



**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**

Distribution:

Limited

UNEP/LAC-IG.XV/7

Monday 28th November, 2005

Original: English - Spanish

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

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I. Introduction

1. The Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, at their Fourteenth Meeting (Panama, 20 to 25 November 2003), ratified that the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was the principal political forum to provide environmental authorities of the region with a space for consensus and reflection on the main challenges of the regional and global environmental agenda in the context of sustainable development. At same time, the Ministers of the Environment of the region adopted the agreements necessary to undertake the implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), which was approved at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002) and which was incorporated into the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. For this purpose, they selected eight priority areas and identified concrete activities, which, together, comprise the Regional Action Plan (RAP).

2. The Panama Declaration, adopted at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, established the political bases on which the Ministers of the region considered ILAC should be implemented and, in particular, they underscored the importance of applying the principles related to cross-cutting approaches, common but differentiated responsibilities, regionalization, the priority that should be given to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the importance of advancing towards an open trade system, the inclusion of civil society and financing for sustainable development.

3. In the past two years, the countries of the region have made progress in implementing the ILAC and have gained valuable experience for making the RAP serve as a tool for focusing on the regional priorities, advancing towards the environmental sustainability set forth in number 7 of the Millennium Development Goals, and for undertaking implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan.

II. Objectives of the Meeting

4. The Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was held in the city of Caracas, Venezuela, on 3 and 4 November 2005.

5. In preparation, a meeting of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee of the Forum of Ministers was held previously in Panama City on 12 and 13 July 2005, where it assessed the advances made in implementing the Regional Action Plan for 2004-2005 and, in general, the decisions adopted by the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers.

6. Prior to the Ministerial Segment, a Preparatory Meeting of Experts, held in the city of Caracas from 31 October to 2 November 2005, prepared twenty recommendations that were adopted by the Ministers (see **Annex II**).

7. Under these terms, the main objective of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum was to consider and, when appropriate, adopt decisions on the proposals and recommendations of the experts and to determine priority lines of action by the Forum for the period 2006-2007, based on the experience gained in the past two years in relation to implementation of the ILAC and, more particularly, of the Regional Action Plan for 2004-2005. Additionally, the Forum of Ministers considered and adopted specific decisions related to items of importance to ILAC implementation, such as the UNEP water strategy, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report.

Participation

8. The Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was held by 105 delegates of 30 countries of the region. In addition, 26 representatives of 11 agencies, programmes, commissions, secretariats and conventions of the United Nations systems, as well as 26 representatives of 20 inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and special guests. The **Annex III** contains the List of Participants at this meeting.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting

9. The Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers was inaugurated on Wednesday, 2 November 2005, by the Vice-President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. José Vicente Rangel Ávalos. During the inaugural act, Ms. Jacqueline Faría, Minister of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) of Venezuela, underscored that one of the major tasks pending in Latin America and the Caribbean was the establishment of a joint vision in the search for peace, equity, respect for nature and the re-conquering of the socio-cultural values with which the countries of the region identify. The region was undergoing significant changes that demanded joint efforts to attain the construction of a world committed to comprehensive development, the Millennium Development Goals, the eradication of poverty, and the construction of a new development model based on ethical values.

10. The Executive Director for UNEP, Mr. Klaus Toepfer, indicated that the conservation of the environment was not a luxury, but rather a condition to combat poverty, for it was precisely the poor who directly suffered from the effects of the destruction of nature. He indicated that to reduce poverty by half in the world before the year 2015 –as established in the Millennium Development Goals– it was necessary to invest in the environment.

11. Lastly and prior to the official inauguration, Vice-President José Vicente Rangel Ávalos spoke of the concern due to high levels of deforestation in the country in recent years, and also mentioned the important achievements attained in terms of the environment, including the percentage of protected areas, now reaching 63% of the territory. Additionally, 70% of electricity

generated is renewable. Vice-President Rangel mentioned priorities of the government that included rural development and sustainable agriculture, an increase in food production and security, the conservation and administration of natural resources, community policy concerning the ecology and global warming, and more. He then officially inaugurated the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.

12. At the opening session of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, Ms. Ligia Castro de Doens, General Administrator of the National Environment Authority of Panama, noted that her country was facing environmental problems such as the destruction of forestry resources and the reduction of biological diversity; the erosion of agricultural lands, livestock and forestry; the pollution of inland and coastal waters; a reduction in the flow of water from the Pacific slope of the Isthmus; and unplanned urban growth that prevailed, especially, in the metropolitan area. These problems were also linked to circumstances of social deterioration, expressed particularly in the poverty that afflicted nearly half of the country's people, and a growing economy that tended to concentrate in the productive sectors that were most and best connected to the world economy, used more sophisticated technologies and created relatively few jobs.

13. In response to these challenges, Panama's environmental policy was aimed at promoting productive use of the growing local, regional and global demand for environmental goods and services of high quality through innovative management of ecosystems that should meet that demand. This policy of conservation for sustainable development also expressed the fundamental lines of development established by her Government: reducing poverty and improving income distribution; promoting economic growth to create jobs; fostering efforts to put public finances on a sound footing; and developing the country's human capital. In designing the environmental policy of Panama, it was recognized that the opposite of conservation was not development, but waste. In this sense, a strategy of conservation for sustainable development in Panama would enable the country to overcome past factors that presently hindered having a responsible relationship with the natural environment, through an orderly and projected use of the resources that the environment provides.

Agenda Item 2: Organization of the meeting

2.1. Adoption of the rules of procedure

14. The Forum of Ministers decided to adopt, *mutatis mutandi*, the Rules of Procedure of the Governing Council of UNEP to govern the procedures of the meeting.

2.2. Election of officers

15. In conformity with the practice established in the Forum of Ministers, the composition of the officers of the Ministerial Segment should be the same as

that of the officers designated by the Experts, the following designations were adopted:

<i>President:</i>	Venezuela
<i>Vice-Presidents:</i>	Chile
	Colombia
	Dominican Republic
	Jamaica
	Nicaragua
	Uruguay
<i>Rapporteur:</i>	Mexico

16. Upon assuming the Presidency of the Forum of Ministers, Ms. Jacqueline Faria, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, expressed her gratitude for the designation. She noted that the eradication of poverty should be the objective of efforts by the countries participating in the meeting and that making such efforts required listening to the people and supporting them through information and capacity building programmes. She also expressed her conviction that Ministers of the Environment had the obligation to change the attitude of human beings towards the Earth.

17. The representatives of the member agencies of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee made general statements. The ECLAC representative indicated that during the previous Preparatory Meeting of Experts, the Commission had reported on the activities conducted by the Commission to fulfil the mandates of the Forum and he stated that emerging tasks and fiscal instruments to support sustainable development had been identified. He noted that the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol opened up numerous opportunities for the countries of the region, particularly in the case of the international market for carbon bonds.

18. The UNDP representative said that the Programme had supported the Forum of Ministers in three spheres and, in relation to them, he summarized the activities conducted. In relation to financial mechanisms for sustainable development, UNDP would continue working with the other ITC agencies in developing strategies to boost the use of these instruments. In the field of climate change, UNDP was carrying out activities at the request of the governments and believed that mitigation and adaptation should be addressed in a balanced manner. In the field of adaptation, land and forest activities were being carried out and support was being given to the island countries in situations associated with the adverse effects of climate change. In general, UNDP was collaborating in the preparation of the national communications and GEF investments for energy efficiency and biofuels. He believed that the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) had not lived up to the expectations of the developing countries and that, consequently, alternative mechanisms that supplemented carbon bonds and offered conservation and development benefits

additional to the benefits of reducing greenhouse gases (GHGs) should be explored. In the sphere of South-South cooperation, a virtual database for the exchange of knowledge was being developed and its initial spheres would be on climate change, including the CDM and fiscal instruments.

19. The IDB representative believed that poverty reduction and economic growth were the objectives through which environmental activities with cross-cutting approaches were being conducted in areas such as energy, climate change and natural disasters.

20. The World Bank representative stated that he shared the views expressed by the representatives of the other agencies with regard to the commitment to continue supporting regional efforts to address the environmental agenda. Since the agenda was very extensive, it was necessary to establish priorities and estimate the costs of environmental degradation, which were very high in Latin America and the Caribbean. In his opinion, it was necessary to consult the poor whose principle problems were linked to solid waste and air and water quality, since these problems resulted in high disease rates. Consequently, any strategy should focus on solving urban problems and reducing poverty. Finally, he stated that cross-cutting approaches had gained notable impetus in several countries of the region, such as Brazil, Mexico and Colombia, countries with which the World Bank was working.

21. The Executive Director of UNEP thanked the ITC agencies for their cooperation. He congratulated the Ministers of the region on the ever-increasing consistency in the Forum's efforts, which was made evident by the approval of the ILAC in Johannesburg. He invited the Ministers to actively participate in the Dubai Meeting, which was going to concentrate its deliberations on the themes that would be addressed at the next session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). He reaffirmed that UNEP would continue channelling resources into the region and its subregions, particularly to the countries of the Caribbean for implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

2.3. Approval of the meeting agenda and schedule of sessions

22. The Provisional Agenda (UNEP/LAC-IG.XV/1) and the annotated Provisional Agenda and the Schedule of Sessions proposed by the Secretariat (UNEP/LAC-IG.XV/2) were adopted without modification.

Agenda Item 3: Special session to exchange experiences and information on emerging issues relevant to the implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development

3.1. Integrated management of water resources

23. The President of the Forum of Ministers announced that the Secretariat of the Forum had made available to the Ministers and Delegation Heads document **UNEP/LAC-IG.XV/3** titled "General Elements that May Be Used by the Ministers and Heads of Delegation for the Exchange of Information on Integrated Water Resources Management". She recalled that in various forums and

international and regional action programmes, such as the Johannesburg Summit, the Millennium Development Goals, the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), there had been repeated acknowledgment that water was the most fundamental of the environment resources and it was the key element for the sustainability of world ecosystems.

24. Three presentations were then made. The first was given by Mr. Cristóbal Francisco, of HIDROVEN, who mentioned that Venezuela was a decade ahead in compliance with the Millennium goal concerning water supply, and that the wastewater goal would be met in 2006. In this regard, technical consultation committees had been established with the population; he mentioned that a fund of US\$60 million had been created to expand the water supply infrastructure coverage and that investment in drinking water and sanitation had reached US\$750 million.

25. Mr. Tim Kasten of UNEP then presented a document on the water strategy in the process of being prepared. He made a summary of the activities carried out by UNEP in recent years and mentioned that, at its twenty-third session, the Governing Council received the strategy proposal and decided to continue working in order to incorporate the results at the forthcoming Meeting of the CSD. He reported on the measures taken by UNEP in response to the decisions of forums such as the Earth Summit and, more recently, the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Summit.

26. He stated that it would now be necessary to move from planning to action, and not to continue with the strategy review process. Since six strategic principles had been established to advance towards this goal, he believed that this Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers offered a unique opportunity to incorporate the ideas and contributions of the participating countries. He described mechanisms, partnerships, and work and cooperation modalities at a regional, subregional and national level as, for example, in the case of the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean, where work would be carried out in coordination with GEF.

27. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment of Trinidad and Tobago, H. E. Earl Nesbitt, made a presentation on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) from a Small Island Developing State Perspective, using the examples of procedures, strategies and needs of Trinidad and Tobago. The goal of Trinidad and Tobago was guided by the 20/20 Vision. The IWRM was but one component of this vision. Trinidad and Tobago was not classified as a water scarce country. Trinidad and Tobago had a population of 1.3 million and landmass of 5064 sq. km. The IWRM was guided and managed in co-ordination by various agencies from international, regional, subregional and national bodies. Special attention was drawn to the challenges of Trinidad and Tobago in the IWRM processes resulting in the deterioration of watersheds, including forest fires, unsustainable use of forest products and sand mining.

28. The approach to IWRM management included capacity building at all stakeholder-ship levels and watershed rehabilitation, the establishment of

legislative and monitoring activities, investments in technologies such as Flood Hazard Mapping and the promotion of stakeholder, community and civil society participation. He pointed out that the needs of IWRM were to be found in the development areas of a comprehensive policy, legislative and institutional framework. Special assistance was called for in the areas of data information management for decision making, capacity building for water resources management and development, and implementation of a public awareness and education programme to modify behaviours and sensitize the wider population.

29. Following the above presentations, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations held a discussion concerning the governance and integrated management of water resources and the assessment of the goods and services provided by water resources. In reference to the former, most of the participants in the discussion acknowledged that none of the Governments had generated a structure to accomplish the integrated management of water resources; that the environment authorities were not responsible for handling this resource, or rather, when they were responsible, they did not have the necessary political strength. The establishment of indicators and goals was also proposed, in addition to public participation processes that could contribute to solving the issue of governance. In reference to the ecological and economic value of water, it was noted that a value had not been determined and, consequently water was either underused or used indiscriminately. Some delegations explained what had been done in their respective countries for the recovery of watersheds.

30. Various delegations agreed on the need to make progress towards a legal and institutional framework for integrated water management, but they noted that no decision had yet been reached on which regional institutional framework would be in charge of promoting this process.

31. Costa Rica mentioned that when the rural population began to receive payment for water through the environmental services payment system implemented in the country, it had a positive effect on the recuperation of forest coverage. Producing water as an environmental service provided by forests became more profitable, in comparison with subsistence farming. Reports were also made about water-related legislation, where it is common to encounter difficulties linked to sectoral visions in terms of water resources management.

32. The representative of Brazil presented a proposal to initiate a process to develop a water strategy together with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. This task would be taken on by a coordinating group which would be responsible for incorporating the countries' demands in order to arrive at a set of specific goals.

