



**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

A. PREPARATORY MEETING OF EXPERTS

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**Elements for the establishment
and operation of the Working
Groups to support the fulfillment of
the decisions of the Forum of
Ministers of the Environment of
Latin America and the Caribbean**

A. Introduction

1. The Eleventh Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Lima, Peru (1998) adopted decision 1 entitled "Institutional mechanisms and a Regional Action Plan to strengthen the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean", which, in paragraph 7, states that:

*The **ad hoc working groups** mentioned above will be formed by experts of the governments and of the United Nations system, international agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the Secretariat. The composition and size will be determined in accordance with the nature of the projects. Representatives of the multilateral banking system, regional and global environmental funds and donor governments, as well as other international entities, will be invited to participate, in order to create favourable conditions for financing the projects and putting them into operation. Each ad hoc group will have a coordinating entity which will, ideally, be UNEP, IDB or UNDP, at least during the start-up stage of the project. The ad hoc working groups will have the following functions:*

- a) *To support the Inter-Sessional Committee in the process of preparing project profiles or more detailed project proposals;*
- b) *To support the Inter-Sessional Committee in the process of implementing and following up on the projects incorporated into the Regional Action Plan.*

2. As a result of the approval of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), the Fourteenth Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, meeting in Panama (2003), decided to update the terms of reference of these working groups, as follows in decision 2, called "Modalities for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan":

"To establish that the working groups will have an open-ended nature and will function, preferably, using electronic means of communication. The coordinators will convoke and develop their roles through electronic and other pertinent means. The working groups will consist of the countries of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of the Region, with support from the Inter-Agency Technical Committee and from other organizations interested in supporting these groups, which fundamentally will be oriented to set in motion and implement the aforementioned decisions and agreements. Every six months, the coordinators will report on the progress made to the Chair of the Forum of Ministers who will keep the Ministers of Environment informed.

"Each coordinator will be responsible for presenting an executive report to the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers.

"The Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers will provide operational support and will facilitate the process, according to the needs of the coordinators and the directions of the Chair of the Forum of Ministers. The ITC will provide specific support to the coordinators according to the needs of the process."

3. In addition to the factors mentioned above, the Meeting of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC), held in Panama City on 12 and 13 July 2005, recommended that the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers prepare a proposal on the establishment and operation of the working groups, based on the best experiences noted in the past periods, to be submitted to the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum. Initially it would be presented to the Preparatory Meeting of Experts, to be held from 31 October to 2 November 2005, so that, on the basis of the recommendations formulated there and sent to the ministerial segment of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum (2 and 4 November 2005), the Ministers could, if deemed appropriate, finally adopt a decision regarding the proposal.

4. Bearing in mind this recommendation, the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers, in consultation with the ITC member agencies and the coordinating countries of the working groups, has prepared the following proposal:

B. Elements for possible preambular paragraphs

- a) Noting the decisions of the Eleventh Meeting (Lima, Peru, 1998) and the Fourteenth Meeting (Panama City, Panama, 2003) of the Forum of Ministers, in which the mandate and terms of reference of the working groups were established;
- b) Noting that the working groups have shown better performance and have been more productive in the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers when these groups have focused their work on specific themes instead of addressing thematic aspects of a more general nature;
 - i) Recognizing that the working groups with greater participation of the ITC implementing agencies have achieved broader work levels;

C. Elements for possible operative paragraphs

5. Taking into account these experiences, the following recommendations are made:

- a) Continue with the practice of establishing *ad hoc* working groups as a means of helping to fulfil the decisions of the Forum through specific activities in which the objectives, the parties responsible for implementation and the expected outputs from these activities are identified.
- b) Incorporate countries willing to advocate the activities or commitments of the Forum of Ministers into these working groups, in an effort to make the inclusion of these follow-up entities help to meet the criterion of subregional representation. In this regard, the designation of a focal point for each country is recommended, so as to coordinate the fulfilment of the responsibilities assumed by the member countries of the working groups.

- c) Include ITC agency or agencies participation to back the efforts of the working groups aimed at the implementation of the specific activities agreed to by the Forum of Ministers. The participation of ITC agencies will take place on the basis of their specific mandates and comparative advantages.

D. Possible working groups to be established

6. Taking into account the previous experience with the *ad hoc* working groups and particularly those related to the decisions of the Eleventh Meeting of the Forum (Peru, 1998) and the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum (Panama, 2003), as well as the activities conducted in RAP implementation, the experts, ministers and heads of delegation could consider establishing the following working groups:

- a) Follow-up on ILAC indicators.
- b) Sustainable production and consumption.
- c) Access to genetic resources and fair and equitable distribution of the benefits arising from their utilization.
- d) Renewable energy.
- e) Integrated watershed management.

