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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**

**31<sup>st</sup> October to 4<sup>th</sup> November 2005**

**A. PREPARATORY MEETING OF EXPERTS**

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# **Minutes of the First Meeting of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee of 2005**

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## **I. Background**

1. Pursuant to the mandate given to the Inter-Agency Committee (ITC) at the Eleventh Meeting of the Forum, held in the city of Lima, Peru, in March 1998, the First Meeting of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee of 2005 was held to evaluate the state of implementation of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) and the fulfilment of the decisions adopted at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum (Panama City, Panama, November 2003), all aimed at implementing the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC). The meeting also offered an opportunity to exchange ideas on RAP activities for the biennium 2006-2007 in the eight themes selected as being of priority in the implementation of the ILAC for the 2004-2007 period. The deliberations and recommendations resulting from this First Meeting of the ITC will serve as the main input for the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean (Caracas, Venezuela; 31 October to 4 November 2005).

## **II. Participation**

2. The meeting was presided over by Panama in its capacity as President of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. Participants in the meeting included representatives of the following organizations that comprise the ITC: the World Bank; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). There were also 25 representatives from the following countries: Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela. The list of participants is attached at **Annex IV** to this document.

### **Agenda Item 1: Opening of the Meeting**

3. Mrs. Ligia Castro de Doens, General Administrator of the National Environment Authority of Panama, inaugurated the meeting by welcoming the participants and urging them to make every effort to fully achieve the objectives of the meeting set forth by the Inter-Agency Technical Committee.

4. Mr. Ricardo Sánchez, Director of UNEP/ROLAC, referred to the background leading to the creation of the ITC, as well as the decision of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to establish the working groups. He also recalled that this ITC meeting had been entrusted with reviewing the progress made in the implementation of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) and the decisions adopted by the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers; there would also be a review of the contribution of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to implementing the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) and initial steps to initiate the formulation of the RAP for the biennium 2006-2007.

**Agenda Item 2: Review and adoption of the agenda and the organization of the meeting.**

5. The meeting adopted the Provisional Agenda (UNEP/LAC-ITC.1.2005/1) and the Timetable of Sessions (UNEP/LAC-ITC.1.2005/Ord.1) proposed by the Secretariat without changes.

**Agenda Item 3: Comments of the ITC members and the countries present on the state of implementation of the activities for which they are responsible in relation to the Regional Action Plan for 2004-2005 (decisions 1 to 3 of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum, Panama City, Panama, November 2003).**

**a) Implementation of the RAP**

6. Under this agenda item, the meeting proceeded to evaluate the state of implementation of the RAP on the basis of the document "Report of the Secretariat on the Implementation of the Regional Action Plan of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean" (UNEP/LAC/ITC.1.2005/5), prepared by the Secretariat of the Forum on the basis of contributions by the members of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (IDB, World Bank, ECLAC, UNDP and UNEP). After the working document was presented by the Regional Director of UNEP, the representatives of the ITC member agencies reported on the various activities they were carrying out at the national, subregional and regional levels to contribute to implementation of the activities foreseen in the RAP.

7. The presentations demonstrated the willingness of the ITC member agencies to strengthen their activities in the field of environment in the region in response to the needs of the countries, as well as their willingness to continue working in coordinated efforts in the priority areas that form the RAP. Some of the agencies announced forthcoming forums and events through which they would continue implementing RAP priority activities and other actions in related themes of interest to the countries of LAC. Similarly, they reported on the opening of funds for projects related to shared ecosystems and noted the projects that had been undertaken in collaboration with different subregional institutions. The reports of the agencies will be updated and presented at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers (Caracas, Venezuela, 31 October to 4 November 2005).

**b) Review of decision 2, «Modalities of Implementing the Regional Action Plan»**

8. The coordinating countries of the working groups present at the ITC meeting widely exchanged points of view regarding the experience gained in these collaboration efforts. This exchange resulted in a consensus on the need to make changes in the operation of these working groups to make their efforts flexible through, for example, the establishment of *ad hoc* groups in which the ITC member agencies and the countries of the region can adopt decisions based on their experiences, interests and resources.

9. The meeting accepted the offer of the ITC Secretariat to prepare a draft decision in consultation with the agencies and the countries, so as to be in a position to formulate a concrete proposal to be submitted to the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers for consideration.

**c) Review of decision 3, «Regional Implementation of the UNEP Work Programme»**

10. In this sphere, outstanding progress was made in the regionalization of UNEP activities through the implementation of the Strategy of the Regional Office presented at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers in Panama and in the implementation of the decisions of the Governing Council of UNEP.

11. The countries participating in the meeting considered it necessary to have broad and detailed information on the resources from different sources for environmental projects, since the adoption of appropriate decisions depended on such information. Some delegations recognized the importance to the region of UNEP indicating by region, the amount of resources it would allocate through the implementation of its various programmes. The possibility of expanding the regional approach to other bodies such as the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was also set forth.

12. Those attending the meeting agreed to recommend to the Forum of Ministers that a panel discussion be held between the environment ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean and representatives of the agencies to review issues of common interest related to the development of the Plan and its financing.

**Agenda Item 4: review of the state of implementation of decisions 4 to 17 of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers.**

13. A review of the implementation of the decisions of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum was made under this agenda item, based on the document "Report on the fulfilment of decisions 4 to 17 of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean" (UNEP/LAC/ITC.12005/4/Rev.2), prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of inputs sent by the ITC members and the coordinating countries of the working groups.

