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Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean**

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PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT

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

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27th January to 1st February 2008**

A. PREPARATORY MEETING OF EXPERTS
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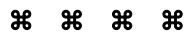
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**Report on the fulfilment
of the decisions of the Fifteenth
Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of
the Environment of Latin America
and the Caribbean**

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I. Introduction

1. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean decided to establish the Forum of Ministers of the Environment so as to have a regional political body to analyse and build consensus on positions revolving around the issues that make up the regional and international environmental agendas. The Forum has now grown stronger through the meetings it has been holding since 1982, and its influence on discussions concerning the international environmental agenda is recognized.

2. The Forum of Ministers has translated its deliberations and agreements into specific decisions that refer to the environmental priorities of the region and of international agreements. Its main working bodies are the Inter-Sessional Committee and the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC). The ITC is formed by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

3. Since the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was held (Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; 31 October to 4 November 2005), important events have occurred in the international environmental sphere with important repercussions on the dialogue and decision-making process in the region, including particularly the relaunching of international dialogue on climate change in response to the dissemination of scientific reports and economic assessments that warn us how serious the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of the problem are. Similarly, note should be made of the continuation of discussions on the sustainable management of ecosystems and the conservation of biodiversity, themes that continue to be of priority to the international community as a whole and to the region in particular. These matters warrant the attention of the principal body for dialogue and consensus on environmental policies in the region, the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.

4. A general report on the activities carried out in 2006 and 2007 enables us to say that UNEP has addressed the subregional and national environmental priorities and has established links of cooperation and coordination with other agencies of the United Nations system and several intergovernmental organizations, basically to promote capacity building and technology support.

5. The Forum of Ministers has become stronger as a body for political dialogue in which shared criteria are discussed and adopted concerning priority items on the international environmental agenda, including strategic matters stemming from the principal multilateral environmental agreements. The Forum has been a meeting place where the region's main political leaders in the field of environment come together to find out about and discuss the most advanced views of global environmental problems. From a programming standpoint, the Forum of Ministers has successfully undertaken the implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), particularly through the

Regional Action Plan (RAP) for the biennium 2004-2005 and for the biennium 2006-2007.

6. The operation of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee has favoured the implementation of the RAP approved by the Forum of Ministers. Various activities related to the priorities established by the countries of the region have been carried out through joint initiatives and projects of UNEP and other regional and international organizations, although more effective actions are still required.

7. UNEP activities have also responded to environmental needs and priorities at the subregional and national levels in spheres related to promotion of the cross-cutting perspective in environmental approaches in national policies, sustainable urban management, the implementation of environmental indicators and, in general, new environmental challenges, particularly the region's vulnerability in relation to climate change.

8. The institutional development of the countries of the region has been backed through various activities in the field of environmental legislation and through cooperation projects to expand capacity to fulfil the multilateral environmental conventions, including particularly the set of projects to achieve the goals of the Montreal Protocol.

9. For its part, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is promoting several projects related to priorities of the region, namely: the sustainable development of Small Island developing States; the sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystems, the incorporation of the environmental perspective in development processes and the strengthening of the regional environmental agenda.

10. The participation of the major groups of civil society has warranted special attention in the activities carried out by UNEP in Latin America and the Caribbean. This strategic orientation is consistent with UNEP's global policy and has enriched the analysis and search for options in relation to the environmental problems the regional as a whole is facing.

11. To make the work UNEP carries out in favour of the environment more visible, various information and dissemination activities have been conducted to expand public awareness and direct regional attention towards issues of environmental importance, fostering ties among governments, civil society and institutions interested in environmental themes.

12. Pursuant to the decisions the Forum adopted on the operation of its working bodies at its Eleventh Meeting (Lima, Peru; 10 to 13 March 1998) and has been applying since then, the First ITC Meeting was convened in 2006 (Margarita Island, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; March 2006), as was the First ITC Meeting of 2007 (Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; 19 and 20 March 2007), taking into account that the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was to be held this year (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 27th January to 1st February 2008).

13. The present report, prepared by the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers, describes the advances made in fulfilling the decisions adopted at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, and is being presented to the Preparatory

Meeting of Experts at the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers (Bávaro, Dominican Republic; 8 to 10 November 2007) as input for them to develop their recommendations and necessary actions, which will finally be considered by the ministerial segment for purposes of adopting related decisions (Bávaro, Dominican Republic; 12 to 14 November 2007). It should be noted that a large number of the activities provided for in each of the Forum decisions were entrusted not only to UNEP, but also to the working groups established under decision 2 and to the ITC.

II. Fulfilment of the ministerial decisions and recommendations of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

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

14. The Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, through decision 1, adopted the Regional Action Plan (RAP) as an instrument for implementing the ILAC, approving on that occasion RAP 2004-2005. This Plan was coordinated around eight priority action areas determined by the Forum of Ministers, namely: access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their utilization; water resources; human settlements, vulnerability and land-use management; renewable energy; trade and environment; economic instruments and fiscal policy; climate change and environmental indicators.

15. To supplement this decision, through decision 2, the Forum defined the modalities of their agreements, assigned the responsibility of coordinating this work to eight countries and established working groups to address the specific issues.

16. The Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers (Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; 31 October to 4 November 2005) received a report on the implementation of RAP 2004-2005 and, on the basis of this first experience in the sphere of implementing the ILAC, approved RAP 2006-2007, whose content was completed at the First Meeting of the ITC (Margarita Island, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; March 2006), which included the participation of the ITC agencies and the coordinating countries of the working groups established by the Forum of Ministers.

17. Decision 1 of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum reaffirmed the Regional Action Plan as the principal instrument of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean for the implementation of the agreed regional strategies. Additionally, the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum, through decision 1 again, agreed that the Regional Action Plan for the biennium 2006-2007 would be aimed at implementation of the ILAC, with the eight lines proposed:

- 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 management;
- d) Renewable energy.
- e) Trade and environment.
- f) Economic instruments and fiscal policy.
- g) Climate change.
- h) Environmental indicators.

18. During the inter-sessional period, various exchanges revolving around the structure and scopes of the RAP have taken place, and the need to review its form and content has been proposed. In that regard, at the Meeting of High-level Government Experts (Panama City, Panama; 30 and 31 August 2007) it was agreed to recommend the adoption of a new matrix for the Regional Action Plan to the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.

19. When recommending the adoption of a new matrix, the High-level Government Experts also recommended developing the principal strategic guidelines, as well as fulfilment and output indicators of the restructured Action Plan. For that purpose, it was suggested that work programmes coordinated by an ITC agency should be structured to incorporate the working groups or the countries when appropriate.

20. In reference to the implementation of RAP 2006-2007, the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers has prepared a document titled "Report of the Secretariat on the Implementation of Regional Action Plan 2006-2007 of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean".⁽¹⁾

DECISION 2

ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF THE WORKING GROUPS

21. The Eleventh Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Lima, Peru; 10 to 13 March 1998) adopted decision 1 called "*Institutional Mechanisms and a Regional Action Plan to Strengthen the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean*", in which paragraph 7 indicated:

*"The **ad hoc Working Groups**, mentioned above, shall be formed by experts of the governments, of the United Nations system, international agencies, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and the Secretariat. Their membership and size shall be determined by the nature of the projects. Representatives of the multilateral banking system, regional and global environment funds, donor countries and other international entities will be invited to participate in these ad hoc groups, so as to create conditions favourable to the financing and*

⁽¹⁾ See document UNEP/LAC-IG.XVI/7.

implementation of the projects. Each ad hoc group will have a coordinating entity which will ideally be UNEP, the IDB or UNDP, at least during the start-up stage of the project. The ad hoc working groups will have the following functions:

- a) to support the Inter-sessional Committee in the process of preparing project profiles or more elaborated proposals for the same projects;*
- b) to support the Inter-sessional Committee in the process of putting into operation and following up on the projects incorporated in the Regional Action Plan”.*

22. Following the approval of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama City; Panama; 20 to 25 November 2003) decided to update the terms of reference of these working groups in its decision 2 called “Modalities of Implementation of the Regional Action Plan”, as follows:

“To establish that the working groups will be open-ended and will preferably operate using electronic means of communication. The coordinators will convene efforts and carry out their roles through electronic and other pertinent means. The working groups will be formed by the countries of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of the Region, with support from the ITC, and from other organizations interested in supporting these groups, which will be fundamentally aimed at setting in motion and implementing the aforementioned decisions and agreements. Every six months, the coordinators will report on the progress made to the Chair of the Forum, who will keep the Environment Ministers informed.

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

“The Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers will provide operational support and will facilitate the process, in accordance with the needs of the coordinators and the directions of the Chair of the forum of Ministers. The ITC will provide specific support to the coordinators in accordance with the needs of the process”.

23. In addition to the above considerations, the ITC Meeting (Panama City, Panama; 12 and 13 July 2005), recommended that the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers should prepare a proposal on the establishment and operation of the working groups, based on the best experiences shown in past periods, to be presented to the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum, initially to the Preparatory Meeting of Experts (Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; 31 October to 2 November 2005) and on the basis of the recommendations prepared there, sent to the Ministerial Segment of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum (Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; 3 and 4 November 2005), so that a decision could be adopted if considered necessary.

24. The Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers adopted decision 2 called "*Establishment and Operation of the Working Groups*" in which it is recognized that the working groups have been more productive in the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers when their work has been concentrated in specific themes. In such terms, it was decided to establish and form the following **Working Groups**.

Lines Proposed	Members
1. Access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing 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
3. Human Settlements, Vulnerability and Land-Use Planning	Cuba , Antigua and Barbuda, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Uruguay ECLAC
4. Renewable energy	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
5. Trade and Environment	Peru , Argentina, Barbados, Costa Rica, Chile, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ecuador, Panama ECLAC, CARICOM
6. Financing, Economic Instruments and Fiscal Policy	Chile , Argentina, Barbados, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama ECLAC, UNDP
7. Climate Change	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>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 and Tobago, Venezuela IDB, ECLAC, UNDP and UNEP</p>

25. In the same decision the working groups are urged to:

- a) Incorporate representatives of the different subregions 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 of Ministers. Relevant Secretariats of regional integration organizations and forums may be invited to take part in specific activities;
- c) Meet in parallel 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 should 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.

26. In decision 2, the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers was asked to continue providing operational support and to facilitate the activities of the working groups, especially the convening of meetings including, but not limited to, real time

electronic communication and translation. Similarly, the countries willing to participate in the working groups were urged to designate a focal point to be in charge of coordinating the fulfilment 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.

27. In follow-up on the agreements established in decision 2 of the Forum of Ministers, the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, in its capacity as Secretariat of the Forum, took various steps to compile information on the designation of focal points of the countries for the different working groups. Similarly and with the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum soon to be held, the coordinating countries of the different working groups were asked to send the Secretariat information on the activities carried out during the inter-sessional period. On the basis of the information received, the Secretariat has compiled the reports sent by the coordinators of the working groups and they have been made available to the participants in a separate document.

28. The question regarding the operation of the working groups was the subject of exchanges among the member agencies of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee and was included as an agenda item of the Meeting of High-level Government Experts (Panama City, Panama; 30 and 31 August 2007). In this regard the High-level Government Experts gave an account of the experiences in their countries in relation to the activities carried out in the framework of the working groups. In the 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 financial resources available and have concentrated their work on specific themes;
- b) The working groups with more participation by the ITC agencies have achieved the best results;
- c) The high-level institutional commitment of the governments and the contribution of their best capacities to the working groups is vital for making this mechanism operational.

29. Taking into account the experiences encountered to date in the working groups, the High-level Government Experts have recommended to the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers that the working groups be established or maintained only in cases in which they contribute to the implementation of the ILAC through specific activities that generate specific outputs, with established time periods and sufficient resources available for their operation.

DECISION 3

**REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNEP'S WORK PROGRAMME INCLUDING
THE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BALI STRATEGIC PLAN**

30. During the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (Nairobi, Kenya, 5 to 9 February 2007), the Executive Director of UNEP presented a report on the Implementation of the Strategic Bali Plan for technology support and capacity building (**UNEP/GC/24/3/Add.1**).

31. To ensure consistency and complementarity between decision 24/1 of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and decision 3 of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, document **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/8** presents an updated, but not exhaustive, table of the activities on technology support and capacity building advocated by UNEP in Latin America and the Caribbean. The table also includes some activities promoted by other UNEP Offices with the support of UNEP/ROLAC.

32. In this sense and in correspondence with the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative and the priority goals established in the Regional Action Plan, UNEP/ROLAC prepared and facilitated the implementation of regional proposals to apply institutional, administrative, legislative and political measures and mechanisms to promote capacity building and the adaptation of Technologies, taking into account the necessary requirements at the regional, subregional and national levels, and in particular the needs and priorities of the small island developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean.

