



**United Nations Environment Programme  
Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean**

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME  
PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT

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**Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of  
Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic  
27<sup>th</sup> January to 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008**

A. PREPARATORY MEETING OF EXPERTS  
27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008

**Distribution:**

Limited

**UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/4**

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2007

**Original:** Spanish

# **Final Report of the Meeting of High-Level Government Experts**

**Panama City, Panama  
29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007**



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## **A. Background**

**1.** In compliance with the mandate issued by the Forum of Ministers, the Agencies that comprise the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC) have been working in a coordinated manner in promoting the compliance with the Forum's decisions.

**2.** With the purpose of analyzing the opportunities and options for the continuation and expansion of ITC's contribution to the compliance with the agreements reached by the Forum of Ministers, on September 14<sup>th</sup> 2006 an Informal Meeting of the Agencies from the Committee was held. At this meeting, they discussed the implementation of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) 2006-2007, and the performance of the Working Groups selected at the meeting of Ministers held in Caracas in November 2005. Moreover, at that meeting each Agency made a summary of the strategic approaches it applies in the design of their program of activities.

**3.** As a result of the discussions that took place at the Informal Meeting of the ITC Agencies the following conclusions were adopted:

- a) to adjust the content of the RAP 2006-2007;
- b) to develop proposals for the priority areas for assistance and cooperation for 2008-2012 in order to continue with the implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC);
- c) to integrate proposals for the RAP 2008-2009, based on a new strategic objective established by each agency and with a new format to facilitate the evaluation of the program;
- d) to review the operations, the scope of action and the work performed by the ITC and to identify options to incorporate other Agencies that participate in specific actions;
- e) to integrate a proposal about the mandate, composition, and operation of the Working groups; and
- f) to carry out a meeting of the ITC that, subject to consultations with the Chairperson of the Forum of Ministers, would take place on the last week of February 2007.

**4.** As follow-up to these conclusions, the First Meeting of the ITC in 2007 was held on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March in the city of Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This meeting generated the following conclusions and recommendations:

### ***A. Progress in the implementation of the RAP***

**5.** The implementation report of the RAP 2006-2007 will be drafted by the ITC Agencies.

***B. Priority Lines of Action of ILAC for the 2008-2012 period and the RAP 2008-2009***

**6.** The evaluation of the progress achieved in the implementation of ILAC shall be considered at a Meeting of High-Level Experts that includes the participation of the ITC Agencies.

**7.** Based on the results of this evaluation, we will have the necessary elements to write a draft RAP, which will be drafted at the Meeting of High-Level Experts and later discussed and adjusted at the Meeting of the Forum of Ministers. This draft must include the priority lines of actions of ILAC, which will be in effect for the 2008–2012 period and the RAP 2008–2009. This task shall be coordinated by the Secretariat of the Forum and will have the support of the Governments, the Experts, and the ITC Agencies.

***C. Contribution of the ITC Agencies to the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers***

**8.** The participants recognized that the document entitled “Review of the Experience of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee that supports the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean”, distributed as **UNEP/LAC-ITC.1.2007/5** and drafted by Mr. Walter Arensberg by request of the ITC Agencies, was a good starting point to undertake a process of reviewing the effectiveness, mandate and composition of the Committee, as well as to review the role of the ITC Agencies in the integration and implementation of the RAP and their participation in the meetings of the Forum of Ministers.

**9.** The structure and content of the RAP should be reviewed in such a manner that it favours a more effective support for the Forum, as well as a better coordination and synergies among the ITC Agencies. Additionally, it should reflect a realistic balance between the expectations of the countries and the means of implementation, including financial resources, and it should direct operations towards the performance of priority actions that should be subject to evaluation and accountability methods.

**10.** The main objective of reviewing the institutional framework that supports the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers should be to strengthen this instance of coordination environmental policies at the regional level.

***D. Operation of the Working groups established by the Forum of Ministers***

**11.** The Working Groups’ composition, agenda and operations should be reviewed in order to try to achieve improved efficacy in their work, including, for example, clearly defining their mandate through specific terms of reference, focusing on particular activities and products, in conformity with available resources, and having a limited term.

### ***E. Calendar for the follow-up of the recommendations made at the First ITC Meeting 2007***

**12.** With the purpose of following-up on the recommendations of this meeting, the parties agreed to hold an Informal Consultation of the ITC Agencies, as well as a Meeting of High-Level Experts, to formulate recommendations for the Forum of Ministers, in light of their upcoming Sixteenth Meeting.

## **II. Objectives of the Meeting**

**13.** The main objective of the Meeting of High-Level Government Experts was to formulate recommendations to be considered in the preparation of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers concerning the following issues:

- a) progress achieved in the implementation of ILAC;
- b) restructuring of the Regional Action Plan, and proposals for the RAP 2008-2009;
- c) the contribution of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee vis-à-vis the implementation of the decisions made by the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean;
- d) the operation of the Working Groups of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean;
- e) begin the discussion on the topics to be submitted for consideration to the Sixteenth Forum of Ministers;
- f) become aware of the state of preparation of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers.

## **III. Participation**

**14.** The Meeting of High-Level Government Experts was attended by representatives from eighteen Latin American and Caribbean countries, representatives from the Inter-Agency Technical Committee's Agencies; as well as representatives from global environmental initiatives. The list of participants appears as **Annex I**.

## **IV. Carrying out the Work**

### ***1. Opening ceremony***

**15.** During the opening session UNEP's Representative welcomed the participants from the countries that were represented by the experts. He explained that the Chairperson of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean would not be able to participate in the meeting for, at that same time, she would be participating in a meeting on international environmental governance

in Brazil. For this reason, he proposed the possibility that the meeting be presided by one of the Forum's Vice-Chairs, and Mr. Alvaro Sapag from Chile was appointed to fill the aforementioned position by acclamation.

**16.** In turn, the Chairman expressed the need to have a rapporteur, and for this purpose he proposed Mexico, who had carried out the role of rapporteur during the Forum of Ministers.

