



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

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

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

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
27th January to 1st February 2008

INFORMATION DOCUMENT FOR THE
PREPARATORY MEETING OF HIGH-LEVEL EXPERTS
AND FOR THE MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

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Information for the Participants



INFORMATION ON SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



1. Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, is located in the south central part of the country. It is the chief urban, economic, cultural, political and social center of the Dominican Republic.

2. *Santo Domingo de Guzmán*, usually referred to as only Santo Domingo, was the first city established by Europeans in the Americas. It was founded by Bartholomew Columbus in 1496 and later transferred to the place where it now stands by Nicolás de Ovando in 1502. It is a flourishing, cosmopolitan city with a profound historic past associated with the conquest of the American continent.

3. Waves and breezes from the Caribbean Sea contribute to the city's pleasant and invigorating climate excellent for outdoor activities.

4. The Colonial District of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO, includes the oldest buildings constructed by Spaniards in the New World.

Population: Approximately three million inhabitants.

Official language: Spanish.

Local currency: Dominican peso.

2. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Passport

5. On entry to the Dominican Republic, the Ministers and special invitees should present a current passport and a valid return ticket; maximum stay in the country is 90 days.

Visa

6. Participants at the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers who need visas for entry to the Dominican Republic should approach the Dominican Republic's consular offices in their country. The Dominican Republic's embassies and consulates have been notified of the meeting of the Forum of Ministers. Participants in countries that do not have a Dominican embassy or consulate will receive an invitation and will be included on a list maintained at immigration control; the immigration officials will have instructions to facilitate their entry.

Entry forms

7. Before airport-border entry to the country, visitors are requested to complete embarkation and disembarkation forms. These should be completed before approaching the immigration point, where passports also should be shown.

3. AIRPORTS

8. The "José Francisco Peña Gómez" **International Airport of the Americas** is located some 22 km east of Santo Domingo. Taxis that provide service to any part of the city are available at the airport exit. The airport has bookstores, restaurants, event facilities, craft stores, waiting rooms and money exchange services. Taxis are recommended for transportation within the city. Taxi service is available at the hotel entrance. Away from the hotel, they can be called at the following numbers: (809) 530-4800 and 537-0000. Asking what the fare will be beforehand is recommended, since the taxis do not have meters.



4. TRANSFER TO THE VENUE OF THE SIXTEENTH FORUM

9. Duly-identified personnel will be waiting at the international airports (Santo Domingo, La Romana or Punta Cana), to welcome the delegates and observers on arrival.

10. Participants at the Forum are advised to notify the event's national organizers of the date and time of their arrival, otherwise their reception, which includes airport-hotel-airport transfer free of charge, cannot be guaranteed.

11. The company Vacaciones Barceló will provide transportation in comfortable buses from the airport. Departure schedules will be coordinated with the itineraries, and buses to the hotels will leave at fairly frequent intervals. There will also be a counter at the airport where personnel with identification will receive and provide participants with information and guidance. The telephone number for transportation emergencies is **809.796.1237**.

5. ACCOMMODATION



Occidental El Embajador

12. The official venue of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean is the **Hotel El Embajador**. The hotel is located at:

Avenida Sarasota 65, Ensanche Bella Vista
Santo Domingo – Dominican Republic

Phone: (809) 221 21 31

Fax: (809) 532 53 06

E-mail: info.embajador@do.occidentalhotels.com

13. The hotel's rates (taxes included) are as follows:

Type of room	Quantity	Single	Double
Royal Club	7 rooms	US\$180.00	US\$180.00
Suite Real	1 suite	US\$ 545.00	US\$ 545.00
Suite Canciller	2 suites	US\$300.00	US\$300.00
Suite Embajador -	2 suites	US\$200.00	US\$200.00
Standard-	85 rooms	US\$90.00	US\$105.00
Club El Embajador-	65 rooms	US\$120.00	US\$135.00

- The rates indicated are per room per night.
- These rates are subject to a 26% legal tax.
- Breakfast included.

Contact for reservations:

Hotel El Embajador

Contact: Sra. Zarina Montalvo,
Business Director.

Tel.: (809) 221-2131

Cel.: (809) 851-9414

Option for lodging:

Hotel Delta

Single room: US\$75.00

Includes breakfast and Internet connexion.

Contact: Sr. Félix Rosa

Marketing and Sales Manager

Tel.: (809) 535-0800, ext. 2754

E-mail: ventas@hoteldelta.com.do

14. UNEP/ROLAC, in its capacity as Secretariat of the Forum, will be responsible for coordinating the hotel reservations and airline tickets of all the delegates for whom it provides funding. These delegates will be staying at the Hotel El Embajador. For reasons of organization, logistics and the smooth running of the Forum, it is recommended that participants stay at the hotel officially designated as the meeting's venue.