33. One of the fundamental mechanisms for implementing the Bali Strategic Plan is South-South cooperation. UNEP/ROLAC programmes and activities have concentrated on this mechanism to a great extent. Furthermore, UNEP/ROLAC has increased its participation in United Nations teams in the countries, both in person and at a distance (telephone, virtual and other means) as a way of contributing to the formulation of "joint programmes to achieve the millennium development goals" (Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru); in the processes of "common country assessment and country cooperation framework of cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme (Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Panama); and in the "pilot project with the approach of "One UN" in Uruguay.

DECISION 4

SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)

34. The strategy followed by UNEP/ROLAC to carry out the Programme of the Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean (SIDS) reflects the guidelines established by the Forum of Ministers. One of the working tools included in this strategy is the development for consultation with the Caribbean SIDS, including civil society, the private sector, and regional and subregional institutions. Additionally, links and partnerships with international, regional and subregional organizations have been developed. Following these two lines of action, various activities have been carried out pursuant to the mandates stipulated in decision 4 of the Forum of Ministers,

which was reported on at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean:

35. The final result of the consultation process was the formulation of a consolidated version of the Programme for the Small Island Developing States, which consists of the following elements:

- a) A well-established, well defined regional co-coordinating mechanism for the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS (BPOA);
- b) A financial mechanism in the form of a Regional Sustainability Fund;
- c) A technical programme that is focused on themes related to the environmental pillar of sustainable development and consisting of various shared initiatives, including, for example: the Initiative on Land Degradation and Sustainable Land Management; the Initiative on the Management of Coastal Aquifers; the Initiative on Sustainable Management of Non-Timber Forest Products – generating opportunities for the participation of the private sector and the creation of alternative sources of income for indigenous peoples and local communities; a Programme for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean; and a Programme of South-South Cooperation in the field of Trade and Environment; an Assessment and Early Warning Programme; an Environmental Law Programme; the OzonAction Programme; and a Programme of Action Against Land-based Sources of Pollution;
- d) A South-South Horizontal Cooperation Programme, which will begin to operate with some activities between Latin American countries and Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean. These activities include technologies on renewable energy, land degradation, water resources and, particularly, coastal aquifer management, biosafety, trade and environment, climate change, disaster management and integrated management of the Caribbean Sea;
- e) a Civil Society Support Programme with five principal elements:
 - i) Facilitation: access to regional and institutional process on environmental and sustainable development;
 - ii) Development of a Comprehensive Regional, Community Based Environmental and Public Awareness Programme in support of the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action;
 - iii) Your change for a better environment project;
 - iv) Enhancement of media participation: increasing access to environmental information; and
 - v) Instalment of video libraries.
- f) A number of country initiatives were also undertaken in response to specific request from Caribbean SIDS. Countries which have been targeted include Jamaica, Dominican and Haiti with support of Cuba and Dominican Republic.

36. The consolidation of the Programme for Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean offers a framework that can be used as the basis for the development of a comprehensive sustainable development and environment programme for such States. Furthermore, the Programme also provides a more systematic framework for the mobilization of resources. This framework is sufficiently flexible to facilitate the development of other initiatives that could be integrated into the Programme. It also provides a framework through which the Small Island Developing States as well as bilateral and multilateral institutions can pool resources in a complementary and comprehensive manner in order to assist the Caribbean SIDS.

37. The Programme for Caribbean SIDS can also help to support these States in attaining the Millennium Development Goals, such as, for example, those related to eradicating hunger and poverty and of ensuring environmental sustainability. This Programme also reflects some specific themes that are underscored in the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the BPOA. The themes referred to include inter alia management, island biodiversity, protection and development of the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, access to drinking water, trade and environment, etc.

38. In brief, the progress made in implementing decision 4 of the Forum of Ministers can be summarized in the following activities:

- a) A well established, well defined **regional coordinating mechanism** for the further complementation of the BPOA:
 - i) The Secretariat facilitated the preparation of a study, coordinated by the CARICOM Secretariat, on Institutional Framework for Environmental Management and Sustainable Development in the Caribbean SIDS. The report has to be circulated by the Caribbean Community Secretariat to Caribbean SIDS. The Secretariat is awaiting a formal response from the CARICOM Secretariat to determine the next step to be taken;
 - ii) The Secretariat continues to provide institutional support to the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) located in Belize and in building South-South linkage between Caribbean SIDS;
 - iii) Institutional support was provided to the Caribbean Community Secretariat to facilitate the convening of a Special Meeting of the CARICOM Committee on Trade and Economic Development (COTED) for Ministers of Environment;
 - iv) A major study on Adaptation to Climate Change in Caribbean SIDS has also been completed, and will guide UNEP'S future interventions in this area in Caribbean SIDS.
- b) **Regional Sustainability Fund:** a proposal on the establishment of the Fund, based on the consultant's report has been submitted to the Caribbean Community Secretariat for distribution to Member States and coordinate their responses on the next step to be taken with respect to the establishment of the fund;

- c) **Technical Programme:** the decision to terminate the preparation of a number of GEF Projects in the Caribbean has had an impact on the implementation of the Technical Programme;
- d) The Secretariat continues to work with Caribbean SIDS and the Caribbean Civil Society in the institutionalization of the **Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) for Caribbean SIDS**. The Secretariat would like to acknowledge the assistance provided by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, on the provision of the Support Office for the PISLM through the Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development (CMRD).
- e) **In the area of South-South Cooperation.** The Secretariat is supporting a Tri-National South-South Programme between Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, based on the establishment of Biological Corridor between the three countries. A number of meetings at both the Technical and Ministerial levels have been held in support of this initiative. A draft Plan of Action for the Tri-National Collaboration will be considered by the Ministers in the near future.

39. Some Latin American countries, have committed to undertake surveys to identify capacities and technologies that could be incorporated into a South-South Programme between Latin American Countries and Caribbean SIDS. Modalities are also being explored to make available to Caribbean island countries cooperation packages in which several Latin American countries could participate in a coordinated and joint manner.

40. With reference to funding for the Caribbean SIDS Programme, in addition to the catalytic resources available in UNEP for its execution, several projects and project ideas have been prepared targeting a number of sources including the EU and the GEF to support the implementation of various elements of the Programme. Among such projects, the following may be noted:

- a) Prevention of land degradation in the small island ecosystems of the Caribbean through sustainable land management;
- b) Development and application of tools and methodologies for the management of highly vulnerable coastal aquifers in the Small Island Developing States;
- c) Traditional knowledge and its application to sustainable land management;
- d) Establishment of goals and indicators in relation to land degradation and sustainable land management in the Small Island Developing States;
- e) Sustainable use of non-timber forestry products;
- f) Conservation and sustainable use of island biodiversity.

41. In order to respond to the special needs of some of the countries, for example Grenada and Dominica, a Special Focus component has been added to the Caribbean SIDS Programme. In this regard, a number of country specific activities have been formulated and/or developed which are in the process of being implemented. In the case of Grenada, a Technical Assistance Programme has been

formulated with the following components namely; a) technical support to the Government of Grenada for the process of the elaboration of the National Action programme for the UNCCD; b) review of the current sectoral legislation that addresses environmental, natural resource management and sustainable development issues; c) national Consultations to support the preparation of the NAP/UNCED; and d) support for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

42. In Dominica, focus is being placed on providing technical assistance to further elaborate the concept on “Environmentally Sound Organic Development”. This involves technical evaluation of the prospects for transforming Dominica into an environmentally sound organic island. UNEP/ROLAC also provided technical and legal assistance to the Government of Dominica to review policies, legislation and institutional arrangements related to the management of bioprospecting activities, including a legislative initiative on access to genetic resources and the distribution of benefits arising from their use, taking into account the benefits arising from traditional knowledge.

43. UNEP/ROLAC has also undertaken other activities that involve the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean, such as, for example, missions and cooperation linked to the implementation of the Montreal Protocol in areas related to reports, permits and freezing the consumption of substances that deplete the ozone layer. The countries involved in these activities include the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. In the case of Barbados, technical assistance was provided in formulating a refrigerant management plan and elements were contributed to define a policy for the gradual elimination of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the refrigeration sector, in accordance with the periods agreed to in the framework of the Montreal Protocol. Various assistance activities in this same sphere were carried out by UNEP in other island developing countries of the Caribbean.

44. Montreal Protocol Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP): under the CAP in Caribbean SIDS, includes a combination of projects, compliance and capacity building activities delivered at both national and sub-regional platforms and collectively aimed at assisting Parties in meeting and sustaining compliance with the Montreal Protocol and including:

- a) **Montreal Protocol Compliance Programme (CAP).** The CAP provided day to day support to all countries of the Caribbean SIDS for the compliance management and reporting of annual data requirements to the Multilateral and Ozone Secretariats.
- b) UNEP provided training and capacity building of ozone officers and other key national stakeholders on the management and preparation of the annual reports as required by the respective secretariats of the Montreal Protocol. For the years 2003 to 2007 the CARIBBEAN SIDS has achieved 100% compliance data reporting requirements.
- c) **Developing and implementation of national Montreal Protocol policies and legislation.** The CAP provided support to Caribbean SIDS on reviews and development of national legislation and in particular the establishments

of Trade Licensing for ODS trade controls. This support is provided through national and regional policy workshops and where required special attention and resources were focus on countries in the risk of non compliance or in non compliance.

- d) **Country specific Montreal Protocol Policy and Legislative compliance** support were provide to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Suriname, Dominica, St. Kitts/Nevis and Grenada in the period under review.
- e) **Technology support and capacity building at national and regional levels.** UNEP coordinates the transfer of best available technologies to support sustainable compliance and transition to ozone friendly technologies through a combination of national and sub regional workshops and targeting both the public and private sectors. The principal sector under focus is the air conditioning and refrigeration as this sector is the largest single user of ozone depleting substances in the Caribbean SIDS.
- f) **Training of Customs officials**, other government officers and the private sector responsible for Trade control (import/export) of ODS and ODS dependent technologies. To date Customs training has been conducted in all of the Caribbean SIDS. From 2003 three regional workshops were held to address regional customs roles and a responsibility for trade in ODS and ODS containing technologies.
- g) **Training and awareness rising in the Monitoring and control of illegal trade in MEA traded commodities:** In May of 2007, English Speaking Caribbean workshop was help in St. Lucia with focus in the Management and Control of Illegal trade in MEA trade commodities with particular reference and focus to commodities controlled under the Montreal Protocol. Each of the 14 CARICOM member states (including Haiti) attended at the levels of the national ozone and senior customs officials. Regional organizations such as CARICOM, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, Caribbean Customs Law Enforcement council also participated in this workshop.
- h) **Green Customs Initiatives Training:** The first Green Customs Initiative (GCI) Workshop for the ROLAC region was held at the hosted by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago September 2005. The workshop was attended by over 70 delegates of the Caribbean region comprising of National Focal Points of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), regional trade and enforcement agencies and Customs Officers from 15 countries of the Caribbean SIDS. The Green Customs Initiative aims at strengthening compliance and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements through integrated capacity building for customs officers within the MEA enforcement chain. The aim is to provide customs officers with training that covers several MEAs at the same time, making it more efficient than separate training on individual agreements.
- i) **Institutional Strengthening (IS) support** and National ODS Phase Out Actions Plans. The principal objectives of these projects are to support national capacity building, national phase out action plans and for the

implementation and compliance of the Montreal Protocol. National Projects that UNEP are responsible for are as follows:

Institutional strengthening	Antigua y Barbuda, Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Saint Lucia
Institutional strengthening and refrigeration management plan	Barbados and Haiti
Institutional strengthening, refrigeration management plan and terminal phase out management plan	Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname

- j) **Net working and Regional Workshops-** the principal objective is to build the capacities of national ozone officers and key industry sectors and develop and implement strategies to address emerging issues such as ozone friendly technologies, new skill requirements, illegal trade in ODS alternative technologies to methyl bromide use and trade in used technologies that are ODS dependent thereby- contributing to dependence on ODSs. From 2003 to 2007 UNEP/ROLAC hosts two network meetings per year for the Caribbean SIDS.
- k) **Horizontal cooperation-** Horizontal cooperation are solicited as a first resource preference with the vision of building, supporting and promoting regional professional capacities. Over the period under review the following activities were conducted:
- i) In training and capacity building support were provided as, Dominican Republic/Haiti, Saint Lucia/Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Trinidad and Tobago/Suriname, Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. UNEP/ROLAC facilitated and coordinated (including financing) these cooperation;
 - ii) Contracting of regional experts in St. Lucia and Jamaica to assist member country on the processes of Montreal Protocol project preparation for submission to the Multilateral Fund and Customs Training using the Train the Trainer approach;
 - iii) Jamaica: Training and technology support in alternative longer term refrigerant alternatives based on the Jamaica experience. For this action Cuba, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago were the main sources of regional experts.
 - iv) Caribbean Single Market and Economy: The horizontal approach is also being explored in the context of the development of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and the movement of personnel engaged in the sectors that are users of ODS. It is recognized that the personnel in these sectors need to have the necessary skills and awareness on the technological adaptation to non- ozone depleting substances in order to avoid the possibility of placing a member country into non-compliance

with the MP. The principal sectors of concern are the Air Conditioning/refrigeration, plant quarantine and pre-shipment and fumigation. Additionally the CAP is coordinating with the regional stakeholders on the sharing of information on markets that can result of reduce cost for transfers of technologies.