**17.** Once this agreement was reached, the Chairman of the Meeting reminded all attendees that the objective of the meeting of experts was to prepare several of the topics to be discussed at the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers. He, therefore, reviewed the points on the agenda and invited the participants to exert the necessary efforts to achieve the objectives of the meeting of experts, which would take place in the following two days. In order to achieve the purposes of the meeting, he proposed the participants to join forces in order to be prepared to move forward in the preparation of the following meeting of the Forum of Ministers. He expressed his certainty that, with the participants' collaboration, at the end of two days' work they would have recommendations that would make it possible to strengthen the Forum of Ministers, establish guidelines for the ITC Agencies to continue supporting the implementation of the decisions made by the Forum, and make it possible for the Working Groups to be instrumental for environmental priorities in the Region. He also stated that the meeting of High-Level Government Experts would take place in a few weeks, during which multilateral environmental negotiations on climate change and biodiversity would take place. Moreover, during the first two months of 2008 the Tenth Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum will take place in the Principality of Monaco. For this reason, it would be convenient to receive information about the meetings of relevance to the discussions and agreements that shall arise from this meeting.

**18.** The Representative of Panama welcomed the participants and expressed her willingness to contribute towards the achievement of the Meeting of Experts' objectives. She especially mentioned that the link between the Working Groups and ITC's role of the was important for her country.

**19.** ECLAC's Representative pointed out that the Commission would pay attention to the countries' requirements with regards to the fulfilment of the Regional Action Plan.

**20.** UNEP's Representative explained that, five years after the approval of ILAC at the Johannesburg Summit, it was necessary to evaluate the progress made in the implementation of this Initiative, and consider the support that the ITC Agencies have provided to the countries. He said that within the context of the United Nations' reform process it was very important to continue with the efforts of coordination and cooperation, in the same way they have been performed within the framework of the ITC, and he highlighted some of the activities that are being carried out in the area of poverty reduction. He said that in Uruguay and Haiti they had been working in a coordinated manner during the pilot phase of the "Delivering as One" scheme. Within this context, the analysis of the contribution of the ITC Agencies to the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers is necessary to establish the conditions under which ILAC will continue to be



implemented. Regarding the participation of the ITC Agencies at the Meeting of Experts, he pointed out that officers from the World Bank and the IDB were following the work via teleconference.

**21.** The Chairman of the Meeting felt it necessary for the meeting to take into account the work that several United Nations Agencies have been performing jointly in Uruguay; He also highlighted the importance of moving forward with the South-South cooperation, in order to be prepared to support countries with urgent needs, such as Haiti.

## ***2. Approval of the agenda and schedule of meeting sessions***

**22.** The Chairman of the Meeting of Experts presented to the participants' consideration the Provisional Agenda (**UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/1**), and the Annotated Provisional Agenda (**UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/2**), as well as a schedule of meeting sessions. The proposals were approved by the Experts of the participating countries.

## ***3. Evaluation of progress in the implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC)***

**23.** The Chairman made a general presentation of the document **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/3**, "Evaluation of progress in the implementation of the Latin America and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC)".

**24.** Mr. Enrique Provencio, Coordinator of the Group of Experts that is preparing the evaluation, presented a preliminary report on the progress in the implementation of ILAC. With regards to this report, he expressed that, according to the adopted terms of reference, the actions that were carried out and the progress in the application of the Initiative are being analyzed through the adopted indicators and the reports that the countries provide. Reports and studies carried out by the ITC Agencies and other institutions will also be taken into account. Regarding the methodology employed in the evaluation, it was stated that this part of the follow-up of the indicators is associated with the indicative purposes and the guiding goals of the 6 topics that ILAC includes within its priorities for action, and the appraisal of the Initiative's guidelines and objectives is being performed with these elements. The general conclusions about the behaviour of processes linked to issues related to ILAC that have indicators and updated information, were also presented, as well as the model that will serve as a baseline to integrate the final report, both in written as well as in digital format. In compliance with the requirement that demands for the evaluation to make it possible to specify the Forum's priorities, it was suggested that-according to the advances presented-in the following RAP more importance should be given to the implications of the production and the growing use of bio-fuels and their relation to biodiversity, to strengthening strategies for mitigation and adaptation to change and to reinforcing action programs to face the social-environmental vulnerability associated with the increasing threats of global change, all within a perspective of integrated ecosystem management.

**25.** UNEP's Representative highlighted that the evaluation of the application of ILAC was possible thanks to the efforts made by the countries to develop ILAC's indicators and, he said, that it would be convenient for all countries to have these kinds of indicators by the year 2009. Moreover, he warned that the methodology presented to integrate the evaluation of the application of ILAC could evolve towards a system of systematic follow-up, which would allow the countries in the region to periodically check in which cases there have been advances or in which areas there continue to be problems with the implementation of the priority areas set by ILAC, and that the establishment of such a system could be the content of a specific recommendation to the Forum of Ministers. He highlighted that despite the short period of time that has passed since the approval of ILAC, there have been considerable advances in the capture of information; however, that information is already showing certain trends, which in certain cases, such as in the one of forests, is still negative, and this has been confirmed by information gathered by FAO. From these trends, it is possible to draw a proposal for the Forum of Ministers, involving maintaining the eight areas of concentration for the implementation of ILAC, but approaching them from different perspectives.

**26.** The Representative of Honduras inquired about the nature of the institutional progress mentioned in the preliminary report that was presented. The Representative of Nicaragua expressed his concern in light of the fact that countries receive multiple and countless requests for information from the different United Nations' agencies, and that it is often the case that the requests are on the same topic, but sent in different formats, which imposes an excessive load upon the countries. Additionally, given the need to reinforce the national statistics institutions, he recommended that an effort be made to carry out a comparative review of data from different sources. He added that the indicators should allow for the evaluation of progress and efficiency of the measures adopted; he also presented the need to assign higher priority and reinforce those areas that gather information related to disasters and risk management.

**27.** The Representative of Panama spoke of the need to incorporate in the evaluation those elements related to citizens' participation and environmental education, as well as information about the sub-regional consultations mechanisms, at a country level as well as at the level of civil society organizations.