**a) Review of decision 4, «Small Island Developing States (SIDS)»**

14. UNEP/ROLAC presented a report on this theme, since Saint Lucia, the coordinating country of this working group, was hosting an important meeting for the island countries of the Caribbean. Mr. Ricardo Sánchez gave an account of the various activities carried out in the SIDS in the previous 18 months and noted that the activities conducted in the Caribbean by the participating agencies were becoming increasingly integrated.

15. The representatives of the countries and the ITC agencies agreed that the theme of the vulnerability of SIDS to natural phenomena made it necessary for these countries to continue being a priority for cooperation activities of various groups under work mechanisms established with the countries.

16. The Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean had decided that the principal lines of work would be preparation for the Mauritius Conference and the mobilization of resources in relation to vulnerability; now new lines of action for the biennium 2006-2007 should be determined.

**b) Review of decision 5, «Financial Mechanisms»**

17. The report on the fulfilment of this decision noted that UNDP and ECLAC had worked in coordination to advocate various training and technical assistance projects in Latin America and the Caribbean on various forms of expanding and maintaining financing for sustainable development and studies on environmental spending. Based on an evaluation of experiences from 2001 to 2005, new lines of work will be defined. UNDP mentioned that, based on the demand of several countries, it had begun a process to systematize tools and good practices. IDB reported that in recent operations it had been recommending use of the environmental services payment mechanism in projects that involved water resources and tourist developments.

18. Following the presentation of these reports and comments by various delegations, it was recommended that UNDP and ECLAC prepare an integrated document containing all the documents that had been produced and distributed in recent years. It was recommended that a panel discussion of environment ministers and ITC agencies to make a broad review of the theme of financial resources and mechanisms should be held at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers.

**c) Review of decision 6, «Civil Society Participation»**

19. UNEP/ROLAC noted that UNEP was advocating the practice of holding civil society forums at various regional and international forums; similarly it was also implementing a new line of work to foster the capacity-building of civil society in environmental themes, and one of the first steps had been the capacity-building of journalists from the countries of the region.

20. The agencies and countries that participated in the discussion of this item recognized the increasingly important role being played by civil society. Some countries were in favour of opening up participation in environmental forums to target communities and it was noted that some agencies were favouring the participation of indigenous communities. The participants were informed that resources were now available to once again hold a meeting of civil society organizations on several days preceding the Fifteenth Forum of Ministers.

**d) Review decision 7, «Water Resources»**

21. Mexico, in its capacity as coordinating country of the working group on this theme, reported on the various initiatives and activities undertaken by countries of the region to present common positions to ensure that the decisions of various forums would reflect the region's interests. It also indicated future lines of action that could be followed in this sphere. The World Bank representative expressed interest in the Forum participating in the regional process in preparation for the



World Water Forum, to be held in Mexico in 2006. It was agreed that Mexico and the World Bank would head efforts to keep the Forum up to date on the preparatory activities in the region.

**e) Review of decision 8, «Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from Their Utilization»**

**22.** The representatives of Ecuador and Mexico, the countries in charge of this working group, gave a summarized account of the various activities carried out and programmed to address the theme dealt with in this decision. The ITC member agencies reported on activities they were carrying out in this field. Some delegations urged the agencies to continue granting high priority to the theme, considering the complexity of the technical, economic and political issues now at stake at the outset of the negotiations on an international regime on access to genetic resources and shared benefits being conducted in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

**23.** The representative of Cuba reported that at the “Regional Workshop on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from Their Utilization and Associated Traditional Knowledge”, organized by UNEP in the city of Havana, Cuba, on 21 and 22 June 2005, the participating experts had formulated a document that included proposals for drawing up a decision of the Forum of Ministers in the field of access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing. It was agreed that the ITC meeting would transmit that recommendation to the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment, and it is consequently attached as **Annex I** to this document

**f) Review of decision 9, «Health and Environment»**

**24.** Argentina, in its capacity as coordinating country of the working group on this theme, reported on the state of progress in fulfilling the decision and particularly on activities linked to the “Meeting of Health and Environment Ministers of the Americas”, recently held in the city of Mar del Plata, Argentina, from 14 to 19 June 2005. It mentioned that, in addition to the inter-ministerial meeting itself, in which 16 ministers and 24 countries participated, and whose consensus is reflected in the Mar del Plata Declaration and its cooperation agenda, technical activities were organized for information on conceptual approaches and methodological tools for addressing health and environment in an integrated manner. The GEO health report by UNEP and PAHO was pointed out as an example of inter-agency cooperation with notable progress.

**25.** The “Inter-Ministerial Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Health and Environment” was also mentioned. It included presentations on the state of fulfilment of the MDGs at the global level (WHO) and the regional level (PAHO, UNEP and ECLAC), as well as the achievements and difficulties met with by the countries. The presentations and results of the meeting are being compiled for publication and distribution to the countries.

**26.** In relation to the Mar del Plata Declaration, which has been sent to the ministers of the region and will be presented by Argentina at the Summit of

Presidents and Heads of State of the Americas, it was noted that it included activities at the country level, regional cooperation, tools for decision-makers and implementation action proposals in three priority themes (integrated water resources and solid waste management, sound management of chemicals and children's environmental health). Note was also made of the support of UNEP/ROLAC, PAHO and the OAS in this process and follow-up carried out by the working group on subregional integration, which should adapt its future agenda to the principles of the cooperation agenda.