- v) The CAP also manages an e/forum in which all Ozone Officers of the Caribbean SIDS are members together with working partners from the private and public sectors inter and extra regionally.

l) Research and Development Activities

- i) **University of the West Indies St. Augustine Campus-** Trinidad and Tobago Establishment of Regional Halon Clearing house was established with the University of the West Indies (St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago) for the establishment of a Regional Halon Clearing House. The University together with the CAP is responsible for the collection, analysis and disseminating of national Halon inventories, alternative to Halon technologies in the region and including bringing of buyers and sellers together on unused and available halon inventories. The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Science is the manger of this Halon Clearing House. Ongoing technical support is provided via the UNEP/ROLAC, and Environment Canada.
- ii) **University of the West Indies, Cave Hill-** Chemistry Department, Barbados. MOU on the Establishment of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) Solvent support facility. The principal objective of this regional activity is to assist the laboratories of the Caribbean region in the management of existing stock of ODS solvents and to be trained and capacitated in the use of alternative and approved non ODS methodologies. This service is being provided through direct support of the university and through the Caribbean ODS Solvent Support e-forum also managed by this university. This project began in February of 2006.
- m) Coordination with the other implementing agencies of the Montreal Protocol and in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) joint project whereby, UNEP/ROLAC focuses in the human and institutional capacity building components and UNDP on the investment components. Joint projects with UNDP are being carried out in relation to the management plan for the gradual and final phase-out of ODS in Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Implementation of the refrigerant management plan and preparation of the management plan for the gradual and final phase-out of ODS are being carried out in Suriname.

45. Workshops were held to support the implementation and fulfilment of the provision in the Montreal Protocol and other multilateral environmental agreements.

46. To strengthen Government capacities to implement the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and analyze such capacities, UNEP organized a series of activities:

- a) First Training Seminar on Access to Environmental Justice in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus; and
- b) First Training Seminar on MEAS for Lawyers in the Public and Private Sectors in the Caribbean SIDS. This was delivered in collaboration with the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus.

47. To provide legal advisory services at the request of the countries – including the disbursement of related financial resources and the formulation and implementation of environmental legislation – following up on the needs identified in the pertinent applications, the reports and assessment missions, the UNEP/ROLAC Environmental Law Programme provides legal technical assistance to developing countries. Specific activities include the assistance to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in the drafting of new Sectoral Legislation, as well as Synergetic Implementation of Biodiversity related MEAS.

48. The Third Regional Workshop on GEO Cities (Havana, Cuba; 25 to 27 June 2005) included the participation of representatives of 25 cities of the region, as well as UNEP representatives in Africa, Europe and Asia. The plans for the GEO Cities Project in 2005 and 2006 include the following actions:

- a) Publish version 3 of the methodology in Spanish, including the inputs received from the Third Regional Workshop of GEO Cities;
- b) Prepare and publish comprehensive evaluations of more than ten cities of the region as part of the UNEP-HABITAT Urban-Environmental Strategy;
- c) Prepare and publish the second version of the regional compendium on environment in cities;
- d) Produce a CD-ROM with all the reports and methodologies published in order to disseminate the information widely and effectively;
- e) Conduct training workshops on the use of databases and other information tools; and
- f) Raise funds to continue implementing the Project after 2006.

49. In the first phase of the project, seven pilot cities of the region were identified, all capitals of countries that have different characteristics, but share similar environmental problems. The evaluations were conducted with funds provided by the World Bank and UNEP. In the Caribbean, Havana was selected and its report was prepared by the Science, Technology and Environment Ministry with the support of UNEP authorities and city authorities of Havana. The information in this document is designed to provide material that can be consulted and analyzed; it reflects the current state of the environment in the city, its future perspectives and long-term solutions to the existing problems.

50. In 2003, UNEP/ROLAC, together with the Caribbean Conservation Association and the Caribbean Network of Young Environmentalists, began working to carry out the GEO Youth Project for the Caribbean. The purpose of the project is to make an evaluation of the state of the environment from the viewpoint of youth for the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean including: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and

Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago. During the project implementation period, a training workshop for focal points in Saint Lucia was held in November 2003 and an editorial meeting in Dominica in October 2004. The GEO Youth Report for the Caribbean has been completed.

51. UNEP/ROLAC has also conducted activities to support the Caribbean region in themes such as sustainable consumption and production (SCP). It recently signed an MoU with the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI) to establish a subregional information centre on SCP for the Caribbean, which will be the Focal Point for the SCP Information Network for LAC.

52. As indicated in decision 12 on sustainable consumption and production, the Fourth Regional Meeting of Government Experts on SCP was held in Brazil (San Pablo, 19 and 20 October 2007). At this meeting, the Caribbean delegates identified subregional priorities in the theme and prepared an Action Plan to address the following themes: the economy of tourism services, finances and ecosystems (mangrove forests, coral reefs, beaches for turtle protection, bird sanctuaries); the diversification of energy sources; food security; support for small and medium-sized companies; fair trade; climate change; water and land-use management. They also mentioned institutional factors such as financing, enforcement, societal participation, regulatory framework, bilateral and subregional public and private cooperation, and institutional strengthening as a point of departure.

53. The subregional delegates agreed to complete a national action plan for each of the states of the Caribbean and to present a San Pablo Subregional Action Plan to the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) through the Secretary General of CARICOM. A subregional meeting will soon be held with the support of UNEP to consolidate the Action Plan and the necessary cooperation relations for its implementation.

DECISION 5

FINANCING AND ECONOMIC AND FISCAL POLICY INSTRUMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

54. The Financial Initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP FI) is a sole global collaboration initiative⁽²⁾. UNEP FI has entered into partnerships with financial institutions throughout the world to identify and promote links between sustainable development and financial outputs. The Regional Groups of UNEP FI enable the Initiative to conduct its mission at the regional scale. The principal activities of the Regional Group for Latin America are:

- a) Enhancement of awareness and capacity building of financial institutions through training sessions and physical workshops; and
- b) Dissemination of ideas, experiences and best practices.

⁽²⁾ See www.unepfi.org.

55. In this framework, the following activities were carried out:

- a) Three training workshops on environmental and social risk analysis in loan and investment processes in Peru, El Salvador and Ecuador; more than 80 representatives of banks and other similar financial institutions were trained;
- b) A virtual capacity building programme on environmental and social risk analysis in loan and investment processes was launched; following its design and pilot phase, two courses were conducted and a total of some 50 persons were trained, basically bank representatives;
- c) A survey on the situation of sustainable finances in Argentina was conducted, including personal interviews with high officials of 20 banking institutions in the country;
- d) Principles for Responsible Investment, a joint initiative of UNEP FI and Global Compact, was distributed in Brazil, Ecuador and Colombia, which resulted in new members joining the Principles;
- e) together with the Asociación de Bancos de México and ABN AMRO México, the Mexican banking sector was invited to a training workshop for analysts and managers on the integration of socio-environmental risks and opportunities in financial operations (Mexico City, Mexico; February 2007);
- f) A Workshop on Environmental and Social Risk Assessment and Management in Loan and Investment Processes was held in Santiago, Chile. The purpose of the workshop was to train financial sector analysts and managers in themes concerning environmental and social risk management in loan and investment processes throughout the country. This workshop was organized in collaboration with ABN AMRO Chile, ABN AMRO Banco Real, Brasil, Asociación de Bancos e Instituciones Financieras de Chile (ABIF), AccionRSE, Chile, Centro de Competitividad/Universidad del Pacifico, Chile and the project Ecobanking Capacity Building International, Germany (INWENT) (Chile, May 2007).
- g) Also with the support of UNEP, implementation of the Corporate Environmental Policy of the Brazilian bank Caixa Econômica Federal (CAIXA) was launched in Brazil. The partnership with UNEP is intended to contribute to the building the capacities of CAIXA related to management practices, business, activities and corporate decisions through greater integration of social and environmental considerations.

56. The UNEP Office in Brazil, in cooperation with the Financial Initiative of UNEP (UNEP-FI) and several local partners such as the Fundación Getulio Vargas (FGV), the Instituto Brasileño de Administración Municipal (IBAM), the Instituto de Estudios de la Religión (ISER) and the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) signed a cooperation memorandum in 2005 with Caixa Econômica Federal (CEF), one of the Brazilian development banks, to prepare policies, sustainable development strategies and the incorporation of environmental criteria in sustainable standards of the civil construction sector.

57. A study was also conducted on the project “Duty Free Green Zone Programme”, an initiative of the Environment Secretariat of the State of Amazonas in Brazil. It is a coordinated set of public policies and economic instruments aimed at promoting sustainability in the production chain and overcoming obstacles identified by social actors and economic agents involved in sustainable development. Through ecologically healthy, socially just and economically viable systems of forest, fisheries and agricultural production, environmental protection and the sustainable management of conservation units and indigenous lands are maintained as a fundamental goal. The publication will soon be launched.

58. The UNEP Office in Brazil and UNEP-FI signed a memorandum of understanding with the Bolsa de Valores de São Paulo (BOVESPA) on the occasion of a visit to Brazil by the Executive Director of UNEP in March 2007. The purpose of the memorandum is for UNEP to join the board of the Corporate Sustainability Index (ISE). ISE is one of two indices that boost sustainability in the stock markets of developing countries. It was initiated in December 2005 as a stock index to identify and monitor the performance of the Brazilian companies most dedicated to environmental and social sustainability. UNEP also supports other corporate responsibility strategies to promote the incorporation of sustainable standards in the capital market.

DECISION 6

PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

59. At the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers it was decided, among other matters, to support the development and implementation of national activities to strengthen the role of civil society, especially the poorest groups, generally excluded, in the environmental management and governance. It was also decided to support various civil society participation and coordination mechanisms that exist at the national, subregion and regional levels, and to study the possibility of supporting the proposal of an executive secretariat to facilitate regional coordination of the civil society organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean. It was also agreed to promote and strengthen collaboration at the national, subregional and regional levels in the sphere of technical cooperation between civil society and the Forum of Ministers.

60. Similarly, the Forum of Ministers agreed to support communication, education and training initiatives whose purpose is to promote and expand civil society participation in environmental management for sustainable development.

61. To help fulfil the agreements under the theme of civil society participation, UNEP has continued the practice of convening meetings of the representatives of civil society organizations so as to obtain and incorporate their points of view and proposals in the adoption of decisions by the principal bodies of UNEP.

62. In the case of the Region of Latin America and the Caribbean, UNEP has promoted the holding of the UNEP Regional Forum for the Civil Society of the region prior to each biennial meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. The same consultation modality has been used for the sessions of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. This

consultative meeting took place in Bogotá, Colombia, in 2006 and in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2007. At the last meeting, 18 countries and 38 organizations representing the major groups of the region were represented.

63. At these meetings, in line with the provisions established at the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), the participation of the so-called “nine major groups” has been encouraged: farmers, women, the scientific and technological community, children and youth, indigenous peoples and their communities, workers and unions, companies and industry, non-governmental organizations and local authorities. This objective has been fulfilled at recent meetings of Latin American Civil Society and the meetings are increasingly representative. Efforts to attain greater participation among the nine major groups have been made, recognizing that each group has special interests that should be strengthened in a collaborative manner without sacrificing the unique interests that exist within and among the groups.

64. In this line, efforts have been made to strengthen the subregional and regional youth networks under the TUNZA work strategy. Four subregional meetings have been held (Southern Cone, Mesoamerica and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, the English-Speaking Caribbean and the Andean Region). The participation of young people in the World Youth Summits has been widely recognized for their preparation, commitment and active participation.

65. Work with UNIFEM has enabled the initial implementation of a partnership to strengthen communication work in the themes of gender and environment by putting into operation a bank of radio programmes aimed at rural women.

66. Two joint meetings of indigenous women’s organizations of Latin America have also been held. At these meetings the guiding axis has been formed by environmental themes. Workshops with women’s organizations of Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua have also been held to strengthen their capacities in carrying out environmentally sustainable activities such as rainwater catchment in rural communities to provide water for human consumption, agricultural activities and the potential for developing micro-companies to market their products.

67. Work with journalist networks in the region has not only allowed training to be offered to these organizations, with more than 400 journalists trained, but has also increased the visibility of environmental issues in the region through support for the Network of Environmental Journalists of Latin America and the Caribbean.

68. In the sphere of education and greater awareness, numerous activities have been carried out through the participation of cultural sectors such as graphic designers, caricaturists, film makers, painters and sculptors. This collaboration has given rise to the exhibit Art and Environment, which has been presented in different cities in the region and includes movies, posters, caricatures, drawing, sculptures and photographs.

69. The “Plant for the Planet” Initiative, a UNEP campaign to plant a billion trees has enabled growing participation of citizens in the initiative, which is reflected in pledges to plant more than a third of the world goal.