**28.** In response to the comments summarized above, Mr. Provencio pointed out that, vis-à-vis the institutional aspects, he agreed with the Representative of Honduras in that the preliminary report contained information of an extremely general nature for in the case of the environmental education, for instance, the available information is not sufficient. It was also said that the indicator regarding the participation of the civil society was the existence of mechanisms for citizen participation. As to the comments of the Representative of Nicaragua, he said that there is a great discrepancy in terms of requests for information that countries receive from the different agencies, and that it is often requested using different indicators; on this issue he said that ILAC's indicators were related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Regarding the comments made by the Representative of Panama, he agreed that it is necessary to analyze the information within the context of environmental management systems and to incorporate the

information about sub-regional consultation mechanisms at a country and citizen level; although he warned that this information should be available.

**29.** UNEP's Representative suggested that the Group should fulfil two tasks: one related to the ITC mandate and the other to the compliance with ILAC. The evaluation that is being performed, as the terms of reference agreed upon by the Chair of the Forum indicate, must be qualitative and quantitative, and may serve as a baseline for the formulation of recommendations to the Forum of Ministers; and finally he talked about the convenience of incorporating proposals about the urban environment (garbage, waste water treatment, air quality) and urban vulnerability.

**30.** In a second round of comments on the presentation of the preliminary report about the application of ILAC, the Representative of El Salvador expressed the need for the content of the report that was being drafted to be validated by the countries. The Representative of Mexico proposed to continue developing the report according to the proposed methodology and to incorporate the activities carried out by the the ITC Agencies. The Representative of Guatemala thanked these Agencies for their activities and contributions, and underlined the fact that, within the framework of the CCAD (Central American Commission on Environment and Development), there have been positive experiences of South-South cooperation, and he spoke of the need to provide the necessary support so that Central American countries can develop their ILAC indicators; moreover, he insisted upon the need for the countries to validate the content of the report and he considered that this report could not necessarily be the baseline for the Ministers' decision-making.

**31.** Mr. Provencio recognized the importance of the countries' validating the content of the report, and he said that to this end it was crucial for the countries in the region to provide information about the activities that they have carried out at a national level vis-à-vis ILAC's implementation. For this reason he considered it necessary for the countries to answer the consultations formulated by the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers, under UNEP<sup>1</sup>.

**32.** The Representative of Haiti said that the institutions responsible for generating information in his country were not consolidated and in order to overcome this situation it was necessary to have international cooperation. He asked whether there was information about the global trend regarding the six priority action areas of ILAC that have been worked upon in the past five years.

**33.** The Representative of Chile said that the report could reflect the evolution of trends from a qualitative and quantitative perspective, and that qualitative indicators should be developed. It would also be necessary to link the indicators for different purposes, such as those set by ILAC and those set by the MDGs. He proposed that the countries consider the possibility of committing to adopt ILAC's indicators.

**34.** Mr. Provencio acknowledged that it was complicated to establish global trends about ILAC's priority areas, because there are many indicators. Given this situation,

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<sup>(1)</sup> Participants received a copy of the dispatched statement, and a copy of a new statement reiterating the aforementioned request.

he stated that an alternative to identify these indicators would be the information that the GEO 4 report will be providing. Moreover, he said that initiatives for the establishment of observatories to gather environmental information, as had been mentioned by the Representative from Haiti, could generate data related to the trends that interested the Representative from El Salvador.

**35.** ECLAC's Representative stated that the evaluation concerning ILAC's application had been a sound ITC measure, and that he considered the selection of the coordinator of the team of experts doing the work appropriate. He believed it was convenient to implement a system to follow up ILAC's application, although thought should be given to the periodicity of such review and to the areas to be reviewed. He highlighted the need to link ILAC's and MDG's indicators. With respect to these indicators, the collaboration and coordination of several U.N. agencies was achieved. In this regard, he proposed for the evaluation to take into account the national reports on compliance with the MDGs. Finally, he proposed that one of the recommendations of the meeting of experts be the strengthening of the national information and statistics agencies.

**36.** UNEP's Representative noted that it would be convenient, as a result from the meeting, to issue specific recommendations so as to prepare the decision proposals for the Forum of Ministers. Furthermore, the report on ILAC' application, should be circulated via electronic means by September 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 at the latest, and for this purpose, it was necessary to have the information requested from the countries. To respond to this request, it was not necessary to prepare a specific report, but rather to provide guidance regarding the documents and reports, as well as the necessary data for locating these documents or else, statistical reports and data wherein this information could be obtained, which indications should have been received by September 10<sup>th</sup> 2007, at the latest. In addition, be the information on the activities carried out by ITC's Agencies would be included. He also anticipated the new proposal for integrating the RAP by applying a more qualitative approach, and reiterated that work was underway with ECLAC for developing indicators that could be used by the countries, taking into account each country's capabilities. Considering the differences in institutional resources and mechanisms in the countries of the region, the goal of the proposed evaluation is not to question particular situations; nevertheless, it was necessary to critically recognize the conditions faced by the countries, so that the latter might be able to establish the priorities and the corresponding corrective actions.

**37.** Following this exchange, the terms and deadlines to follow up the activities for the integration of ILAC's evaluation report were accepted. The Presidency announced that a document with proposed recommendations for the Forum of Ministers would be prepared jointly with the Rapporteur.

## **IV. Regional Action Plan**

**38.** The Chairman of the Meeting of Experts made a presentation on the contents of the working document **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/4** and, thereafter, UNEP's representative commented that the Forum had determined that ILAC's concentration areas would be applied for a four-year period and that they would be

implemented through the RAP every two years. He also noted that within the framework of discussions at ITC meetings, the need had been proposed for linking the RAP design to new orientations relative to ILAC's concentration areas. In response thereto, a proposal for the new RAP structure has been presented.

**39.** The Representative of Nicaragua considered that the new proposed scheme for the RAP was appropriate; nevertheless, he believed that a pending task was the integration of said scheme to the national planning process and its relationship to sub-regional cooperation working levels, such as CCAD, for example.

**40.** The Representative of Ecuador expressed his agreement with the proposed matrix presented and reiterated the need to have the support for developing indicators for the planning processes. The Representative of Uruguay also supported the proposal because he considered it necessary that the decisions of the Ministers generate specific results.

**41.** The Representative of Costa Rica supported the proposed matrix for the RAP, although with respect to the priority action areas he considered it necessary to take into account mainstreaming activities such as those being promoted in Central America. In addition, he emphasized how important the land-use management is for his country and likewise, that in the urban sphere it was necessary to consider national urban conflicts.