**27.** It was announced that between 14 and 16 November 2005 a meeting on Children's Environmental Health, sponsored by WHO, would be held in Buenos Aires and that government representatives of environment and health ministries were invited, so as to provide orientation for the tasks of the Health and Environment Working Group of the Meeting of Ministers.

**28.** In relation to its Clean Air Initiative, the World Bank reported that it was advancing in the design of a new institutional structure, creating an initiative centre that would coordinate projects to support cities in sectors such as urban transport and development with the participation of a broader network of donors and partners from the private sector.

**g) Review of decision 10, «Adaptation of the Work Programme of the Environmental Training Network to the Implementation of the ILAC and the Incorporation of the Latin America and Caribbean Programme of Environmental Education for Sustainable Development»**

**29.** Venezuela, coordinator of the working group on this theme, reported on the progress made in developing the Latin American and Caribbean Programme of Environmental Education (PLACEA), whose proposal was approved at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers. It reported on the Meeting of Specialists in Public Management of Environmental Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Margarita Island, Venezuela; November 2004) in which 15 countries of the region participated, including one English-speaking country. This meeting agreed on a structure of various levels of responsibility, which included: the plenary, the regional coordinating office, subregional coordinating offices (Southern Cone, Northern Andes, Southern North America, Mesoamerica and the Antilles) and national coordinating offices. At this meeting it was decided that the Regional Coordinating Office would be formed by the UNEP Environmental Training Network and Venezuela for the 2005-2007 period; spheres for conducting PLACEA activities were also established: the training of environmental promoters, environmental education in communities and their schools, and training programmes in centres of higher education. Giving priority to education processes that lead to the solution of environmental problems considered to be of priority in ILAC (eight themes) was also approved. The Report of the Margarita Island Meeting has also been translated into English in order to inform and incorporate the Caribbean countries.

**30.** Venezuela set forth the need for regional cooperation projects to focus on specific projects based on the results of the Margarita Island Meeting. Under this item, it mentioned the implementation of the project to prepare a prototype of

textbooks on environmental education for the basic education system of the countries of the region through an agreement with the Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México (UACM) and a contribution from the Government of Spain. It also announced its intention to work on a specific proposal to institutionally and financially strengthen the Latin American and Caribbean Programme of Environmental Education, which would be submitted to the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers for consideration.

**31.** UNEP gave an account of the principal activities conducted through the Environmental Training Network that fulfilled the lines approved by the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers in relation to the adaptation of the Work Programme of the Environmental Training Network to the Implementation of the ILAC.

#### **h) Review of decision 11, «Environmental Indicators»**

**32.** Costa Rica, the coordinator of this working group, made a detailed presentation of the various activities carried out to fulfil each of the operative paragraphs in this decision of the Forum of Ministers. In this context, it noted the need for the countries to expand their participation in the activities promoted by the working group and, in general, for the countries of the region to increase their participation in the ILAC activities related to the design and application of indicators.

**33.** It also mentioned the establishment of a virtual platform for sharing information on activities related to the decision. It underscored the need to coordinate the activities of the ITC member agencies in order to move forward in constructing a regional system of environmental statistics, identifying as a first positive step in that direction the signing of an agreement between UNEP and ECLAC in which it was established that information would be requested from the countries once through their national statistics entities. It was explained that the agreement was intended to focus their efforts on building the capacity to generate and use environmental statistics and indicators in countries through South-South cooperation. Consideration was given to the need to make coordination efforts in the formulation and preparation of data for the millennium goal reports.

**34.** Costa Rica and UNEP presented reports on several comprehensive environmental assessment initiatives in the region, such as those that have been implemented using the GEO methodology and process. UNEP informed those attending the meeting that it had initiated the fourth GEO process (GEO-4) and that greater participation of the national governments and collaborating centres in the region was needed.

**35.** ECLAC reported on its work in the field of social and environmental statistics and its related database (BADEIMA), and it also drew the participants attention to the availability of information on environmental sustainability indicators for all the countries of the region, completed in the framework of its work on sustainable development indicators.

**i) Review of decision 12, «Sustainable Consumption and Production»**

**36.** UNEP made a presentation on the activities it had carried out in various countries of the region in the field of sustainable production and consumption in close collaboration with local governments, the private sector and civil society; as well as the operation of the Network of Authorities for Sustainable Production and Consumption. These activities focused on five main areas: a) capacity-building; b) support for the regional network of government experts on sustainable consumption and production; c) development of national and regional policies; d) dissemination of information; and e) implementation of pilot projects.

**37.** The results of these activities have been positive and widely recognized. Countries such as Argentina, Mexico and Nicaragua are also working intensively to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns.

**j) Review of decision 13, «Implementation of Economic Instruments and Fiscal Policy for Environmental Management»**

**38.** The representative of Chile, the coordinating country of the working group, stated that the mandate of the Forum of Ministers was aimed at the ITC member agencies, urging the countries of the region to participate in the activities that these agencies promoted. That is why most of the activities the coordinator of the working group presented were the result of initiatives by the ITC agencies. Some problems that have arisen in the information compiling process were also indicated and it was noted that the complexity of the theme made it unfeasible to apply the same instruments in all the countries.

**39.** ECLAC reported on its work in the field of economic and fiscal instruments associated with a strategy to make recommendations to improve the consistency, coordination and integration of public policies for sustainable development. One of the most significant results of these efforts was to have held regional seminars between fiscal and environmental authorities of the countries of the region, with the support of organizations of the United Nations system with experience in the field, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and UNDP, and from other organizations such as the OECD and the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ). These activities, being carried out since 2003, have become an appropriate forum for discussion and closer relations among those who design and implement both policies. Technical assistance has also been provided to the countries that have requested it.