70. World Environment Day celebrations, year by year, have been involving an increasing number of organizations, institutions and companies in commemorative activities on this emblematic day. Millions of citizens have participated to demonstrate their concern regarding the environmental situation in their respective communities.

71. In another sphere, the Tierramérica project is now present in 29 newspapers of the region that publish its contents each week, in addition to the radio version of these materials on more than 800 radio stations in the region and the version on the Internet in English, Spanish and Portuguese. In this way, civil society is being informed about environmental developments in the region.

72. The Global Environmental Citizenship (GEC) project has continued and is in its last stage. Six countries are participating in the project (Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Mexico and Peru), as well as the following civil society organizations: World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters and the Association of Latin American Radio Educators (AMARC-ALER); Consumers International; the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI); the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO); the Association of Mexican Municipalities (AMMAC); and the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

73. The Global Environmental Citizenship project (GEC) is aimed at building public awareness, increasing levels of understanding global environmental matters and mobilizing support in Latin America and the Caribbean to create an appropriate environment for decision making and national action on various of the focal areas of the Global Environment Facility (GEF): biodiversity, climate change, international waters and the ozone layer. This is possible through the capacity-building activities the six major social networks are carrying out in seven countries of the region.

74. In the 2006 period, GEC project efforts culminated in the field of training for the participating citizen networks. Various workshops were held within the networks, including the following sectors: radio broadcasting communicators, consumers, religious leaders, parliamentarians, primary education and municipal authorities. These spaces enabled the strengthening of links between the citizen networks and the environment ministries of Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru.

75. With this stage concluded, efforts in 2007 have been dedicated to implementing demonstration activities aimed both at network members and citizens who coexist in the work sphere of each network.

76. For UNEP, conducting these activities has enabled it to learn about each network's efforts in much greater depth, and particularly about the challenges in implementation posed by diverse national circumstances. In this sense, even when efforts have been made to maintain similar progress in the seven countries, it must be recognized that the dynamics in each country are different and impose a different rate of action in every case.

77. The municipal network has proved to be the most sensitive to this situation, since the member organizations, in addition to facing distinct national realities, also have an autonomous origin in each country and in the international context, and there is no mechanism for regional coordination of municipalities to enable the

implementation of simultaneous strategies in different countries. For that reason, in 2007, the municipal network concluded its participation in the framework of the Global Environmental Citizenship project, having fulfilled the training stage in some of the participating countries.

78. Consequently, in the promotion of citizen environmental awareness and from the perspective of international support, the municipal sector represents an area of opportunity for designing a strategy for greater effectiveness in assisting municipal leaders, recognizing their implementation capacities and the challenges posed by their national environments.

79. Although the progress of the networks in their work of building awareness at the local level is distinct, it has also been seen that conducting regional activities are the efforts that have greatest impact because of their scope.

80. In the case of radio broadcasting communicators, the AMARC-ALER produced various radio broadcasting spots for educational purposes in the fields of international waters, biodiversity, climate change and the ozone layer. In addition to having been broadcast by the PULSAR and ALER networks of radio broadcasting stations, these materials are available at the Internet sites of both organizations for replication and rebroadcasting by any radio station.

81. In work with the religious sector, in spite of the local nature of its activities, the CLAI has brought together notable efforts in the ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue to promote citizen environmental awareness. From this perspective, the inter-religious forums that have been organized in practically all the participating countries have had significant levels of participation. In the case of Argentina, this activity was carried out in the city of Gualguaychú and included the participation of religious leaders from the city of Fray Bentos, Uruguay, providing an opportunity for dialogue and closer ties between both communities.

82. In relation to the participation of the IUCN and its work in the education sector, the member organizations have had an opportunity to compare their progress in the different participating countries, exchanging experiences in shaping and promoting a curriculum in environmental education for basic levels of student education.

83. In the field of work carried out with the parliamentarians, in 2007 it was decided to address the theme of the possible creation of a Latin American Environment Court. Several subregional workshops have been effective in analysing the challenges that implementing such a mechanism would involve for the region. A strategy that recognizes the need to previously guarantee the right to information and access to justice in the environment field has been envisioned for that purpose. The results of these workshops point towards establishing closer ties between the Latin American Parliament and the European Parliament, particularly for the preparation of a document to adopt the principles established in the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (ratified by the European Union in 2004).

84. In the case of consumers, the organizations affiliated with Consumers International have chosen an individual action plan for each country, addressing the thematic priorities and circumstances of the municipalities where they have

influence. The theme of household solid waste was given particular attention in Argentina and Ecuador. The work consisted of a programme for increasing awareness with inhabitants and authorities in the Argentine municipalities of Barranqueras and Maipú and in the metropolitan areas of Quito, Ecuador. In the case of Mexico, the theme of biodiversity was widely addressed and the creation of virtual schools on this theme in collaboration with the Environment and Natural Resources Ministry of Mexico (SEMARNAT) is being considered. In Peru, the promotion of sustainable lifestyles and habit changes for the acquisition of products not harmful to the environment took place through the organization of expo-consumption fairs in the municipalities of Huancayo and Callao.

85. Finally, the theme of the ozone layer had particular emphasis in Chile through the creation of the Sun Semaphore programme. Through cooperation between the National Environment Commission (CONAMA) and AMARC/ALER, radio spaces were programmed to warn the population about the state of the ozone layer and sun exposure risks at specific times of the day.

86. The GEC project has provided one of the most valuable learning experiences in the efforts made by UNEP to promote a culture that safeguards the environmental rights and responsibilities of the citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean. This process has consisted of strengthening the linkage of civil society and the governments of the seven countries, promoting the active participation of the six civil society sectors, which are indispensable for the development of a new citizen environmental awareness. The demonstration experiences and the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation stage are expected to have been concluded by late 2007 and early 2008. Through different spaces in this process, representatives of both the governments and civil society of other countries not currently participating in the project have expressed their interest in joining the initiative.

87. In collaboration with the networks and countries, the coordinating unit of the project is now exploring options to continue executing the project once the application of GEF funds ends. For that purpose, visits are being made to the countries to evaluate work alternatives for the future, together with the national counterparts. Contacts are also being made with various potential financing sources that could be interested in supporting work with civil society in environmental matters. In parallel, designs are underway for transferring Project activities to different ROLAC work programmes. In this point, it should be noted that several of the methodologies and work programmes advocated by the GEC have been adopted by the participating countries.

88. UNEP, together with the Brazilian Forum of Non-Governmental Organizations and Social Movements (FBOMS), held a round of consultations with civil society on the process of the Reform of the United Nations and International Environmental Governance (Sao Paulo, Brazil; 23 and 24 August 2007). Officials of the Ministries of Environment and of Foreign Affairs and of the UNEP Office of Brazil reported to the representatives of 30 non-governmental organizations present at the forum on the status of global consultations on global and environmental governance in the 21st century, the present and future of multilateral environmental institutions and regimes and other topics. The participants discussed the need for coordination and cross-cutting approaches in the environmental policies throughout the United

Nations system and the need for greater synergies among international conventions. They issued recommendations for change in current production and consumption patterns, as well as the strengthening of international environmental governance in relation to the system of the World Trade Organization (WTO). They recommended increasing the authority of UNEP as the environmental pillar of the United Nations system.

89. The Brazilian Forum of Non-Governmental Organizations and Social Movements (FBOMS), the Government of the United Kingdom, the Environment Ministry of Brazil and UNEP made joint efforts to carry out a project to increase the access of civil society institutions to information on environment and justice in environmental issues. The project also proposes the training of NGOs in integrated environmental assessment tools and methodologies, which will enable their effective participation in the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) processes being implemented in Brazil as part of the GEO Brazil II.

90. The FBOMS has a consultative status together with UNEP and mobilizes the participation of Brazilian non-governmental representatives in regional and international environmental forums.

DECISION 7

WATER RESOURCES

91. The Working Group on Water Resources/Integrated Watershed and Coastal Zone Management, coordinated by Mexico has reported that the Fourth World Water Forum, held in Mexico City from 16 to 22 March 2006, was the most relevant event of the sector at the global level. The central theme was "Local action for a global challenge". The preparatory stage of the Forum was organized around two processes - regional and thematic - which were carried out two years prior to the beginning of the meeting and provided two major inputs for the Forum.

92. As a result of the thematic process, 323 organizations convened 206 thematic sessions in the framework of a matrix that contained 5 thematic axes and 5 cross-cutting perspectives. In this process a thematic document containing the positions of the leading themes and perspectives around which the Forum proceeded. During the deliberations it was noted that:

- a) A clean water supply and sanitation are among the most important problems facing humanity in our days. That is the reason for plans to achieve Millennium Development Goals, which will depend on the governments' capacity to surmount the financial, institutional and governance challenges. In this process, civil society should play an important role, in partnership with the government, to achieve the goals of the sector;
- b) Risk management points out the importance of policies to foster capacity building and cooperation to mitigate water-related disasters through the promotion of preparedness, not reaction, and local participation. Special consideration should be given to climate change in the water sector's development and management plans. Emphasis was placed on the

importance of early warning systems and the necessary exchange of communications and information; the importance that should be given to measures to prevent drought and appropriate technology to reduce its impact was also highlighted;

- c) Financing does not only mean increasing financial flows, but it is also necessary to create appropriate conditions on the demand side to attract Money and use it well. Non-conventional financing sources should be developed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, recognizing that the delivery of water services is a local matter, and capacities should therefore be developed at that level;
- d) Empowerment of communities, user groups, local governments, women and minority groups consists of providing them with the possibility and means to adopt decisions or to participate in the process of adopting and implementing them;
- e) In relation to science, technology and the exchange of knowledge, it was agreed that the local knowledge communities possess to solve their problems is important. An evaluation of the use of local and traditional knowledge should precede the adoption and adaptation of technologies. It is necessary to disseminate innovations, training and the transfer of knowledge as a fundamental point for the future of the developing countries;
- f) Note was made of the need to consider the establishment of goals and monitoring to understand and assess the real impact of the actions and investments of governments and the international community in order to fulfil water-related goals. Above all, it is essential to establish objectives and monitor activities to achieve progress oriented towards the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. These measures will help to provide transparency and generate reports which are of Basic importance for public participation.

93. The twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (Nairobi, Kenya; 5 to 9 February 2007) adopted the Water Strategy and Policy. To prepare a decision proposal on the issue, an information contact group was formed consisting of Argentina, Brazil, China, United States, Iran, Mexico, Turkey and the European Union.

94. During the negotiation, efforts were made for both the decision and the water strategy to respect several basic principles through should be incorporated in UNEP activities, such as the valuation of ecosystems and integrated water resources management. Concepts such as the consideration of transboundary water resources and watershed management also required greater precision to be included in both documents.

95. With regard to freshwater, the Governing Council adopted the water policy and strategy as a framework and guide for directing the work programme of UNEP in this field for the period 2007 – 2012 for it to be implemented in the countries at their request.

96. With regard to the component of oceans, coasts and islands, the decision calls on the countries in a position to do so to provide financial resources for the developing countries and particularly the small island States to build their capacities so as to incorporate some of their recommendations in their national plans.

97. In general the water strategy and policy adopted seeks to significantly contribute to environmental sustainability in the management of water resources using the ecosystems approach as the main tool, which, at the same, would help attain the millennium goals and targets, particularly in reference to the socioeconomic development of States. The water strategy and policy was adopted for a five-year period, 2007 to 2012, and its activities, which will take place in the framework of biennial work programmes, will be monitored by the Governing Council.

98. The Second Intergovernmental Meeting to review the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), held in the People's Republic of China from 16 to 20 October 2006, produced the following recommendations and outputs, among others:

- a) Intensify efforts to prepare and implement programmes of action and regional and national mechanisms for the protection of the marine environment from the pollution from land-based sources and activities carried out on land, giving consideration to the strengthening of legislative and institutional frameworks and pertinent financing;
- b) Improve cooperation and coordination at all levels for integrated management of watersheds, coasts, seas and oceans, especially applying integrated water resources and coastal zone management;
- c) Apply the ecosystem approach to the management of watersheds, coasts, ocean ecosystems and major marine ecosystems and islands, in accordance with the decisions of the Johannesburg Summit, and
- d) Intensify efforts to integrate and incorporate the economic valuation of environmental goods and services provided by oceans, coasts and watersheds, including their direct and indirect value for societies and ecosystems.

99. The complete report of the Working Group on Water Resources appears in a reference document prepared by the Secretariat.

