**Final Report of the Preparatory**

**Meeting of High-Level Experts**

**Quito, Ecuador
31 January to 3 February, 2012**

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##

# I. Introduction

1. At the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama, Panama, 25-30 April 2010), agreements were adopted to continue execution of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), which is part of the Johannesburg Plan of implementation.

2. Nine years have elapsed since the approval of ILAC. During this time, the countries of the region have made specific progress in implementing ILAC, in order to move forward towards environmental sustainability as set forth in item 7 of the Millennium Development Goals, and in implementing the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building.

3. At the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, agreement was reached to assess the lessons learned and the challenges posed by implementing the Regional Action Plan, and to prepare, during the inter-sessional period, a conceptual review of the Plan's structure and modalities of implementation. The objective of doing so was to evaluate the possibility of establishing joint programmes with the agencies of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC), without prejudice to the activities carried out by individual agencies.

4. During the inter-sessional period since the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum, consultations were carried out with the purpose of reviewing experiences of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and its instruments. This review consists of an analysis of the current situation of the Forum, followed by proposals to raise the Forum's relevance for and impact on the environmental and development agenda at the national, regional and global levels. In addition, an analysis was conducted of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) as an instrument for political dialogue and cooperation, and preliminary ideas for its future positioning were put forth.

# II. Objectives of the meeting

5. The High-Level Preparatory Meeting of Experts of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was held from 31 January to 1 February, 2012, in Quito, Ecuador.

6. The main objective of the High-Level Meeting of Experts was to review the experiences of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and its instruments. To this end, the Secretariat submitted in November 2011 the document that, in its revised form, appears as UNEP/LAC-IG.XVIII/4, for the consideration of the countries. This document presents a reflection based on the review of documents of the Forum and the findings of preliminary consultations held with Ministers of Environment of the region, other representatives of participating governments and representatives of organizations who are members of the ITC, regarding the Forum's possible new orientations and its instruments.

7. The experts reviewed the reports of the Secretariat on implementing the decisions of the Seventeenth Forum of Ministers and the recommendations arising from the meetings of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators of ILAC, as well as the Network of Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production. The experts deliberated on the follow-up of the decisions of the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum.

# III. Attendance

**8.** The Preparatory Meeting of Experts was attended by 47 Government representatives from 31 countries of the region, as well as 5 attendees from 4 programmes, and Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, 9 representativesfrom 6 Intergovernmental Agencies, 3 representatives from 3 Non-Governmental Organizations, and 2 special invitees. The List of Participants of this Meeting is available as **Annex II** to this document.

# Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting

## 9. The meeting began with an opening ceremony on Tuesday, January 31 2012 at 9:00 am. Opening remarks were delivered by Ms. Aziza Ladrón de Guevara, representing the National Environmental Authority of Panama; the Minister of Environment of Ecuador, Ms. Marcela Aguiñaga; and the Regional Director and Representative of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Ms. Margarita Astrálaga. Panama transferred the chairmanship of the Forum to Ecuador for the current period, acknowledged the honour of having held it for the past two years, cited the importance of Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), predicted successful management of the Government of Ecuador, and thanked UNEP for its support in the Forum Secretariat. The Minister of Environment of Ecuador acknowledged the challenges of building the foundations for economic, social, environmental and cultural sustainability in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is the most bio-diverse region on the planet. The Minister also highlighted the importance of strengthening governance of the Forum in the context of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean (ECLAC); the definition of a joint vision of the Region under the road towards Rio +20; and South-South cooperation. The Minister also recognized the importance of support from international agencies, including UNEP, as well as the implementation of solutions to priority problems of the region. She also urged participants to make appropriate recommendations to the Ministerial Segment of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Forum of the Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.

## 10. The Regional Director and Representative of UNEP thanked the Government of Ecuador for their hospitality and in hosting this meeting. She stressed that this meeting offers the opportunity to have an open dialogue to seek the modernization of the Forum, and thereby be help face the new challenges of the twenty first century. She also highlighted that the road to Rio +20should be the starting point for a new model of sustainable development, recognizing social, economic and environmental challenges face by the 33 countries of the region. Finally, she invited the countries to define a regional roadmap to ensure that the environmental pillars has a fundamental role in the road to Rio +20 Conference, that advances the quest for equity.

# Agenda item 2: Organization of the meeting

## 2.1. Adoption of rules and regulations

## 11. It was suggested that the experts adopt mutatis mutandis, which are the Regulations Governing Council of UNEP to govern the procedures of the meeting.