**k) Review of decision 14, «Climate Change»**

40. The representative of Panama, the country coordinating this working group, made a detailed presentation of the most important events revolving around the theme and emphasized the efforts being made by the countries of the region and particularly Panama, to take advantage of the opportunities set forth in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) of the Kyoto Protocol.

41. The IDB representative reported that resources were available to carry out capacity-building projects in the field of climate change. He noted that a segment of the meeting of Vice-Ministers, to be held on 19 July 2005, would be dedicated to explaining what resources were available and how to gain access to them.

42. The participants expressed their full appreciation for the efforts and resources provided by Argentina to host the tenth session of the COP of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

**l) Review of decision 15, «Renewable Energy»**

43. The meeting took note of the comments and of the proposal sent by Brazil, as coordinator of the working group on this theme.

44. The ECLAC and UNDP representatives reported on the participation of these agencies in the regional process in preparation for the Bonn Conference, which included several regional meetings and enabled the region to arrive at this multilateral conference with consensus on a common position in favour of reaching the goal of 10% of energy supply from renewable resources. There was also a brief presentation of the principal UNEP and ECLAC projects in the sphere of promoting renewable energy and energy efficiency.

**m) Decision 16. «Trade and Environment»**

45. The IDB representative stated that various trade negotiations under way made this theme important. He recognized the active participation of UNEP in conducting activities to develop capacity. He mentioned that ECLAC and the OAS had been working in this sphere. Owing to the participation of this diversity of institutions, IDB had promoted meetings among the ITC member agencies to agree on how to continue supporting the countries in an efficient manner.

46. He also indicated that, in response to the decision of the Forum of Ministers, the IDB had redirected the work of the Dialogue of Vice-Ministers towards the theme of trade and environment. He noted that the ITC member agencies had been invited to the next meeting (July 2005) so they could participate in jointly identifying ways to continue supporting the countries in this sphere. UNEP noted that it was working in close collaboration with the other ITC member agencies and reported on the activities conducted in the region within the 'Capacity-building Task Force' in the theme of trade and environment, including three regional consultation meetings (Kingston, Jamaica, November 2004; Buenos Aires, Argentina, April 2005; and Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, July

2005) and three comprehensive assessment projects on trade, environment and sustainable development in Brazil, Chile and Colombia.

47. Finally he reported on a training course on "Multilateral Negotiations, Trade and Sustainable Development", held in Panama City, Panama, in April 2005, through the collaboration of UNEP and ECLAC, and indicated that distance courses being carried out in this theme were being explored.

**n) Review of decision 17, «Regional Meeting in Preparation for the Twelfth Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development»**

48. The representative of ECLAC, the agency responsible for follow-up on this decision of the Forum of Ministers, noted that after having been notified by the CSD Secretariat of budget limitations for supporting regional consultations in preparation for the work of this United Nations meeting, ECLAC had decided to take advantage of various regional meetings on human settlements, water and sustainable development to prepare regional diagnoses of these matters, which were presented in a timely manner as inputs for the Report that the Secretary-General of the United Nations presented to the CSD.

**Agenda item 5: activities of the GEF implementing agencies in the development of regional and national projects that contribute to the fulfilment of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC).**

49. UNDP, through the person responsible for the GEF Unit for Latin America and the Caribbean, gave a brief description of the Facility's operation, noting that the predominant focal areas were those related to biodiversity, climate change, integrated resources management, international waters and, recently, the theme of sustainable land management. He mentioned the various projects being carried out in several countries of the region. **Annex II** includes the presentation made by UNDP.

50. The World Bank, in turn, commented that the portfolio of projects in the region was among the most extensive and that the establishment of trust funds was being advocated as a means of ensuring financing for protected natural areas. As successful examples using this modality, the World Bank noted projects conducted in Brazil, Mexico and Peru and it reported that other activities had been undertaken in Colombia and Venezuela. Another important project advocated by the World Bank was that related to the Guaraní Aquifer; the ecological markets project in Costa Rica was mentioned in relation to payment for environmental services.

51. The IDB, in its recent capacity as a GEF implementing agency, has a new but growing portfolio of GEF projects, principally in Central America, and others in Guyana and Suriname. And UNEP made a detailed presentation of the projects carried out and under way in various spheres. This presentation is attached to the present document as **Annex III**.



52. UNDP indicated that for the next refinancing of GEF, consideration was being given the application of a resource allocation mechanism through which single amounts would be granted to groups of countries, making greater coordination imperative, not only among the implementing agencies, but also among the countries. UNDP offered to see that the governments received important information on the decisions that GEF would adopt at the meeting on refinancing scheduled for the month of August and complementary documents on the current implementation of projects, rules and procedures.

53. In view of the importance of the information presented by the implementing agencies of the GEF projects, the participants of the ITC meeting agreed to recommend to the Forum of Ministers that a segment of the work be dedicated to making a presentation to the ministers on the project portfolio and central characteristics of GEF's operations in the future. This presentation would enable the identification of options to improve coordination among agencies and among countries in order to make more efficient use of GEF resources.

