

18. A great variety of telephone cards for local and international calls are sold at communication centres and newspaper stands. The rates vary, depending on the destination of your call. There are also many communication centres where international calls can be made, and Internet service is available in shopping centres and other places in the city. For people calling from other countries, the international area code for access to Caracas is "58-212".

Tipping

- **Hotels:** Most hotels include tips with other charges in the invoice. However, waiters and other services (laundry, room service) are to be tipped when delivered.
- **Restaurants:** Tips are customary, 10% being the norm.
- **Taxis:** Tips are usually not expected, but most passengers round up to the next full amount when satisfied with the service.

Services

19. Participants will have access to international calls, fax, post office, photocopies, travel agency services, medical service, etc. All of these services are available at the Hotel premises. Internet access is available in the rooms, as well as at the Hotel Business Center and will be charged to the participants' account.

Other informations

- The Metric System is the only system used in Venezuela.
- Should you rent a car, we strongly advice you to park at fee parking lots.
- Caracas City is very safe. However, we recommend that you do not wear jewelry or brandish computer equipment, cameras, expensive objects, or carry large amounts of money.

Information on the city of Caracas



East of Caracas with Cerro El Ávila

The city of Caracas is located in one of the main valleys of the Cordillera Central, very near the shores bathed by the waters of the Caribbean Sea. It is separated from the coast by the majestic mountain, Cerro El Ávila, which rises to an altitude of 2,600 meters.

- Area:** The Distrito Capital has an area of 1,930 km².
- Climate:** The temperature in Caracas varies from 22°C to 27 C, so light-weight clothing is suggested.
- Population:** The population is estimated at approximately 5 million inhabitants.
- Official Language:** Spanish is the official language of the country.
- President of Venezuela:** Ing. Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías.
- Religion:** Some 92% of the population is Catholic and the remaining 8% belongs to other religions.
- Currency:** The official currency is the bolívar. There are coins for 10, 20, 50, 100 and 500 bolívares and notes for 500, 1,000, 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000 and 50,000 bolívares. The official exchange rate is Bs. 2,144.60 per US\$ 1.00 for buying and Bs. 2,150.00 per US\$ 1.00 for selling.
- Currency restrictions:* Foreign currency exchange transactions should be carried out at commercial banks and *casas de cambio* at the official rate. Credit cards are accepted at most tourist establishments. Outside the largest cities, a good supply of Venezuelan currency (bolívares) is needed.
- Credit Cards:** Visa, Mastercard, Diners Club and American Express credit cards, as well as travellers cheques, are accepted in practically all stores, restaurants, hotels, bars and night clubs.
- Electricity:** Voltage in the Distrito Capital, as well as the rest of Venezuela, is 110 volts.
- Vaccinations:** No special vaccinations are needed to enter the country. Persons who travel to the tropical forest regions or want greater protection may wish to get vaccinations against yellow fever, malaria and cholera after consulting a doctor.