## 2.2. Election of officers

12. It was proposed to the Preliminary Meeting of Experts, in accordance with the established practice in previous Forum meetings, that the Bureau be composed of a President and seven Vice-Presidents, including a Rapporteur, taking into account the criteria of geographical representation, and rotation defined by the ministerial meetings. By nomination, it was agreed that the Bureau be composed of: representing the sub-region of Central America, Honduras and Mexico; representing the Caribbean sub-region, Dominican Republic and Jamaica; representing the Andean sub-region, Ecuador and Peru; and representing the Southern Cone, Argentina and Uruguay. Peru was nominated to serve as rapporteur.

## 2.3. Approval of the agenda and the meeting schedule of the Forum

## 13. The experts present considered the Provisional Agenda 1, Provisional Annotated Agenda 2 and Timetable of Sessions proposed by the Secretariat. The Deputy Regional Director of UNEP delivered a brief overview of the agenda, to which there was no objection and the President declared it passed. The Presidency gave positive consideration to the request by Jamaica, within the framework of the Small Island Developing States and Other Countries group, in order to create more time for discussions with the sub-regional groupings. At the request of Cuba, and with support of several countries, it was also agreed to draft and distribute the Declaration of Quito as soon as possible, in order to advance the achievement of a common vision among the countries present.

# Item 3 of the agenda: Follow-up of the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama City, Panama, 26 - 30 of April 2010)

**14.** The Deputy Regional Director of the UNEP delivered a presentation about Implementation of the Decisions of the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. Subsequent to this presentation, the Secretariat presented progress regarding environmental education, strengthening the Network for Environmental Training for Latin America and the Caribbean (ALC), and a proposal of the activities for this network.

**15.** The Secretariat of the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification delivered a presentation on the work of the Regional Financial Strategy (EFIR) for the fight against desertification and sustainable land management.

**16.** Following the presentations, the Presidency called on the participants to discuss the issues:

**17.** Colombia thanked the Secretariat for the presentations and indicated that it was satisfied with the general report. Concern was expressed with respect to the low participation by the countries to send information related to the progress of implementation of decisions and added that Colombia would like to explore the options to improve the level of participation. In relation to training, it was mentioned that it is a theme of interest but they would like more information concerning the scope and potential of the Network, given that the time dedicated to the presentation was limited. Colombia asked for additional detail concerning the proposal to extend the fiduciary fund and how to better coordinate it with the national Focal Points. The other comments were related to possible synergies to obtain potential resources at the national and regional level with different international organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank, Global Environment Facility, and environmental Conventions. Similarly, many countries requested clarifications regarding references to high return pre-investment references and their relationship with the development of projects.

**18.** Brazil expressed that they have difficulties with the limitation in the use of the Portuguese language. Brazil agreed with Colombia regarding the importance of dedicating financing for environmental education and made proposals regarding land degradation. Brazil also expressed its concern with the scope of the proposal in relation to existing resources.

**19.** The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela thanked Ecuador as host. It mentioned that the countries are performing many activities at the national level that have not been mentioned in the report, as well as cited various examples of the activities that Venezuela has developed in this area and urged other countries to assume national commitments.

**20.** Nicaragua called on other countries to make their national proposals concerning Environmental Education, recognizing that there are domestic efforts under development. It also made the point that sustainable development should be based on human development and consistent with local knowledge. It mentioned that the countries of Latin America should demand greater financing for sustainable land management, and stressed that resources should fulfil the expectations of each country and be managed at the national level. Finally, various countries expressed that the environmental costs should be included as part of production costs.

**21.** Ecuador stressed that environmental education should be directed and coordinated with production issues and environmental ethics, and not just with a focus on formal education. Ecuador stressed that desertification funds must be strengthened, given that the problems of land degradation cross the national boundaries. Ecuador suggested strengthening the fund within the *Banco Sur* framework.

**22.** Regarding environmental education, Argentina expressed the need to strengthen the actions of the network throughout the region, mainly through the Latin American and Caribbean Environmental Education Programme (PLACEA). On issues related to combating desertification, it recommended that action be developed under the umbrella of the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and stressed the need to generate synergies and to avoid multiple overlapping efforts. Argentina also mentioned that there are issues that have not been included in the document and are related to a holistic understanding of the true causes of the problem of degradation. Argentina supported the suggestion of Brazil that to not extend the scope of the global mechanism. Argentina also suggested linking the issues of desertification with climate change adaptation.