### **Agenda Item 6: proposals of the member and coordinating countries of activities for the RAP in the 2006-2007 period**

54. UNEP/ROLAC made a brief introduction to the theme, indicating the need to have guidelines from the ITC member agencies and the coordinating countries of the working groups regarding the activities that would continue being conducted and new activities considered important to initiate, all of which should take into account the experience gained in the 2004-2005 period.

55. Following this introduction there was general discussion in which several delegations indicated that they were in favour of continuing with the same structure without changes in relation to the cross-cutting activities, but with adjustments in the priority activities.

56. A point that was set forth in several comments was that the RAP activities should include clear subregional aspects. The UNEP representative indicated that clear subregional emphasis had recently been given to various activities carried out in the context of RAP implementation.

57. UNEP announced its intention to continue carrying out cooperation activities with the countries of the region in spheres related to capacity-building and technological support. A specific priority of UNEP for the 2006-2007 period will be to support the implementation of the agreements of the Mauritius Conference and to continue with activities related to vulnerability related to natural phenomena, working in coordination with ECLAC and UNDP in spheres in which these agencies have recognized leadership. In the field of renewable energy, there was a proposal regarding the possibility of organizing a panel in the framework of the Forum of Environment Ministers that would include environment and other involved authorities and could contribute to the regional process preparatory to the next session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Finally, UNEP offered to send the countries the information packages on the eight priority areas, in an effort to identify options for new lines of action.

58. Several coordinating countries of the working groups reaffirmed their willingness to continue advocating the activities set forth in the RAP.

59. Following this general discussion, the meeting proceeded to comment on each of the eight priority areas that comprise the RAP.

### **6.1. Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing**

60. During the deliberations on this item, it was recognized that the efforts of the region should be aimed at forming a shared position, particularly in relation to the intensification of negotiations on an international regime launched at the Johannesburg Summit. For that purpose, the decision proposal arising from the meeting recently held in Havana will be used.

61. Activities to support the strengthening of national legislation were also mentioned.

### **6.2. Water Resources**

62. UNEP reported that the Government of Brazil had send a proposal to incorporate into the agenda of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers the development of a common strategy for water management in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, taking into account that the Forum could formulate concrete decisions for consensus on such a strategy and guidelines to see that the theme was developed in a coordinated manner among UNEP, the World Bank and the OAS.

63. The participants took note of Brazil's proposal and agreed on the importance of the region's arriving at a common position to reinforce its position at the World Water Forum and to back Mexico as the Forum's host. The representative of Mexico stated that, in an effort to define a shared position in the field of water resources, the countries of the region had been working in coordination with each other at various environmental forums in which the theme of water had been addressed, and that, in its capacity as coordinator of the working group on water resources, it would continue making such efforts.

64. The representative of the World Bank offered to distribute a draft document with a diagnosis of the key problems in the field of water, as well as successful experiences. This could serve as input for determining priorities for the RAP 2006-2007. The participants recognized the need to identify activities already carried out or those the agencies were carrying out as part of their regular programmes, so they could be omitted from the RAP.

65. It was recommended that Mexico, in coordination with the Secretariat, Brazil and the World Bank, evaluate the best way to present the theme of water resources to the Forum of Ministers.

### **6.3. Human Settlements**

66. In dealing with this matter, it was considered advisable for the agencies to exchange experience gained through the implementation of projects in countries of the region. Authorities of the region should participate in this exchange.



#### **6.4. Renewable Energy**

67. Representatives of ECLAC and the World Bank expressed their willingness to continue working in this theme and noted that they would be awaiting the decisions of the Forum regarding the activities to be carried out in the biennium 2006-2007.

#### **6.5. Trade and Environment**

68. The IDB representative pointed out the need for the countries to decide how they were going to continue working on this theme, since in the past they had worked in response to circumstantial situations. He indicated that this question would arise during the work of the Dialogue of Vice-Ministers, to be held in Washington, D.C.

#### **6.6. Economic Instruments and Fiscal Policies**

69. The UNDP, ECLAC and UNEP representatives indicated that they would continue granting priority to activities in this sphere.

#### **6.7. Climate Change**

70. The UNEP representative recalled that this matter would be addressed as the principal theme at the forthcoming session of the CSD and emphasized that it would continue conducting diverse activities to support the countries of the region in taking advantage of the benefits of the CDM operations, including projects with a subregional approach. The ECLAC representative expressed similar views. And the delegation of Chile indicated that the theme of vulnerability should be granted priority.

#### **6.8. Environmental Indicators**

71. The representative of Costa Rica reiterated that it would continue supporting the working group on this theme and that, together with other countries and UNEP, work lines had been agreed on for the next biennium, as follows:

- a) Continue efforts to institutionalize environmental information activities in all the countries of the region, with the support of the ITC:
  - i. Finalize the proposal for the System of Regional Information on Environmental Statistics (SIREA).
  - ii. Formulate a strategic plan for implementation of the SIREA and capacity-building in the national sphere.
- b) Develop a platform for sharing information among countries with a high capacity for using satellite information and other geospatial applications
  - i. Create a network of centres with technological capacity for managing georeferenced and satellite information.
  - ii. Strengthen mechanisms for access to this information.
  - iii. Establish mechanisms to share processed information.
  - iv. Stimulate South-South cooperation.

