



**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
31ST October to 2nd November 2005

Distribution:

Limited

UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XV/Inf.6

Wednesday 14, January 2004

Original: English-Spanish

Panama Declaration

**Annex I of the Final Report of the
Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the
Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**

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

Panama Declaration

We, the Ministers of Environment and Heads of Delegation of Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered in Panama City, Panama:

Considering that in spite of the efforts made to attain sustainable development, a serious situation of poverty, inequity, and environmental degradation persists in the region;

Considering that the immense amount of natural and cultural resources in the region is of global importance and offer opportunities of which we have to take advantage in order to attain equitable, inclusive and sustainable development;

Considering that environmental policies require priority attention to decisions related to the future of our peoples;

Considering that the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), as an instrument to help attain the priority goals of the Region, was included in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

Considering that this Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, which is the first meeting held after the World Summit on Sustainable Development, has identified eight themes of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development for implementation in the biennium 2004-2005: i.e. access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of their utilization; water resources; human settlements, vulnerability and land use planning; trade and environment; economic instruments and fiscal policy; renewable energy; climate change; and environmental indicators;

Considering that transformation of production and consumption patterns, environmental education and the relationship between health and the environment are cross-cutting issues that are strategic to the implementation of the ILAC;

Considering that it is indispensable to encourage social participation, as well as strategic partnerships for implementation and financing of sustainable development;

THEREFORE:

1. Reaffirm our political commitment to make our best efforts to implement the principles, commitments and goals of Agenda 21, the Millennium Declaration, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development;

2. Reiterate that in order to turn this political commitment of the States into a reality it is necessary to have access to the resources and new financing mechanisms agreed upon at the Johannesburg Summit. Because of this we urge the members of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee of this Forum of Ministers, as well as the multilateral financing and cooperation organisms to – in keeping with their mandates and the decisions of this Forum of Ministers – direct their resources

in the manner required to allow the effective implementation of the Regional Action Plan (2004-2005) and the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development.

3. Will concentrate efforts to get the other authorities of our countries to make a commitment to work in a joint and coordinated manner in order to mitigate environmental degradation and the poverty of our peoples.

4. Reaffirm the application of the Rio principles, and in particular those regarding the common but differentiated responsibilities of States and the sovereign right of each country over its natural resources, especially genetic resources, as well as to establish their own levels of environmental protection.

5. Urge the United Nations system to promptly implement the decisions adopted at the Johannesburg Summit with regard to strengthening the regionalization processes, as well as UNEP as far as decisions 22/21 and 22/13 of the 22nd session of its Governing Council are concerned, in order to make progress in the regionalization of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the UNEP work programme.

6. Call the attention of the international community so that it will urgently adopt the measures required to strengthen the Small Island Developing States in order for them to handle acknowledged vulnerability problems and ensure a more effective implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action.

7. Recognize that the Kyoto Protocol established a worldwide consensus to mitigate the effects of global warming and its negative socioeconomic and environmental consequences. We therefore make an appeal for a prompt entering into force of the protocol and encourage the continuation of efforts to implement the Clean Development Mechanism including afforestation and reforestation activities in line with the COP decisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

8. Reiterate the need to create a fair, just, and equitable multilateral open-market system that is compatible with sustainable development, and that the environmental theme should not be used as a covert restriction to trade, as well as the need to prevent the enforcement of unilateral trade measures in order to tackle environmental problems.

9. Recognize the strategic nature of environmental education for the building of sustainable societies and the need to incorporate into this education the concept of ethics for sustainable development and to intensify the development of national plans for environmental education and heightened awareness in the countries of the region.

10. Urge all stakeholders of civil society, in particular the youth and the productive sectors, as well as the governmental sector to work together in establishing mechanisms to resolve or mitigate environmental problems at the local and national levels, through the widespread participation of civil society in environmental management. This will legitimize environmental decisions and allow improvements in public management governance.

11. Make a commitment to realize efforts to achieve greater synergy and a complementary nature between the agendas of the various ministerial environmental forums in the region.

12. We welcome the offer by the Republic of Argentina to serve as the seat of the COP 10 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and offer our support for that purpose. In addition, we thank Mexico for agreeing to represent our region as Co-Chair of the Round Table No. 3 to be held during COP 9.

13. We welcome the offer of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to host the 15th Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to be held in 2005, during which the support group of the Island States of the Caribbean will report on the progress reached in their task of contributing to the implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action.

Signed in Panama City, Panama, on 21st of November of 2003 by the Ministers and Heads of Delegation present at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

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<p>The Honourable Elizabeth Thompson Minister Ministry of Housing, Lands and Environment BARBADOS</p>	<p>Sr. John Briceño Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, Commerce and Industry BELIZE</p>
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<p>Sr. Rodrigo Egaña Baraona, Subsecretario General de la Presidencia Ministerio Secretaría General de la Presidencia CHILE</p>	<p>Sr. Juan Pablo Bonilla Arboleda, Viceministro de Ambiente Ministerio de Ambiente, Vivienda y Desarrollo Territorial COLOMBIA</p>
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<p>Sr. Arturo Harding Lacayo Ministro Ministerio del Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (MARENA)</p> <p>NICARAGUA</p>	<p>Sr. Ricardo Anguizola Administrador General Autoridad Nacional del Ambiente (ANAM)</p> <p>PANAMA</p>
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