**42.** The Representative of Argentina supported the matrix and expressed the need to attribute greater relevance to the RAP as instrument for achieving the objectives of ILAC, with a redefinition of the role of ITC, so that it may support the RAP guided by the countries, and it is essential that the activities of the ITC agencies be focused on the priorities of the RAP. She also stressed the need to determine the priorities of the RAP in order to generate more efficient results.

**43.** The Representative of Peru considered that one of the priorities to be proposed to the Ministers should be the vulnerability vis-à-vis natural disasters. He additionally requested that ITC agencies and in particular, UNEP strengthen their level of collaboration in disaster events.

**44.** The Representative of Brazil supported the proposed matrix and highlighted the need to determine the issues to be covered as well as the responsibilities of each of the parties involved. The representation of Mexico spoke in the same terms and recalled that an attempt had already been made at ensuring greater involvement of the ITC agencies. He also noted the importance for the region of having greater participation and presenting in global fora, proposals in keeping with the regional priorities. The Representative of Ecuador expressed his conformity with Brazil and Mexico's proposal.

**45.** The Representative of Haiti expressed his appreciation for the work carried out by the Secretariat and likewise said it was very important for the Action Plan to be adopted for a period of two years. He added that even though the plan is biennial, it should focus on limited and specific activities, because attempting to cover too many issues could result in not considering any of them adequately. The representation of Guatemala supported Haiti's statement and added that it was necessary to establish criteria and priorities, by analyzing topics that are common at the regional level and which may have synergies in sub-thematic categories.

**46.** The representative of Paraguay supported the matrix and stated, like Nicaragua's representative, that he was concerned about the fact that the national plans would not be taken into account and proposed, like Mexico's representative, the use of the resources that could be captured through the ITC agencies.

**47.** The Representative of Panama commented on the methodology used by the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development to identify the areas where the work is concentrated in two-year periods.

**48.** The representation of Honduras supported the proposed RAP scheme and reiterated the importance that the Plan be structured according to priorities and agendas that are in accordance with the priorities of the countries, in order to prevent the proliferation of initiatives. The Representative of El Salvador considered of utmost importance the definition of concentration areas.

**49.** The Representative of Nicaragua said that it was necessary to have a mechanism that would allow for the determination of the areas where cooperation is already available and of the actions to be included in the RAP.

**50.** According to the Representative of Chile, ILAC's areas of concentration on which they should continue working should not necessarily be the same since, in some cases for example, work has been going on for years in trade and environment without any progress. He coincided with Mexico in that it was important for the region to actively participate in the global debates.

**51.** In addition to supporting the proposed matrix, the Representative of Guatemala insisted in that it was necessary that the priority of the country be considered in the debates of the Forum of Ministers. In this respect, health and the air quality were priority issues, while it was also important to continue to work on the issue of trade and the environment and another priority being extreme events related to climate change, which poses challenges to environmental institutionalality. The Representative of Costa Rica supported the positions of Guatemala and Nicaragua.

**52.** The Representative of Haiti referred to the agreement signed with Cuba and the Dominican Republic within the framework of the South-South cooperation for developing a biological corridor between the three countries, which transversal axis would be the poverty issue.

**53.** In turn, UNEP's Representative considered that although the group had supported the adoption of the proposed matrix, it had also posed the need for determining its contents. The proposal presented to the Experts was to continue working in the eight areas of concentration, although under different approaches; therefore, it was now necessary to develop a proposal to be considered by the Forum of Ministers, which may take into account the fact that the countries and sub-regions have different priorities, depending on varying factors, as well as the results of the evaluation of ILAC's implementation.

## **V. Contribution of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee to the implementation of decisions from of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**

**54.** The Chairman of the Meeting went over the background of the topic and made a general introduction of the working document **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/5**, specifying the purpose of the discussion in relation to this matter. On his part, UNEP's Representative commented on the background of the ITC and, in particular, the mandate and criteria which the Forum of Ministers had established with respect to the composition of the Committee. He also referred to the examples of cooperation and coordination between the agencies of the United Nations that have led to the approval of projects on the environment, such as, for example, the case of the Spanish Fund administered by the UNDP for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. He warned that the Committee's composition could be analyzed in the light of the evolution of conditions since the ITC was established in 1998.

**55.** For his part, the IDB Representative referred to the study carried out by Mr. Walter Arensberg regarding the ITC's contribution to the implementation of the decision of the Forum of Ministers. In relation to this report, he pointed out that recommendations were aimed at strengthening the Forum of Ministers.

**56.** ECLAC's Representative commented that at the ITC meeting it had been agreed that the countries would provide comments on the preliminary report prepared by Mr. Walter Arensberg. UNEP's Representative stated that there had been a follow-up to the ITC's recommendation and that UNEP/ROLAC had sent their observations on the document in a timely fashion.

**57.** The Representative of Brazil admitted the importance of the contribution of the ITC agencies and noted that through the integration of a joint activities program the collaboration of these agencies could be expanded.

**58.** Panama's Representative reiterated her proposal in the sense that it was necessary to arrive at a closer cohesion between the ITC agencies and the activities of the Working Groups. She referred to the experience when an attempt was made at developing a proposal on climate change in collaboration with the World Bank, but the proposed actions could not be carried out. In view of this situation, she proposed that the ITC Agencies work with the countries through the Working Groups to define a joint activities program. The Representative of Honduras supported Panama's proposal in relation to the link between the ITC and the Working Groups.

**59.** The IDB representative recalled that at the ITC meeting held in Caracas the issue as to how to link the RAP with ITC had been raised and the recommendation had been to follow-up on the matter.

**60.** In response to the IDB's inquiry, the UNEP Representative mentioned that in the morning's session, comments had been made regarding the work in progress

for evaluating ILAC's implementation and, in relation to this matter, the Experts had agreed to recommend to the Forum of Ministers the restructuring of the format and contents of the RAP. In addition, he reported on decision 2 of the Fifteenth Forum of Ministers, which provides for the composition of the Groups.

**61.** According to the Representative of Argentina, the contribution of the ITC Agencies is essential for the implementation of the RAP, and for this reason a clear link should be established between both institutions.

**62.** ECLAC's Representative mentioned that even though they had been working in only eight areas of concentration of the ILAC, there were twelve Working Groups whose work was quite irregular.