- v. Publish the LAC Atlas.
- a) Continue reviewing and monitoring the ILAC indicators
  - i. Strengthen the network of ILAC focal points
  - ii. Establish a programme for the use of ILAC indicators in the national sphere. By 2007, at least 20 countries will have published their ILAC report.
- b) Continue constructing the environmental portal of Latin America and the Caribbean
  - i. Achieve a consensus among the national focal points on the services that a single environmental information portal in Latin America and the Caribbean should offer
  - ii. Coordinate and integrate existing environmental information initiatives such as the Mesoamerican Environmental Information System (SIAM) and others

### **Agenda Item 7: Other Matters**

**72.** UNEP-ROLAC announced the e-mail distribution of the draft minutes of the first ITC meeting 2005 among the participants. The final version of the minutes was prepared, incorporating the observations and corrections that the Secretariat had received as of 27 July 2005. This final version will be placed on the Internet site and distributed by e-mail on Tuesday 2 August 2005.

**73.** The delegation of Chile proposed the possibility of having the next meeting of the Forum of Ministers give consideration to the recently launched "Decade of Education for Sustainable Development".

### **Agenda Item 8: Conclusions and Closing of the Meeting**

**74.** The Regional Director of UNEP-ROLAC thanked the people and Government of Panama and particularly its National Environment Authority (ANAM) for the support provided for holding the First ITC Meeting of 2005 and expressed his recognition for the contribution of the ITC member agencies for the activities carried out over the past two years to contribute to the implementation of the ILAC. He also expressed his appreciation for the efforts made by the coordinating countries of the different working groups. These efforts provide the necessary elements conducive to attaining the objectives of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, the principal environmental body of Latin America and the Caribbean.

**75.** The President of the Meeting, on behalf of the Government of Panama, thanked the countries and agencies participating in this ITC Meeting for their collaboration in fully achieving its objectives.



## Annex I

### **Recommendation to the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from Their Utilization**

The experts participating in the «Regional Workshop on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from Their Utilization», and Associated Traditional Knowledge, held in Havana, Cuba, on 21 and 22 June 2005,

**Recalling** that the access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their utilization is unquestionably one of the most complex themes of greatest international discussion in relation to biological diversity and, at the same time, is of particular importance to the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, where one of world's greatest endowments of genetic resources is found;

**Taking into account** that the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, at its Fourteenth Meeting (Panama City, Panama; 24 and 25 November 2003), adopted decision 8, which requests the support of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee for holding workshops or experts meetings, with a view to exchanging experiences and strengthening institutional capacities of the countries for the implementation and fulfilment of international legal mandates in this field;

**Considering** that decision VII/19 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity mandated the preparation and negotiation of an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing, aimed at the adoption of an instrument or instruments to effectively implement the provisions of Article 15 and Article 8 (j) of the Convention and its third objective, fair and equitable sharing; and at the presentation of a report on the progress made in this theme to the Conference of the Parties at its eighth meeting;

**Recognizing** that the meeting of the Special Open-ended Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing (Bangkok, Thailand; 14 to 18 February 2005), in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, made it evident that we were entering into a complex process of negotiation on an international regime in this field, in compliance with the successive mandates of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and decisions IV/8, V/26, VI/24 and VII/19 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity;

**Considering also** that the objective of the present Regional Workshop has been to align criteria in a very preliminary manner in a group of experts of the countries of the region on some of the very complex technical issues being discussed at the beginning of the process for the development of the international regime agreed to in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

**Agree to ask the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to:**

- 1. Advocate** the activities necessary to include the policies and priorities of the Latin American and Caribbean countries in the negotiation of the international regime.
- 2. Ask** the countries of the region to advocate, at the national level, the processes to identify national priorities in the theme of access and benefit-sharing through mechanisms to coordinate trade and environment agendas.
- 3. Consolidate** national participation processes in the discussion of the themes of access and benefit-sharing.
- 4. Create** regional opportunities for discussion of the negotiations on the international regime revolving around this theme, in view of the importance of traditional knowledge.
- 5. Continue promoting** regional and subregional activities, including meetings, workshops and other means of expanding knowledge and exchange on the theme of access to genetic resources, benefit-sharing and traditional knowledge in the identification of priorities and demands of the region and on its optimum positioning in the negotiation process on the international regime.
- 6. Use** the considerations arising from this workshop as a contribution to the discussions and to the formulation of a common regional position (Annex I to this document).

**Appendix  
Considerations**

**A. International Regime on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing**

1. It is recognized that an international regime or system is composed of various elements, some of which already exist and others that should be developed in the negotiation framework initiated at the seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
2. It is also recognized that this regime requires binding elements.
3. There is agreement on the need to promote effective compliance with the CBD obligations and, in particular, article 15.

4. Elements which the international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing could influence or have as objectives were identified, as follows:

*I. The development of measures in the countries that use genetic resources, including:*

- The promotion of adjustments and modifications in the intellectual property regime to include requirements of origin and legal provenance in applications for intellectual property rights;
- Mechanisms for fair and equitable sharing of benefits.
- Measures to guarantee technology cooperation and transfer, in compliance with the CBD.

*II. The development of resource follow-up and monitoring mechanisms to help verify the agreed access conditions. A certificate of legal provenance could be an alternative mechanism, as well as the disclosure of the country of origin on applications for intellectual property rights.*

*III. The development of measures to guarantee fulfilment of and compliance with the CBD obligations and of the conditions agreed to in the access contracts and other instruments, particularly those referring to Prior Informed Consent (PIC) and other obligations arising from the international regime itself.*

5. The need to explore mechanisms to obtain economic benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and channel them into the genetic resources' countries of origin was suggested.

