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

**Panama City, Panama  
26 to 30 April 2010**

A. PREPARATORY MEETING OF HIGH LEVEL EXPERTS  
26 to 28 April 2010

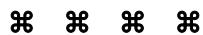
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## **Report of the Network on Atmospheric Pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean**

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## Background

1. Atmospheric pollution in the Latin American and Caribbean region, is an issue that must be addressed at regional level by the promotion of alternatives and solutions in a concerted manner through mechanisms such as South-South Cooperation.
2. In this regard the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, Technical Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, strongly promotes the adoption of concrete actions to reduce atmospheric pollution levels and to take the necessary prevention measures in specific cases and regions.
3. In the framework of the Meeting of High-Level Government Experts held in Panama City, as a preamble to the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>1</sup>, representatives of the Global Atmospheric Pollution Forum noted the lack of progress in Latin America and the Caribbean with respect to other regions of the planet in the implementation of regional initiatives to address the air pollution issue in the region, since the effects caused by this problem for the population are evident and in most cases are increasing.
4. The existence of international agreements and instruments that promote regional and international cooperation in the field and the need for a similar instrument in the Latin American and Caribbean region was noted, specifically "the adoption of a declaration of the Forum of Ministers on atmospheric pollution, which may include a network of government institutions responsible for this issue."
5. The progress made by the Partnership of Clean Fuels and Vehicles in the region was also presented at the meeting, focusing on human health benefits associated with improved fuel quality and the need for progress in air quality measurement tasks in the region as well as the impact of emissions from the transport sector, mainly in urban areas.
6. The issue of air pollution and the need for initiatives for the region, as well as the topic on better fuels, resulted in concrete proposals of decisions to be considered by the Sixteenth Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.
7. The Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean took place in early 2008 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic five years after the adoption of the Latin American Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC).
8. Among the decisions adopted by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers relevant to the topic of atmospheric pollution in the region we can mention Decision 7 (Atmospheric Pollution), which recognizes the increasing air pollution in the region, concentrated mainly in urban areas, which negatively affects the health and quality of life of the population. It also

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<sup>1</sup> Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from 27 January to 1 February 2008

recognizes the need for updated technical quality information, so as to facilitate and carry out diagnostic assessments of the impacts caused by pollution.

9. The decision also recognizes the impact of activities related to transportation on pollution and sulfur levels used in fuel as well as the need to adopt new, cleaner associated technologies.
10. In this sense it was decided to establish a network of Latin American and Caribbean authorities in charge of the issue of atmospheric pollution with the objective of having technical exchanges, promoting the development of skills and considering alternatives to reduce air pollution as well as the application of a regional action plan.
11. Another decision adopted at the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers in the Dominican Republic (Decision 8 Better Fuels for Better Air Quality) refers to the need to advocate for improving fuel quality through the use of cleaner fuels and vehicles with lower emissions, according to the goals established in the UNEP based Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles<sup>2</sup>.
12. The fact that the introduction of cleaner fuels and more efficient vehicles is one of the most efficient ways to address urban air quality issues and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases is recognized in this decision. The inclusion of topics related to improved fuels and vehicles in the priorities of the Forum of Ministers of Health and Environment is recommended.
13. It also highlights the success in the measures taken for the withdrawal of leaded gasoline from the Latin American and Caribbean market and the reduction of sulfur levels in fuels. This reduction will continue to be promoted aiming at a reduction of 50 parts per million of sulfur, focusing especially on countries with air quality problems in their urban areas.
14. In compliance with the mandate received from the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, the meeting of authorities in charge of Atmospheric Pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean took place in the early days of March, 2009 in Panama City where the Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean was integrated.
15. This meeting was attended by government representatives of twelve Latin American and Caribbean countries, representatives of the Global Atmospheric Pollution Forum, the Stockholm Environment Institute, the Clean Air Initiative and recognized experts in the topic of Atmospheric Pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean.
16. During the first day of the meeting there was an introductory seminar in which experts from various countries and organizations at global and regional level exposed topics of interest related to the atmospheric pollution issue.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.unep.org/pcfvr/](http://www.unep.org/pcfvr/)