**23.** Suriname enquired about the role of the global mechanism in the operational part of the EFIR. Regarding the Environmental Training Network, the delegate welcomed the consideration to provide training in Dutch but also informed that English is not such a barrier. Suriname talked about EFIR, and requested an explanation regarding the role of the Global Mechanism in the process.

**24.** Bolivia supported statements made ​​by Venezuela and Nicaragua regarding the importance of including activities being undertaken at the national level in global processes. Bolivia emphasized that strategies must reach a local level and that attention for education should be given to indigenous peoples respecting and given due recognition to their ancestral knowledge. Regarding desertification, Bolivia recognized the importance of a focus on food security, but expressed concern that certain funding sources can lead to a commercialization of nature and therefore recommended the use of public sources.

**25.** Jamaica highlighted the environmental education work done with the "University of West Indies" has been effective and recommended that more support is given to the initiative of MESCA (Mainstreaming Environment in Caribbean Universities) and other networks.

**26.** The Chair summarized the discussions on the following points:

* It is recognized that there is lack of information on activities being undertaken in each country and the Forum of Ministers provides a platform to facilitate communication about initiatives being undertaken in the region.
* Countries see the lack of synergy as an obstacle and allow the Forum providing wording for the issues important to the region such as desertification and climate change adaptation, and strengthen the region to other supranational organizations and forums.
* With respect to financing, the Chair emphasized the need to seek synergies and mechanisms and national initiatives to achieve better targeting of different resources.

**27.** The recommendations with respect to this issue are considered in draft decisions 2 on Environmental Education for Sustainable Development and 3 Regional Financial Strategy, for analysis by the Ministers.

## 3.1. Elements of a framework agreement on atmospheric pollution in Latin America and the Caribbean

**28.** The Chair introduced this item and explained that at the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, Ministers adopted the decision on establishing the need to develop an Action Plan of the Regional Intergovernmental Network for Atmospheric Pollution.  The Network meetings and subsequent consultations produced a set of general principles and specific elements for the development of an action plan. The Secretariat presented the objectives of the Intergovernmental Network of Air Pollution. They analyzed the integrated elements in the document UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVIII/7. Based on this document, the following points were outlined:

**29.** Several countries commended the Secretariat for the presentation and the proposal, which has provided good elements for a future decision on the issue.

**30.** There was general consensus to establish a Network for information sharing on the subject within the region. A number of countries also stressed that it is essential to designate focal points on the issue, as this will provide an institutional framework to the work being done through the Intergovernmental Network on Air Pollution. There was also an emphasis placed on the importance of regional and sub-regional cooperation to share experiences on the subject.

**31.** However, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, and Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Paraguay opposed the creation of a new Framework Convention given the existence of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Viena Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol and Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, amongst other. . These countries stressed the importance of identifying links related to the topic of atmospheric pollution with existing Conventions.

**31 bis.** Trinidad and Tobago, Peru expressed the need to take into account the relevant provisions and requirements of other multilateral environmental agreements that address issues related to atmospheric pollution when considering the Action Plan of the Regional Intergovernmental Network for Atmospheric Pollution in order to minimize duplication and maximize synergies.

**32.** Chile, Ecuador and Mexico proposed the development of a regional effort to collect, review information, and strengthen capacity to assess the impacts of air pollution. Paraguay proposed to undertake a regional monitoring weather and climate that include considerations related to air pollution. Ecuador called for an agreement among the countries to strengthen and tools and research for the analysis of air quality.

**33.** Bolivia and Colombia highlighted emphasized the different circumstances of each country, and the importance of avoiding the creation of commitments that will be problematic to implement in countries.

**34.** Other countries felt that this issue should be further analysed

**35.** Venezuela noted that the evaluation and monitoring of air pollution are not enough and stressed the importance of understanding and addressing the structural causes of it.

**36.** Chile, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Paraguay noted that air pollution is not limited to climate change, but also includes human, plant and animal health.

**37.** Brazil and Nicaragua recommended extending the vision of air pollution to emphasize the need for proper management of productive ecosystems..

**38.** Brazil indicated the need to promote an action plan to combat trade in illicit chemical substances that deplete the ozone layer.

**39.** The Chair thanked the interventions and discussion and provided a summary of key points of the discussion, to be considered in the recommendations on this issue for analysis by the ministers.