33. The Mexican delegation invited the participants to the Fourth World Water Forum (Mexico City, 16-22 March 2006), the main purpose of which was to foster dialogue among water stakeholders, particularly non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians and local communities; the Forum would also include a ministerial segment. The programme included holding roundtables on six subject areas that coincided with the international commitments that had been adopted at diverse international forums. There would be a meeting of local authorities who were in charge of water management; consequently the slogan

of the Forum would be "Local Action for a Global Problem". The ministerial declaration expected for adoption at the end of the Forum would focus on advancing towards compliance with the guidelines agreed on in the Commission on Sustainable Development.

3.2. Renewable energies and energy efficiency

34. In reference to renewable energies, the President of the Forum mentioned that the countries of the region were determined to meet the goal of 10% of the energy supply coming from renewable sources.

35. Mr. Jorge Rogat of the UNEP Risø Centre made reference to the global energy situation and mentioned that a 60% increase in energy demand by 2030 was expected, according to the International Energy Agency. Fossil fuels would continue to play a major role, which implied a challenge in supplies and the development of alternative energies, and that this challenge was related to problems associated with natural disasters and climate change. There were environmental impacts derived from the use of energy, particularly air, water and soil pollution, deforestation, etc.

36. One of the current problems was supplying energy to the 1600 million people that did not have it. He presented six key political issues: security of supply, energy for development, climate change and other environment problems. The main objective of the UNEP energy programme was the integration of social and environmental considerations in decisions related to energy generation. The measures currently under way included the promotion of rural energy production companies, building capacities for the CDM (US\$10 million), and the global energy network for sustainable development. These and other activities were channelled towards the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan.

37. Ms. Ruth Potopsigh, Assistant Director of the Management Group of the Jamaican Petroleum Corporation indicated that 90% of the energy used in the Caribbean countries came from petroleum, which had led to problems whenever there had been considerable increases in energy prices. Energy consumption was focused principally on domestic use, rather than productive projects, therefore fostering environmental awareness and education was necessary to reverse these trends. Alternative energies offered opportunities that could be tapped through the use of international cooperation mechanisms, such as the CDM of the Kyoto Protocol. She described the options for the generation of renewable energy and the obstacles faced by its use, and she also presented examples of significant progress made in Cuba through the operation of hydroelectric plants and photovoltaic energy for education and hospital facilities.

38. Mr. Oswaldo Lucon of the Ministry of the Environment of Brazil mentioned that the use of renewable energies was going through a learning curve: costs fell with rising production; it was necessary to invest in technologies that were still in the maturing phase; which made subsidies necessary at the initial stages. The reproduction of the learning curve in various countries was feasible and technology transfer could be carried out in different ways. Renewable energies

should not be produced only for internal consumption; the regional potential of this service should be tapped.

39. During the discussion that followed these presentations, Brazil stated that renewable energies were a subject of particular interest to Brazil because of their potential for complying with the 10% ILAC goal. It noted that significant resources had been invested in various countries in wind and other kinds of energies, which had financial implications. The Uruguay delegation pointed out the need to identify not only the renewable source of energy, but also its sustainable use. Consequently it suggested that the term "sustainable energies" rather than "renewable energies" should be used. Additionally, the delegation stressed the important contribution these types of energies could make to facing climate change and the important place they should have in the energy matrix, as well as the identification of environmental contributions by renewable energies and their associated impacts, the work pending in energy efficiency with a heavy social component, and the contribution these alternative energies could have on a country's development

40. Several delegations agreed on the relevance of governance and acknowledged limitations that arose between the environment and energy agendas. The institutional framework was far from being optimum to accomplish sustainable development results because the sectoralization of the environment and energy counteracts the proposals. It was believed that renewable energies were not yet listed on the agenda and although the oil market was favouring the promotion of this kind of energy, ideally, it should be accompanied by the corresponding institutional base. To that end, Costa Rica proposed that the Forum of Ministers should inform the Latin American and Caribbean Energy Organization (OLACDE) of the ILAC goals and the results of the Forum through UNEP and the other ITC agencies.

41. The delegation of Chile considered it important to undertake a regional assessment of the impact of hydroelectric facilities, as was proposed by Brazil, and suggested advocating the development of legislation that would include, *inter alia*, incentives for innovative energies. They stated that the introduction of the environment dimension in the energy programme was very complex; therefore, they proposed making environmental assessment of policies rather than projects.

42. Other delegations proposed that the Forum of Ministers should take note of the interests of SIDS as well as the support of the ITC in the building of capacities in economic instruments and fiscal policies for renewable energies. Finally, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela recognized the problems of the greenhouse gases, but believed that development was not possible without the reduction of poverty. And development would invariably require the consumption of fossil fuels, which meant a significant challenge in finding the correct equation.

43. The importance of energy and renewable energies was emphasized by the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean. The delegation of St. Kitts and Nevis mentioned that their Government was seeking alternative energy sources, such as biofuels, and they noted they were in favour of expanding South-South

cooperation, particularly from countries that had already had this experience, such as Brazil and Cuba. Furthermore, they offered their country as the site for a pilot project. The Barbados delegation reported that energy costs accounted for 70% of the foreign currencies obtained from exports and such costs affected all sectors.

44. In the same discussion, it was recognized that investments in renewable energy were costly and made capacity building and support for human resources indispensable. A call was made concerning the need to find innovative approaches, particularly through South-South cooperation and capacity-building for the promotion of renewable energies in the region. This proposal was supported by the Jamaican delegation, provided that, when dealing with these subjects, energy conservation or technologies already used in the area were included, in addition to solar energy and the awareness and education of the general public. The delegation of Trinidad and Tobago reported that the issue of energy should close the gaps between the environment, technology transfer and poverty.

Agenda Item 4: Implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development.

45. Under this agenda item, the Mexican delegation, in its capacity as Rapporteur of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts, presented the Report of the Meeting, and conducted the review of the proposed Regional Action Plan for 2006-2007 and the proposed decisions drawn up in the Preparatory Meeting of Experts.

4.1. Regional Action Plan 2006-2007

46. The UNEP Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean underscored the two main issues addressed in the proposal presented by the Preparatory Meeting of Experts. The first issue was to approve the Regional Plan of Action for the biennium 2006-2007 focused on the implementation of ILAC, with eight lines proposed: access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from their use; water resources, human settlements, territorial vulnerability and regulation; renewable energies; trade and environment; economic instruments and fiscal policy; climate change and environment indicators.

47. In second place, it was proposed that the Inter-sessional Committee should meet with the coordinators of the *ad hoc* Working Group during the inter-sessional period in order to complete the definitive draft of the activities agreed upon in the Regional Action Plan 2006-2007, including the schedule of their activities; based on the contributions of this meeting, as well as those received up to December 2005 from the countries and agencies that made up the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC).

48. The delegation of Mexico proposed incorporating in the Regional Action Plan several activities concerning the prevention of and response capacity to natural disasters for which the Experts drew up a decision proposal.

49. The delegation of Argentina, on behalf of the MERCOSUR nations, gave a presentation highlighting the convergence of the activities of this subregional institution with the guidelines agreed upon in the Forum of Ministers, which included water resources, hazardous wastes, biodiversity –particularly cetaceans– trade and environment, and GEO- MERCOSUR. The delegation of Brazil stressed the importance of UNEP’s subregional activities, particularly through the office in Brazil.

50. After these remarks, the proposals of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts were approved and the group proceeded to review the proposed decisions.

a) Implementation of the agreements of the Forum of Ministers on the sustainable development of the Small Island Developing States

51. The delegation of St. Lucia stressed the importance of the continuous support of UNEP for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action.

b) Access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization

52. The delegation of Ecuador presented a proposal of the decision drawn up by the Preparatory Meeting of Experts, highlighting its importance in the light of the forthcoming negotiations to be held in Granada, Spain. The delegation requested the ITC agencies to support the organization of workshops similar to the one held in Havana in June 2005. The delegation of Brazil invited the countries of the region to participate in the upcoming Meeting of the Convention on Biological diversity (CBD) to be held in Curitiba, Brazil, in March 2006.

53. The delegation of Bolivia proposed that the decision include a reference to the intellectual protection of traditional knowledge. Note was taken of this proposal.

c) Follow-up on the Meeting on Health and Environment

54. The delegation of Argentina underscored the importance that the Forum has given to the association between health and the environment, which implied the challenge of involving various sectors. They were pleased that the cooperation agenda arising from the Meeting held in Mar del Plata had been included in the decision drawn up in the Preparatory Meeting of Experts and noted the links between the above- mentioned agenda and the Bali Strategic Plan. They reiterated the importance of the GEO Health project that UNEP would be jointly undertaking with PAHO.

d) Latin American and Caribbean Environmental Training Programme

55. The delegation of Venezuela stressed the most important elements of the decision proposal in this subject. The delegation of Peru reported on the start-up of the Andean Amazonia Communication and Environmental Education Plan.

e) Review of the progress made concerning environment indicators.

56. The delegation of Costa Rica mentioned that the activities carried out in the Working Group had started to produce concrete results and reaffirmed that the use of indicators was of critical importance to assessing progress in environmental management, compared with the performance seen in other sectors. The delegation of Brazil agreed and made available to the participants the MERCOSUR information system. Costa Rica's work, in its capacity as the coordinating country of the group was acknowledged by various delegations, particularly in terms of the development of indicators to measure sustainability with indicators in addition to those set forth in the Millennium Development Goals; the joint efforts of UNEP and ECLAC in this sphere were also noted.

f) Sustainable production and consumption.

57. The delegation of Nicaragua urged the participants to approve the decision on this subject and listed the activities to be carried out in accordance with the recommendation prepared by the Experts, particularly the establishment of a subregional centre that would promote cooperation in Central America in this field and for which the CCAD, the Government of Nicaragua and UNEP would join efforts.

g) Climate change.

58. The delegation of Panama stressed the relevance of the decision proposed in the light of the forthcoming meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. The delegations of Brazil, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic jointly expressed their concern that international negotiations in the framework of the Convention on Climate Change continued rejecting activities for the protection of natural tropical forests to prevent deforestation as part of the portfolio projects eligible for the CDM. Consequently it was proposed that the countries of the region should promote a healthy discussion of this issue during the COP11/MOP-1 that would be held in Montreal, Canada. Likewise, the importance of initiating discussion on the future regime of climate change post-2012 during these meetings was highlighted.

59. The delegation of Brazil supported this position and stressed that adaptation and mitigation should be approached in a balanced matter. The delegation of Trinidad and Tobago set forth the need to assess ecosystems in order to have inputs to determine the economic impact caused by the lack of action through environmental management.

60. The delegation of Bolivia proposed the inclusion of a reference to the fact that the countries of the region had already ratified the Kyoto Protocol, and on that basis, once again a request to the countries that had not yet ratified the Protocol to do so. The representative of the UNFCCC stressed that the 5-year adaptation and operation programme and the workability of the Adaptation Fund would be discussed at the Montreal Conference.

61. The delegation of Mexico mentioned that various countries in the region, including Mexico, had been seriously affected by the devastating impact of the Stan and Wilma hurricanes. Consequently, it proposed the drafting of a Regional

Plan of Action with the support of UNEP and the agencies of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (World Bank, IDB, UNDP, ECLAC), as well as the preparation of a series of studies and cooperation activities. The activities would be focused on:

- i. supporting the integration of environmental management initiatives with initiatives to prevent disasters;
- ii. supporting the development of databases on the vulnerability of the region's natural resources;
- iii. supporting the strengthening of national and regional capacities and mechanisms;
- iv. enhancing the prevention capacity and the response to emergency situations;
- v. strengthening policies and legislation to minimize the impact of natural disasters;
- vi. assessing the costs and benefits of the actions and strategies to prevent the impact of natural disasters;
- vii. preparing an action plan for the Latin American and Caribbean region, that would establish indicators, goals and responsibilities;
- viii. strengthening financing lines and the mobilization of resources and international cooperation; and
- ix. presenting the results to the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers in 2007.
- x. other recommendations of the meeting of experts.

62. The delegation of Venezuela underscored the importance of the Dialogue of Environmental Organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean for Sustainable Development that took place in Caracas prior to the commencement of the work by the Fifteenth Forum of Ministers and mentioned that the decision proposed by the Experts meant progress in the sphere of social participation mechanisms.

63. The delegation of Peru made a declaration on behalf of the Andean countries in which it stressed the approval of the Amazonia Communication and Environmental Education Plan, which took place in Lima, Peru, in October 2005.

Agenda Item 5: Follow-up and discussion of the agreements of the twenty-third session of the Governing Council of UNEP and the preparatory activities for the ninth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 7th-9th February 2006)

64. The Director of the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean mentioned the preparations for the Dubai Meeting, whose agenda

included the UNEP water strategy and the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan, for which draft decisions had been prepared in the Preparatory Meeting of Experts. The UNEP Director of the Division of Regional Cooperation and Representation (DRCR) gave a presentation on the work segments of the meeting. She noted that the issues related to energy and tourism would be debated at a ministerial level, but a decision on these matters was not expected. However, the adoption of a decision on chemicals was foreseen.

Agenda Item 6: Report on the Millennium Ecosystems

65. Ms. Angela Cropper, President of the Cropper Foundation, mentioned that the report was the product of efforts by experts of four international environment conventions and academic institutions and was submitted to peer review. She said that while the value of the ecosystem is not tangible, nevertheless they provide important services.

66. The uniqueness of the report was that it offered a methodology to determine services of a diverse nature provided by the ecosystems; another characteristic of the report was that it responded to the demands of the countries. The report had produced results indicating that the ecosystems had changed faster in recent years. For example, in the field of land use, 20% of the reefs had been lost and mangroves had been affected. The benefits obtained in terms of well-being had implied a high cost that would affect future generations; this cost had not been envisaged in the national accounts system, although it meant a loss of natural capital; changes in ecosystems could be irreversible; in developing countries, half of the inhabitants of the urban zones had been affected by diseases related to water and sewerage problems.