**63.** The Representative of Mexico stated that ITC's contribution to the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers is related to the task of the Working Groups. Nevertheless, the times and products of the Groups are not defined and, therefore, in the future, Groups should be established only in those cases where there is an evident need to work under this mechanism and likewise it is necessary to determine the final product that should be generated by each Group.

**64.** As far as the composition of the ITC is concerned, UNEP's Representative commented that even though the mandate of the Committee could continue to be the same, given the RAP's new proposal, it is possible that the role of the Working Groups may be focused on specific activities and the role of the ITC Agencies could be reconsidered. In addition, although the UNEP mainly worked in the implementation of ILAC, other agencies such as the World Bank and IDB carried out projects at the national level, but beyond those differences in the type of activities carried out, the Committee's mandate could be revised to better define its relationship with the Working Groups and the membership may be expanded when there are established criteria regarding the activities of the working group and how they can be related to other agencies.

**65.** The IDB Representative stated that although the ITC agencies have different mandates, as members of the ITC they could be given a specific mandate, and they would report the compliance with such a mandate to the Forum of Ministers; for example, that they compile and present information on best experiences.

**66.** ECLAC's Representative agreed that if the ITC agencies were entrusted a limited number of activities, then they could generate results.

**67.** The Representative of Nicaragua proposed that the integration of ITC be flexible, because this could favour the harmonization of the RAP's working areas, and said that a possibility could be the integration of the CCAD.

**68.** With respect to ITC's mandate, the Representative of El Salvador considered that the mandate of each Agency comprising the Committee should be determined on the basis of its specialization. According to the Representative of Mexico, the ITC mandate should be broad and involve coordination and specific activities could be entrusted to each Agency so that they could carry them out and report the results to the Forum of Ministers.



**69.** The Chairman proposed that the ITC mandate should continue to be broad, but each Agency should be assigned specific matters according to its specialization. He added that another issue is that related to the restructuring of the RAP, wherein specific activities may be assigned.

**70.** The Representative of Uruguay deemed it convenient to evaluate the incorporation of other Agencies to the ITC since, the more Agencies work on the environmental agenda, the greater benefits there would be for the priorities of the region. It would be necessary then to determine the agencies that would be interested in participating.

**71.** The Representative of Uruguay asked whether the banks took the ILAC into account for developing the working program with the countries. The IDB Representative answered that the Bank carried out a negotiation with each governmental administration and that in order to support the countries in the implementation of the ILAC, priorities must be specified.

**72.** UNEP's Representative commented that ever since ITC was established, the broadness of its composition had been considered convenient; however, the incorporation of new institutions had been suspended because of the lack of consensus among the countries of the region with respect to the request for entry of a hemispheric organization.

**73.** The Chairman of the Meeting of Experts said that ITC must be at the service of the ILAC and the RAP, due to which any expansion of ITC had to be determined by the similarity of agendas; otherwise, there could be distortions in the approach to the activities that are carried out within the framework of the Forum. Accordingly, it would be necessary to discuss the development of a mechanism for approving the entry of new members. The Representative of Nicaragua coincided with the Presidency regarding the need to establish criteria for the incorporation of new members of the Committee.

## **VI. Operation of the Working Groups of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**

### ***6.1. Review of the Experience of the Working Groups***

### ***6.2. Alternatives for continuing to support the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers through the Working Groups***

**74.** The Chairman made a general comment on the contents of document **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/6** and invited the Experts to an open dialogue on the experiences the countries have had in the Working Groups.

**75.** The UNEP Representative commented on the background of the Working Groups and particularly described the mandate these Groups received from the Forum of Ministers and that they had been revised on different occasions since 1998 up to the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum held in Caracas in 2005. He noted

that in the operation of the Working Groups there had been ups and downs and, therefore, now that the implementation of ILAC was being evaluated and the restructuring of the RAP was being proposed, it would be important to consider such aspects as: the way in which the Groups are set up, the establishment of a mandate linked to ILAC's concentration areas, determination of a limited duration and coordination either by a country or an agency or else, shared by both. In addition, the Groups may incorporate research institutions that may contribute to the work of the Groups.

**76.** In relation to the experience of the countries insofar as their participation in the activities of the Working Groups was concerned, the Representative of Panama said that she had coordinated the Working Group on Climate Change and that one of the issues that had been considered was the vulnerability of the insular countries. Additionally, a working agenda had been established on the basis of a questionnaire distributed to the countries and letters were sent to the Agencies, but they were not answered and besides, there had been no fluidity in communication. Likewise, except in the case of the Working Groups on Indicators and the ABS, there had been no significant interaction.

**77.** The Representative of Brazil considered fruitful his participation in the Working Groups on Environmental Education and on Indicators; nevertheless, the existence of these Groups had to be re-evaluated and in order to continue to work with that same scheme, a joint working program could be developed, under the coordination of the Agencies and the Forum of Ministers. The Representative of Haiti agreed with Brazil and coincided in that the Working Groups do not operate adequately and therefore, new criteria must be determined.

**78.** The Representative of Argentina supported Brazil regarding the establishment of a joint working program. In turn, the Representative of Chile commented that the Groups had not been working as expected and that was partly due to the broadness of the mandates, the composition and lack of financial resources. Those that have worked are the ones that are linked to other joint working networks, as is the case of climate change; the other one has been that on indicators, which has enjoyed information provided by the countries and the support of academic institutions which systematize the information. The other Groups have not functioned adequately and even so, up till now their existence has not been questioned.

**79.** The Representative of Mexico agreed that the only Working Group that had worked was the one on Environmental Indicators, because its mandate is to support the application of the ILAC and its tasks are clearly defined. She proposed that the recommendations to the Forum be based on the guidelines proposed in the working document. The Representative of Costa Rica agreed with the statement made by the Representative of Mexico and highlighted the importance of carrying out workshops for reviewing progress.

**80.** The Representative of Nicaragua considered pertinent the proposal made by the Secretariat; and likewise that it should be determined whether the country fulfilled the conditions and had the means for making significant contributions to the Groups.

**81.** The Representative of Chile believed it was not necessary to have Working Groups for all matters considered at the political level of the region which is the Forum of Ministers; that they should be Groups with a very specific mandate and they should enjoy the best capabilities of the countries. He considered it was better to focus the activities on a reduced number of tasks.