17. The topics covered in the Introductory Seminar include: global and regional trends in air pollution, impacts and costs of atmospheric pollution at local, regional and global level in Latin America and the Caribbean, regional and local air pollution, the transport sector and burning of biomass.
18. The Intergovernmental session took place during the second and third day of the meeting. The mandate of the Forum of Ministers to establish the Network<sup>3</sup> was noted in this meeting. International experiences in intergovernmental networks of air pollution, the role and objectives of the network, national and bilateral programs, and the definition of priorities by sub-region were also discussed. The meeting ended with an established Network and with the agreement of carrying out another meeting to discuss the elements for a Framework Agreement on Atmospheric Pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean.
19. In compliance with the agreement reached at the meeting where the Network on Atmospheric Pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean was established, the Second Meeting of the Intergovernmental Network of Atmospheric Pollution took place in Mexico City, in early December 2009.
20. This second meeting was held around the following topic: Combat against air pollution and climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean: New priorities and opportunities for national and regional action.
21. As in the first meeting, the second meeting began with an introductory seminar, in this case for the first two days, and the following issues were discussed: global trends, policies and their implications for Latin America and the Caribbean, Climate Change and Atmospheric pollution, Atmospheric pollution in cities, costs and benefits to health and the environment, investments in air pollution, impact of transport sector emissions and the efforts of international cooperation to reduce the impact of transport emissions on the quality of air in the cities of Latin America and the Caribbean.
22. Upon completion of the introductory seminar, a visit and tour in the Rapid Transit Bus System in Mexico City (METROBUS) was arranged, and a presentation on this system was provided by representatives of the Government of Mexico City.
23. The last day of the meeting was devoted to the Intergovernmental session, where a proposal for a Framework Agreement on Atmospheric Pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>4</sup> was presented for discussion. The proposal covers topics such as regional cooperation, development of standards for vehicles and fuels, transportation infrastructure and urban planning, fixed and area sources, forest fires, indoor air pollution, public participation and capacity building.

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<sup>3</sup> Decision 7 of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean it is decided: To establish a Latin American and Caribbean network of authorities responsible for atmospheric pollution which would be aimed at having technical exchanges, promoting the development of skills and consider alternatives to reduce air pollution and a Regional Action Plan.

<sup>4</sup> See Annex 1: Framework Agreement on Atmospheric Pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean.

- 24.** The proposal was widely discussed during the meeting and was subsequently sent to the government atmospheric pollution focal points for comments and suggestions in order to have a version of the proposal to be submitted for consideration by the ministers of environment of Latin America and the Caribbean for approval at the next Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to be held in Panama City in the upcoming month of April.
- 25.** UNEP will continue promoting the activities of the Network, in close collaboration with government focal points, the Global Atmospheric Pollution Forum, the Clean Air Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean as well as other agencies of the United Nations, NGOs and scientists making efforts to reduce air pollution levels in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 26.** In the discussions at both meetings held up to this date, as well as in exchanges held with representatives of participating governments and associated organizations, in addition to having the Framework Proposal, the development of a work plan for the network that contains elements such as revision of baseline skills and monitoring needs, evaluation and other key elements for capacity building, the issue of co-benefits in transportation and the promotion of South-South cooperation have been identified among the necessary actions to be carried out in order for the region to move forward with concrete measures towards the reduction of Air pollution levels.

## **Annex I**

### **Framework Agreement on Air Pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean**

#### **1. Regional Cooperation**

- 1.1 Cooperate in the preparation of flexible and differentiated agreements for the maximum reduction and control of air pollutants;
- 1.2 Consider the synergies and shared benefits obtained by taking joint measures against the emission of air pollutants and greenhouse gases;
- 1.3 Develop and align among the States, as much as possible, the policies, guidelines, legislation, standards, monitoring procedures and data management procedures with respect to national air quality management;
- 1.4 Promote the exchange of information, research, and technology on air quality management through sub-regional networks and data bases;
- 1.5 Provide support and technical assistance in identifying the sources of pollution and the impacts on human health and the environment;
- 1.6 Promote cost benefit studies of air pollution and its impacts;
- 1.7 Promote epidemiological studies in the countries for appropriate decision making in each case;
- 1.8 Align emission standards and regulations from fixed sources and areas to control and promote research on the effects of transboundary air pollution;
- 1.9 Promote the development of local and regional laboratories specialized in the analysis of air pollutants.

#### **2. National and Regional Environmental Governance**

- 2.1 Promote the coordination of the national parties interested in the development and implementation of policies on air quality and air quality management strategies;
- 2.2 Build or improve the capacity of air quality management units in the national environmental agencies;
- 2.3 Develop and/or maintain, whichever the case may be, national emission inventories for the main air pollutants and greenhouse gases, including the transboundary air pollutants, and assess the impact of the various policies and measures related to these emissions;
- 2.4 Promote and install air quality monitoring stations for key pollutants using regionally standardized equipment and protocols and, as necessary, on a sub-regional level, linking this to the work being carried out globally with respect to modelling and forecasting with support from international cooperation agencies;
- 2.5 Identify and share best practices related to financing policies in order to implement measures to improve air quality and emission control and evaluation using monitoring and emission inventory systems;

- 2.6 Facilitate the regional alignment of air quality standards and guidelines and carry out periodic revisions to evaluate the national and regional air quality standards, comparing them with the best international practices;
- 2.7 Promote the use of networks and the exchange of information with support from cooperation agencies (North-South, South-South).