67. The projections and scenarios of the report indicated considerable increases in terms of changes in land use, and food security would not be attained until 2050; water availability would grow 7%, but this growth would have to be linked population growth. Living standards could improve over the next few years in various aspects, provided that diverse and correct policy measures were adopted. In the final section of the presentation the findings of the assessment made in the Caribbean countries using the report methodology were presented.

68. Fernando Gast of the Instituto Alexander Von Humboldt of Colombia presented an analysis made in the coffee-producing sector of his country to contribute to the well-being of the communities involved in growing coffee. The case study, in which 186 municipalities participated, was based on the acknowledgement of considerable changes in land use, assessed by using satellite images and fragmentation of production units of less than 2 hectares, which enabled assessment of the coffee-producing sector in three departments of Colombia.

Agenda Item 7: Special session on the implementation of ILAC

7.1 The contribution of the implementing agencies of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to implementing the ILAC lines of action

69. In response to the request of the President of the Forum and the countries participating in the ITC meeting held in Panama City in July 2005, the UNDP representative, on behalf of the GEF members of the ITC, described the main characteristics of the fourth replenishment cycle of GEF for the period from July 2006 to June 2010. She gave an account of background events to the GEF operation, stressing that it was the financial mechanism of four international environmental conventions and that almost US\$5 billion had been disbursed in developing countries since it was launched in 1992. In the next GEF cycle, called GEF4, the members of the GEF Governing Council approved the establishment of a GEF Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) in two of its main operating areas; namely, the conservation of biodiversity and climate change. Background for this Resource Allocation Framework occurred in the final GEF replenishment round, held in 2002 (for the 2002-2006 period), during which the members of the Council deemed it necessary to maximize the impact of scarce GEF resources through a resource allocation system to be implemented during GEF4. The purpose of this framework would be to ensure strategic prioritization by the countries, promoting the selection and funding of projects that fully reflected national priorities as endorsed by the GEF focal points of the requesting governments. The resources allocated to each country during GEF4 for biodiversity and climate change projects would depend on the amount of capital GEF received in the present replenishment round and on the allocation granted to the programming areas of biodiversity and climate change. Final allocations by country would be defined and available for the meeting of the GEF Council, to be held in June 2006.

70. In preparation for GEF4 and the implementation of this new means of allocation, the GEF Secretariat had established an interinstitutional RAF application team, which would be in charge of jointly preparing the operational procedures needed to effectively apply the framework. The team had already begun working and would meet periodically to collaborate in performing the necessary tasks to prepare operational procedures for RAF application. The interinstitutional team would act in an open and integrating manner and would carry out its work in consultation with a great variety of stakeholders. The operational procedures proposed for implementing the RAF would be presented at the meeting of the GEF Governing Council, to be held in June 2006.

71. It was noted that the coordination, selection and prioritization process at the country level would be of fundamental importance, just as inter-agency coordination. Consequently, the above-mentioned working group would identify the best options and issue recommendations and practical guidelines to optimize such interaction. The percentage of resources to be allocated to regional projects concerning biodiversity and climate change was still being discussed.

72. Another factor important to the success of the new scheme was the development of a communication strategy so that the governments could be informed of the content and operation of the new system. In order for the countries to be prepared to implement the RAF during GEF4, it would be advisable: to consolidate internal processes to set priorities among a wide range of projects, to invest in the search for key partnerships with financing agencies that could supplement resources from GEF, and to develop a communication strategy to provide information at the country level on the modalities being used to establish the priority of projects to be submitted to the GEF.

73. Additionally, the UNDP representative made a brief presentation on the UNDP-GEF portfolio in the region and the way in which GEF was supporting the priority themes of ILAC and the Regional Action Plan. The UNDP-GEF portfolio in the region amounted to US\$300 million and approximately US\$600 million in counterpart funds. It consisted of 149 projects in the diverse GEF programming areas covering a wide range of stakeholders and its implementation was supported by UNDP national offices. The UNDP-GEF portfolio reflected the high degree of complementarity with other GEF operational agencies.

74. The contribution of the UNDP-GEF portfolio to ILAC consisted of a set of projects that were contained in the documents that had been distributed. These contributions supported priority ILAC issues (access to genetic resources, climate change, renewable energies, financing mechanisms and economic instruments, water resources, etc.) At a subregional level, work had been done with CCAD and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), and support was also being given to the Caribbean SIDS.

75. Mr. Abel Mejía, on behalf of the World Bank, briefly explained its function in the region and the contributions and opportunities concerning ILAC. The Bank had an action strategy for each country that generated added value. There was also a global strategy for the environment, the result of a wide-ranging survey of the countries to identify synergies at the national level.

76. The World Bank had biodiversity-related projects in various subregions (the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor and the ARPA project in Amazonia, among others). Climate change was the second priority, with projects for adaptation measures and mitigation in urban areas related to air quality. Mr. Mejía stressed opportunities in the payment for environment services. The World Bank funds for this subject amount to US\$370 million with 55 projects in the GEF framework and the leveraging of additional resources.

77. Mr. Ricardo Quiroga, on behalf of the IDB, informed that their activities were associated with its programming work in the region. To date, it had three projects in Central America and several projects were being prepared in this subregion. The Bank expected to have the capacity to promote more projects with impact in other subregions.

78. UNEP presented the portfolio that had been promoted in the region and was based on a series of concepts, such as decentralization and streamlining in the preparation and implementation of projects. The projects covered different levels and amounted to a total of US\$150 million in subjects ranging from water

resources to access to genetic resources, coastal aquifers in island States, protection of the Wider Caribbean Region, renewable energies, bio-business, and land degradation, among others. This portfolio had been developed in coordination with the countries.

79. The delegation of Costa Rica asked the agencies to explain the GEF criteria that would be used to allocate resources under the RAF scheme and the bases for such criteria. UNDP, on behalf of the agencies, explained that the criteria were based on a set of environmental indicators and other macro-economic and institutional indicators used by multilateral banks.

80. The World Bank representative mentioned that in relation to resources obtained by the countries, there were multiple demands from diverse sectors whose projects did not include the environmental perspective; hence, it was necessary to promote the cross-cutting aspect in this regard.

81. The Chilean delegation spoke of the need to receive more information from the agencies regarding their accumulated experience in the presentation of projects; this information would allow for the identification of opportunities and challenges in terms of obtaining resources. The delegation of Panama mentioned that it was difficult to understand the content of the reports presented by the implementing agencies, because the projects had been approved through the application of criteria with which the countries were unfamiliar.

82. The delegation of Venezuela expressed concern regarding the problem posed by the numerous administrative procedures that must be met prior to the approval of a project; and the delegation of Colombia added its voice to this concern. The delegation of Brazil, in turn, believed that the criteria for project evaluation should reflect the perspective of integrated environmental management. These delegations asked the agencies to work in a coordinated, expeditious and less bureaucratic manner, strengthening their representation at the country level.

83. The ECLAC representative deemed it advisable to move towards increased coordination between the criteria of the GEF implementing agencies and the criteria, priorities and guidelines of the Forum of Ministers.

84. The delegation of Cuba indicated that the GEF Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) established macroeconomic, political and project implementation requirements for financial resources allocation which were proposed by the main donor countries and subsequently led to opposition expressed by many countries members of the GEF Council. Consideration was not given to the fact that GEF was the financial mechanism for the four MEAs and that the opinion of the Conferences of the Parties to those instruments should consequently have been taken into account. Through the decisions adopted in relation to the allocation of resources, the GEF had, in fact, changed its founding principles through the decision of its main donors. Under these conditions, GEF was no longer properly able to address the priorities of the countries. Finally, it was recognized that the GEF implementing agencies were not responsible for the decision adopted in relation to the RAF, since it was a decision promoted by the principal donor countries.

7.2. Financing for Sustainable Development

85. The ECLAC representative gave a general introduction to the presentations by the guest experts, underscoring that in terms of sustainable financial development, there were grave shortcomings in the coordination within the governments, due primarily to difficulties in integrating public policy and to a lack of indicators on environmental expenditures. Consequently, the session would encompass four themes: environmental fiscal policy; efforts geared towards economic environmental training; the cross-cutting nature of public policy and markets for environmental goods and services.

86. ECLAC noted that the international emissions market offered the countries of the region major opportunities with the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol. Being in a position to tap these opportunities would require addressing problems linked to the existence of a weak supply, simplification of procedures, lack of certainty and additionality outside normal investment schemes. He mentioned the initiative adopted at the last G8 meeting in reference to financing greenhouse gas emission reduction projects.

87. ECLAC pointed out that workable forms of carbon credit funds were being defined and would require coordination at the regional and country level. There were also initiatives that sought to match supply and demand for emission reduction projects and took into account the possibility of major intervention by treasury authorities. It was noted that environmental authorities were not participating in the discussions concerning these criteria.

88. Mr. Rubén Darío Patrouilleau, Cabinet Head of the Environment Secretariat of the Health and Environment Ministry of Argentina pointed out that climate change was a priority for his country, which was evident from its promotion of national and international activities in that sphere. Although there was not yet a State policy, there were signs of progress being made in that direction. The National Carbon Fund's main purpose was to facilitate CDM projects and increase the participation of Argentina in the international carbon credit market with high quality projects. Argentina has a reduction potential of 30 million of metric tonnes CO₂ per year that would generate 150 million dollars. The portfolio of the Argentine CDM Office had 75 projects registered with comparative advantages in energy generation, new technologies, renewable energy, transport, tourism, afforestation and reforestation, and urban solid waste management.

89. Ms. Olga Luciano, Director of the Secretariat of State for Planning and Environment of the Dominican Republic made a presentation on integration policies. She noted that national activities in the sphere were based on the recognition of a weakness in legal institutions and command and control enforcement measures that had proved to be ineffective, as well as environmental problems associated with centralized sectoral policies and the allocation of budget resources without predetermined criteria. The assessment conducted with the support of ECLAC provided a set of recommendations among which the need to incorporate a cross-cutting approach in different sectors figured prominently, and this could only be done through the use of instruments that responded to the national reality and included the use of economic

instruments that would enable persuasion in moving towards environmentally sustainable conduct. The ECLAC study had generated conditions and opportunities to advance towards a cross-cutting approach, particularly in a project in the energy sector.

90. Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, Minister of the Environment for Costa Rica, stated that in his country land use was subject to the ground surface available (51,000 km²), which was the reason that, traditionally, there had been competition among various production sectors and livestock raising had been encouraged for decades, fostering the loss of forest cover. In 1996, it was decided to reverse this trend, and an important mechanism had been payment for the environmental services generated by forests. As a result of this new policy, forestry legislation recognized four groups of environmental services provided by forests, and payment to forest owners was initiated. These services were the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, the protection of water, the protection of biodiversity for conservation and sustainable use, and natural scenic beauty for tourism and scientific purposes. It was underscored that the environmental Services Payment Programme was not a programme that had arisen spontaneously, but rather the result of a process that had been initiated in the late 1960s and had gradually evolved into a financially sustainable mechanism.

91. Ecomarkets, a project (US\$49.4 million) to strengthen the forest maintenance policy, was supported by the World Bank, GEF, and a national counterpart. It had enabled significant expansion of protected forest coverage, incorporating mothers who were heads of households and owned forest land, as well as indigenous communities. As concerns water, 17 sub-sectors had been identified as major users who should pay for the water they use; the payment for water had risen from .0007 cents colon to 40% of the value of water, and it would be phased in over the next four years. Ecotourism in national parks had generated around 5.5% of GDP (US\$1.5 billion dollars), as compared to 7.7% for the agricultural sector. One of the potential spheres of these policies was sustainable rural development. At present, work was being carried out on what was known as the second generation of environmental services. The implementation of the millennium development goals and combating poverty were the target objectives. He underscored the importance of building capacity for instructors who could disseminate knowledge and details on these instruments.

92. Mr. Franklin Méndez, from the delegation of Venezuela, referred to his country's Fund for Economic and Social Development, which had available US\$4 billion, of which US\$803 million are allocated to the electric sector, particularly as concerns renewable energy projects. Mr. Méndez also listed the various projects under way, including: sanitation of the Guaira river; major infrastructure and communications projects, development of housing and habitat; technical tables to discuss the management of water that included the participation of society. With resources from the Funds themselves, actions were being carried out in Argentina, Cuba and Uruguay.

93. The ECLAC representative mentioned that the Initiative resulting from the Group of Eight meetings, led by the United Kingdom, had not yet determined the definitions necessary for the rules of operation, hence, the region should seek opportunities to express its position and interests.

94. The delegation of Chile commented that the environmental dimension of development was still considered an obstacle rather than an opportunity. With examples such as the ones described by Costa Rica, it would now be timely to reverse this viewpoint in order to set forth the inclusion of the environmental dimension as a requirement. The linkage between sustainability and overcoming poverty should be duly underscored in order to foster dialogue with the authorities of non-environmental sectors. The theme of environment was not a matter of militancy, but rather a theme linked to economic development.

95. The delegation of Argentina considered that the cases presented by Costa Rica and Venezuela were innovative in relation to what was occurring in the rest of the region because they involved breaking with paradigms and, in the case of Venezuela, the availability of financial resources associated with oil would benefit the environment sector, although the question of what will be done when the petroleum assets were no longer so important should be asked. The delegation of Venezuela noted that, in contrast to other occasions when the surplus was deposited in the banks, it was now being channelled into projects for social and environmental purposes, with clear emphasis on the southern region of the country, where development efforts were being made.

96. The IDB representative pointed out that the supply of financing had no limitations, but the demand in the environmental sector was very limited, although investment in projects related to energy, tourism and communication could offer interesting opportunities associated with environmental impact assessment. Partnerships between public and private sectors could generate outputs favourable to the environment sector. In the case of natural disasters, he noted that consideration was being given to establishing a fund to respond to such emergencies.

97. The delegation of Bolivia stated that in its country the construction of communications infrastructure financed by international loans was affected by the lack of intersectoral coordination and emphasized that failure to incorporate the environmental dimension into public policies was caused by the lack of environmental education among the decision-makers who, in general, applied short-term policies.