* Signalled synergies between this theme and climate change;
* Highlighted the high costs associated with an effective management of atmospheric contamination at both national and regional levels, particularly the cost of an appropriate system to monitor air quality;
* Noted the need for a search for financing mechanisms so the Action Plan can be implemented at national and regional level;
* Stressed the diversity of contexts, capacities and efforts related to this theme in each country; and
* Highlighted the importance of the lessons learned in the region, such as improvements in mass public transit.

40. The recommendations with respect to this issue are considered in draft decision 4 for analysis by the Ministers.

## 3.2. Action plan and operation of the Environmental Indicators Working Group: next steps

**41.** The representation of the Environmental Indicators Working Group of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) had the opportunity to comment on the activities undertaken during the inter-sessional period. This group presented as a support document the proposal of the Environmental Indicators Working Group (EIWG) of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC)[[1]](#footnote-1). The presentation reported the achievements obtained during the biennium 2010-2011 and presented both the Action Plan 2012-2013 (developed at the last meeting of the EIWG, Mexico, in October 2011) and a set of recommendations of the Group for the Forum’s consideration in the document UNEP/LAC-IWGW/5/.

**42**. After the presentation, many countries intervened to commend the work of the EIWG and acknowledge the efforts of the UNEP Secretariat. Delegations highlighted that the results achieved so far have been very concrete and showed general support for the Work Plan and recommendations made.

**43**. Some representatives reported on the activities of environmental indicators in their respective countries, including their coordination in planning processes at national level. The Dominican Republic emphasised the importance of strengthening the collection of primary sources of information and proposed that technical assistance is provided to develop the ILAC national indicators.

**44**. Several countries noted the need to strengthen national offices for environmental statistics, the capacity to develop and organize primary information for monitoring, boost training activities and ensure a harmonized system of indicators that can support the development of national policies, as well as allow responding to international requests for information. In this regard, they stressed the importance of ensuring the identification and mobilization of both technical and financial resources. Also, Paraguay and Bolivia called attention to their situation as landlocked countries.

**45.** The opportunity to leverage ILAC’s regional experience and use it as an input for the process of discussing a new metric for sustainable development in the context of Rio +20 was also highlighted.

**46.** Several delegations pointed out the importance of taking into account the context and the specific capabilities of the different countries of the region under the EIWG Work Plan. In this context, the representative of Brazil suggested considering the possibility of undertaking specific work at the sub-regional or biome level.

**47.** The delegate from Uruguay noted that work on the subject of indicators should encourage integration and complementarity between environmental, social and economic indicators.

**48.** The representative of Bolivia concurred by highlighting the importance of placing the indicator system in the framework of restoring equilibrium with the earth, and reported that her country is working on the formulation of specific indicators along this line. It is recommended to analyse and enrich with the proposal of the countries the matrix of indicators to strengthen a constructive discussion towards Rio+20.

**49.** Ecuador reported on its progress with respect to the indicators tied to the National Plan for a Good Quality of Life, which is currently under evaluation and may provide a basis for a South-South exchange of experiences. In this context, it highlighted the experience gained in constructing and measuring indicators such as the ecological footprint and ecosystems’ carrying capacity.

**50.** Paraguay suggested that the Work Plan explore the link between environmental indicators and knowledge management, including the work with universities, centres of excellence, as well as the Environmental Training Network, without losing sight of the importance of taking into account both local and ancestral knowledge.

**51.** Saint Lucia welcomed the inclusion of two English-speaking countries in the EIWG, and encouraged other countries to join.  Argentina's representative in turn stated the willingness of her country to return tothe EIWGand requested the petition to be made through a note. Dominican Republic also expressed its interest to become a member.

52. The recommendations emerging from the discussion are contained in draft decision 5 for submission to the ministerial segment for possible adoption.

3.3. Report of the Sixth Regional Meeting of the Council of Regional Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and the operation of the expert network

**53.** The UNEP representative made a short presentation on the topic, and the President opened the floor for different countries to make comments and ask questions.

**54.** In general, the participants highlighted the importance of working on the topics of sustainable consumption and production, and they congratulated the work carried out by the Council of Regional Government Experts on sustainable consumption and production (SCP), and UNEP. In this context, they expressed the need to support the suggestions contained in the report of the Sixth Meeting of the Council of Regional Government Experts, held in November 2011 in Panama.

