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**Indicators of the Millennium
Development Goals (MDGs) and the
Latin American and Caribbean Initiative
for Sustainable Development (ILAC)**

This information document was prepared by the Development Observatory of the University of Costa Rica and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Environment Programme.

I. Introduction

1. This document shows the criteria of the Working Group of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) in relation to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The meeting of the Working Group in San Rafael de Heredia, Costa Rica, in October 2005, discussed the need to supplement the Goal 7 indicators with the ILAC indicators.

For that purpose, the background of both initiatives was presented and the common indicators in both proposals were compared in order to subsequently issue a recommendation, which is presented at the end of the document.

II. MDG Background

In September 2002, in the Millennium Declaration, 147 Heads of State and Government and a total of 189 countries declared that they were determined to make the right to development a reality for all and to shelter humankind from need. They recognized that progress is based on sustainable economic growth that should focus on the poor and particularly on human rights. The goal of the Declaration is to promote a "wide approach and coordinated strategy to tackle many problems simultaneously across a broad front".

The Declaration calls for reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day by the year 2015. This also involves finding solutions to hunger, malnutrition and diseases, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, ensuring primary education for all and supporting the principles of Agenda 21 regarding sustainable development. The richest countries should directly provide the developing countries with support in the form of assistance, trade, debt relief and investment.

Approval was given to a framework of eight goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators to measure the progress made towards achieving the MDGs.

III. ILAC Background

ILAC was approved during a special meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, held on 31 August 2001 in Johannesburg, in the framework of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It is a political and ethical response to the need of giving a practical sense to the processes aimed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which provided a unique opportunity to assess the progress made at all levels in fulfilling the commitments assumed at the 1992 Rio Conference and to adopt effective actions to seek solutions to new sustainable development challenges. Guiding goals to serve as orientation for activities were identified, together with operational indicative objectives to measure and effectively assess the actions proposed and implemented. In this way we will facilitate the work of stakeholders involved in this unpostponable task of safeguarding our environmental heritage.

On several occasions, the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean has made efforts to remedy the lack of regional data and indicators. At its Fourteenth Meeting, held in November 2003, the Forum decided to support a project “to produce a number of core environmental indicators (national), as well as the economic, social and institutional indicators needed to assess the progress made in implementing ILAC”.

One of the guiding goals and respective specific indicative objectives that ILAC proposes is “to develop and apply an assessment process to follow-up on advances made in fulfilling sustainable development goals, especially those resulting from the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and the adoption of national and regional sustainability indicators, in accordance with the particular social, economic and political characteristics of the region.

ILAC identifies six priority themes and 25 guiding goals and indicative objectives, with a total of 38 indicators approved by the Forum of Ministers.

IV. Comparison between the two initiatives

It can be seen that both the MDGs and the ILAC make reference to goals and objectives. The MDGs specify targets with specific values to be reached by certain years, while the ILAC indicates more general objectives for each indicator. The MDG initiative – by its own mandate – is broader than the ILAC initiative, since, in addition to environment-related themes, it also incorporates themes aimed at measuring the development of a country as a whole. (See, basically, MDGs 3 to 6 and 8).

In the Annex, there is a table comparing the specific indicators for each goal and target, in the case of the MDGs, and the goals and indicative objectives, in the case of the ILAC. This comparison shows the overlapping of 12 indicators that are shared by both proposals and represent nearly one-third of the ILAC matrix.

However, in the specifically environmental field, the list of indicators identified by the ILAC is three times longer, wider and more specific than the MDG indicators. This reflects the political will existing in the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean – and expressed at the Forum of Environment Ministers – for more extensive follow-up on the environmental problems in the region.

In this regard, the added value of ILAC is outstanding in the way it deals with MDG 7 (Ensure environmental sustainability) by directly dealing with the theme of environment and sustainability. Here, the MDGs set forth nine specific indicators for three targets:

Target 9: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse loss of environmental resources.

Target 10: Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation services by the year 2015.

Target 11: Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 10 million slum dwellers by 2020.

For Millennium Target 9, the ILAC integrates 12 more specific indicators, two of which are related to the theme of “biological diversity”, eight to the theme of “vulnerability, human settlements and sustainable cities” and two to the theme of “economic aspects”. For Millennium Target 10, the ILAC includes four specific additional indicators related to the theme of “water resources management”. Finally, for Millennium Target 11, the ILAC adds six specific indicators linked to “social themes”.