98. The UNDP representative stated that the exchange carried out demonstrated that the Forum could constitute an excellent opportunity for the exchange of experiences among the countries of the region. He noted that the experiences presented demonstrated how different mechanisms could be used, depending on the reality in each country, to improve and build natural and social capital. He announced that UNDP was making available to the countries a knowledge management model it had developed and, as an example, he delivered a CD-ROM with materials developed for the first regional environmental knowledge fair, held in Costa Rica, an event that promoted the exchange of good practices, matching supply and demand, and promoting

South-South cooperation agreements. He announced that he was also making available to the delegations another CD-ROM, which was published together with ECLAC and included the publications compiled in the field of financing for sustainable development and economic mechanisms for environmental management in the region. Finally, he announced the launching of a UNDP knowledge Internet web site in 2006 through which the countries would have access to good practices, case studies, a network of experts and virtual discussions.

99. The World Bank representative indicated that a record in loans granted by the Bank had been reached, equivalent to US\$1 billion. He added that the Bank was working on environmental projects with GEF that had received US\$380 million in resources. Although the region was not among the main GHG emitters, he underscored the need for methodologies on land-use change to increase the region's participation in the international carbon bond market. Budget allocations in the countries of the region were very small in relation to the environmental challenges. There were mechanisms to attract resources linked to payment for environmental services, funds for protected natural areas – that amounted to one billion of dollars – and examples of cooperation such as that used for protection of the Amazon region. The ITC agencies should apply indicators to what they were doing, and they should calculate the costs of environmental degradation.

Agenda Item 8: Message from the Dialogue of Environmental Organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean for Sustainable Development

100. Mr. Sandro Chávez, on behalf of the civil society organizations (CSO), thanked the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and particularly its Environment Minister and UNEP for facilitating the dialogue they had held prior to the Meeting of the Forum of Ministers. He underscored the importance of the theme of partnerships, which had been widely discussed at this and other forums, and expressed their commitment to working continuously towards building and developing it.

101. He also mentioned the importance of the CSOs on the path to sustainable development, for which they had made significant progress in organizational and coordination aspects through the creation of an Executive Secretariat and through continuing and strengthening the work of subregional coordinating units, which would implement an information and communication strategy and support UNEP in its work on indicators to monitor the ILAC, the Millennium Development Goals and Agenda 21.

102. The CSO representative also presented a summary of the principal recommendations of the dialogue to the Forum of Ministers, which were reflected in the CSO declaration and referred to chemicals, energy, tourism and shared environmental management.

Agenda Item 9: State of implementation and future perspectives of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (Messages by high-level representatives of the multilateral environmental conventions)

103. Mr. Marco González, Executive Secretary of the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, reported that the results of the global effort to comply with the measures agreed upon in the framework of the Protocol had made it possible to phase out the use of ozone-depleting substances by 90%; consequently, the recovery of the ozone layer was documented by scientific data. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have phased out 60% of the CFCs, equivalent to 10% more than the goal met a year earlier. Thus, he recognized the commitment with which the countries of the region had contributed to the implementation of this multilateral agreement. Nevertheless, the work was not completed; efforts and resources must now be focused on phasing out all the substances over the next few years; this was the most important challenge for compliance with the Montreal Protocol goals. With this, the case of the Protocol could also be presented as an example of the success of a multilateral environmental agreement.

104. Mr. Paul Ratznick, President of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol, mentioned the antecedents of this financial mechanism for purposes of providing financial and technical assistance to phase-out chemicals that were depleting the ozone layer. Representatives of countries in the region had taken up administrative positions in the Committee. Since the establishment of the Fund, nearly US\$350 million had been disbursed to all the Latin American and Caribbean countries to phase out more than 32,600 tons of ozone depleting substances. The financial support to countries of the region had so far proven to be very effective in phasing-out controlled substances. For example, an average consumption and production of 70,000 tons of CFCs in the 1995-1997 period had dropped to some 17,600 ODP tons by 2004,, and some reduction in the consumption of the fumigant methyl bromide had been achieved.

105. With the level of funding provided, many industries in the region had been converted to state-of-the-art ozone-friendly technologies. The good news was that the CFC production facility in Mexico had been shut down in August this year, nearly five years ahead of official phase-out date of 2010. He expressed his appreciation to the Government of Mexico for accomplishing this task so early. Argentina and Venezuela were also progressing very quickly towards the closure of their respective production facilities. Greater efforts would need to be made by countries that had methyl bromide phase-out projects with specific commitments to meet the agreements they had made. This was essential in order to sustain the continued success of the Protocol and its Multilateral Fund in the phase-out of ozone depleting substances. The Ozone Units, funded through the Multilateral Fund, would need to continue receiving all the support and assistance of the Ministers to ensure that the job they had started many years ago would be completed by 2010 and beyond.

106. Mr. Arthur Nogueira, on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), thanked the organizers of the meeting for giving him the opportunity to address this Meeting of Environment Ministers of the Latin America and Caribbean Region. He indicated that work was under way for the preparation of the next Meeting of the Parties, to be held in March of 2006 in Curitiba, Brazil, marking the second MOP to be held in the LAC region. Some of the major themes to be addressed at the 2006 meeting included communication, education and awareness building, and strategies towards meeting the 2010 goals and access and benefit sharing.

107. Mr. Arthur Nogueira gave an overview of the work and objectives of the CBD globally, regionally and nationally..He called for public education and awareness, increased stakeholder partnerships, development of innovative approaches for implementing the Convention, establishment of linkages with poverty reduction and increasing the effectiveness of implementation processes. He emphasized the importance of having a mechanism for regional coordination and cooperation linking national processes and leading to the creation of capacities. Mr. Arthur Nogueira indicated that by working together our strength would multiply.

108. Mr. Roberto Acosta Moreno, representative of the UNFCCC secretariat related the regards from the acting Executive Secretary, Mr. Richard Kinley, who is temporary fulfilling this function for Ms. Joke Waller-Hunter who recently and regrettably passed away. The representative expressed that, despite this great loss, the secretariat will continue to support the Parties of the UNFCCC with the same standards, which had characterized it until now. Regarding the implementation of the Convention he stressed the importance of the entry of force of the Kyoto Protocol that has set a milestone in the international regimen of climate change, as it is a first effort to reduce greenhouse effect gas emissions by 5.2% by 2012 in relation to year 1990 by developed countries. In this respect, he stressed that the preparatory activities to guarantee a rigorous review and accountability of the GHG emissions and the transactions resulting from the Protocol's mechanisms, needed for the Protocol successful implementation, are well underway.

109. He also emphasized that the CDM of the Kyoto Protocol is an instrument that only recently commenced operations and does not yet have sufficient resources for the level of work required to be performed by the Executive Board and by its different panels. He mentioned that intense work is being done to reverse this situation and he called upon the countries of the region to support the negotiations in order to improve and strengthen the CDM's procedures during the next UNFCCC conference in Montreal. He also referred that the GHG emissions continue to grow; hence, the vital importance of the statements made by the ministers regarding the need to support the beginning of the dialogue on the future regime of climate change after 2012 in Montreal.

110. Finally, he stressed the urgency to support the implementation of the decision about climate change approved by the XV Forum, because it will contribute to face the negative effects of climate change to which the region is already very vulnerable.

Agenda Item 10: Other matters

111. A proposal to support the holding of two parallel events during the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity was made by the delegation of Brazil and accepted by the Forum of Ministers. The two events were:

- a) A meeting on experiences related to the implementation of national access and benefit-sharing laws;
- b) A meeting on associated traditional knowledge and its relationship with national protection, access and benefit-sharing laws.

112. The proposal made by the delegation of the Dominican Republic offering to host the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was accepted. The representative of Mexico, in turn, informed the attendants of his country's intention to hold the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum in Mexico.

Agenda Item 11: Approval of the Draft Final Report of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers

113. The draft report containing the decisions adopted by the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was presented. The Ministers and Heads of delegation examined and approved the Caracas Declaration (see **Annex I**) and its twenty decisions (see **Annex II** to this document). The Rapporteur and the Secretariat were granted time to incorporate comments and corrections submitted on the draft report and subsequently distribute the final report among the participants.

Agenda Item 12: Closing of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.

114. The UNEP Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean thanked the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for its hospitality and support, which had substantively contributed to the success of the meeting. He also noted that the solidarity expressed by the participating countries and the contributions of the ITC member agencies had been decisive in continuing to advance in the implementation of the ILAC. Ms. Jacqueline Faría, President of the Forum, then thanked the participants for their constructive participation and declared the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean officially closed at 8:00 p.m. on Friday, 4 November 2005.

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Annex I

**Caracas
Declaration**

Annex I Caracas Declaration

We, the Ministers of the Environment and Heads of Delegation of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered in the city of Caracas, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, at the Fifteenth Forum of Ministers of the Environment,

Observing that, despite the efforts made to achieve sustainable development in the region, serious poverty, inequality and environmental degradation persist. In order to reverse this situation it is necessary to take further actions to develop public policies focused on sustainability and the participation of society;

Recognizing that our natural and cultural wealth constitutes a social and sovereign heritage of the peoples, as well as potential for sustainable development and the eradication of poverty;

Convinced that these resources are the foundation for addressing problems of inequality and unsustainability, based on the development of internal capacities, international cooperation and the consolidation of opportunities for the participation of the different sectors of society;

Considering that it is urgent and necessary to advance towards achieving the objective contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation related to production and consumption patterns;

Reaffirming that although sustainable development is primarily a national responsibility and the countries of the region continue making efforts to achieve it, principally through the utilization of their own resources, there is also a need for the Official Development Assistance (ODA) already pledged at the international level;

THEREFORE:

- 1.** We urge developed countries to honour the commitments they have made to support sustainable development by contributing 0.7% of their Gross National Product (GNP) as Official Development Assistance (ODA), bearing in mind the importance of this contribution to provide complementary financial resources for the development of our region.
- 2.** We urge the international community to advance towards achieving the objectives of the Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, particularly in reference to the regionalization process, through the implementation of the Regional Action Plan of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC).
- 3.** We note the serious and multiple challenges faced by the region due to its vulnerability to climate change and the importance of adaptation and mitigation strategies to deal with this phenomenon through the full application of the Buenos Aires Programme of Work on Adaptation and Response Measures.

- 4.** We emphasize that the region has contributed significantly to the effective implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, and active regional participation should be maintained in the negotiations that will define the post-2012 period.
- 5.** We urge the international community to promptly fulfil its commitments to SIDS as agreed to in the Mauritius Strategy, recognizing that the vulnerability of Caribbean SIDS continues to be a major constraint to sustainable development, particularly because of the high susceptibility to disasters. This situation will worsen unless urgent actions are taken.
- 6.** We express our commitment to continue working on the preparation of regional and subregional strategies aimed at reducing economic, social and environmental vulnerability and building resilience to address these challenges.
- 7.** We recognize that the devastating consequences of recent natural disasters that have affected the countries of the region with the loss of human lives and vast deterioration in the economic and social infrastructure makes it necessary to apply disaster prevention, adaptation, mitigation and response measures, taking into account the existing initiatives in the region.
- 8.** We confirm the strategic importance to the region, as the possessor of the planet's greatest biodiversity, of the negotiations underway to adopt an international regime on access to genetic resources and sharing of the benefits arising from their utilization, in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, based on strict respect for the sovereign right of the States over their biological resources, and helping to overcome poverty.
- 9.** We reaffirm our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals in the field of water and sanitation, as well as to advancing in integrated water resources management. In this regard, we call on the international community to participate constructively and actively in the Fourth World Water Forum, to be held in Mexico City in March 2006.
- 10.** We reiterate our commitment to advancing in the use of renewable energy sources, as a means of including the disadvantaged, enabling access to basic services, and providing opportunities to become more productive and achieve sustainable development, taking into account the potential and interests of each country.
- 11.** We reaffirm the need to develop conditions of equity and complementarity between trade and environment, eliminating subsidies that have an adverse impact on the environment and preventing the application of environmental measures as disguised trade barriers.
- 12.** We recognize the cross-cutting nature of environmental management and we commit ourselves to continuing with efforts to strengthen intersectoral work opportunities and to achieving the incorporation of the environmental dimension in policies, plans, programmes and projects, as well as to capacity-building and the strengthening of effective citizen participation mechanisms to satisfy these goals.

13. We will continue to implement integrated health and environment policies, and to strengthen the coordination between both, giving priority to partnerships with health ministries and encouraging intersectoral collaboration to contribute to a better quality of life among our peoples, especially in the most vulnerable communities.

14. We acknowledge the significant role of citizen participation and the promotion of partnerships between state and non-state actors.

15. We reaffirm our commitment to the process of promoting responsible citizenry, environmental education and public awareness programmes, emphasizing the inclusion of marginalised groups, and furthering national policies shared with the Ministries of Education, technical training centres and universities. We support the efforts of regional and subregional cooperation, including those within the framework of the PLACEA and the development of environmental education in the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

16. We reiterate the need to further regional and subregional cooperation and integration mechanisms for the exchange of experiences and the building of capacities in the region, including the promotion of science, technology and innovation to advance the process of sustainable development.

17. We recognize and promote the accomplishments and potential of regional cooperation (South-South), and we will continue to further it as a way to share the best practices available and provide better technical cooperation.

18. Finally we recognize the Forum of Ministers as a platform for analysis, dialogue and joint action; an adequate mechanism for regional participation, integration and cooperation in reference to environment and sustainable development issues.

19. We thank the Government and People of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for their hospitality and assistance in holding this Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.

20. We welcome the invitation of the Government of the Dominican Republic to host the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2007.