**55.** A large number of participants pointed out that their countries have been working seriously on the topic of SCP, and they have developed and implemented a series of policies, plans, strategies and initiatives in this field; and in some cases the considerations of SCP have been incorporated in National Development Plans. Likewise, some sub-regional groups like the Mercosur, have adopted a decision regarding a Policy of Promotion and Cooperation and Sustainable Consumption. Argentina informed that this instrument was internalized through national normative. They emphasized, among other issues, the need to continue working in sustainable public procurement. And, the Dominican Republic mentioned that they have adopted a Sustainable Consumption and Production Policy in the framework of the Central American strategy. Colombia highlighted the effective articulation of these policies with their National Development Plan.

**56.** Various participants highlighted the importance of supporting the adoption, in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio +20, of the 10 Years Framework of Programmes on SCP, with clear objectives and adequate financing, and whose adoption was not possible in the 18th and 19th sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

**57.** Some representatives pointed out the need for more radical changes, and the importance of having a new paradigm for development, one that considers nature as an integral part of the above.

**58.** Argentina highlighted the importance of identifying synergies with activities, programs, and projects that are complementary with SCP. On the other hand, the representative of Paraguay encouraged that a discussion takes place on the relationship between the green economy and SCP.

**59.** Ecuador acknowledged the need to support the standardization of clean production processes.

**60.** Bolivia and Venezuela emphasized the need to consider ancient cultures’ sustainable practices, and to promote their respect and learning about these practices. Likewise, recognition of the planet’s limits and its finite resources was encouraged, as well as the need to consider the capacity of ecosystems to regenerate. Venezuela also requested to refer to paragraph 31 of the Ministerial Environmental Declaration of Caracas, which recognizes the sovereignty of countries over their natural resources and ensures the rights of indigenous and local communities over their traditional knowledge

**61.** Mexico in turn highlighted the importance of strengthening the life cycle approach, and promoting opportunities to replicate successful experiences.

62. The Presidency concluded by recognizing and congratulating the region’s progress in this topic, and highlighted the need of a new paradigm that fosters harmony with nature, as well as a strong approach in this Forum’s declaration for Rio + 20.

63. The recommendations emerging from the discussion are contained in draft decision 6 for submission to the ministerial segment for possible adoption.

*3.4. Evaluation, strengthening and governance of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean*

* ***Evaluation report***

64. The Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers provided the High-Level Experts with the document “Revision of Experiences: Modalities for Dialogue and Implementation of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.”

65. This agenda item began with Ecuador's proposal to declare the Eighteenth Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean as the First Meeting of Ministers of Environment of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC, in Spanish). Afterwards, the President gave the floor to the Pro-Tempore Presidency of CELAC that currently Chile.

66. In her remarks, the CELAC representative thanked the Ecuadorian government for the opportunity to intervene and provided best wishes to this meeting, as the first meeting in preparation of the Community for the Rio +20 Conference. She stressed that the recommendations of the Troika, comprising Chile, Venezuela and Cuba, under the Caracas Action Plan, gives priority to the rational use of resources.

67. In addition to the Action Plan, consideration was given "to convene a meeting of ministers of the environment before the Rio +20 Conference, in order to follow up on the agreements of the Environmental Ministerial Declaration of Caracas and to contribute to the success of the Conference" and the Troika expressed that, in order to use resources more wisely, this edition of the Forum be established as mentioned.

68. It is believed that an update of the Forum’s instruments will facilitate that an effective response is given to country priorities, emphasizing the environmental agenda at the local, regional, sub-regional and global levels.

69. The Environmental Ministerial Declaration of Caracas recognized the progress in regional institutionalization, through UNEP and the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative (ILAC), which are key instruments supporting the region’s countries in implementing sustainable development policies.

70. The President then invited the countries to provide their comments.

71. Nicaragua, Cuba, Bolivia, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Paraguay and Argentina supported Ecuador’s proposal.

72. Mexico said that the work between the Forum of Ministers of Environment and CELAC should be collegial and should foster synergies between the two bodies, while also focusing on the work supported by UNEP in the last 30 years.

73. Several countries welcomed the creation of a space for environmental discussion in the context of CELAC, but stated that they needed a little more time to analyse Ecuador’s proposal, reflect on its implications, and how to work between the Forum and the CELAC.

74. Several countries (including Argentina, Paraguay, Cuba, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Haiti) stressed that CELAC goes beyond environmental issues and constitutes an undeniable political space.