**82.** The Representative of Paraguay considered it a matter of concern that the decisions of the Forum of Ministers could not be fulfilled and that experience in this area was indicating the need to depend on fewer groups and to aim them toward carrying out specific activities. He considered that in the light of the exchange carried out, there were elements to make a recommendation to the Forum of Ministers.

**83.** The Representative of ECLAC deemed that the opportunity to depend on a revised RAP should result in a number of Groups with a more limited composition and agenda, with specific terms and products. The ITC Agencies may support with resources or else with other means.

**84.** The Representative of UNEP proposed that during the period prior to the Forum of Ministers, under the coordination of the Chairman of the Meeting of Experts, a proposal that could take into account the issues raised in the debate could be developed. In turn, the Representative of Chile commented that the Forum could request the Agencies to carry out tasks that may generate specific products and that the countries could join in accomplishing those activities. In any case, the first thing to be done is to develop a proposal with specific tasks.

## **VII. Report of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators**

**85.** Costa Rica's Representative made a brief presentation on document **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/7**, which includes a summary of the report of the Group's meeting held in Panama on July 4 and 5, 2007. In this respect, he pointed out the main tasks carried out by the Working Group. The UNEP's Representative stated that the Group had been meeting periodically during the past five years and that the Forum of Ministers had instructed the Working Group to develop ILAC indicators. However, the work of the Group had been very broad in response to Decision 11 of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum. The objectives of the Meeting of the previously mentioned Working Group were also mentioned and she stated that the Group was facing several changes, such as, for example, the demand for work and the lack of necessary resources for generating specific products; as well as the importance of counting on the participation of experts of excellence. The main achievements of the Group were also highlighted: 26 countries with GEO, 4 countries with ILAC reports; 50 indicators being developed; strengthened inter-agency collaboration and development of tools for dissemination and training. The proposals of the Working Group were presented by Costa Rica. Finally, several publications were presented, which were based on the work of the Working Group on Indicators.

**86.** The Representative of Panama noted the importance of counting on geo-referenced information, since it constituted an analysis and decision-making tool. Said information is available at the Water Centre for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC) and work was being carried out with the countries so that they may have access to this information.

**87.** The Representative of Mexico mentioned that in the Group's deliberations it had been said that some of the indicators were not adequate and posed the convenience of bringing this problem to the attention of the Forum of Ministers.

**88.** The Representative of Brazil reported that Brazil's ILAC report would be available shortly and he proposed that the Group continue its work.

**89.** ECLAC's Representative underlined the adequate coordination between UNEP and ECLAC on the issue of the indicators and expressed his conformity with UNEP's proposal for the two agencies to work on the issue of national accounts. One of the tasks to be carried out would be to further link the ILAC and the MDG indicators and likewise the number of indicators being worked on should be limited.

## **VIII. Air Quality**

### ***8.1 Global Forum on Atmospheric Pollution***

**90.** Mr. Richard Mills, from the World Forum on Atmospheric Pollution, made an introduction on the subject and, in particular, mentioned the objectives of the Initiative where the UNEP has been participating and with regards to which, the Latin American and Caribbean region has not made the same progress as have some of the Asian countries. Images were displayed concerning the distribution of pollutants in large urban centres throughout the region, centres where the impact upon human health are considerable. International and regional instruments were cited that promote cooperation in this area, nevertheless, he advised that a regional initiative to deal with this problem does not exist and, it is important to broaden cooperation. Remarks were made concerning proposals within the working document and in particular to one made concerning the adoption of a declaration from the Forum of Ministers on atmospheric pollution that could include a network of government institutions accountable for this issue.

**91.** The Representative of Argentina mentioned that regional cooperation on this issue was necessary. Nevertheless, she expressed her disagreement with the recommendation to issue a Joint Declaration and a subsequent Agreement, since a decision of such importance, with possible obligating effects, requires greater internal consultations with all of the involved areas of public administration. On the other hand, she expressed her concern for the financial implications that the adoption of an agreement will bring, since all agreements that include the creation of bureaucratic structure and follow-up systems necessarily require payment of contributions by the Parties. Consequently she proposed that the adoption of a Joint Declaration and subsequent Agreement be postponed.

**92.** The Representative of UNEP pointed out that the adoption of an Agreement was ambitious, even though the creation of a network of authorities may well be useful

in order to carryout technical exchanges and capacity building. He said that the network could operate for two years and take advantage of the available resources; to this end, a declaration is not necessary, in its place a decision to establish clear parameters for regional collaboration will suffice.

**93.** The Representative of Guatemala pointed out that, for his country, this issue was of primary importance, especially in light of the impact it has on the health of children. He mentioned that they had received support from Mexico and Panama, as well as from other agencies. He reminded all of the fact that, because of the importance that his country places on the subject, they had proposed that this issue be considered by the Forum of Ministers. The Representative of Mexico said that the issue was important to her country, a country with broad experience on the subject, but she requested more information; the Representative of Ecuador spoke accordingly and made mention of the recommendations drafted at the Quito Workshop of February of this year.

**94.** The Representative of Chile recognised that the issue of air quality is of priority importance for his country and, as pertains to the tasks that the proposed network may embark upon, recommended a survey of national capacities be taken and he also mentioned that this issue had already been addressed by the Forum. On this subject, he requested that, for the issue to be considered by the Forum of Ministers, a more detailed document be submitted in order to evaluate the convenience of adopting a declaration.

## ***8.2 Improvement of Fuel Quality***

**95.** After the presentation of the contents of the work document, by the Chairman of the Meeting of Experts, Mr. Gianni Lopez from the Mario Molina Foundation on behalf of UNEP, gave a presentation on the activities within this framework that are promoted by UNEP and emphasis was placed upon the benefits for human health associated to the improvement of fuel quality. Existing statutes on air quality for the region were mentioned, nevertheless, measurements of air quality are not performed in all Latin American and Caribbean countries where emissions mainly come from transportation. Measures were proposed that could be adopted to improve the quality of fuels as well as the benefits said measures might generate. With respect to this, recommendations as submitted by the regional workshop of Quito were mentioned, amongst them, the adoption of a goal for the reduction in sulphur content for the period 2010-2012 is highlighted.