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Ministry of Works, Transportation and the
Environment

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Viceministro de Ambiente
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ECUADOR

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Environmental Protection Officer
Ministry of Health

GRENADA

Mr. Yves André Wainright
Minister
Ministere de L'Environnement

HAITI

Sr. Donovan Stanberry
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Land and Environment

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PARAGUAY

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Sr. Max Puig
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Ministry of Health and the Environment

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

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Environmental Policy Offiicer
Ministry of Labour, Technological
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Mr. Earl Nesbitt
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Public Utilities and the Environment

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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Ministra
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VENEZUELA

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Annex II

Decisions

Annex II

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

The Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Governments present at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, from October 31 through November 4, 2005, taking into account the recommendations of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts and the deliberations of this Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, adopted the following decisions:

DECISION 1

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ILAC) REGIONAL ACTION PLAN 2006-2007

Taking into account that the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean is the primary regional inter-governmental political forum on the environment, and that it offers the environmental authorities of the region a venue for reflection and discussion concerning the major challenges of the regional and global environmental agenda within the framework of sustainable development;

Considering that the Regional Action Plan is the major instrument of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean for the implementation of agreed regional strategies;

Considering that the Regional Action Plan 2004-2005 was approved by the Forum of Ministers of the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean during the Fourteenth Meeting that took place in Panama in November 2003; and

Emphasizing the need to implement the ILAC, drafted and adopted by the Forum of Ministers of the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean, approved at the World Summit for Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002.

Decide:

- 1. To reaffirm** that the Regional Action Plan is a fundamental tool for the implementation of the ILAC.
- 2. To approve** the Regional Action Plan for the biennium 2006-2007, with a view to implementing ILAC and its eight proposed major topics:
 - a) Access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits resulting from their utilization
 - b) Water Resources;

- c) Human Settlements, Vulnerability and Land Use;
- d) Renewable Energy;
- e) Trade and Environment;
- f) Economic Instruments and Fiscal Policy;
- g) Climate Change
- h) Environmental Indicators

3. To agree that the Inter-Sessional Committee meet with the coordinators of the ad hoc Working Groups during the inter-sessional period to finalize the programming of activities agreed under the Regional Action Plan 2006-2007, including scheduling said activities based on input received at the meeting as well as that received before December 2005, both from Governments and from the Agencies that are part of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee.

DECISION 2

ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF THE WORKING GROUPS

Taking into account decision 1 of the Eleventh Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, the decision 2 of the Fourteenth Meeting (Panama City; November 2003), and other relevant decisions of the Forum of Ministers in which the mandate and terms of reference of the Working Groups were established;

Mindful that Working Groups have been more productive in the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers when these groups have focused their work on specific issues;

Recognizing that working groups with greater participation of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee implementing agencies have achieved more results;

Taking into account the recommendations of the Meeting of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee held in Panama City, July 12 and 13, 2005,

Decide:

1. To call for the establishment of the following working groups, membership indicated hereunder:

1. Access to genetic resources and fair and equitable distribution of the benefits arising from their utilization	Ecuador , Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Grenada, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela UNEP
2. Water Resources/Integrated Watershed and Coastal Zone Management	Mexico, Nicaragua , Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela The World Bank, IDB

<p>3. Human Settlements, Vulnerability and Land-Use Planning</p>	<p>Cuba, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Uruguay ECLAC</p>
<p>4. Renewable energy</p>	<p>Brazil, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Uruguay, Venezuela ECLAC, IDB, UNDP</p>
<p>5. Trade and Environment</p>	<p>Peru, Argentina, Barbados, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, Panama ECLAC, CARICOM</p>
<p>6. Financing, Economic Instruments and Fiscal Policy</p>	<p>Chile, Argentina, Barbados, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama ECLAC, UNDP</p>
<p>7. Climate Change</p>	<p>Panama, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Venezuela IDB, The World Bank, ECLAC, UNDP</p>
<p>8. Monitoring the implementation of decisions of this Forum relevant to the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the BPOA for the Sustainable Development of SIDS</p>	<p>Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Cuba, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, CARICOM UNEP, ECLAC</p>
<p>9. Environmental Education</p>	<p>Venezuela, Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Uruguay UNEP</p>
<p>10. Health and Environment</p>	<p>Argentina, Costa Rica, Chile, El Salvador, Haiti, Panama, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay The World Bank, UNEP</p>
<p>11. Environmental indicators</p>	<p>Costa Rica, Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Saint Lucia ECLAC; UNEP</p>
<p>12. Disasters, Preparedness and Management</p>	<p>Jamaica, Argentina, Barbados, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Trinidad y Tobago, Venezuela IDB, ECLAC, UNDP and UNEP</p>

2. To urge that the working groups:

- a) incorporate representatives of the different sub-regions of the Latin American and Caribbean Region, insofar as possible;
- b) include at least one ITC agency that can contribute appreciably to advancing the implementation of the specific activities agreed to by the Forum on Ministers. Relevant Secretariats of regional integration organizations and forums may be invited to take part in specific activities;
- c) meet in parallel manner during the inter-sessional period with the ITC Meeting to assess progress attained and determine the future direction for implementation of the specific decisions of the Forum of Ministers related to the mandate of the working group – a report on the outcome of these meetings to be provided to the President of the Forum of Ministers for circulation to the countries of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of the Region;
- d) develop and implement a work plan through electronic means during the inter-sessional period.

3. To request the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers to continue to provide operational support and facilitate the activities of the working groups, especially the convening of meetings including, but not limited to, real time electronic communication and translation.

4. To urge countries willing to participate in the working groups to designate a focal point in charge of coordinating the fulfillment of responsibilities taken on by the member countries in the working group - the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers will be informed of the designation of said focal points.

DECISION 3

**REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAM
OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME, INCLUDING
THE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BALI STRATEGIC PLAN**

Taking into account decision 20/39 of the twentieth session of the UNEP Governing Council on the work of the regional offices and the proposed measures for strengthening, regionalization and decentralization, as well as decision 22/21 from the twenty-second session of the UNEP Governing Council regarding the regional implementation of the UNEP work programme;

Abiding by the provisions of the Implementation Plan of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, particularly Section XI (g), the mandates from the Committee on Sustainable Development, and the content of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development;

Recalling that the Bali Strategic Plan was approved during the twenty-third session of the UNEP Governing Council by decision 23/1 and that it is regarded as an important political instrument for the achievement of targets, goals and objectives, especially those in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

Recalling that the Bali Strategic Plan also includes, among other objectives, the design of measures to provide technological support and the creation of systematic and selective capacity on the short and long terms, taking into account international agreements and based on national and regional needs, as well as to improve UNEP services to developing countries and to countries with economies in transition in technological support and capacity building, all of which requires due implementation at a regional level;

Considering that timely implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan, at a regional level, requires that its targets and goals be integrated to the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative, and in particular, with the priority areas established in the Regional Action Plan.

Decide:

- 1. To request** the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, to develop the respective actions for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan at a regional level, according to the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative and the priority targets established in the Regional Action Plan.
- 2. To urge** UNEP to effectively follow the mandate of the UNEP Governing Council concerning the regional implementation of its programme of work, under Decision 22/21, highlighting the important role of the regional offices of the United Nations Programme.
- 3. To prepare** regional proposals to apply institutional, administrative, legislative and policy measures and mechanisms that promote the development of capacities and the adaptation of technology, taking into account the necessary requirements at regional, sub-regional and national levels, and in particular the needs and priorities of the Caribbean SIDS.
- 4. To request** the agencies from the Inter-Agency Technical Committee, to develop and implement a program for cooperation to strengthen institutional capacities in the area of technology support, as per decision 23/1 from the UNEP Governing Council.
- 5. To urge** the countries from Latin American and the Caribbean to actively participate, in a coordinated manner, at the Ninth Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, to be held in February 2006 in Dubai, in order to ensure that regional priorities for the 2006-2007 biennium are taken into account during the review of the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan, particularly regarding budgetary and financial aspects.

DECISION 4

SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)

Taking into account decision 4 of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean;

Recognizing and appreciating the work done by UNEP in collaboration with the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD and the Caribbean Community in the development of the Caribbean SIDS Programme;

Acknowledging the role played by the Ministerial Support Group on South-South Cooperation between Latin American countries and Caribbean SIDS under the Chairmanship of Chile;

Recognizing the special vulnerabilities and particular structural circumstances as regards small size, extreme open exposure, the concentration of a narrow range of basic export products, limited capacity for diversification and high susceptibility to natural disasters as articulated by Agenda 21, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (BPOA), the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI);

Taking note of the adoption by the Heads of State and Governments of paragraphs 55(d) and 66 of Resolution No. A/60/L. 1 of the United Nations World Summit of September 2005 and the adoption in August 2005 of United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 59/31 concerning the International Meeting to review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS);

Further noting at a meeting in St. Kitts and Nevis in October 2005 that the Caribbean SIDS have engaged in follow-up activities on the implementation of the MSI;

Noting also the considerable efforts that the Caribbean SIDS have made in the implementation of the BPOA,

Decide:

- 1. To urge** further development and implementation of the Caribbean SIDS programme and its continued review and assessment so that it might reflect the goals of the MSI and emerging development needs and priorities of the region.
- 2. To call** on UNEP to provide support to the subsequent design and development of a well-established, well-defined Regional Coordinating Mechanism to further the implementation of the BPOA and the MSI.
- 3. To request** UNEP to support the implementation of the Caribbean SIDS Programme, and to strengthen the institutional capacity of SIDS at the national and regional level including access to new and emerging technologies.
- 4. To call** on UNEP to continue its support to the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) as a means of strengthening the region's institutional

and technical capacity to adapt and respond to the adverse impacts of climate change and to develop cooperative initiatives with similar institutions within Latin America and the Caribbean.

5. To also call on UNEP to assist the Caribbean SIDS in strengthening their ability to reduce risk and to mitigate and respond to the consequences of natural and man-made hazards, and to address issues such as insurance and re-insurance.

6. To urge UNEP to provide additional support in addressing trade and environment issues, particularly in view of the entering into force of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

7. To urge the Forum of Ministers to further develop the South-South cooperation programme between Latin American countries and Caribbean SIDS, taking into account the priority areas identified by the Ministerial Support Group, in particular, support for renewable energy options including the establishment of a mechanism to enhance South-South cooperation.

8. To urge that support be given to Caribbean SIDS for the development and strengthening of environmental awareness programmes, campaigns and materials involving all stakeholders – public, private and civil society – using Caribbean artistic, cultural and sporting activities and experiences as the primary media.

9. To call on UNEP to support the efforts of Caribbean SIDS to work towards the cessation of transport of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea.

DECISION 5

FINANCING AND ECONOMIC AND FISCAL POLICY INSTRUMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT

Bearing in mind the genuine needs of the countries in the region concerning financial resources, including the application of economic and fiscal instruments for environmental management, whose objective is to close the current gap between aspirations and accomplishments regarding environmental management in Latin America and the Caribbean;

Considering the mandates and recommendations emerging from the Declaration of Rio de Janeiro on Environment and Development of Agenda 21 of the Millennium Declaration of 2000, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, as well as the call on developed countries to comply with the Official Assistance Development (OAD), established in the Final Declaration of the International Conference on Development Financing (Monterrey 2002), all of which are very important in ensuring the flow of the necessary resources to comply with the environment goals and objectives for sustainable development;

Bearing in mind the importance of the subject in the application of recommendations and action priorities identified in the Regional Action Plan 2006-2007 of the Forum of the Environment Ministers of Latin America and the

Caribbean, in accordance with the objectives and goals of the Latin American and the Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC);

Recalling the importance of implementing the ILAC, specifically the Operational Guidelines that urge the creation and strengthening of economic and fiscal instruments for the promotion of sustainable development;

Underscoring the importance of the coherence, coordination and integration of public policies demanded of environmental management, which include fiscal and environmental policies, as a challenge yet to be overcome by the countries of the region;

Reiterating the importance of incorporating new instruments that are currently available in the region to assess public policies concerning environmental issues, particularly Environmental Performance Evaluations (EPAs);

Recognizing the work accomplished by various regional and global organizations, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), World Bank (WB) and the Global Environment Fund (GEF).

Decide:

1. To request that the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC), the working group and other regional and subregional agencies continue working toward the identification of financial mechanisms as well as to support the implementation of economic and fiscal instruments for environmental management in the countries of the region.

2. To request ECLAC and UNDP to propose a set of tools and instruments that reflect the lessons learned and best practices in terms of identifying financial sources in the public and private sectors that include methodologies to define environmental expenditure, as well as those that are pertinent to the application of economic and fiscal instruments for environmental management. A request is made to continue with development of environmental capacity-building activities in order to facilitate the use of such tools.

3. To request ECLAC and UNDP as well as the rest of the agencies that comprise the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC) to continue supporting the organization of High Level Regional Meetings between fiscal and economic authorities and environmental authorities, so as to continue exploring the identification of complementary ties between fiscal and environmental policies, promoting the use of economic and fiscal instruments for environmental management, among others.

4. To promote in keeping with the mandate of the Inter Agency Technical Committees (ITC), the experience and cooperation among the countries of the region concerning financial issues for sustainable development, including economic instruments and fiscal policies.

5. To promote and facilitate the exchange of experiences in subjects such as payment for environmental and ecosystem services designed to strengthen the financing of sustainable development.

6. To request the agencies of the Inter Agency Technical Committee (ITC) and other financial institutions, that the allocation of financial resources for capacity building programmes on the use of economic and fiscal instruments for environmental management be done bearing in mind the policies and the institutional, economic and social realities of the countries of the region.

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DECISION 6

CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

Considering that Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Millennium Development Goals highlight the importance of citizenship participation in sustainable development;

Acknowledging that in the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), in the Barbados Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and its follow up, as well as in the Mauritius Strategy, the significant role of citizenship participation in sustainable development is underscored;

Recalling that the Governing Council of UNEP, through decision 22/18 reiterates its support for decision SSVII/5 adopted at the Seventh Special Session, on the commitment to include civil society in the UNEP work programme;

Taking into account that experience in the participation of civil society is being developed in the region at the national and local levels, such as National Committees on Environment and National Councils on Sustainable Development;

Taking into account the positive results of decision 6 on the participation of civil society at all levels, adopted at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers.