100. To a great extent, the decision on water resources was implemented thanks to GEF funds and to having the work of UNEP as the implementing agency. Thus, projects such as those below were formulated or continued:

- a) "Programme for the Integrated Watershed Management of the Pantanal and Upper Paraguay River Basin" Brazil: After six years of execution, the project concluded in 2006. An Action Plan for a subsequent phase was prepared;
- b) "Integrated Management of Land-based Activities in the San Francisco Basin" – Brazil: the full size project (FSP) concluded in June 2006. The Action

Plan was completed and approved. A concept project to implement the Action Plan was prepared. It is still being reviewed by the GEF Secretariat;

- c) "Strategic Action Programme for the Binational Bermejo River Basin" – Argentina, Bolivia: the medium-sized "Project Development Facility" (PDF-B), which began in 1995, included a diagnostic study of the problem and the development of an Action Plan. At this time, it is in its second phase and the Action Plan is being implemented;
- d) "Integrated and Sustainable Management of Transboundary Water Resources in the Amazon River Basin" – Regional: the PDF-B project began to be implemented in October 2006 and will last until the end of 2007; a full size project with then be prepared;
- e) "Formulation of a Strategic Action Programme for the Integrated Management of Water Resources and the Sustainable Development of the San Juan Basin and its Coastal Zone" – Costa Rica, Nicaragua. The PDF-B was completed, included a diagnostic study of the problems, and an Action Plan was developed;
- f) "Formulation of a Framework for Water Resources Management of the River Plate Basin" – Regional: The PDF-B concluded and a larger project proposal has been prepared to implement the Action Plan produced by the PDF-B;
- g) "Sustainable Land Management in the Basin of the Mopan-Belice River" – Belize, Guatemala: The project concept was approved in January 2006 to be included in the portfolio; however, owing to the lack of resources, the PDF-B will be financed through resources of GEF phase IV; and
- h) "Sustainable land management of the river basins that drain into the Gulf of Fonseca" – El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua: The project concept was approved in January 2006 to be included in the portfolio; however, owing to the lack of resources, the PDF-B will be financed through resources of GEF phase IV.

101. The Small Island Developing States have also been part of the GEF portfolio. Thus, the project "Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Management in the Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean" is being implemented. The PDF-B has been concluded. Implementation of the large-scale project began in June 2006 and is expected to conclude in five years.

102. GEO-Water Resources-Brazil was launched in March 2007 during the visit of the Executive Director of UNEP in Brazil, as part of the tenth anniversary of the National Law on Water Resources. It is a joint publication of the Agencia Nacional de Agua (ANA), the Environment Ministry and a group of Brazilian experts who present a broad and updates diagnosis of the state of water resources in Brazil. The report includes assessments and recommendations for strengthening and improving the use of water policy and governance instruments at the federal, state and municipal levels, and by the River Basin Committees.

103. Among the initiatives carried out to analyse advances in the field of integrated water resources management (IWRM) and the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan, the Workshop on Integrated Water Resources Management for the Southern

Cone was held. The event received technical and financial support from the UNEP Collaborating Centre on Water and the Environment" (UNEP/UCC-WATER), the Government of Denmark, the Environment Subgroup of MERCOSUR (SGT-6) and the Offices of UNEP in Panama and Brazil. The workshop brought together officials of environment and water resources of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela (São Paulo, Brazil; 25 to 27 October 2007).

104. In Latin America, an experimental project of technology support to improve water quality in the city of Bocaina (Brazil) is being carried out in collaboration with the International Lake Environment Committee (ILEC). An artificially constructed wetland was designed to treat some of the effluent from a domestic water treatment plant that flows into the Bocaina River. The project also includes the capacity building of local authorities and authorities of the institution associated with the design and construction of the artificial wetland, as well as dissemination of the experience through the municipalities.

105. The Itaipú Binational Entity (Paraguay and Brazil) and the countries of the River Plate Basin (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) agreed to create the River Plate Basin Centre for Socio environmental Knowledge and Care. The Centre initiated its activities in 2007.

106. In relation to preventing the degradation of marine and coastal areas from land-based activities through the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) and through UNEP (both the Coordination Office in The Hague and UNEP/ROLAC), technical and financial assistance was provided for the preparation of national action programmes in 15 countries of the region. Also, numerous countries of Latin America and the Caribbean actively participated in the Second Intergovernmental Meeting to Review the GPA (Beijing, People's Republic of China; 16 to 20 October 2006). The GPA Work Programme for the period 2007-2011, approved at the China meeting, was subsequently endorsed by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (Nairobi, Kenya; 5 to 9 February 2007).

107. UNEP (through the GPA Coordination Office and the Regional Office), with Swedish cooperation funds (SIDA), supported the Central American Commission of Maritime Transport (COCATRAM), as the Executive Secretariat for the Action Plan for the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Marine Environment and Coastal Areas of the North-east Pacific, in updating the inventory of land-based sources of pollution sea of the North-east Pacific. It also supported the holding of a Regional Workshop on Training in Liquid Waste Management for the Countries of the Pacific North-east. (San José, Costa Rica, from 4 to 8 September 2006).

108. At the request of the Environment and Energy Ministry of Costa Rica and with the technical support of an expert of the Environment Ministry of Spain and of UNEP, technical assistance in reviewing a bill for a new law on water resources was provided.

109. Similar cooperation took place when Cuba helped the Dominican Republic by providing legal assistance in drafting a bill for a Law to Reform the Water Sector.

110. In Central America, in the framework of the integrated water resources management project financed by the Danish Cooperation Agency (DANIDA), seminars were organized on the formulation of a national integrated plan in Managua, Nicaragua, and in Honduras in July 2006; in the case of Guatemala, technical assistance was provided to train indigenous communities in water resources management, which included teaching materials in four indigenous languages.

111. In the framework of technical and financial cooperation between the government of Spain and UNEP, a binational (Peru and Bolivia) project was developed for Integrated Water Resources Management in Lake Titicaca, Desaguadero River, Poopo Lake and Coipasa Salt Lake (the TDPS system) focused on the assessment and updating of wastewater discharge levels and the subsequent implementation of measures to reduce the pollution of the Lake.

112. With funds from the Environment Ministry of Spain, training activities aimed rural women's organizations have been carried out in Central America. Representatives of rural women's organizations in Nicaragua and Guatemala have been trained in techniques for water catchment in rural areas. Community workshops on this theme are being developed for each country. At the end of the workshops small community rainwater catchment facilities will be installed as sustainable alternatives for rainwater supply in rural areas.

113. Also, thanks to Spanish cooperation with the United Nations system and, particularly, through funds granted by the government of Spain to achieve the millennium development goals (a fund established in December 2006 and managed by UNDP), UNEP has participated in the formulation of joint programmes under the heading of environment and climate change: in Panama (Incorporation of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Measures in the Integrated Management of Natural Resources in Four Priority River Basins of Panama), Nicaragua (Local Environmental Administration for Natural Resources Management and the Provision of Environmental Services on the Bosawás Biosphere Reserve), Peru (Comprehensive and Adaptive Framework of Natural Resources and Climate Risks in Micro-Basins of the Andean Highlands) and Ecuador (Sustainable Conservation and Management of the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve).

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

114. One of the themes considered by the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum and included among the eight priority lines of the Regional Action Plan was access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their utilization. Thus the Caracas Declaration, in point 8, establishes that: "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”.

115. The Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum also called for the establishment of a Working Group on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from their Utilization, formed by Ecuador (coordinator) Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Grenada, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela, whose mandate and priority issues in the field were defined in decision 8.

116. Among other matters, this decision defines the creation of regional spaces for negotiations of the international regime that take into account the need to develop a regime for the protection of traditional knowledge with the support of the different ITC agencies, as well as the promotion of regional and subregional activities, including the holding of meetings, workshops and other means aimed at delving deeper into knowledge and exchange on the topic of access to genetic resources, sharing of benefits and traditional knowledge, in the identification of the region's priorities and demands and in its optimum positioning in negotiations on an international regime.

117. In its annex, the decision includes the conclusions 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 (Havana, Cuba; 21 and 22 June 2005). This workshop made a valuable contribution to the discussions and to the establishment of a common regional position on the negotiation process for an international regime, establishing important background for the present meeting of the Working Group of the Forum of Ministers.

118. In response to the decision adopted by the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean, UNEP organized a Meeting of the Working Group on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising from their Utilization (Paipa, Colombia; 21 and 22 September 2007) to address agenda items of the meetings of the special open-ended working group on this matter established in the sphere of the Convention on Biological Diversity, facilitating the exchange of information, perspectives and viewpoints opinions look towards the international process.

119. At the meeting the state of implementation of decision 8 of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was also examined, and the participants discussed the operation of the working group, as well as the opportunity to adjust its mandate and work modalities.

120. The meeting was coordinating by Ecuador and included that participation of representatives of the governments of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Grenada, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela, plus a representative of the indigenous peoples and UNEP in its capacity as Secretariat.

121. The outputs of the meeting are presented in the working document titled *“Report of the Meeting of the Working Group on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits (Paipa, Colombia 20 and 21 September 2007”* (UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/9), which contains recommendations to the

Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers on: negotiations on an international regime of access to genetic resources and benefit sharing and b) the Working Group of the Forum of Ministers.

122. Finally, the project Capacity Building for the Implementation of a Regional Framework for Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing, which will be carried out as a pilot case in the countries of the Andean Community, was kept on the list of projects for GEF financing. This project was delayed owing to changes in GEF policies. However, it has remained a UNEP priority in the fourth GEF cycle.

DECISION 9

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

123. The Working Group on Health and Environment, coordinated by Argentina, presented a report on the activities conducted. It is summarized below, but the complete report appears in the reference document prepared by the Secretariat. Thus, the countries in the region continued supporting regional and subregional mechanisms that help to consolidate the vision and strategy on the theme of health and environment. At the continental level, the process of the meeting of Health and Environment Ministers of the Americas (MISMAA) is outstanding, and a second meeting was held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in June 2005.

124. Through decision 9, the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers assumed the commitment to promote the development and implementation of the Cooperation Agenda signed in Mar del Plata, which includes national activities and regional cooperation with the following priority themes: integrated water resources and solid waste management; the safe management of chemicals; and the environmental health of boys and girls.

125. The efforts of the working group created at the meeting in Ottawa, Canada (2002), were recognized, together with the support received from the Organization of American States (OAS), UNEP/ROLAC and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and follow-up on the Declaration and the Cooperation Agenda was entrusted to the working group.

126. Although the countries have not yet succeeded in having the involved sectors and the ministries work in coordination to address health and environment problems, they have been able to establish a working mechanism to achieve common goals.

127. In particular, decision 9 underscores the GEO Health project as a tool for integrated environment and health assessments and refers to the implementation of pilot projects using this tool and promoting the use of health and environment indicators.

128. In the light of these goals, the idea of developing a methodology for making integrated assessments of health and environment problems in Latin America and the Caribbean arises. This initiative was entrusted to PAHO and UNEP, in collaboration with regional experts.

129. In fact, the joint UNEP and PAHO project on GEO Health has been able to strengthen its planning and implementation since the last meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment, including the development of a methodology to enable making integrated assessments of health and environment problems in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

130. The project for the preparation and implementation of this methodology was planned to be fulfilled in various stages, the first of which was the analysis of existing methodology to implement "integrated assessments", so as to determine and evaluate what had already been done in this field and be able to improve and adapt what is best in these methodologies under a methodological approach appropriate to the realities of LAC, its specific problems and its health and environment priorities. As an output of this evaluation the first document of this project was produced, it is called *Assessments of Health and Environment Methodologies in Latin America and the Caribbean*. The following stage has consisted of the preparation of a methodological approach that will allow integrated assessments to be applied to health and environment problems in Latin America and the Caribbean to ensure:

- a) That these assessments provide the decision-makers of the region with relevant, reliable and sufficient information to promote long-term sustainable policies and remedy and solve the region's health and environment problems;
- b) That environmental and environmental health monitoring programmes, reliable and comparable throughout the region, are established and that they obey the criteria established in this integrated approach; and
- c) That the integrated instruments and indicators necessary to fulfil all these objectives are developed in this monitoring, together with a glossary of terms to help the implementation of the project.

131. In Argentina where the pilot project is being conducted, two workshops on GEO Argentine Health – Local Integrated Environment and Health Assessments were held (April and November 2006), whose objectives were:

- a) To discuss the conceptual framework of the GEO Health method and the methodological approach to environmental and health interactions;
- b) To analyse possible Integrated Environment and Health Assessments (IEHA) in two selected Argentine localities;
- c) To determine which IEHA have the best profile to be addressed in the pilot test of the method in each locality;
- d) To identify the necessary elements to construct the reference lines of the scenario defined in each locality;
- e) To agree on feasible instruments and interventions; and
- f) To discuss two prospective scenarios: the one that would be produced by the proposed intervention and the one that would be produced by not intervening.

132. In Brazil, UNEP is conducting the project "Green and Health Environments" in cooperation with the Green and Environment Secretariat of the city of São Paulo and a group of 17 non-governmental organizations. This initiative is aimed at the training of 5,800 health agents to incorporate environmental variables in the management of local communities. The project also focuses on reinforcing public policies and instruments for environmental management in sectors such as sustainable construction, climate change, green public procurement and the management of urban conservation units and linear parks, among other emerging themes. Activities were initiated in September 2006 and include the preparation of the GEO Health report and of integrated health and environment indicators in selected regions of the city of São Paulo.