15. Delegates not funded by UNEP should make their own hotel reservations, mentioning that they are attending the Sixteenth Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean in order to obtain the preferential rates offered by the Hotel El Embajador for attendees at this event.

6. ACCREDITATION

16. In all cases, accreditation of official delegations and invitees to the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum must be sent by fax or E-mail to the UNEP/ROLAC Secretariat, with a copy to the event's national organization, clearly stating the names and posts of the delegates and the meeting they are to attend.

7. MEETINGS REGISTRATION ARRANGEMENTS AND TIMETABLE

17. The **Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts** of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers will take place from Sunday, 27 January, to Tuesday, 29 January, 2008. The Ministerial Segment, in turn, will be held from Wednesday, 30 January, to Friday, 1 February, 2008.

18. The **Ministerial Segment** will be inaugurated by the President of the Dominican Republic, Dr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, on Wednesday, 30 January 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in the Hotel Jaragua. Participants are asked to wear formal attire (suit, tie and appropriate shoes).

19. Participant registration for the Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts will take place on Sunday, 27 January, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

20. Participant registration for the Ministerial Segment will commence at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, 30 January. The Order of the Day will be distributed each day.

8. DOCUMENTS

21. The documents for the Sixteenth Meeting have already been prepared by UNEP/ROLAC. The Latin American and Caribbean countries have been notified of the documents needed to support the deliberations of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers. It is planned to provide only a limited number of copies of the documents for the delegates, and participants are advised to bring with them the working documents available at the Forum venue. The idea is to save paper and then minimize the environmental impact associated with document printing and reproduction.

22. The working, informative and reference documents of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers are accessible via the following links:

Spanish: <http://www.pnuma.org/forodeministros/16-repdominicana/html/documentos.htm>

English: <http://www.pnuma.org/forumofministers/16-dominicanrep/html/documents.htm>

9. FURTHER INFORMATION

A. Weather

23. The Dominican Republic enjoys a warm, tropical climate all year round. Depending on the location, an average day is very sunny or alternates sunshine and clouds. Average annual temperatures lie in the range 25°-30°C. The cooler season is from November to April; the hotter from May to October.

B. Time zone: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

24. The Dominican Republic adopts Eastern Caribbean Time (GMT-04:00). This applies all year round (i.e. the country does not adopt daylight-saving time).

C. Currency



25. The official currency is the Dominican peso. Notes are issued in denominations of 10 pesos (green), 20 pesos (brown), 50 pesos (purple), 100 pesos (orange), 500 pesos (turquoise blue), 1,000 pesos (light red) and 2,000 pesos (blue); all are of the same size. The coins currently in circulation are of 5, 10, 25 and 100 pesos and vary in shape and colour. Credit cards are accepted in most establishments.

26. The official currency's exchange rate against the US dollar is \$1=32 Dominican pesos. Exchange can be effected at the banks and bureaux de change. The rate of exchange fluctuates constantly.

D. Banks and bureaux de change

27. Financial transactions can be carried out efficiently in Santo Domingo at various banks and other firms. These are open for business Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

28. Cash machines are an excellent option, since they are available round the clock. Most allow you to select the English language, while withdrawals are in the local currency (Dominican pesos). The operations normally supported are checking one's balance, withdrawals and cash advances. Do not give or tell strangers your password. The machines are strategically sited on the main streets, in shopping malls and elsewhere. Cirrus, Visa, Mastercard and others support international debit and credit transactions. *Participants are advised against changing dollars in the street.*

E. Credit cards and travellers cheques

29. **Credit cards:** most Santo Domingo's shops, restaurants and other establishments accept international credit cards, Mastercard and Visa being the most commonly used; some also accept American Express.

30. **Travellers cheques:** before purchasing these in your country, you should enquire whether the issuer has branches or representation in the Dominican Republic. American Express and Visa travellers cheques account for the bulk of those used here. They can be used in payment at the more exclusive hotels; their acceptance by the general retail trade is limited.