**96.** The Chair stated his intention of including this position as part of the report and recommendations to the Forum of Ministers. In order to give follow-up to this proposal, it was proposed that the Secretariat draft a proposal to the Forum, in coordination with the other two proposals on air and fuel quality, in order to promote the creation of networks, information exchange and capacity building, in line with what the ILAC establishes.

## **IX. Report on the State of Preparedness for the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**

**97.** When this item of the Agenda was addressed, the regional Director of the UNEP for Latin America and the Caribbean reported that the meeting shall be held between January 27<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> February of 2008 at Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. It was pointed out that the Preparatory Meeting of Experts shall be held between Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008 and the Ministerial Segment from Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January and Friday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008. On this issue, he made a detailed presentation on how the Forum will be structured and mentioned the execution of the host nation agreement, which will be provided for the preparations of the meeting.

**98.** In turn, the Representative of the Dominican Republic reaffirmed his gratitude to the countries of the region for their acceptance of the offer to become the host nation for the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers. He gave notice that, during the coming days, he shall be forwarding the official invitation to the meeting and added that the Forum Secretariat is hard at work on preparations for the meeting. The Representative of Mexico pointed out that, within the framework of the Governing Council, it had been agreed that the UNEP work based on a mid-term programme and that the countries should have an shared position on this and thus she proposed that this subject be included in the Forum agenda. This was seconded by the Representative of Paraguay.

**99.** The Representative from Panama felt that the subject of mainstreaming of environmental policies should be priority during the debates at the Forum, as already submitted to the Governing Council of the UNEP. The Representative of the UNDP seconded the proposal by the Representative of Panama and remarked upon the fact that this subject had been the object of joint work by the UNDP, the ECLAC and the IDB. The Representative from Costa Rica added that his country had launched the platform called Peace With Nature through which mainstreaming is promoted amongst different sectors and could be included in the deliberations on the subject.

## **X. Participation of Latin America and the Caribbean at the Global Environmental Negotiations on Biodiversity and Climate Change**

**100.** The Chairman of the Meeting made a brief introduction of this subject and was followed by the Representative from Panama who informed that her country would be promoting a regional gathering in light of the global negotiations to be held at Bali, Indonesia. The Representative of Guatemala remarked that on September 24<sup>th</sup> a Presidential Summit shall take place close to time of the General Assembly of the United Nations and that the subject of climate change shall be the central theme at that meeting.

## **XI. Other Matters**

**101.** The Forum Secretariat mentioned that the participants at the Meeting of Experts have been given copies of the communications sent by the Ministers requesting information for the evaluation of progress in the implementation of the ILAC, as well as a new communication reiterating said request.

## **XII. Review and Approval of the Proposal for Conclusions and Recommendations**

**102.** The Rapporteur for the Meeting of Experts announced the distribution of a proposal of conclusions and recommendations. The document was the source of an intense exchange amongst the High Level Government Experts and after said discussions, the document that appears as **Annex II** was approved.

## **XIII. Draft of the Report of the Meeting of High Level Government Experts**

**103.** The Rapporteur for the Meeting of Experts announced that a draft of the report will be circulated amongst the participants on Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup> with the purpose of collecting observations and comments and thus draft the definitive version of the report by Monday 9<sup>th</sup> of that same month.

## **XIV. Closing of the Meeting of High Level Government Experts**

**104.** During the closing ceremonies of the Meeting of Experts, the Chairman extended his appreciation for the active participation and collaboration of the participants especially since their recommendations shall contribute to the work of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers.

**105.** The Representatives from Guatemala, Paraguay and Panama expressed their own appreciation and recognition for the performance of the Chair and the Rapporteur of the Meeting and stated that they felt that the results will contribute in strengthening regional cooperation as we face the next Meeting of the Forum of Ministers.

**106.** The Chair thanked People and Government of Panama for its hospitality and declared the Meeting of Experts adjourned on Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> August of 2007 at 15:00 hrs.

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## Annex I

### List of Participants of the Meeting of High-Level Governmental Experts Panama City, Panama; 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2007

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<sup>(2)</sup> Participó vía teleconferencia en la discusión sobre el mandato y la configuración del CTI.

<sup>(3)</sup> Idem.

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## Annex II

### **Recommendations of the Meeting of High Level Government Experts to the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**

#### ***A. Evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC).***

- 1.** The High Level Government Experts discussed the contents of the preliminary report on progress made in the implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC).
- 2.** Based on the trends identified in this preliminary report, the High Level Experts agreed to formulate the following recommendations to the Sixteenth Forum of Ministers:
  - a) taking into account the results of the ongoing assessment on the implementation of the ILAC, consideration should be given to continuing the application of the eight Priority Action Areas agreed at the Fourteenth Forum of Ministers, in order to move forward in the implementation of the ILAC;
  - b) the focuses, modalities and emphasis should be determined to continue applying the Priority Action Areas agreed by the Forum of Ministers, taking into consideration that the conditions under which the ILAC was adopted have changed;
  - c) taking into account the progress made in the implementation of the ILAC, ways and options be identified for overcoming the obstacles faced by the countries in the implementation of this Initiative, in particular through the strengthening of South-South cooperation;
  - d) the structure and content of the RAP should be revised, with the purpose that it reflects a strategic focus in accordance with the environmental priorities of the region, in search of the necessary synergies;
  - e) the ILAC implementation mechanisms: the RAP, the ITC and the Working Groups, should be reviewed with the purpose of establishing a system to achieve the objectives of the Forum of Ministers and those of the ILAC.
- 3.** Recommend to the Forum of Ministers the adoption of a system to evaluate periodically the implementation of the ILAC, considering the recent evaluation process, and the proposals that will be presented during the Forum of Ministers. A recommendation was made to incorporate the activities carried out by ITC agencies in order to have comprehensive evaluations.

### ***B. Regional Action Plan-Revision of the Implementation of the 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 RAP***

4. Having considered document **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/4**, the usefulness of the RAP is acknowledged as a tool that has made it possible to know of and record the activities undertaken at different levels for the application of eight priority areas of action.
5. Based on the lessons learned and challenges posed by the application of the RAP, the High Level Government Experts have reasserted that the RAP should be strengthened as the main tool to make operative the implementation of the ILAC.