133. In the subregional sphere, agreements have been reached in MERCOSUR and Associated States through the work of the Interministerial Commission on Environmental Health and Workers' Health (CISAST), which meets periodically to fulfil the mandate of the Declaration of Mar del Plata at the subregional level. In particular, on 29 June 2006, the Ministers of Health and Environment of MERCOSUR and Associated States agreed to a Joint Declaration on the occasion of the Twentieth Meeting of Health Ministers and the Fifth Meeting of Environment Ministers of MERCOSUR, reaffirming their commitment to the Cooperation Agenda of the Mar del Plata Declaration and to the work of CISAST. The First MERCOSUR Seminar on Environmental Health and Workers' Health was held from 30 October to 1 November 2006, with the participation of governmental and non-governmental technicians and representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

DECISION 10

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

134. The Environmental Training Network of UNEP addressed each of the aspects set forth by the Forum of Ministers in decision 10 on environmental education for sustainable development.

135. Thus, the Network continued supporting the strengthening of the national networks that requested it, particularly in the case of Colombia, and boosted the development of a network of universities and postgraduate study programmes on environment and sustainable development. The Network provided its support in holding two meetings of PLACEA (Joinville, April 2006 and San José, November 2006), as well as three meetings of PANACEA in Peru.

136. Similarly, in response to the request to continue managing the Network Trust Fund, UNEP fulfilled this mandate. It also took pertinent steps to ask the countries to bring their contribution payments up to date. Some countries are still behind in their payments.

137. The Network also continued activities in the established areas of priority, including courses, congresses and workshops on ecosystem management of natural resources; agroecology, agroforestry and sustainable agriculture; and coastal area management. Similarly, the Network continued its publishing programme, principally in the series "*Pensamiento Ambiental Latinoamericano*".

138. The Forum of Ministers decided to establish regional strategies, as well as schemes of intergovernmental, inter-institutional and inter-agency cooperation, including consortia and partnerships for developing environmental training courses with distance courses in the priority themes of the region to enable a multiplying process in capacity building. In this sense, the Network promoted the possible establishment of a network of universities and postgraduate study programmes on environment and sustainable development. Agreements were established for the development of three distance courses: 1) Agroecology, agroforestry and sustainable agriculture with the Universidad Autónoma de Chapingo; 2) Ecological economics of water with the School of Advanced Studies-Acatlán of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (FES-Acatlán/UNAM); and 3) Environmental education with the Confederation of Education Workers of the Argentine Republic (CTERA).

139. The Forum also decided to continue supporting the organization of national, subregional and regional congresses and seminars to make known activities in favour of environmental education and foster Iberoamerican cooperation in this field. Thus, the following events were held: the Fifth Iberoamerican Congress on Environmental Education (Joinville, Brazil; April, 2006); The Regional Consultative Meeting on the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (San José, Costa Rica; November, 2006); and National Seminars on Environmental Education in Argentina, Colombia, Peru and Uruguay. Furthermore, UNEP and UNESCO signed a Cooperation Agreement for developing joint activities in the framework of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

140. The Forum's decision also included the following actions:

- a) To continue supporting the training of teachers in basic education systems, including local community teachers;
- b) To continue promoting and developing the project on community training for sustainable development;
- c) To ratify the agreement signed at the First Meeting of Public Policy-Makers in Environmental Education (Margarita Island, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; November 2004).

141. To deal with all the above matters, the Network continued supporting CTERA in Argentina and the development of a master's degree programme on environmental education at the Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México, within which a project was carried out to prepare Prototypes of Environmental Education Textbooks for Basic Education in the countries of the region; the first phase of this project was concluded through a cooperation agreement with the Environment and Natural Resources Ministry (SEMARNAT) and the National Biodiversity Commission (CONABIO) in Mexico, with ten training workshops for ten sustainable development projects in the Mexican Biological Corridor; the agreements of the meeting in Venezuela were ratified with some modifications such as the design of the Andean Amazon Plan for Environmental Communication and Education (PANACEA) and the decision to incorporate education ministries through

steps taken by environment ministries. UNEP opened a window⁽³⁾ at its website for the publication and dissemination of documents and agreements arising from the meetings of PLACEA (Latin American and Caribbean Environmental Education Programme) and PANACEA.

142. UNEP requested the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC) to identify and take steps to obtain financial resources, in accordance with their specific mandates and those contained in the ILAC, to support the implementation of PLACEA. There was little progress in this item principally because of the lack of concrete projects that could be negotiated with the ITC agencies. The PANACEA advanced in its negotiations with regional agencies and international cooperation programmes (Andean Community of Nations, Organization of the Amazonian Cooperation Treaty, Secretariat of the Andrés Bello Convention, and the German development entity, GTZ).

143. Little progress has been made in relation to support for developing the PLACEA training activities approved in Margarita to advocate and strengthen national capacity building, especially in the eight priority themes identified by the Forum in the framework of the ILAC, as well as the Johannesburg agreements and the millennium goals, through formal, non-formal and informal education, principally owing to a lack of concrete proposals formulated by the countries. In PANACEA, a proposal for training, capacity-building and research in environmental education and communication was formulated.

144. With regard to the holding of a workshop with the participation of public policy makers in environmental education of the region to construct the Regional Action Plan of PLACEA (2006-2007), as well as subregional plans to articulate strategies to enable the implementation of the plan, two PLACEA meetings were held, but little progress in constructing the aforementioned PLACEA Action Plan 2006-2007 was evident in them.

145. Finally the Network contributed to the establishment of the Centre for Socio-environmental Knowledge and Care of the River Plate Basin mentioned in the decision regarding water resources.

146. UNEP/ROLAC has been supporting various activities of the environmental education programme carried out by the Environment and Education Ministries of Brazil. These activities are concentrated in the preparation of educational materials and integrators for youth groups.

DECISION 11

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

147. Fulfilment of decision 11 rested principally on actions by the Working Group on Indicators. This group, coordinated by Costa Rica, has presented a detailed report entitled "Meeting of the Working Group on Environment Indicators" (UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/Ref.2).

⁽³⁾ Visit <http://www.pnuma.org/educamb/>.

148. The Environment Ministry of Brazil prepared a report on the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development, together with a group of 15 governmental and non-governmental institutions. The publication will be available in November 2007.

149. UNEP offered technical support for the preparation of the Brazilian report on the monitoring of indicators of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in relation to Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability. The report was coordinated with the Brazilian Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA) and was presented at the 62nd session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25 September 2007 in New York.

DECISION 12

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

150. In April 2006, approval was given to the Regional Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production to promote and support the development and implementation of concrete policies and projects to step up change towards sustainable consumption and production patterns, which include the active participation of key actors of government, the private sector, civil society, media and the public in general.

151. This Programme is a response to the needs identified during the meetings of Government Experts on sustainable consumption and production, held in Argentina, Nicaragua and Panama in 2003, as well as international meetings held in Marrakech in 2003 and Costa Rica in 2005.

152. Based on the recommendations of these meetings and in keeping with the decisions of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), the project will contribute to:

- a) The development and adoption of National Strategies for Sustainable Consumption and Production;
- b) The design and implementation of Integrated Waste Management and the promotion of waste prevention and minimization policies;
- c) An increase in capacities and knowledge of micro, small and medium-sized companies with clean technologies, cleaner production and ecodesign;
- d) Support for the implementation of sustainable public procurement programmes;
- e) An increase in awareness and sensitivity to sustainable consumption and production;
- f) The strengthening of the Regional Council of Government Experts on Sustainable Production and Consumption.

153. The first subregional meeting of government experts for the Andean subregion was held in August 2006, during which the participants of the five

countries discussed and defined priority lines of action. It should be noted that on the basis of the recommendations of this meeting, the ministers of the subregion decided to incorporate the item of sustainable production and consumption as a cross-cutting axis of the Andean Environmental Agenda 2006-2010. The participants also received training on life cycle evaluation and exchanged experiences with Mexico on the project of Youth for Change, and with Argentina on the incorporation of the consumption component in the national sustainable production and consumption strategy.

154. A National Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production was carried out in Sao Paulo (19 and 20 April 2007) as part of the 10-Year Framework for Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production: the Marrakech Process. This has been a joint initiative of UNEP with the financial support of the European Union. Twelve governmental organizations, 13 entities representing the private sector and 7 non-governmental and academic organizations participated. The Roundtables for the MERCOSUR countries and the Latin American and Caribbean Region took place in São Paulo, Brazil (18 and 19 October 2007).

155. A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed with the Mexican Instituto Politécnico Nacional, which carried out training in cleaner production and sustainable consumption in an “e-learning” modality for twenty representatives designated by the governments of the region. The material developed in this pilot project is available for replication with other countries and institutions.

156. Regional and national cooperation in this matter also advanced thanks to the Memoranda of Understanding signed with the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) and with the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI) to establish subregional centres for information on sustainable production and consumption for the Caribbean and for Central America, respectively. In response to the request of the environment ministers of several countries of the region, the information centres have been conceived of to act as focal points in the area of sustainable production and consumption. Through the contribution of seed capital, UNEP secures the commitment of the local institution and the sustainability of the initiative. The objectives of the information centres are: to disseminate information on sustainable production and consumption to industry, governments, NGOs, consumer associations and other key actors; to play a complementary role in the national cleaner production centres and provide support or carry out joint initiatives; to facilitate the exchange of information and build capacities; to promote sustainable production and consumption with all the key actors. These centres now exist in Argentina, Cuba (two), and Panama at the national level.

157. Additionally, with the support of the Spanish Government and the participation of universities in eight countries of the region, teachers were trained in ecodesign. As a result, a letter was signed in which the universities promised to establish programmes in their institutions to promote and disseminate the theme of ecodesign.

158. The Fourth Meeting of the Council of Governmental Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production (PAHO) for Latin America and the Caribbean was held

in the city of Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 18 and 19 October, in the framework of the Marrakech Process and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

159. For the first time, representatives of non-governmental organizations, national cleaner production centres (CPC), companies, unions, cooperation agencies and academics, in addition to governmental delegates who are members of the Council, participated in the meeting. Thus, 24 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), through their members on the Council of Governmental Experts on CPS; 12 non-governmental organizations of 6 countries; 5 national cleaner production centres, members of the Network of Cleaner Production Centres of the region; 6 representatives of the business and union sector; 7 representatives of academic and research centres; 2 representatives of regional banks and/or cooperation agencies; 7 representatives of local organizations and 10 members of international agencies were present.

160. This opportunity strengthened the links and cooperation among the actors, necessary for working together towards a change in more sustainable life patterns and styles. The actors provided valuable input and contributions for the preparation of action plans, the identification of regional priorities for the preparation of the 10-Year Framework for Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP); and Recommendations to the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to be submitted to the Council of Governmental Experts, as its advisory body in the theme. The report on the meeting has been made available to the participations in a separate document.

161. Youth have also been targeted by UNEP activities in this field. A public awareness programme for youth and their consumption habits (Youth for Change) was put into operation and has included workshops held in Bolivia, Peru and Colombia. The outputs are expected to be replicated in other subregions in the course of 2008.

162. The UNEP Office in Brazil has assisted the project "Enabling developing countries to seize eco-label opportunities", which will be implemented by the Development, Industry and Foreign Trade Ministry with the support of UNEP (Division of Technology, Industry and Economy and the Brazil Office). A call was issued for working document proposals that will be used to begin implementation of the project in December 2007. Project funds come from the European Union's programme for the environment in developing countries and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The purpose of the project is to provide training and technical assistance to governors, industrial representatives and exporters to expand the competitiveness of export products in accordance with European eco-labelling patterns.

DECISION 13

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF CHEMICALS

163. UNEP has technically and financially supported the *ad hoc* meetings of the MERCOSUR Sub-Working Group 6 on Management of Chemical Substances and Products (Montevideo, Uruguay; 16 and 17 September 2005, and 13 to 15 December; Buenos Aires, Argentina; 17 and 18 April 2006). The Sub-group on

Environment developed a strategy in this theme, including the definition of a conceptual framework and strategic approach to chemical substance management, as well as activities for the preparation of a Regional Plan for Monitoring Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) and for coordination in the management of hazardous substances.

164. The project to implement the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) was prepared by the Environment Ministry with resources from GEF and through the UNEP Office in Brazil. The project development fund proposal is for US\$ 480,000 (US\$ 360,000 from GEF). The Brazilian government is negotiating the juridical modality of the project documents and implementation.

DECISION 14

CLIMATE CHANGE

165. The Latin American and Caribbean region is facing the threat of climate change under special environmental characteristics, since it includes some of the countries with the greatest availability of freshwater and greatest biodiversity on the planet. Many countries of the region present very high levels of vulnerability to extreme climate phenomena capable of triggering disasters that compromise their development, as is the case with the small island developing States of the Caribbean.