6. It was recognized that this theme was being dealt with more or less directly in various international forums, pointing up the need for closer ties among the different State representatives and entities (economic-trade and environmental) revolving around negotiations on access and benefit-sharing, so as to arrive at a unified position among the countries of the region.

## **B. The use of terms, definitions and/or glossaries, as appropriate**

### **1. General considerations**

*I. The scope of the definitions should refer only to the legal inclusion of a specific juridical instrument, without prejudice to the technical or juridical definitions in each country.*

### **2. Specific considerations**

*II. Clear negotiation strategies must be established so that progress in the negotiations is not subject to the definition of terms, and viceversa, and to prevent obstacles to the discussion in this sense. The region should produce its own process for advocating the theme.*

*III. Not all the definitions proposed in this item of the negotiating process are necessary for an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing.*

*IV. Efforts should be made for more in-depth construction of definitions that will be decisive to the scope and sphere of the international regime.*

*V. Practical exercises with existing definitions are needed to clarify the associated problems. The exercises should be granted priority for certain terms.*

*VI. In the theme of derivatives, a great deal of target technical information should be available and their scope and sphere should be very well defined, just as in the definition of genetic resources, since they may be comprehensive definitions.*

### **C. Other approaches; Certificates of Origin, Source or Legal Provenance**

1. The certificate is a useful instrument and its inclusion in the international regime should consequently be supported.

#### *I. Objective*

i. The objective of the certificate should be associated with the possibility of monitoring and verifying compliance with the conditions under which access was granted.

ii. The idea of the certificate initially arose as legal provenance, and this idea of legality in access is the central concept, more than the country of origin or the source.

#### *II. Desirable characteristics of the certificate*

i. It is basically, but not exclusively, reviewed in applications for patents, which remains the most difficult point in the negotiation.

ii. It is used for review at the end of the process and not for step-by-step tracing.

iii. It accounts for the legality of the access.

iv. It should be a positive sign and, consequently, should serve as an incentive for users.

v. It should remain a simple concept.

vi. It should be practical and low-cost.

vii. It should be issued by whoever grants the access permit.

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**Annex II**  
**UNDP Presentation on the activities of the**  
**GEF Implementing Agencies in the development of**  
**national and regional projects that contribute**  
**to the fulfilment of the Latin American and Caribbean**  
**Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC).**

1. The presidency of the Secretariat requested the ITC member agencies, in advance, to make reference to their GEF programming and to how the national and regional initiatives financed by this fund contribute to the ILAC priority themes (25) and more precisely to the Regional Action Plan (8).
2. Before entering into the details of UNDP-GEF programming, we considered it important to underscore some of the characteristics of GEF that enable us to appreciate the importance and potential of this financial mechanism to support sustainable development strategies in the region.
3. *The first consideration* is the fact that GEF is the financial mechanism of four global conventions (1. biological diversity; 2. climate change; 3. desertification; and 4. persistent organic pollutants) and its operational criteria and strategic priorities are therefore closely linked to the guidelines of these conventions and recommendations from the meetings of their conferences of the parties. The fact that the countries of the region have signed and ratified these global convention is indicative of and confirms the importance of this financial mechanism in supporting its environmental priorities at the national and regional levels.
4. *The second consideration* is that from its outset in 1991, GEF has disbursed/promoted US\$5 billion in projects in developing countries. This figure immediately makes/situates it as the main financial fund for the environment in the world.
5. This is even more important when we consider that GEF resources are channeled to beneficiary countries through the main international cooperation institutions and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. In the region we refer to seven agencies (UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, IDB, FAO, UNIDO and IFAD). The quite strategic purpose of this GEF structure is to take advantage of the established structures and programming experience of each of these agencies to internalize environmental themes in their respective operations at the global level.
6. In the case of GEF programming in UNDP, it should be noted that we are on an equal footing with UNEP and the World Bank, one of the three traditional GEF agencies; the other four have joined GEF in the last five years. The GEF portfolio in UNDP is US\$1.8 billion on projects being implemented (a figure that amounts to approximately 35% of the total resources disbursed by GEF).
7. The GEF portfolio in the region now amounts to US\$270 million and we estimate that this figure will reach US\$300 million by the closing of GEF3 in June 2006 (GEF is refinanced every four years based on fiscal calendars – the next cycle, called GEF4, will begin in July 2006). It is a portfolio composed of both national and regional projects and, essentially, reflects the demand and priorities of the



governments and the wide range of actors who typically collaborate and participate in these initiatives.

**8.** In relation to UNDP-GEF programming in the region, it is important to note that the predominant focal area in the region has always been biodiversity (US\$143 million); followed by climate change (US\$79 million); integrated ecosystem management (US\$24 million); international waters (US\$17 million); sustainable land management (US\$6 million); and the remaining areas refer to national capacity diagnoses (US\$4 million) and the elimination of persistent organic pollutants (US\$2 million).

**9.** In relation to the priorities being implemented in the Regional Action Plan, we will provide the Secretariat with a complete and detailed list of our projects, but limit ourselves to some specific references in this presentation.