### **3 Transport Sector**

#### ***Standards for vehicles***

- 3.1 For those countries where the importation of used vehicles is permitted, promote establishing regulations to control and make sure that the condition of these vehicles does not pose a threat to the environment;
- 3.2 Establish pilot programs, at the national level, to measure the emission of pollutants of the vehicles in the main cities to be completed by 2015, at the latest;
- 3.3 Develop the necessary capacity to enforce inspection and maintenance programs;
- 3.4 Establish maximum permissible emission levels at the regional level by 2015 for the different categories of motor vehicles, to be as rigorous as the quality of the available fuel allows;
- 3.5 Explore and adopt modern technologies that promote vehicle fuel efficiency and the reduction of emissions, for new vehicles and for those in circulation;
- 3.6 Promote and establish emissions regulations for mobile sources.

#### ***Fuel standards***

- 3.7 Promote the establishment and standardization of appropriate fuel specification regulations, aiming for a sulphur content of 50 ppm by 2015;
- 3.8 Establish new reference laboratories and reinforce and expand the capacity of the existing labs in order to analyze fuel quality;
- 3.9 Carry out detailed economic, social, and environmental evaluations to allow for the sustainable use of biofuels and other clean fuels.

### **4 Urban Planning and Management**

#### ***Transportation Infrastructure and Urban Planning***

- 4.1 Promote investments in the development of sustainable urban mobility infrastructure;
- 4.2 Promote the use of lanes or highways exclusively for public transportation;
- 4.3 Establish operating rules and maintenance standards for public transportation vehicles and for rendering the service;
- 4.4 Promote the development and implementation of traffic administration policies and demand management, particularly streamlining the use of private vehicles through measures such as charging tolls, fees for traffic congestion, and the administration of parking lots;



- 4.5 Promote the financial sustainability of improvements in public transportation;
- 4.6 Develop adequate information systems as a need for urban planning, formulating scenarios and policy evaluation;
- 4.7 Develop and promote strategies to increase green areas, ecological measures in urban spaces and the paving of sidewalks and roads;
- 4.8 Develop and/or use land use control instruments, such as urban planning regulations, to ensure the appropriate location of industrial establishments.

## **5 Fixed and area sources**

- 5.1 Draft and adopt adequate policies and legal frameworks to promote the adoption of the best available technologies and the best environmental practices by 2015;
- 5.2 Draft and adopt policies and legal frameworks to facilitate and promote the use of cleaner fuels and the efficient use of energy;
- 5.3 Require environmental impact evaluations and/or environmental audits, as the case may be, for businesses and activities having potential and real impacts on air quality;
- 5.4 Promote establishing and/or adopting emission standards and regulations for the different activities and ensure their compliance;
- 5.5. Develop the capacity for the national monitoring of emissions caused by area and fixed sources.

## **6. Forest fires, Uncontrolled Burning, and Deforestation**

- 6.1 Support research on the frequency and impact of forest fires in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- 6.2 Promote the development and strengthening of the population's capacity to prevent and control forest fires, both provoked by man and from natural causes;
- 6.3 Develop and implement early warning systems for fires, such as fire management strategies;
- 6.4 Promote reforestation programs in deteriorated landscapes and develop alternative livelihood programs;
- 6.5 Enact regulations for the prohibition of waste burning outdoors.

## **7. Indoor Air Pollution**

- 7.1 Promote the use of accessible, more efficient, clean combustion and safer energy devices;
- 7.2 Promote the use of technologies and cleaner and more advanced energy, including the use of renewable energy;
- 7.3 Support energy efficiency training programs and promote public awareness of the impact of indoor air pollution;
- 7.4 Promote formulation of technical specifications for domestic combustion devices and establish emission standards;
- 7.5 Promote and support building naturally ventilated houses;

- 7.6 Promote electrification of poor areas to avoid using fuel lamps;
- 7.7 Promote the substitution of conventional ovens for ovens with improved technology;
- 7.8 Promote the establishment of standardised methodologies to analyze control parameters for sick building syndrome.

## **8. Public Participation in Air Quality Management**

- 8.1 Increase public awareness of air pollution problems through awareness campaigns using formal and informal communication channels;
- 8.2 Improve participation of those interested in air quality management by supporting initiatives to build capacities in governments, academic institutions and civil society organizations;
- 8.3 Promote the active commitment of the civil society and other stakeholders in collaborative air quality management projects;
- 8.4 Promote the access to and exchange of information on air pollution including, among others, research and educational information;
- 8.5 Develop effective communication strategies on the impacts of air pollution on human health and the environment, aimed, for example, at school aged children;
- 8.6 Promote and support the development of citizen participation mechanisms.

## **9. Building Capacities / Research Development**

- 9.1 Promote and establish regional educational entities, identifying regional centres of excellence for researching air quality management and other related topics, integrating them into research networks;
- 9.2 Promote and support the development of training modules and student exchange programs on air quality management and other related topics;
- 9.3 Develop and/or adopt methodologies to evaluate the impacts of air pollution during the environmental impact evaluations, environmental audit studies, and socio-economic evaluations in collaboration with national and international academic institutions;
- 9.4 Promote and support initiatives to reduce air pollution in collaboration with regional and international organizations;
- 9.5 Foster and support the harmonized use of inventories, monitoring and modelling processes, impact evaluations, reduction options, and framework policy approach.