166. These features help to explain why the region has played such an outstanding role in the multilateral negotiations related to climate change and why it is now strongly involved in activities being conducted under the Kyoto Protocol and particularly in the clean development mechanism. The Forum of Ministers has notably contributed to the countries' participation in these activities. The theme has been addressed at successive meetings, in keeping with the outstanding importance it has been gaining globally and regionally and it is now a thematic line of the Regional Action Plan.

167. In decision 14, the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers stated that it was in favour of:

- a) Recognizing the need to guarantee the continuity of the international regime to combat climate change based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, in accordance with the respective capacities;
- b) Promoting 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 achievement of the present commitments and the participation of all the Annex I countries of the Protocol;
- c) Fostering advances in constructive discussion concerning a future regime on climate change within the framework of the UNFCCC, integrating both mitigation of and adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change and promoting greater participation of the private sector in these efforts;

- d) Urging the ITC to increase its contributions to the countries of the region in the theme of climate change and to support the work of the systematic climate observation networks, early warning systems, education and research, as well as capacity building.

168. In the framework of the Tenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Buenos Aires, Argentina; October 2004), the Regional Report on Climate Change in Latin America and the Caribbean, prepared jointly by the Environment and Natural Resources Ministry of Mexico and UNEP/ROLAC, was presented. The report was widely recognized as a contribution of the region to the knowledge and projects of this global environmental problem and has been widely distributed regionally and internationally. In 2005, the Report was updated and reviewed prior to its publication in 2006.

169. A report on climate change in the Caribbean is also at the final stage of preparation.

170. These reports give an account of the diverse regional and subregional agreements that provide a platform for coordinating and strengthening cooperation in the development of policies and measures to face climate change.

170. These initiatives include, among others:

- a) An initiative created by the Andean Committee of Environmental Authorities established a coordinating unit for climate change offices now called the Group of Experts on Climate Change;
- b) A model applied in Central America to reduce vulnerability and build capacity for adaptation is the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, which seeks to reduce deforestation and the fragmentation of ecosystems and wilderness populations;
- c) The Regional Convention on Climate Change (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) to protect the climate system in benefit of present and future generations, based on equity and in conformity with their responsibilities and capacities;
- d) The Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC);
- e) The establishment of the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC), with headquarters in Belize since September 2003 has enabled the development of the project called Adapting to Climate Change in the Caribbean, financed by the Canada Climate Change Development Fund, and the project Generalizing Adaptation to Global Climate Change, whose main areas of activity are: a) introducing climate change as a theme on the national and sectoral planning agendas and in investment decisions, b) assisting the countries in activities related to the second stage of adaptation of the Framework Convention, and c) increasing the participation of the region in monitoring, modelling and assessing global climate change in support of adaptation plans;

- f) The Pilot Project (Central America, Mexico and Cuba) to prepare a framework of adaptation policies, to formulate adaptation strategies, policies and measures, officially launched in July 2003. The implementation agency of the programme is UNDP and the executing agency is the Water Centre for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC);
- g) The Latin American Carbon Programme (PLAC) established by the Andean Development Corporation (CAF) in 1999, whose objective is to facilitate and advocate the participation and entry of Latin American and Caribbean countries in the market to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. At the present time, PLAC is conducting projects in Central America, the Andean region, the Caribbean, Brazil and the Southern Cone, with emphasis on the energy, industry and transport sectors;
- h) the Clean Air Initiative for Latin American and the Caribbean Cities (CAI-LAC), created in 1998 to reverse deterioration in urban air quality and help channel the necessary dialogue among environmental, transport and urban planning authorities and among jurisdictions (municipal, regional and central governments).
- i) The GEF medium-sized grants programme in Argentina is financing a pilot case to analyse glacier retreat in southern Argentina. This initiative began in July 2007 and will provide important information for areas still scarcely surveyed. It will also complement work that is expected to be carried out through another GEF proposal in Chile, focusing on understanding the impact of climate change on Andean glaciers and the socio-economic systems that depend on them.
- j) Active participation in the CLIMALATINO event held in October 2007 in Quito and Guayaquil. On that occasion an environmental film festival was presented, in addition to an exhibition of environmental posters, cartoons and children's drawings in collaboration with the Andean Community of Nations.
- k) In the framework of the Universal Forum of Cultures in Monterrey, Mexico, an academic course on climate change was created in collaboration with the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León and a business organization called Promotora Ambiental.

172. Other important initiatives for the region include:

- a) The Iberoamerican Network of Climate Change Offices (Spain, Portugal and countries of Latin America), created in September 2004, is a Spanish initiative that has technical support from UNEP/ROLAC.
- b) The Prototype Carbon Fund of the World Bank.

173. In relation to the region's participation in multilateral negotiations, two subregional meetings were held in 2007 in preparation for the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC and MOP 3 of the Kyoto Protocol: the Latin

American meeting, held in Panama City, Panama, on 22 and 23 October 2007⁴, and the meeting held by Small Island Developing States of the Caribbean members of the "Alliance of Small Island States" (AOSIS) in Saint Kitts and Nevis from 6 to 9 November 2007.

174. In another sphere, the project "Involving socio-environmental matters in climate change strategies in Brazil" will coordinate the efforts of six United Nations agencies in Brazil – ILO, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO and UN-HABITAT – with funds from the government of Spain to fulfil the millennium goals (environment and climate change window) The purpose of the project is to incorporate socio-environmental considerations in national strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as deforestation reduction, energy efficiency and bioenergy policies. The project was approved on 8 August 2007 and will begin its activities in 2008.

175. The UNEP Office in Brazil supported or was represented at a large number of events on the theme of climate change and published or collaborated with interviews and articles on the topic through media such as UN Radio (May 2007), *Jornal do Brasil* (May 2007), *Folha de São Paulo* (June 2007), and at organizations or corporations such as Bayer (June 2007) and the National Confederation of Industry (July 2007).

DECISION 15

RENEWABLE ENERGY

176. ECOLATINA, with the support of UNEP-DTIE, organized a Roundtable on Sustainable Biofuels (17-18 October 2007, Belo Horizonte, Brazil). UNEP also took the opportunity to convene an outreach meeting for the Latin America and Caribbean region on sustainable standards for biofuels. The meeting looked at potentials in the region and environmental and social issues that need to be addressed. Over 50 participants attended the meeting, mainly from Brazil, but also from Argentina, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay and Uruguay.

177. The Brazil Rural Energy Enterprise Development (B-REED) programme has been developing new energy enterprises in Brazil's northeast regions of Bahia and Alagoas that provide or use clean, efficient and sustainable energy technologies. By providing clean energy services, these enterprises can also reduce the environmental and health consequences from using fossil fuels and poor quality biomass fuels, while stimulating local economic growth. The B-REED approach, supported by UNEP, the United Nations Foundation and the Blue Moon fund, offers sustainable energy entrepreneurs a combination of enterprise development services and early stage financing. For entrepreneurs, this might include assistance to

⁽⁴⁾ See working document **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/10** of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts, entitled "Report of the Preparatory Meeting for Negotiators and National Focal Points of Latin American countries during the period prior to the Convention of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Conference of the Parties serving as a Meeting of the Parties (CMP) of the Kyoto Protocol (UNFCCC COP13/CMP3) - Panama City, Panama; 22 - 23 October 2007".

transform their business plans into established companies capable of accessing mainstream financing⁽⁵⁾.

178. UNEP and UNDP have joined their efforts to develop a GEF programme to accelerate global commercialization and sustainable market transformation of solar water heating technology in developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The «Solar Water Heating Market Transformation and Strengthening Initiative» aims at installing more than 1 million square meters of new solar water heating systems and at reaching an annual market growth of 20% by the end of the first project phase. Six countries (Mexico, Chile, Albania, Algeria, India and Lebanon) are now engaged in the first phase of the project. One component of this project is the global knowledge management and networking which its main objective is to reach out in all the regions to support replication. The project was approved in 2006. The whole package is now being finalized and will shortly be submitted to the General Manager of the GEF for endorsement.

179. The UNEP Risoe Centre on Energy, Climate and Sustainable Development (URC) supports will, together with 9 other organizations (4 in Europe and 5 in Latin America) are implementing the EU-funded research project “biofuels assessment on technical opportunities and research needs for Latin America”. The project was approved in August this year and contract negotiations with the EU are expected to start between October-November this year.

180. A project on Developing Financial Intermediation Mechanisms for Energy Efficiency Projects in Brazil, China and India (the so called 3 Country Energy Efficiency Project) was jointly implemented by the World Bank, the UNEP Risoe Centre on Energy, Climate and Sustainable Development (URC) and Core Groups in Brazil, China and India, under the overall management of UNEP’s Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE). The project which concluded in July 2007 spurred investment by existing banks in individual efficiency projects, provided support for the nascent ESCO (Energy Service Company) industries that can be key agents in project identification/development, and supported the countries in assessing barriers and options for guarantee funds and equity investment in energy efficiency. The above was achieved by establishing and assisting Core Country Groups in Brazil, China and India, and by supporting an intensive program of South-South cross-exchange between energy professionals and financiers⁽⁶⁾.

181. In 2006, UNEP/DTIE supported the development of the Central America Wind Energy Resource Assessment. This document, published in August 2006, describes the development of detailed high-resolution (1 km²) wind energy resource maps for the region of Central America that includes the countries of Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua⁷. And, in 2007, projects were developed in Brazil and Cuba. The former dealing with a new wind and solar atlases which has been developed with the National Institute for Space Research - INPE- of Brazil)

⁽⁵⁾ Further information is available at www.b-reed.org.

⁽⁶⁾ More details are available at <http://3countryee.org>.

⁽⁷⁾ Further details are available at: <http://swera.unep.net/index.php?id=35&idx=354>.

and the latter on Wind mapping in Cuba (with the Centro de Gerencias de Programas y Proyectos Priorizados –GEPROP– and the Meteorological Institute of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of Cuba)⁽⁸⁾.

DECISION 16

TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT

182. UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics - Economics and Trade Branch (DTIE-ETB) and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) have continued with the implementation of substantive activities on trade and the environment at the regional and national.

183. An initiative on assessing agricultural trade liberalization and biodiversity impacts for 2005-2009 which was launched in July 2005 in collaboration with the Convention on Biological Convention (CBD) Secretariat. It responds directly to CBD Conference of the Parties' Decision VI/5 calling for the impacts of trade liberalization on agricultural biodiversity to be examined. At the core of this initiative is the implementation of six country projects, including Jamaica (also Cameroon, Mauritius, Madagascar, Uganda and Papua New Guinea).

184. The project is currently entering its third year of implementation. A draft "Manual on Incorporating Biodiversity into Integrated Assessments of Trade Policy in the Agricultural Sector" has been developed to facilitate the national-level assessments. Each of the participating governments has designated a national institution to undertake the assessments on their behalf. In Jamaica, the Government has designated the University of West Indies – Institute for Sustainable Development as the institution charged with undertaking the assessment. The project is focused on the Jamaican sugar cane industry and the potential impacts from the loss of preferential EU tariff rates on sugar cane.

185. Furthermore, a two-year initiative on reviewing national wildlife trade policies for 2006-2008 is being jointly implemented by the UNEP-UNCTAD Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development (CBTF), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat, and the Geneva-based Graduate Institute of Development Studies (IUED). The initiative was launched in January 2006 and responds directly to CITES Conference of the Parties' decision 13.74, which calls on the CITES Secretariat to support Parties in conducting reviews of their national policies regarding the use of and trade in specimens of CITES-listed species. The initiative is now entering its second year with the launch of four country pilot projects, including a project in Nicaragua (also Madagascar, Viet Nam and Uganda). The Government of Nicaragua has designated the Central American University – Environmental Sciences and Agrarian Department to undertake the policy review on their behalf. The Launching Workshop for the Nicaraguan project was held on 17-18 May 2007.

186. A memorandum of understanding between the Government of Ecuador (Ministry of the Environment; Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fishery and; Ministry of Foreign Relations, Commerce and Integration) and UNEP is

⁽⁸⁾ Further details are available at <http://swera.unep.net>.

about to be signed to provide the Ecuadorian Government with a better understanding of the impacts of fisheries subsidies on trade and sustainability. It aims to assist the Government of Ecuador develop its national and regional policy strategies concerning subsidies, increase its capacity to negotiate fisheries subsidies issues in the World Trade Organization, and to assess whether eco-label/certification schemes - in addition to promoting sustainable fisheries management practices - could contribute to the limitation of those subsidies.

187. The review of the impact of subsidies will also provide valuable information and knowledge to assist other Permanent Commission for the South Pacific (CPPS in Spanish) member States (Chile, Peru and Colombia) to develop appropriate strategies to secure their best long-term interest for both fisheries and development objectives.