F. Embassies and accredited consulates in the Dominican Republic

<p>EMBASSY OF ARGENTINA Ave. Máximo Gómez No.10 Phone: (809) 682-1074 and 682-2977</p>	<p>CONSULATE OF BOLIVIA Calle Luis F. Tomen No110 Phone: (809) 701-6176, 656-8573, 701-6196</p>
<p>EMBASSY OF BRASIL Calle Eduardo Vicioso No.46-A Phone: (809) 532-0868 and 532-0342</p>	<p>EMBASSY OF COLOMBIA Calle Fernando Escobar No.8 A Ensanche Serrallos Phone: (809) 562-1670</p>
<p>EMBASSY OF COSTA RICA Calle Malaquías Gil No.11 Phone: (809) 683-7002 and 683-7209</p>	<p>EMBASSY OF CUBA Calle Francisco Prats Ramírez #808 Phone: (809) 537-2113 and 537-0139</p>
<p>EMBASSY OF CHILE Av. Anacaona No.11, Mirador Sur Phone: (809) 532-7800 and 530-8441</p>	<p>EMBASSY OF ECUADOR Calle Rafael Augusto Sánchez No.17 Apto 301 , Ens. Naco Phone: (809) 563-8363</p>
<p>EMBASSY OF EL SALVADOR Calle Haim López Pehna, No.28B 4to piso, Ens. Piantini Phone: (809) 565-4311</p>	<p>CONSULATE OF GUATEMALA Calle Santiago No.359, Gazcue, Phone: (809) 689-5327 and 689-5614</p>
<p>EMBASSY OF GUATEMALA Calle Santiago No.359 Phone: (809) 689-5327</p>	<p>EMBASSY OF HAITI Calle Juan Sánchez Ramírez No.33 Zona Universitaria Phone: (809) 686-8185</p>
<p>EMBASSY OF HONDURAS Calle Arístides García Mella, Apt.1-B, Mirador Sur, Phone: (809) 482-7992</p>	<p>EMBASSY OF JAMAICA Ave. Enriquillo No.61, Los Caciczgos Phone: (809) 482-7770</p>
<p>EMBASSY OF MEXICO Calle Arzobispo Meriño No. 265, Zona Colonial Phone: (809) 687-6641</p>	<p>EMBASSY OF NICARAGUA Ave.México No.152 , La Esperilla Phone: (809) 563-2311 and 563-2034</p>
<p>EMBASSY OF PANAMA Calle Benito Monción No.225 Phone: (809) 476-7396 and 688-3789</p>	<p>GENERAL CONSULATE OF PANAMA Calle Cayetano Rodríguez No.1021, Gazcue Phone: (809) 688-1043 y 685-3533</p>
<p>CONSULATE OF PARAGUAY Calle Virgilio Díaz Ordóñez No.1, Ens. Julieta , Phone: (809) 412-501</p>	<p>EMBASSY OF PERU Calle Maireni 31, Los Caciczgos Phone: (809) 482-3300 and 482-3344</p>
<p>EMBASSY OF VENEZUELA Ave. Anacaona No. 7 Phone: (809) 537-8684</p>	

10. ABOUT THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

A. Government

31. The Dominican Republic has a representative democracy with three branches: executive (headed by the President); legislative, composed of the chambers of deputies and senators; and judicial. The President of the Republic is elected by popular vote for a four-year term. The current president is Dr. Leonel Fernández Reyna.

B. Healthcare

32. Medical attention for visitors to the resort is available at two clinics, one inside the hotel and staffed around the clock, and another some 10 minutes away from the hotel. In the event of an emergency or other need for medical attention, the hotel staff is in touch with both clinics. Santo Domingo has water supply, drainage, electricity, telephone service with national and international direct dialing, Internet access and other services.

C. Voltage

33. Electricity supply is of 110 volts. The points are of the US type (two flat pins).

D. Water

34. Water is supplied from tanks and wells; it can be used for general purposes but is unsuitable for drinking or preparing beverages. Bottled water should be used in the latter cases. Given the intense heat of the Caribbean, at least 8 glasses of water should be drunk daily to avoid dehydration. Use of sun lotion or similar with a protection factor of 15 is advisable.

F. Telephone

35. Telephone service is available in all the hotels, resorts and other tourist establishments. Cell-phone service is also available. Phonecards (call prepayment cards) are on sale in the shops. The area codes for calls within the Dominican Republic are 809 and 829.

G. Clothing

36. Given the high temperatures, visitors to Santo Domingo are recommended to wear light clothing of cotton or linen. In restaurants and night clubs, short-sleeved shirts, casual trousers and shoes are suitable. Sandals, trainers and shorts can be worn in open-air locations and most of the resort establishments.

H. Tipping

37. It is usual to leave tips in restaurants, hotels and other service establishments. Restaurants normally include a separate 10% service charge on the bill and it is customary to leave a tip of up to a further 10%. Bellboys, waiters, porters (airport) etc. generally expect tips. It is not usual to tip taxi drivers.

11. FURTHER INFORMATION

38. For further details contact:

National Organizer of the Event

Mrs Patricia Ginebra, Event Organizer
**Secretary of State for the Environment and
Natural Resources**

Phone: (809) 567-4300 extensions
284 and 283

E-mail: patriciaginebra@gmail.com

Site: <http://www.medioambiente.gov.do/cms/>

Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers

Ricardo Sánchez Sosa, Regional Director,
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