Decide:

1. To strengthen the systematic incorporation of civil society into the activities taking place at the national and regional levels for the implementation of ILAC, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy.

2. To recommend that civil society organizations undertake efforts to increase the involvement of major groups in activities for organization of and participation in the implementation of the ILAC, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy.

3. To support the development and implementation of national actions to strengthen the role of civil society, especially the poorest and usually excluded groups, in environmental management and governance.

4. To support the various participation and coordination mechanisms of civil society that exist at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, and study the possibilities to support the proposal of an Executive Secretariat to facilitate the regional coordination of civil society organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean that provide follow-up to the ILAC, at the same time fostering proactive and responsible participation.

5. To urge the agencies of the Interagency Technical Committee, within the framework of their mandates, to allocate specific resources during the 2006-2007 biennium for citizen participation in the implementation of ILAC, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy.

6. To promote and strengthen collaboration at the national, sub-regional and regional levels within the framework of technical cooperation between civil society and the Forum of Ministers.

7. To support initiatives of communication, education and training with the objective of promoting and expanding the participation of civil society in environmental management for sustainable development.

8. To establish collaboration mechanisms among the agencies of the Interagency Technical Committee and the environmental authorities to convene –in a wide, representative manner and with transparency– an objective selection of participants for training activities and dialogues with civil society.

9. To ensure transparency and access to information by implementing and strengthening national and regional information systems on the environment.

10. To promote the creation of national work committees comprising different sectors of society in the member countries of the Forum of Ministers, with the following objectives:

- a) begin a review of the direct participation experiences and mechanisms in decision-making in environmental management at the different levels of local, state and national public administration;
- b) propose concrete mechanisms for citizen participation in decision-making processes on public matters related to sustainable development.

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DECISION 7

WATER RESOURCES

Considering decision 7 of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean;

Reaffirming the importance of water as an essential resource for life and for the development of the region as well as for the conservation of important ecosystems;

Reaffirming our accession to the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development;

Taking into account the Millennium Development Goals and the commitments made by Governments at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, particularly those related to water and sanitation;

Considering the need to develop and implement intersectoral policies that reflect the crosscutting nature of this issue and the need to move forward in the implementation of public policies to put into practice the integrated management of water resources;

Stressing the results of the 2004-2005 cycle of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

Decide:

- 1. To support** the decision on water, sanitation and human settlement policies adopted at the thirteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.
- 2. To reiterate** the need to adopt an integrated planning approach, taking into account the links between land use, watershed and coastal area management, in particular for the Caribbean Small Island Developing States.
- 3. To urge** Governments to adopt integrated strategies with a watershed approach, for the planning and integrated management of water resources, including groundwater, in line with the valuation of environmental, social, cultural, economic and land use considerations.
- 4. To enhance** the appropriate valuation of the role of water in ecosystems and the role of water ecosystems as supplying resources and essential services for sustainable development, as well as for the wellbeing and safety of the people.
- 5. To promote** the harmonization of policies and legislation in the field of water at the subregional level, as appropriate, and to support the development and implementation of the legal frameworks of the countries.
- 6. To promote** the adoption of alternatives to increase water availability, such as rainwater harvesting and the re-use of water as well as community supply systems as a feasible strategy to increase water availability in rural areas.
- 7. To encourage** the prevention of coastal and marine area degradation from land-based activities, and to participate in and support the preparatory process of the 2nd Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the GPA to be held in October 2006 in the People's Republic of China.
- 8. To establish** measures that call upon the suppliers of water services to reduce unaccounted for water (UFW) loss, recognizing the impact of increasing energy prices on water production and distribution costs.
- 9. To promote** the adoption and the operation of information systems that include hydro-geological databases, water quality information and all variables of the water cycle.
- 10. To promote** the participation of all stakeholders, in particular women, young people and local communities, in water planning and integrated water management.

11. To recognize that water provides a platform for integration among peoples and the consolidation of peace.

12. To support the general directions and elements of the Draft Water Policy and Strategy as presented in document **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XV/Inf.12** and to actively participate in the activities of UNEP with a view to updating the Water Policy and Strategy which will be reviewed by the 24th session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in 2007.

13. To welcome the proposal on a Latin American and Caribbean Common Strategy on Water Management taking into account regional particularities and to urge countries to submit their considerations before December 5, 2005. The Working Group on Water Resources mentioned in decision 3 will be responsible for compiling and incorporating the countries' proposals and for presenting a consolidated version at the IV World Water Forum, to be held in Mexico City in March 2006. In order to obtain consensus on the consolidated text, the permanent missions of Mexico and Brazil to the United Nations will convene a meeting of our permanent representatives in January 2006.

14. To wish success to the Fourth World Water Forum, to be held March 16 through 22, 2006, in Mexico City, and to express our willingness to collaborate in a constructive manner with the works of this Forum;

15. To recognize that the Ministerial Conference of the Fourth World Water Forum will provide an opportunity to discuss and exchange experiences and knowledge to support the implementation of water and sanitation policies, in particular those approved within the framework of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

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DECISION 8

ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES, FAIR AND EQUITABLE SHARING OF THE BENEFITS ARISING FROM THEIR UTILIZATION, AND PARTICIPATION OF THE REGION IN THE NEGOTIATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL REGIME

Recalling that 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, one of world's richest regions as concerns genetic resources;

Taking into account that the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, at its Fourteenth Meeting (Panama City, Panama; November 24 and 25, 2003), adopted decision 8, which requests the support of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee for holding workshops and/or meetings of experts with a view to exchanging experiences and strengthening institutional capacities of the countries for the implementation and fulfillment 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: the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the utilization of genetic resources; as well as at the presentation of a report on the progress made in this regard 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 clear 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 the outcomes of 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, June 21 and 22, 2005, to align, in a preliminary manner, the criteria of 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.

Decide:

- 1. To advocate** the activities needed to include the policies and priorities of the Latin American and Caribbean countries in the negotiation of the international regime.
- 2. To 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. To acknowledge** the contribution of the various groups and social organizations concerned about these issues, and at the same time consolidate national participation processes in the discussion of access and benefit-sharing.
- 4. To create**, with the support of the ITC, regional opportunities for discussion of the negotiations on the international regime that take into account the need to have a regime for the protection of traditional knowledge.
- 5. To 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. To use** the considerations arising from the Havana Workshop as contribution to the discussions and to the formulation of a common regional position

(Appendix 1 of Annex II relating to the decisions adopted at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean).

7. To convey this decision, through the GRULAC representatives, to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Parties.

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DECISION 9

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

Reaffirming decision 9 of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers and the need to improve the understanding of environmental threats to human health, in order to prevent and minimize their negative impact, contribute to the eradication of poverty and reduce inequality;

Considering that the development and implementation of integral and participation-oriented health and environment policies and programmes are tools that effectively contribute to improving the quality of life of our peoples, especially that of the most vulnerable population groups;

Bearing in mind the Ministerial Health and Environment meetings held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, from June 16 through 19, 2005, in which the following priority work areas were identified:

- a) Integrated management of water resources and solid waste,
- b) Safe management of chemicals,
- c) Child-related environmental health.

Recognizing the inter-agency work done by UNEP/ROLAC, PAHO and OAS, including the methodological framework of GEO Health for the integrated assessment of health and the environment under the leadership of UNEP, with the cooperation of PAHO;

Taking note of the conclusions reached by the Dialogue of Organizations of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean for Sustainable Development (Caracas, Venezuela, 29 – 30 October 2005), that emphasize the right to timely, truthful, comprehensive and accessible information on human health and the environment.

Decide:

1. To provide continuity for the Work Group on Health and the Environment of this Forum, ensuring that all the subregions are represented.

2. To continue promoting synergy between health and environmental policies, strengthening the exchange of information between both sectors and fostering the development of integrated actions and projects at the national and regional levels.

3. To foster the development and implementation of the Cooperation Agenda underwritten in Mar del Plata in June 2005.

4. To include the identification and assessment of environmental threats to human health and the prevention and minimization of their negative impact in capacity-building activities and technological support for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan in the regional and subregional sphere, advancing the following points:

- a) gathering information and compiling an updated inventory of the projects and activities underway in the region that touch on the problem of health and the environment;
- b) regional studies that include the assessment of costs of environmental deterioration in terms of human health;
- c) promotion of practices and establishing infrastructure for the integral management of solid waste, including recycling and appropriate disposal;
- d) projects for the correct disposal of chemical and hazardous waste, including electronic waste;
- e) inclusion of solid and liquid waste management as an element integrated into land use and urban planning;
- f) consolidation of the regional centre for Central America and Mexico based in El Salvador in compliance with article 14 of the Basel Convention to support the sustainable management of hazardous waste.

5. To further intersectoral work with the Health Ministries of our countries and the multiple levels of government, encouraging dialogue, encouraging meetings of a technical nature that include health and environmental experts of our countries, and promoting capacity-building activities and technological support for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan.

6. To stress that the GEO Health project provides the region with an initial set of tools for an integrated assessment of the status of the environment and health, and to request the start-up of pilot projects for the implementation of said tools and to promote the use of health and environmental indicators.

7. To ask ITC for support in financial and technical terms for air pollution control projects, including the establishment of legal frameworks and an inventory of emission sources, as well as "specific environment" protection projects to protect workers in their work environment, and programmes to reduce the effects of indoor pollution.

8. To invite PAHO to contribute to the work of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee, with a view to consolidating information and enhancing inter-agency cooperation for integrated health and environment projects.

9. To urge regional and subregional entities to strengthen their regional and sub-regional Rapid Response Systems related to public health emergencies including *inter alia* vector borne diseases associated with the aftermath of natural disasters, and further urge PAHO to mainstream Public Health response into Early Warning Systems throughout the region and sub-regions.

10. To ask UNEP/ROLAC and the PAHO to continue strengthening inter-agency work and to promote dialogue among the Environment and Health Ministers.

DECISION 10

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Considering the decision adopted by the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, referring to the adaptation of the Environmental Training Network Work Programme and the implementation of ILAC and the incorporation of the Latin American and Caribbean Environment Education Programme (PLACEA);

Considering the need to expand and strengthen current operational mechanisms of the Environmental Training Network Programme, especially regarding the adoption of decisions and the allocation of resources;

Considering that the First Meeting of Experts in Public Environmental Education Policies (Isla Margarita, Venezuela; November 2004), approved the PLACEA organizational base;

Recognizing that Peru has been promoting a subregional Andean-Amazonian initiative for the implementation of environmental education actions (PANACEA) in the framework of the PLACEA, and as a result of the Margarita agreements;

Bearing in mind the 2005 launch in our region of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development;

Recognizing the existence of a significant environmental education movement in Latin America and the Caribbean that reflects the growing commitment of communities to education processes and their contribution to the construction of sustainable societies;

Convinced of the need to make progress in strengthening environmental education programmes as part of the public policy of various countries in the region through cooperation, communication and exchange processes among countries,

Decide:

1. To strengthen the capacity of the Network to promote, articulate and coordinate the process of environmental education and training in the countries of the region, particularly in the development of the activities of PLACEA and the establishment and development of National Environmental Training and Education Networks.

2. To extend the operation of the Network Trust Fund through the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, asking UNEP to continue managing this Fund.

3. To ask the countries of the region to pay their pending contributions, and to meet their annual commitments to the Network Trust Fund.

4. To continue the activities of the Environmental Training Network in accordance to the guidelines approved at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment.

5. To establish regional strategies and inter-governmental, inter-institutional and inter-agency cooperation mechanisms, including consortia and partnerships for the development of environmental training courses, and learning at a distance courses on priority subjects of the region that enable a multiplying process in the creation of capacities.

6. To continue supporting the organization of national, regional and sub-regional conferences and seminars in order to channel actions on behalf of environmental education and foster Ibero-American cooperation in this field.

7. To continue supporting the training of teachers, including local community teachers, within the basic education systems.

8. To continue promoting and developing the community training project for sustainable development.

9. To ratify the agreements reached at the First Meeting of Implementers of Public Environmental Education Policies held in Isla Margarita, Venezuela, November 2004.

10. To reiterate the request made to UNEP and the Inter-Agency Technical Committee to identify and manage financial resource, in accordance with their specific mandates and the contents of ILAC, to support the implementation of PLACEA.

11. To support the orientation and development of PLACEA training activities approved in Isla Margarita towards the furthering and strengthening of capacity-building at the national level, especially considering the eight priority topics identified by the Forum in the framework of ILAC, as well as the Johannesburg agreements and the millennium goals, through formal and informal education.

12. To exhort the Ministers of the Environment of the countries to strengthen the environmental education units so that they may comply with the PLACEA guidelines.

13. To organize a workshop with the participation of the region's implementers of public environmental education policies in order to draw up the PLACEA Regional Action Plan (2006-2007), as well as the subregional plans so as to articulate the strategies that permit implementation thereof.

14. To ratify the need to strengthen the presence of the Caribbean in the Programme in order to further regional integration.

15. To make progress in the promotion of new education strategies (including digital technology) that strengthen the participatory processes in the collective building of environmental know-how, especially knowledge rooted in the poorest communities and other traditionally excluded groups, that permit an exchange of experiences and a dialogue on knowledge, while at the same time recognizing their contribution and furthering their linkage to the environmental management actions proposed herein.