188. In addition and as part of the overall UNEP DTIE-ETB/ROLAC Partnership Strategy the following activities are envisaged:

- a) **Green Accounting:** Relevant information is becoming available through the Virtual Resource Center on Environmental and Economic Accounting⁹;
- b) **Promoting Poverty Reduction and Environmental Protection through Increased Market Access for Developing Countries.** UNEP DTIE-ETB has prepared a project which intends to contribute to poverty reduction, trade promotion and environmental protection by building developing country capacities to seize market opportunities offered by environmental requirements. The activities aim to encourage and assist developing countries to gradually move from a reactive to a pro-active approach to environmental requirements in key export markets and to seize new market opportunities created by these requirements. The project was submitted to the European Union for funding in September 2007 and it includes Africa (particularly Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda), Asia (particularly China, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam), and the Caribbean (particularly Barbados, Dominica, and Jamaica);
- c) **Payments for Ecosystem Services, particularly on avoided deforestation:** this is an environmental management instrument through which deforestation is reduced in order to achieve, among others, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions (accounts for 20-25% of GHG emissions). As planning for Kyoto's second commitment period unfolds, avoided deforestation has resurfaced in the climate debate; and
- d) **Capacity building:** UNEP/ROLAC and DTIE-ETB will explore the development of an on-going capacity building/technical assistance programme for the LAC region to ensure that trade policies are developed in harmony with socio-economic development and environmental protection. In particular, the emphasis of this work will be on building awareness and analytical legal skills to address the interlinkages between trade and environment. To achieve this objective, ROLAC and DTIE-ETB will explore the establishment of a regional centre of excellence on trade and

⁽⁹⁾ See <http://www.unep.ch/etb/areas/valuationEnvAcc.php>

environment. Such a regional centre will help to institutionalize a capacity building programme in the region whereby various courses on trade, development and environmental issues would be offered to policymakers from the public/private sectors. An appropriate academic institute with relevant experience in building capacities for policymakers from different countries and organizing international training events will be identified to host the capacity building programme. The regional centre will serve as a pilot, and depending on its success, may be replicated in other regions, such as Africa or Asia.

189. Under the Partnership Agreement between the Government and Spain, ROLAC has developed a project on the Contribution to the Development of Bio Trade in the Dominican Republic. The overall objective of the project is to promote sustainable Bio Trade practices in selected rural communities of the Dominican Republic contributing to the improvement of their life quality through sustainable entrepreneurial activities. It is expected that the project will start late 2007.

190. In 2006, UNEP Brazil implemented the project "Integrated Assessment and Planning of the Soybean Sector in the Region of Influence of Highway BR-163", which took place in the central region of Brazil. The integrated assessment and planning (IAP) methodology was used in the soybean sector, considering environmental, social and economic production aspects. The assessment involved the Environment and National Integration Ministries and experts of the Universidad de Brasilia, Universidad Federal Rural de Amazonia, Universidad Federal de Uberlandia and the Brazilian agricultural research corporation Empresa Brasileira de Investigación Agropecuaria (EMBRAPA). Non-governmental organizations, companies, producers and communities of the region were consulted during the assessment. The final report was presented on 5 June 2006. Several recommendations were incorporated into the policies of the Inter-ministerial Working Group on the Sustainable Development Plan for the Area of Influence of Highway BR-163. The inter-ministerial working group includes 21 ministries and is coordinated by the Civil Household (Casa Civil) of the Presidency.

191. The UNEP Office in Brazil supported MERCOSUR Ad Hoc Sub-working Group 6 on Environmental Goods and Services (SWG-6) in holding a workshop organized around this theme by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in conjunction with SWG-6 (Buenos Aires, Argentina; 17 April 2006). Representatives of Ad Hoc Sub-working Group on Environmental Goods and Services, the Environmental Network of the Southern Cone Subregion of the IDB, as well as UNEP, UNDP and the OAS, participated in the workshop. It offered governmental experts training to participate in environmental negotiations in the sphere of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to encourage such capacity building.

192. The UNEP Office in Brazil, together with the MERCOSUR SWG-6/CLAES and the support of a team of institutions and experts, conducted a trade and environment integration assessment process using the GEO methodology in the MERCOSUR countries. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay are included in the assessment. Preparation of the GEO MERCOSUR drafts was supervised by SWG-6 and is at the final review stage. In this process a GEO MERCOSUR Scenarios Workshop was held to identify the principal impacts of the countries of the region

on the environment and to construct scenario bases for the GEO MERCOSUR. Governmental representatives and experts of the Member States of MERCOSUR participated in the event (Brasilia, 16 to 18 October 2006).

DECISION 17

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

193. The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit is the principal United Nations emergency response mechanism that mobilizes international assistance to countries facing environmental emergencies and natural disasters with significant environmental impacts. Some of the actions⁽¹⁰⁾ undertaken by the Unit in Latin America and the Caribbean relate to:

- a) **Hurricane Stan – Guatemala:** In October 2005, Hurricane Stan passed over the southern coast and western highlands of Guatemala. Due to torrential rains, flooding and mudslides ensued in many parts of the country, causing loss of life and injury. As of 21 October, the death toll stood at 664, while 844 people were still missing. An estimated 9000 dwellings were destroyed. The Joint Environment Unit ensured the inclusion of an UNDAC-trained environmental expert from Brazil in the UNDAC team. The expert conducted his work through meetings with various government ministries and field assessment trips. The Joint Environment Unit released an REA report for Guatemala that identified possible risks such as the pollution of surface water, animal carcasses, erosion, hazardous materials and shelter and waste management. Recommendations included the thorough testing of groundwater supplies in affected areas, and an assessment for both erosion, and areas where significant soil movement is a risk to discover any 'hotspots' likely to threaten human life or livelihoods;
- b) **Heavy rains/floods – Suriname:** Torrential rains in May 2006 in Suriname led to the flooding of approximately 25,000 to 30,000 square km. At the request of national authorities, OCHA deployed an UNDAC team. An UNDAC-trained environmental expert from the Netherlands was deployed as part of the UNDAC team and carried out an REA, which focused on identifying potential hazardous materials being released from industrial facilities, mining, hydrocarbon storage, and sewage/drinking water facilities. The REA was supported, for the first time, by the Dutch integrated response system the 'Environmental Accident – Policy Supporting Team' (Bot-Mi). With this support, a rapid desktop screening of potential secondary risk was carried out to aid the UNDAC team and national authorities. There were no acute secondary risks associated with the floods and there was no need for follow-up activities through the Joint Environment Unit;

⁽¹⁰⁾ More details on the above-mentioned activities are available at:

<http://ochaonline.un.org/AboutOCHA/Organigramme/EmergencyServicesBranchESB/EnvironmentalEmergenciesSectionEES/7thmeetingofAGEE/tabid/1471/Default.aspx>.

- c) **Hydrogen Sulphide Cylinders – Suriname:** In January 2007 the Joint Environment Unit acted as a broker between potential donor countries and the UNDP office in Suriname, which was dealing with a number of rusted cylinders filled with hydrogen sulphide that were discovered in a technical school in Paramaribo. National authorities removed the cylinders and there was no need for international assistance.

194. The Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit sent Brazilian experts to Peru to assess environmental damage caused by the Pisco earthquake and, at the request of the Environment and Natural Resources Ministry of Nicaragua, the UNEP Regional Office channelled the support of Mexican experts to assess damages caused by Hurricane Felix in the Bosawas Reserve. Earthquake in Pisco, Peru (August 2007) and Hurricane Felix, Basawas Reserve, Nicaragua (October 2007).

195. On a related matter, the project proposal on Securing Water Resources through Watershed Rehabilitation in Grenada in the Post Ivan Era, prepared by UNEP/ROLAC in consultation with the Government of Grenada in 2005 and, submitted to the European Commission ACP-EU Water Facility; was finally rejected after having been short listed.

196. In 2006, the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean facilitated South-South cooperation from Cuba to Jamaica for the provision of technical assistant in the development of a plan to recover Palisadoes Peninsula after Hurricane Ivan.

197. The methodology of Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at a Local Level (APELL), an important tool for reducing local risks in cases of emergency, continues being a priority for UNEP. The APELL process has been applied in many countries of the region in response to recent rates of industrial emergencies and accidents. Thus:

- a) Implementation of TransAPELL in Peru was initiated. Three major mining companies undertook APELL activities;
- b) The APELL methodology for Ports was introduced and disseminated in port zones of South America in collaboration with GTZ and GEF;
- c) APELL methodology was presented to the Government of the state of Tlaxcala, Mexico, which will adopt it in 2006-2007.

DECISION 18

COMMEMORATION OF 2006 AS THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DESERTS AND DESERTIFICATION

198. The Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought commemorated the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006. World Environment Day (5 June 2007) activities coordinated by UNEP/ROLAC focused on the areas mentioned below:

199. The central activity took place in La Rioja, Argentina, and was carried out together with the Argentine Environment Ministry.

200. Television announcements were made and distributed to all the environment ministries of the region; they were also disseminated by different television chains, including CNN in Spanish.

201. There was participation in numerous television and radio programmes, as well as interviews in the printed press. In Mexico more than 100,000 copies of a special supplement in the newspaper Reforma were published.

202. Support was provided for a pertinent artistic activity on the theme called "El Encuentro". This piece prepared in conjunction with the National Folklore Ballet of Mexico reconstructs the theme of deserts and desertification over time.

203. Numerous activities with civil society were promoted. In Mexico, the UNILEVER Company and UNEP organized a large event with more than 3,000 people in a park in Mexico City, which included the presence of the Global Manager of UNILEVER. The event included activities for children, young people and adults such as films, lectures and exhibitions.

204. El report "Global Deserts Outlook" -GEO Deserts- was published on 5 June 2007 at various world sites as one of UNEP's main contributions to the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. The publication was prepared with the active participation of experts of Latin America who worked together with experts from other parts of the world. It was coordinated by three collaborating centres: the San Diego Natural History Museum of the United States, the Argentine Institute for Arid Zone Research (IADIZA) in Argentina, and the Gobabeb Training and Research Centre in Namibia.

205. The GEO Deserts report provides an objective image of the very diverse state of the world's deserts with their ecosystem values, distinguishing areas degraded by anthropogenic interventions. One of the important outputs of the analysis was an updated demarcation of deserts using three criteria (*Climatological* – hyperarid and arid zones, *Biological* - ecoregions with desert flora and fauna, and *Physical* – large contiguous areas of low plant cover and/or bare earth), covering an area of more than 33 million km²; almost one fourth of the planet's surface area, and inhabited by some 500 million people (8% of the total world population).

206. On the occasion of the launching of GEO Deserts for Latin American and the Caribbean, a press conference was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 5 June 2006. Another press conference was held on 13 June 2006 through a video conference, connecting the cities of Santiago, Buenos Aires and San Diego. Important coverage by the press throughout the region was observed and media articles, interviews and special reports highlighting the importance of desert ecosystems were generated.

207. A UNEP children's drawing contest on the theme of deserts was promoted and more than 3,000 drawing were received.

208. In follow-up on decision 18, UNEP/ROLAC supported the Fifth Africa-Latin America and the Caribbean Forum of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought, held in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, from 18 to 21 June 2007.

DECISION 19

MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

209. The main purpose of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was to assess the consequences of ecosystem changes on humanity's quality of life and the scientific bases necessary to achieve the conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems.

210. In general terms, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is known among the principal actors in government and civil society organizations, as well as in the scientific and academic sectors of Latin America and the Caribbean, although the appropriation of this assessment as an effective tool for informed decision making and the development and/or adaptation of environmental policies and norms has not been so broad in some cases, owing to the lack of knowledge concerning this tool by governmental technicians and officials.

211. The sub-global assessments carried out by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment include the Caribbean Sea Ecosystem Assessment – CARSEA conducted by The Cropper Foundation. This sub-assessment focuses on two of the principal ecosystem services for the Caribbean: tourism and fisheries and their sustainability relationship with the conservation of beaches, coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass meadows. The outputs of this study that seeks to support decision-making that will help to improve the quality of life of the Caribbean populations will be presented to the Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean at the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers.

212. In late 2005, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between UNEP, the Amazon Treaty Cooperation Organization (ATCO) and the Universidad del Pacífico (UP) to initiate the GEO-Amazon process. The purpose of the GEO Amazon project is to make a comprehensive assessment of the Amazon ecosystem through the use of the comprehensive environmental assessment methodology called GEO (Global Environment Outlook). The assessment is conducted on the basis of the most important and updated sources of information that exist in the Amazon region. The project will serve as a space for the exchange and consolidation of existing information on the Amazon. Its greatest contribution is to be a platform for the coordination and systematization of the information available, whose analysis and recommendations will contribute to policy-making and decision-making processes in the field of environment in the Amazon region. The GEO Amazon is in the final phase of preparation.

213. Finally, UNEP contributed to the Second Latin American Congress on National Parks and Other Protected Areas (Bariloche, Argentina; 30 September to 6 October 2007), as part of the Organizing Committee, as a speaker at the opening ceremony and in other working sessions, as well as in the preparation of the document "Privileged Spaces", which describes the current situation of the protected areas of the region, the threats, the challenges and the opportunities. This document provided a base for discussions during the congress (other collaborators included FAO, REDPARQUES, the National Park Administration of Argentina and the World Commission on Protected Areas).

214. The Declaration of Bariloche appears in reference document
UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XV/Ref.3.

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