### ***C. Options for the integration of the RAP-Elements for the 2008-2009 RAP Proposal***

6. The High Level Government Experts recommend that the Forum of Ministers adopt the "Proposed Matrix for the Regional Action Plan" and that the main strategic orientations and the compliance and results indicators of the restructured Action Plan continue to be developed. To this end, it is suggested that work programs be structured, coordinated by some ITC agency, incorporating the working groups or the countries as appropriate.

### ***D. Contribution of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee to the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.***

#### ***D.1. Analysis of the Mandate of the ITC***

7. The High Level Government Experts, after considering and discussing the contents and proposals of **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/5** and the document titled "Contribution of the ITC Agencies to the Implementation of the Decisions of the Forum of Ministers" (**UNEP/LAC-ITC.1.2007/5**) recommend that the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers review the ITC mandate, so that, pursuant to the guidelines of the United Nations, a joint and coordinated work of the ITC member agencies be generated. Likewise, clearly identify the tasks and expected results of the participation of the agencies that comprise the Committee.
8. The High Level Government Experts recommend that the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers express its appreciation and recognition for the contribution made by the ITC member Agencies to expand the political dialogue and cooperation between the Latin American and Caribbean countries on environmental and sustainable development matters.

#### ***D.2. Composition of the ITC***

9. Pursuant provisions of Decision 8 adopted at the Eleventh Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, the High Level Government Experts recommend that the Forum of Ministers reaffirm the validity of the criteria established by the Forum

regarding the membership of the Committee. They recommended flexibility in the application of said criteria and that the Forum of Ministers be the instance that defines the participation of other agencies based on said criteria.

**10.** In that sense, the High Level Government Experts recommend that the Sixteenth Forum of Ministers continue the practice of inviting relevant international and regional agencies to the meetings of the Forum of Ministers and that they participate, when appropriate, in the promotion of the cooperation amongst the countries of the region and support the implementation of the decisions of this instance pursuant to their respective mandates.

### ***E. Operation of the Working Groups of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of LAC-Review of the Experience of the Working Groups***

**11.** The High Level Government Experts reviewed the background information related to the establishment of the Working Groups of the Forum of Ministers, and in particular Decision 1, of the Ninth Forum (Lima Peru, 1997) called "Institutional Mechanisms and a Regional Action Plan to strengthen the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean", as well as the subsequent Decisions of the Forum regarding the establishment and operation of Working Groups.

**12.** Likewise, the High Level Government Experts summarized the experiences of their countries regarding the activities carried out in the framework of the Working Groups. In light of that experience, the High Level Government Experts, considering the criteria adopted by the Forum of Ministers, recognized that:

- a) the working groups have been more productive in the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers when they have had financial resources available and have focused their work on specific topics;
- b) the working groups with the highest participation of the ITC agencies have achieved more results;
- c) a high level of institutional commitment by the governments and the contribution of the best of their capacities to the Working Groups is vital to make this mechanism functional;

### ***F. Alternatives to continue supporting the implementation of the Decisions of the Forum of Ministers through Working Groups***

**13.** Considering the foregoing, the High Level Government Experts recommend to the Sixteenth Forum of Ministers that the Working Groups be established or maintained only in those cases where they contribute to the implementation of the ILAC, by means of specific clear actions, which generate specific products based on established deadlines and that they have sufficient resources for their operation.



### ***G. Working Group report on Environmental Indicators***

**14.** The High Level Government Experts took note of the discussions that took place in the Working Group on Environmental Indicators (July 2007), and agreed to recommend that the Forum of Ministers strengthen the Group by:

- a) the transformation of the environmental data portal into a permanent site providing the necessary financial resources for its operation. Thus, it will be possible to continue contributing to the dissemination of region's and sub-region's environmental information of the ILAC indicators and of those that correspond to the indicators of the MDG's and their links, as well as facilitate the virtual and permanent collective work to improve the methodological papers of the ILAC indicators and their application;
- b) the strengthening of the national focal points network appointed by the national environmental authorities, as well as of the national statistical offices that participate in the activities of the Working Group;
- c) the strengthening of regional capacities, amongst others, by means of South-South and horizontal cooperation, as well as to support regional initiatives and proposals for training as SIEAN;
- d) continue to support to the Technical Advisory Committee on Geo-Spatial Information and Earth Observation Systems in order to generate capacities throughout the region to have geo-spatial information and earth observation systems; create training and education programs; and the creation of an Environmental Atlas of the region;
- e) undertake exchanges and formulate recommendations regarding ways and means for the application of National Accounts, with a vision that incorporates environmental and natural resources management;
- f) review the pertinence of the established indicators and, if it is the case, modify them.

**15.** Recommend that the Forum of Ministers request the ITC agencies and the Secretariat support the countries that do not yet have an ILAC system of indicators, so that all countries in the region have one by 2010.

### ***H. Air Quality-Global Forum on Atmospheric Pollution***

**16.** The High Level Government Experts recommend that the Sixteenth Forum of Ministers:

- a) that the LAC region considers its participation, along with other UNEP regions, in the Global Forum on Atmospheric Pollution;
- b) that it consider the creation of a network of government authorities on air pollution at a regional scale, under the leadership of the UNEP Regional Office and along with other stakeholders of the region, to work for two years in order to develop capacities in the region.

### ***I. Enhancement of the Quality of Fuels***

**17.** The High Level Government Experts recommends the Sixteenth Forum of Ministers consider the adoption of a decision that includes, as may be the case, the following elements:

- a) take note of the recommendations and discussions of the South American Conference of sulphur content in vehicle fuels and other related events carried out in Central America;
- b) strengthen the public-private dialogue and the role of all sectors involved in cleaner vehicles and fuels, to promote commitment and action in a planning framework at the regional, sub-regional and national levels;
- c) recognize that, with the purpose of reducing the emission of pollutants into the atmosphere and, at the same time, take advantage of the most recent technological developments in vehicles and associated technologies, countries should make progress towards the reduction of sulphur content in vehicle fuels. Thus it is recommended that, in the event that the network stated in the paragraph above is created, that said network is devoted to the study of proposals for the reduction of sulphur in the fuels available in the region and to a possible schedule to achieve said reduction;
- d) as progress is achieved in fuel quality, countries should additionally adopt emission standards that promote the incorporation of standard devices (i.e., catalytic converters, particle filters).

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