#### **a) Financial mechanisms and economic instruments**

**10.** It should be noted that this is actually a cross-cutting theme in all our projects, apart from the focal area under which it is being presented. The theme of financial sustainability has been gaining increasing importance in GEF and in the viewpoint of donors, forcing UNDP and the other agencies to focus on this theme in a very consistent and innovative manner in our projects. Some examples of financial mechanisms and economic instruments of increasing and notable value in our projects are valuation of environmental services, notably in reference to water resources, and payment systems that provide equitable benefits and a lasting incentive for effective and sustainable management of natural resources. Payment mechanisms for environmental services can be seen principally in projects that promote the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable land use. Another theme that is quite characteristic in our programming in the region is financial mechanisms to support the sustainability of the national systems of protected areas through eco-tourism, marketing of products derived from biodiversity or nontimber forestry products, support for ecological certification processes in the agricultural and forestry sectors, the establishment of preferential loans for eco-friendly production, etc., basically to ensure through these financial mechanisms and economic incentives that conservation can be good, profitable and sustainable business in socio-economic terms. The theme of training in these various themes is also an essential cross-cutting theme and an important component in our projects.

#### **b) Climate Change**

**11.** In the framework of the UNDP/GEF operations, several projects have been conducted in the themes of energy efficiency and sustainable transport, which contribute significantly to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing sound use of energy in the region. Among the principal energy efficiency initiatives is the project for energy efficiency in industry and trade in Central America and regional standardization and labelling initiatives, both in the Andean countries and in the Southern Cone and Brazil. In the theme of sustainable transport, efforts are already under way in the city of Valencia, Venezuela, and projects have been programmed in Ecuador, Chile, El Salvador and Nicaragua. The UNDP/GEF Unit has also continued supporting all the countries participating in the UNFCCC through support for preparing the second national communications to the convention.



### **c) Renewable Energy**

**12.** UNDP/GEF has continued to support initiatives for electrification with renewable energy sources, both in isolated cases and when connected to the electric power network. At the regional level and together with the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), a proposal was developed to facilitate access to financing sources for investments in renewable energy in Central America. A number of initiatives on productive uses of renewable energy have also been developed, resulting in the approval of projects in Nicaragua and Guatemala. In relation to renewable sources connected to a network, a wind project is being implemented in Mexico and a wind energy initiative being developed in Uruguay will be initiated in mid 2006. All these efforts are aimed at reducing energy dependence on fossil fuels and providing remote and isolated towns with access to energy.

### **d) Strengthening of specific subregional activities**

**13.** Under this priority, several regional projects with the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) should be mentioned, including a project to consolidate the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, and the regional project on market changes for biodiversity in Central America, together with the CABEI, making biodiversity conservation and sustainable development cut across financing schemes for micro, small and medium-sized companies. It is estimated that upon conclusion, the project will have changed the practices of 200 small and medium-sized producers and suppliers of services, as well as thousands of micro-producers.

### **e) Small Island Developing States**

**14.** UNDP/GEF gives priority to the development of initiatives that will provide the Caribbean island countries with tools to achieve integrated and sustainable management of their resources. Thus, the project implemented together with UNEP for integrated watershed and coastal area management will provide a framework and essential tools to address the management of water resources in the small island States.

**15.** The projects UNDP/GEF are promoting in the field of sustainable land management should also be noted. Thirteen countries of the Caribbean basin are participating in this global project (Barbados, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago) whose objective is not only to increase capacities at the individual, institutional and systemic level, but also to develop an investment plan for sustainable land management. The initiative will help the countries complete their Action Plan in compliance with their obligations related to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Barbados Programme of Action and Saint George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability of the OECS.

### **f) Water Resources**

**16.** UNDP/GEF has several regional projects within the line of activities in the focal area of international waters supporting the sustainable management of Large

Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) of the region such as the Caribbean Sea, the Gulf of Mexico, Rio de la Plata and its Maritime Front, and a project for integrated management of the Humboldt Current. Similarly, as previously mentioned, the theme of water resources conservation and use is also being addressed in biodiversity and sustainable land management projects through the integrated management of basins and micro-basins in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Colombia.

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**Annex III**  
**Activities of the GEF implementing agencies**  
**in the development of regional and national projects that**  
**contribute to fulfilling the Latin American and Caribbean**  
**Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC)**

UNEP/GEF strategy

1. Decentralization
2. Project formulation on the basis of the governments' priorities
3. Clear insertion in regional and national strategies (e.g.: ILAC)

Priority Themes	Implementation Activities	UNEP/GEF Support Underway
<b><i>A. Access to Genetic Resources and Equitable Benefit-Sharing</i></b>	Adopt frameworks for the regulation of access to genetic resources and fair and equitable benefit-sharing	Medium-sized project (MSP) to support the Andean Community of Nations (subject to approval)
<b><i>B. Water Resources</i></b>	Include coastal aquifer management to prevent saltwater intrusion	MSP for coastal aquifer management in the Caribbean (subject to approval)
	Improve and strengthen institutionality for integrated watershed management	- Bermejo, Paraguay; Sao Francisco; Amazonia; San Juan - Expansion of the portfolio to include Fonseca and Mopán
	Implement action plans for the integrated management of coastal resources, with particular attention to the small island developing States	- IWCAM (Integrated Water and Coastal Management Project – Caribbean)
<b><i>D. Renewable Energy</i></b>	Implement the use of renewable energy in the region	- Various specific initiatives: Cuba (biomass); Caribbean (geothermal energy); Global (technology transfer); Global (seed capital)
<b><i>E. Trade and Environment</i></b>	Establish a system of economic incentives for production transformation projects that will conserve natural resources	- Collaboration of UNEP and ADC in bio-trade (FSP) Replication of this experience in other countries (being examined)
<b><i>G. Climate Change</i></b>	Implement and strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms for risk management and impact mitigation	- Pilot project (Chile). Impact of receding glaciers on protected areas and the sustainable use of water and land - Others being evaluated

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