Recommendation

The ILAC working group has identified important gaps in the MDGs with regard to the monitoring of regional environmental performance.

- a) In general, the indicators need to be reviewed and other, complementary new indicators should be incorporated. (See the last column of the Annex, where new and more specific indicators proposed by ILAC are highlighted in gray).
- b) In many cases, the Millennium Development Targets have already been achieved in Latin America and the Caribbean, which makes it necessary to define other indicators to enable the measuring of the region’s advances towards sustainability.

Having incorporated a large number of indicators proposed for the MDGs in the set of ILAC follow-up indicators means that ILAC follow-up at the national level will also be fulfilling the requirement to construct indicators for the MDGs; that is, the national effort is a single endeavour and the ILAC analysis should complement the general MDG analysis.

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Annex 1. Comparative Table of the Millennium Targets and the Latin American Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC)

Millennium Targets			ILAC		
Goal	Target	Indicator	Goal	Indicative Objective	Indicator
Goal 1			ILAC		
Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Target 1. Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day	Proportion of the population below \$1 (1993 PPP) per day (World Bank)	<i>Social themes, including health, inequality and poverty</i>	Poverty and inequality. 1. Drastically reduce the poverty levels in the countries of the region.	Proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar (PPP) per day
Goal 2					
Achieve universal primary education	Target 3. Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	Net enrolment ratio in primary education (UNESCO)	<i>Institutional Aspects</i>	Training and capacity-building of human resources 1. Eradicate illiteracy and achieve universal enrolment in primary and secondary education.	Net enrolment ratio in primary education
Goal 7					
Ensure environmental sustainability	Target 9. Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse loss of environmental resources	Proportion of land area covered by forest (FAO)	<i>Biological Diversity</i>	Increase in the forest area. Ensure the sustainable management of forest resources of the region, reducing the current deforestation rates	
		Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to total surface area (UNEP-WCMC)		Territory in protected areas. Significantly increase the amount of territory in protected areas in the region, transition areas and biological corridors in their definition	Percentage of protected areas in relation to the total area ¹
		Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1,000 GDP (PPP) (IEA, World Bank)	<i>Economic aspects, including trade and production and consumption patterns</i>	Energy. Implement in the region the use of renewable energy that will account for at least 10% of the total energy used in the region by the year 2010	Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1,000 GDP (PPP) ¹

Millennium Targets			ILAC		
Goal	Target	Indicator	Goal	Indicative Objective	Indicator
		Carbon dioxide emissions per capita (UNFCCC, UNSD) and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs (ODP tons) (UNEP-Ozone Secretariat)	<i>Vulnerability, human settlements and sustainable cities</i>	Air pollution. Reduce the concentration of polluting emissions in the air.	
		Proportion of the population using solid fuels (WHO)	<i>Economic aspects, including trade and production and consumption patterns</i>	Cleaner production. 1. Install Cleaner Production Centres in all the countries of the region.	Carbon dioxide emissions ¹
				Energy. Implement in the region the use of renewable energy that will account for at least 10% of the total energy used in the region by the year 2010.	Proportion of the population using solid fuels
	Target 10. Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation	Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water sources, urban and rural (UNICEF-WHO)	<i>Vulnerability, Human settlements and sustainable cities</i>	Water pollution. Expand the coverage of drinking water and wastewater treatment services	Proportion of population with access to drinking water
		Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural (UNICEF-WHO)	<i>Vulnerability, human settlements and sustainable cities</i>	Water pollution. Expand the coverage of drinking water and wastewater treatment services	Proportion of population with access to sanitation
			<i>Water Resources Management</i>	Better quality of inland waters. Improve the quality of effluents and reduce the discharge of pollutants into bodies of surface water and groundwater, as well as on the coastal area.	Proportion of population with access to sanitation

Millennium Targets			ILAC		
Goal	Target	Indicator	Goal	Indicative Objective	Indicator
	<p>Target 11. By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</p>	<p>Proportion of homes with access to secure tenure (United Nations-Habitat)</p>	<p><i>Social themes, including health, inequality and poverty</i></p>	<p>Poverty and inequality. 1. Drastically reduce the poverty levels in the countries of the region.</p>	<p>Proportion of homes with the right to property deeds (guarantee of land tenure)</p>

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