DECISION 11

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

Noting that the indicators approved of the Guiding Goals and Indicative Purposes of the Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) strengthen the capacities of countries to measure their progress and accomplishments toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG);

Observing the need to increase the availability and accessibility of information on the environment and on sustainable development, both at the national and sub-national level, in order to assess the progress made in the implementation of ILAC and other regional and national initiatives;

Reaffirming the commitment of the countries of the region to harmonize the methodologies used to gather environmental statistics and indicators within the framework of the Forum of Ministers, through the construction of a regional environmental information system focused on strengthening capacities and the consolidation of similar existing initiatives in the region, led by the Government of Costa Rica as coordinator of the Working group on environment indicators of the Forum;

Acknowledging the progress made in complying with decision 11 of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers and the First Meeting of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee of this Forum on environmental indicators and Recommendation 1 of the twenty-third session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum;

Bearing in mind the Framework Agreement of Cooperation signed by UNEP and ECLAC in May 2005, whose main objectives are to strengthen and develop national technical capacities, contribute to improving the production and quality of environmental statistics and access to them in the countries, ease the burden of environmental statistics reporting in the countries of the region, and promote the dissemination and use of environmental information to strengthen decision making processes and their assessments.

Decide:

1. To continue with the activities of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators of the Forum of Ministers coordinated by Costa Rica, including a periodic review of the relevance of said indicators as relates to regional and sub-regional priorities.

2. Further the application of ILAC indicators with their methodological sheets at the national level within the framework of the Environmental Statistics and Indicators Project of the Forum of Ministers in order to assess the progress made in the implementation of ILAC and ask UNEP and ECLAC for the economic support necessary to prepare and publish the corresponding report.

3. Request UNEP and the Government of Costa Rica, as the coordinating country of the Working Group of environmental indicators of the Forum of

Ministers, to move forward on the preparation of methodological sheets for the remaining indicators of the ILAC Guiding Goals and Indicative Purposes suggested at the Second Meeting of Focal Points held in Costa Rica in October 2005, to accept the modifications done to the matrix of indicators and to consider the inclusion of additional indicators that could be a priority for specific subregions.

4. Promote the use of ILAC indicators in the region and in international forums to complement MDG indicators and to ensure the suitable measuring of environmental elements, especially in Goal 7.

5. Promote also the improved application of environmental indicators in national development plans.

6. Consolidate and strengthen the collection, harmonization and systematic ordering of environmental statistics and indicators within the framework of the Forum of Ministers under the coordination of UNEP and the Government of Costa Rica, as the coordinator of the Working Group on environmental indicators of the Forum of Ministers, making use of the experience and contributions of the "Project on Evaluation of Sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean" (ESALC) and the "Project of the Network on Social and Environmental Statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean" (REDESA), coordinated by ECLAC, in addition to using existing tools, such as the "geodatos.org" Portal for Latin America and the Caribbean.

7. Finalize the proposal of the Regional System of Environmental Statistics of Latin America and the Caribbean (SIREA) and develop a strategic plan for the implementation of SIREA and the development of national capacities to generate, process and disseminate statistics and indicators, including the development of national information systems.

8. Promote the use of geospatial information and the improvement of access to basic geospatial and satellite information, furthering the standardization of the methodologies used and South-South collaboration, in order to help in medium- and long-term environmental planning and management.

9. Support the proposal of the Working Group on environmental statistics of the Forum of Ministers to create a Technical Advisory Committee, coordinated by the Government of Panama, to serve the Working Group with a view to facilitate work on geospatial information and Earth Observation Systems in coordination with subregional organizations. The Committee would consider developing and implementing the following activities:

- a) establish a platform to share information among countries and institutions with high capacity to manage satellite information and other geospatial applications;
- b) assist in capacity-building in this regard for those countries who so require;
- c) develop products, such as an inventory of geospatial information generators and users and a Regional Atlas on environmental change in order to increase knowledge about the usefulness of geospatial information for decision-making.

10. Request the agencies of the ITC, in accordance with their respective mandates and other regional and subregional organizations, to collaborate with the Working Group on environmental indicators of the Forum of Ministers to strengthen and consolidate the work on environmental indicators, geospatial information and Earth Observation Systems.

11. Continue supporting the preparation of GEO reports at regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national levels, reflecting ILAC indicators as well as other specific priority themes.

12. Develop capacity to promote a regional environmental information system for standardization of methodologies that incorporate existing experience and lessons in the sub-regions and the countries.

13. Guide the development of environmental indicators within participatory environmental assessments in such a way that they constitute tools for social action on problems and environmental processes.

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DECISION 12

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Considering that the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development established that one of the objectives of its Plan of Implementation was the joint promotion of 10-year programmes to support national and regional initiatives to accelerate change towards sustainable forms of consumption and production;

Bearing in mind that the countries of the Latin America and Caribbean region stated the need to incorporate concepts of clean production in industry and to work in favour of sustainable development, as expressed in the Latin America and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development;

Bearing in mind that the results of the First, Second and Third Meetings of Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Managua, Nicaragua, and whose results will include: a proposal for the creation of the Regional Council of Government Experts for Sustainable Consumption and Production and a Contribution for the Construction of a Regional Platform on Sustainable Consumption and Production;

Considering that the results of the First Meeting were recognized as exemplary actions in the XI meeting of the Commission for Sustainable Development (New York, May 2003), and in the International Meeting on 10-Year Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (Marrakech, June 2003) as well as the results of the second international meeting of experts on sustainable production and consumption (Costa Rica 2005).

Decide:

1. To foster the preparation of sustainable consumption and production policies, strategies and action plans in the countries of the region, in accordance with their institutional particularities.

2. **To promote** the formation of national consultation bodies concerning sustainable production and consumption.
3. **To capitalize** on the experience of the countries and subregions that have developed and implemented cleaner production policies (CPP) in the region to prepare integrated sustainable production and consumption policies.
4. **To promote** institutional development and the inclusion of sustainable production and consumption in the crosscutting policies and agendas of other ministries.
5. **To design and implement** a cooperation programme among the region's countries focused on technical training and assistance in sustainable production and consumption, based on current experiences and knowledge in the region.
6. **To implement** pilot projects to develop and evaluate sustainable production and consumption methodologies for the region.
7. **To foster** the development of post-consumption responsibility strategies/programmes at a regional and subregional level, and support the development of pilot projects to test effective implementation mechanisms.
8. **To acknowledge** the recommendations made by the Council of Government Experts on sustainable production and consumption at Third Meeting and exert all efforts necessary to implement them in accordance to the specific possibilities and characteristics of each country.

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DECISION 13

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS

Considering that the World Summit on Sustainable Development established as one of the objectives of the Implementation Plan that, by the year 2020, chemicals should be produced and used in such a way as to reduce adverse effects on human health and the environment, and also endorsed the development of a strategic approach for the integrated management of chemicals at the international level;

Taking into account that the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development urge the strengthening of cooperation and intra-regional coordination with the support of relevant agencies and institutions in each region;

Recalling that decision 23/9 of the UNEP Governing Council establishes a set of actions to be undertaken by the Programme and the Governments towards strengthening initiatives in the context of international agreements on the sustainable management of chemicals, supporting the development of a strategic approach to the integrated management of chemicals at an international level, strengthening actions aimed at the expansion of scientific, technical and technological knowledge on chemicals and their effect on human health and the environment, and adopting decisions to reduce the adverse impacts of chemicals on human health and the environment;

Considering the organization of the High Level International Conference on Chemical Safety to be held in Dubai in 2006, where the Strategic Approach to Integrated Chemicals Management shall be adopted, and that said approach demands additional efforts and resources from the countries in order to fulfill its commitments and achieve its objectives.

Decide:

- 1. To promote** the fulfilment of the objective of using and producing chemicals in ways that minimizes significant adverse effects on human health and the environment in the region by the year 2020.
- 2. To support** the process for the development of a Strategic Approach to Integrated Chemicals Management (SAICM), ensuring that it includes the participation of all sectors involved, that it adequately considers the needs and situation of the countries in the region, that it includes the necessary means to guarantee implementation, such as the availability of technical, technological and financial resources.
- 3. To urge** the agencies of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee, in line with their own mandates, to support the projects and actions undertaken by the countries in the region toward the implementation of the sustainable management of chemicals in the region, observing their commitments under the relevant international agreements and the objectives specified under SAICM.
- 4. To further** the interaction and intersectoral work, *inter alia*, in the areas of health, agriculture and industry in our countries, fostering dialogue and the coordination of policies and programmes for the sustainable management of chemicals.
- 5. To ask** UNEP and other agencies under the Inter-Agency Technical Committee to establish and strengthen initiatives and partnerships at the regional, subregional and interregional levels with a view to advance the implementation of programmes and actions for sustainable management of chemicals in the region, particularly in the context of capacity-building and technological support as outlined in the Bali Strategic Plan.
- 6. To urge** the international agencies and Multilateral Environmental Agreements to strengthen regional structures aimed at building capacity and technology support to optimize the potential of the regional centres to support the countries of the region in the implementation of the sustainable management of chemicals.
- 7. To strengthen** the bodies and initiatives devoted to the dissemination and exchange of information related to the management of chemicals, and consider the creation of a Latin American and Caribbean network for the exchange of information on environmental components vulnerable to chemical substances, *inter alia*, soil.
- 8. To establish** bodies to be responsible for the exchange of experiences and information concerning the management of polluted sites, including the prevention, identification and restoration of these sites.
- 9. To promote** synergy with other sectors involved in the management of chemicals.

DECISION 14

CLIMATE CHANGE

Recalling decision 14 on Climate Change adopted at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean;

Recognizing with satisfaction the implementation of the considerations of said decision;

Taking note of the adoption by Heads of State and Government of paragraphs 50, 52 and 53 of resolution A/60/L1 adopted at the 60th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2005.

Welcoming the declarations by the Ministers of Environment of Iberoamerica at their Fifth Forum, and by the Ministers of Environment of the Andean Countries at the First Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Environment and Sustainable Development.

Decide:

- 1. To welcome** the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol.
- 2. To underline** the social, economic and environmental vulnerability of the region with regards to the effects of climate change and the need to implement effective measures to adapt to such effects. These measures should be incorporated into national development policies.
- 3. To congratulate** the government of Argentina for the successful organization of the Tenth Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC that took place in Buenos Aires.
- 4. To recognize** the efforts of the Canadian Government to successfully organize and thus guarantee the success of the Eleventh Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and the First Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol that will take place in Montreal in November and December 2005.
- 5. To recognize** the need to guarantee the continuity of the international regime to combat climate change based on the Principle of Common and Differentiated Responsibilities, in accordance to the respective capacities.
- 6. To promote** the consolidation and strengthening of the multilateral process of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol, with particular focus on the accomplishment of the present commitments and the participation of all the countries of Annex I of the mentioned Protocol. In this regard, we would like to urge those countries that have not yet ratified the Kyoto Protocol, to do so.
- 7. To foster** at these meetings and in subsequent years the discussion on a future regime on climate change within the framework of the UNFCCC, which integrates mitigation and adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change and promotes a greater participation of the private sector in these efforts.
- 8. To support** during the Eleventh Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC:

- a) the approval of the five-year programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change in the context of decision 1/CP10,
- b) the contribution of sufficient resources by developed countries for the effective operation of the Special Fund on Climate Change
- c) the introduction of the discussion on ecological services in natural forests; and
- d) the analysis of options to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases arising from deforestation in developing countries.

9. To initiate a dialogue in the region on these issues, led by the Working Group on Climate Change.

10. To support during the First Meeting of the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol, the adoption of the Marrakech Agreements of the Kyoto Protocol, in particular those related to the procedures of the accomplishment of agreements.

11. To recognize the role of the Clean Development Mechanism as an instrument that reconciles actions geared toward the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions with those geared toward the promotion of sustainable development; to urge the First Meeting of the Parties to seek the most appropriate means to expedite and strengthen the works of the Executive Meeting, based on the Marrakech Agreements.

12. To support the proposal of GRULAC to elect the Representative of Trinidad and Tobago as the next Chair of the SSBSTA and, to request the support of other regions to this effect. To support the work of Jamaica, as President of the Group of 77 and China.

13. To ask the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC) to increase its contributions to the countries of the region in activities related to climate change and to support the work of the development of the systematic climate observation network, early warning systems, education and research as well as capacity building activities.

14. To ask the ITC to strengthen the existing regional centres that work on climate change and to promote when necessary the establishment of new centres.

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DECISION 15

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Recalling that in the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) the target to "increase renewable energy use in the region to at least 10% of its total energy consumption by the year 2010" was adopted and that it recognized the important contribution that bilateral, subregional and regional activities can make to the promotion of sustainable development within the framework of the Platform for Action towards Johannesburg 2002, approved in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in October 2001;

Underscoring the positive contribution that the productive use of renewable sources of energy can make to the sustainable development of the countries of the region in mitigating poverty, increasing energy security and diversifying national and regional energy schemes, reducing risks due to variations in water-related emergency situations; the decentralization of the production of energy; the improvement of the technological and industrial base of the countries, and full coverage of the supply and use of electric energy;

Considering that access to energy is fundamental to promote economic growth, the protection of the environment and social equity;

Recognizing that the production of renewable energy offers, among other advantages, the creation of jobs, development of rural areas, and the reduction of the effects of greenhouse gases;

Considering the high potential and diversity of renewable energy sources in the region;

Recalling that the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation proposes the improvement of the access to affordable and reliable energetic services to achieve sustainable development and to facilitate the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals, without putting aside the objective to halve the percentage of the population that lives in extreme poverty for the year 2015;

Considering that 13 years after the 1992 Rio Summit, and as indicated in ILAC in 2002, the region still faces important challenges; new, emerging issues must be taken into account in order to make sustainable development a reality and to effect the necessary changes to the development models in place; there is a need to revert the present trend of environmental deterioration, in both the natural and the urban environment, to attain the reduction of poverty and its impacts –a scourge for the countries of the region.

Recalling that the increased use of Renewable Energy sources constitutes a priority line for the Regional Plan of Action 2004-2005 adopted by the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Decides:

- 1. To recognize** the sovereign right of the Latin America and Caribbean countries to develop all renewable energy sources in accordance to their potential and interests.
- 2. To highlight** the importance that renewable energy sources have in the achievement of sustainable development and in combating poverty in rural and isolated areas of Latin American and Caribbean countries.
- 3. To reiterate** the need for financial institutions to support the development of national, subregional and regional renewable energy projects, including small scale projects in rural or isolated areas.
- 4. To urge** that funds for renewable energy technologies incorporate investment for the transfer of technologies –in addition to the evaluation of potential– and lend priority to the rural and isolated areas to secure their sustainable development.

5. **To support** the continuity of ongoing studies and promote new ones to establish the relationship in the countries of the region between renewable energy and poverty, and their link to the rate of human development and to environmental indicators.
6. **To encourage** the development of renewable energy projects by promoting the establishment of decentralized, self-sufficient systems which contribute to sustainable development.
7. **To maintain** as a priority the development of renewable energy sources in the Regional Action Plan 2006-2007 of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.
8. **To promote** changes in current production and consumption models, focusing on more efficient models in the use of energy.
9. **To continue** the activities of the renewable energy working group of the Forum of Ministers in order to coordinate regional activities with the support of the agencies of the ITC, in keeping with their respective mandates.
10. **To identify** actions aimed at removing legal, institutional and political obstacles to the introduction of Renewable Energies in the region, and to achieve the ILAC objectives.
11. **To ask** the ITC agencies to provide support in carrying out surveys and studies regarding the analysis of the status of energy matrixes in the region, and the inclusion of practical recommendations to increase renewable energies, and the inherent challenges and opportunities.
12. **To ensure** that the elements contained in this decision are duly considered in the Preparatory Regional Meeting of CSD-14, bearing in mind that the issue of renewable energies will be considered in the forthcoming period of CSD.
13. **To ask** UNEP, in its capacity as Secretariat of the Forum, to inform the Latin American and Caribbean Energy Organization (OLACDE) and the Ministers of Energy of the Region of the progress made concerning this decision.

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DECISION 16

TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT

Reiterating that the theme of Trade and Environment is one of the priorities for action in the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) and in the Plan of Implementation of the Johannesburg Summit;

Recognizing that the environment now has an impact on the negotiation and implementation of bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements;

Following up on and strengthening the coordination and cooperation efforts established in the 2004-2005 Regional Action Plan of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean;

Considering the need to strengthen environmental institutional development to face the new challenges posed by the relationship between trade and environment policies in the region and in the world, with the aim of mutual strengthening to attain sustainable development;

Reaffirming the need to develop mutually supportive and equitable conditions between trade and environment through the elimination of subsidies whose impact on the environment has been negative, and that the utilization of environmental measures that constitute disguised barriers to trade should be avoided;

Reiterating that the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) underscores the urgent need to provide incentives at the national, regional and international level to encourage the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and to improve the operation of its markets by strengthening the capacity of developing countries to compete in the emerging biological resource markets.

Decide:

1. To request the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC) to provide support for conducting, at the request of interested countries, comprehensive and strategic environmental assessments of the interrelationship between environmental and trade policies within the framework of trade agreements.

2. To promote dialogues and exchanges of experience among environmental and trade authorities to create interest among the ministry of finance and others in incorporating, in a crosscutting manner, environmental themes and considerations into funding requests for national projects.

3. To urge the ITC agencies, as well as other international agencies that participate in the region, in conformity with their respective mandates, to improve their dialogue and coordination mechanisms to support capacity-building programmes on the links between trade, environment and sustainable development, both in the context of negotiations for integration or trade agreements and in their implementation, taking into account the realities and needs of the countries, whenever possible.

4. To reaffirm the need to promote the exchange of experience and cooperation, particularly among the countries of the region, in the field of negotiating and implementing trade agreements and their interactions with environmental matters.

5. To promote and implement, in a coordinated manner among the ITC agencies, cooperation programmes to carry out activities on training and the exchange of experiences regarding trade and environment, at the request of interested countries, placing emphasis on the following themes:

- a) negotiation capacities for integrating trade negotiations with multilateral environmental agreements;
- b) comprehensive strategic environmental assessments related to environmental impacts of integration and trade agreements;

- c) bio-trade;
- d) access to markets;
- e) valuation of environmental goods and services;
- f) regulation of standards;
- g) certification;
- h) training in the application of the regulatory framework for multilateral trade;
- i) intellectual property and access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing.
- j) quality of the environment

6. To ensure that the diverse training and cooperation instruments support the sustainable development of the countries of the region and prevent the use of environmental measures as disguised barriers to trade;

7. To aim at making trade and environmental policies mutually reinforcing so as to serve as tools for strengthening sustainable development.

8. To build capacities in the field of environmental goods and services in the framework of the provisions in paragraph 31 of the Ministerial Declaration of Doha by providing elements that will contribute to reflecting sustainable development objectives and generating equitable benefits for all the countries members of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

9. To ask the ITC to carry out activities to facilitate access to financial resources for the implementation of this decision.

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DECISION 17

PREPARATION OF A PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE PREVENTION OF IMPACTS FROM NATURAL DISASTERS

Considering that the Latin American and Caribbean Region is extremely vulnerable to natural and man-made disasters and that climate change, rapid urbanization and environmental deterioration are exacerbating these vulnerabilities;

Recognizing that there have been catastrophic losses in terms of lives, livelihoods, the environment and economic well-being, especially in recent years, and that these losses have severely hindered our economic development due to the practice of diverting the scarce resources from social, economic and infrastructure programmes to respond to these disasters;

Considering that the challenge of handling the existing vulnerability to natural disasters is likely to be exacerbated by the current trends in weather patterns, the challenges of climate change and other non-traditional threats;

Reaffirming the importance of implementing congruent public policies that promote land planning strategies that, in turn, minimize the risks and impacts of the natural disasters,

Decide:

- 1. To promote** the adoption of policies and strategies designed to minimize the risk and impact of natural disasters.
- 2. To apply** in full the Declaration and Framework of Action of Hyogo (2005-2015) approved at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe, Japan).
- 3. To request** the Working Group on Disasters, Preparedness and Management, the Inter-Agency Technical Committee and other competent international organizations to assist the efforts of the governments of the region to develop early warning and rapid response systems to natural and anthropogenic disasters; this could be done through the implementation of multimodal criteria and in keeping with international strategy for disaster reduction through early warning and response systems applicable to all forms of hazards.
- 4. To strengthen** the capacity to prevent and respond to local communities affected by these phenomena.
- 5. To request** the Working Group on Disasters, Preparedness and Management, the Inter-Agency Technical Committee and other international organizations to:
 - a) support the integration of environmental management initiatives and disaster reduction initiatives; this should include the community level, as part of the perspective of an integrated approach to risk management;
 - b) support the development of databases on the vulnerability of natural resources;
 - c) support the strengthening of national and regional capacity and mechanisms to improve natural disaster preparedness, capacity for mitigation and early warning and response, increase public awareness concerning disaster preparedness and mainstream risk management into national planning processes;
 - d) support the increase of regional, subregional and national capacity to forecast and respond to emergency situations, including search and rescue capabilities, technical equipment for forecasting and communications, undertaking a review of building codes and designing vulnerability mapping;
 - e) support regional and subregional institutions linked to disaster management and the strengthening of policies and legislation with a view to forecasting, preventing and minimizing the risks and impacts of natural disasters;
 - f) support the development of affordable insurance and re-insurance programs as an integral part of fostering recovery capabilities;
 - g) carry out an assessment of the costs and benefits of possible actions and strategies to prevent impact from future natural disasters, which may

include the protection of priority ecosystems, the ecological organization of the territory, information systems, hydro-geological risk management for transboundary watersheds, and more. The above implies estimating the investment necessary for prevention, in order to avert the costs implied by reconstruction once there has been an impact as a result of a natural event;

- h) conduct a cost estimation exercise on the lack of action that takes into account the particular vulnerability of SIDS;
- i) make recommendations for an Action Plan for the Latin American and Caribbean Region in which indicators, goals and responsibilities are established;
- j) strengthen the lines for financing, mobilization of resources and international cooperation within the framework of the agreements with each country, to help the countries in the region in the design and implementation of land use planning designed to prevent, respond to and minimize the impacts of natural disasters;
- k) inform about progress on the agreed activities to the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, to be held in the Dominican Republic in 2007.

DECISION 18

COMMEMORATION OF 2006 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DESERTS AND DESERTIFICATION

Recognizing the importance for environmental management of the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations to declare the year 2006 as the "International Year of Deserts and Desertification", adopted November 22, 2004, through Resolution A/RES/58/212;

Endorsing the decision of the Tenth Regional Meeting of Focal Points of Latin America and the Caribbean parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, held August 29 - 31, 2005 in the city of Sao Luís, in the state of Maranhão, Brazil, which refers to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as Secretariat Pro Tempore of the Andean Community, and Uruguay, as President Pro Tempore of MERCOSUR, exhorting all involved and interested governments to include the above mentioned reference concerning the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations in their speeches, pronouncements and documents;

Warning that land degradation processes, due to both natural and anthropogenic processes in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid environments, have increased, as has the ensuing vulnerability of rural populations receiving less assistance, as have the agricultural, livestock and agro-forestry production systems of the latter;

Aware of the need to create environmental awareness and sensitivity at all levels of society, particularly as refers to decision-makers and rural communities.

Decide:

- 1. To welcome** the Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations and the proposal of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification to commemorate the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006.
- 2. To promote** in the countries of the region, a broad based program for the commemoration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, to be executed in 2006, and to ensure that it includes the organization of events at the regional, national and community levels.
- 3. To inform** all public authorities of the countries of the region at different levels about this decision and urge all authorities to join them.
- 4. To recommend** the implementation of the Convention at the national, subregional, regional and interregional levels during the 2006-2007 biennium, in keeping with decision 1 of the Meeting of UNCCD for Latin America and the Caribbean which was held in the state of Maranhao, Brazil in August, 2005.
- 5. To request** financing agencies and other bilateral and multilateral partners to reinforce and deepen their support to the implementation process of the priorities that have been identified in National Action Programmes to Combat Desertification and Drought.
- 6. To reinforce** synergy with other Conventions, particularly with the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- 7. To support** the proposal presented by the Dominican Republic to the Executive Secretariat of the Convention of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought, for the organization of the 5th Africa – Latin America and Caribbean Forum, to be held in the Dominican Republic in 2006.
- 8. To welcome** the acceptance of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought CoP for the region to host the Fifth Meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, to be held in Argentina in the second half of 2006.

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DECISION 19

THE MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEMS ASSESSMENT

Recalling that the Millennium Development Goal of achieving environmental sustainability was reaffirmed in the World Summit for Sustainable Development through incorporating the principles of sustainable development in national policies and programmes and the reversal of the deterioration of natural resources as one of its goals;

Considering that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment may become a framework for decisions related to the sustainable utilization of natural resources and conservation of ecosystems;

Bearing in mind that there is already a degree of experience in managing many of the services provided by ecosystems;

Bearing in mind that the health of ecosystems is considered at a global level to be of high priority, especially in light of recognizing the services that they provide.

Decide

- 1. To consider** the Report of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment as a contribution to the analysis and information concerning the current status of ecosystems.
- 2. To recognize** the need to further develop the criteria and methodologies designed to make such assessments at country and sub-regional levels so that they may become tools for decision making in the countries of the region.
- 3. To further request** that the ITC agencies consider within the framework of their mandates the building of the corresponding capacities of the countries in the region and to support the undertaking of regional and sub-regional assessments as a basis for improving the sustainable management of ecosystems.
- 4. To encourage** participation, at technical and policy levels, in the follow-up activities of the Region relating to the Caribbean Sea Assessment.
- 5. To request** the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, in collaboration with the organizers of the Caribbean Sea Assessment, to consider how this body might support those follow-up activities in the region.

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DECISION 20

**GRATITUDE TO THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA**

Decide:

To express the deep gratitude of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean held in Caracas, Venezuela, October 31 through November 4, 2005, to the People and Government of Venezuela for the generous hospitality shown during this Meeting.

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Annex I, Appendix 1
Appendix to Decision 8

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 June 21 and 22, 2005, agree to ask the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to use the **attached considerations** arising from this workshop as a contribution to the discussions and to the formulation of a common regional position.

CONSIDERATIONS

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

1. It is recognized that an international regime or system comprises 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 and 8 (j).
4. Elements which the international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing could exert influence on or establish 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 that guarantee cooperation in and transfer of technology, in compliance with the CBD.
 - II. The development of mechanisms for the tasks of follow-up and monitoring that might contribute to the verification of the conditions for access agreed on. An alternate mechanism might be a certificate of legal origin, in addition to disclosure of the country of origin on applications for intellectual property rights.

III. The development of measures designed to guarantee fulfillment 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. It was suggested that there is a need to explore mechanisms to obtain economic benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and channel these to the countries of origin of said resources.

6. It was recognized that this theme was being dealt to a greater or lesser degree at various international forums, underscoring the need for closer ties among the different State representatives and entities (economic-trade and environmental) as regards 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 vice versa, and to avoid delays in the discussion caused by the foregoing. The region should produce its own process for handling this aspect.

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 toward building a more in-depth set of definitions that will be decisive as regards 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. As concerns byproducts, much technical information is required, and the scope and sphere should be very clearly defined, as is the case of the definitions for genetic resources, given that there may be linkage in the 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 the legality of access is the central concept, even more so than the country of origin or the source.

II. Desirable characteristics of the certificate

i. To be reviewed primarily, though not exclusively, in applications for patents, the most difficult point in the negotiation.

ii. To be used for review at the end of the process and not for step-by-step tracking.

iii. To attest to the legality of the access.

iv. To be perceived as a positive sign, and, consequently, become an incentive for users.

v. To be maintained simple as a concept.

vi. To be practical and low-cost.

vii. To be issued by whomever grants the access permit.

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Annex III

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