75. Jamaica welcomed the reference made to the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Islands Developing States.

76. Colombia expressed that the Forum has provided a very valuable case of regional consensus during its close to 30 year existence, which has implied a learning process for all countries. The Forum has allowed giving continuity to an important set of actions and herein lays a potential forum to make more effective decisions over time. He added that the Forum sets priorities which provide a framework for sub-regional spaces. On challenges, the issue of managing financial and technical resources that arise from decision-making was highlighted. He noted that as long as the Forum is specific in its proposals and precise in its goals, international aid agencies will be more likely to channel their support.

77. Brazil stressed that the Forum is a space in which common problems are shared and thus provides no better place to make environmental claims. According to this country, the Forum is the most important regional space for political dialogue. Environmental problems for the region have been identified therein and proposals have been made to address them during recent years. In this regard, UNEP's efforts to serve the Forum have been very important. It is now necessary to analyse what works well (for example, the working groups) and what needs to be strengthened or improved. Furthermore, it is key to avoid doing a bit of everything and in this way dispersing the actions. A dynamic agenda is required.

78. Bolivia mentioned that CELAC is a joint effort for future development where knowledge will be shared and South-South cooperation will be promoted. He stressed that CELAC should take into consideration all assets and documents developed by the Forum.

79. Ecuador recalled that CELAC originates from a mandate from the Presidents of the region and the Caracas Action Plan sets out the elements to begin working on a roadmap. The heritage created by the Forum is not being disregarded.

80. Another group of countries asked to leave substantive discussions to the ministerial segment, given the relevance and political importance of the subject.

81. Peru said they deem that the best way to acknowledge the heritage of the Forum is to recognize that this is the eighteenth meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of CELAC and not the first of CELAC, recognizing the progress and suggesting that the environmental agenda has already set its priorities.

82. Venezuela said the Caracas Action Plan gave the mandate to hold a meeting of Ministers of Environment in order to contribute to the Rio +20 Summit, which is only four months away. The CELAC will not overlook the Forum and this meeting will mark a milestone.

83. Finally, the session ended with speeches by ECLAC and UNDP. ECLAC emphasized that the Forum has been very important for this Commission to get to know environmental priorities of the region and to transmit these to other development sectors. The representative of ECLAC offered further support to the Forum and all stakeholders that are complementary to the area of sustainable development. UNDP expressed its intention to renew its unswerving support to contribute to the processes of regional integration and to respond to countries’ requirements from different areas.

84. The Chair closed the discussion by noting that through CELAC the region could also cast itself to present the views of Latin America and the Caribbean to the region and the rest of the world.

85. The Chair also suggested that an open-ended working group on governance of the Forum be created. Peru and Mexico offered to facilitate and co-facilitate the group, respectively. Dominican Republic, Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, Cuba, Colombia, Ecuador, Suriname and St. Lucia asked to participate in the Group.

86. The recommendations emerging from the discussion are contained in draft decision 1 for submission to the ministerial segment for possible adoption.

*Conclusions and recommendations*

**87.** The Rapporteur proceeded to read the summary of conclusions and recommendations made during the day; the following comments were made:

**88.** Argentina submits a proposal on sovereignty of the Malvina’s Islands to be included in the Quito Declaration.

**89.** Finally, the President reminded participants of the contact groups that were created to discuss specific issues in more detail. These are: the Group charged with addressing the issue of governance of the Forum; the Group to discuss the decisions to be adopted by the meeting; and the group to introduce the subject of Common Good and Mother Earth.

# Agenda item 4: Perspectives of the Forum towards Rio+20

**90.** The representatives of the countries had the opportunity to analyse and discuss the regional perspectives of the Forum having in mind the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20-22 June 2012.

## 4.1 Current situation of sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean

**91.** In this agenda item, Mr Carlos de Miguel, Environmental Affairs Officer, Division for Sustainable Development and Human Settlements, Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), delivered a presentation on the current status of sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to diagnose the progress and outstanding issues and recognize the challenges the region faces in the current context. He noted that given that this was a general presentation, he noted that many specificities of the region could not be detailed.

**92.** The analysis conducted by ECLAC in 1992 explained that the region of Latin America and the Caribbean experienced a low rate of economic growth, high inflation and high foreign debt. On the contrary, the region has been experiencing a relatively high level of growth during the past decade. However, this growth is not homogeneous in all sub-regions and shows signs of slowing. In the past 20 years, the region has made important advances, including a decrease in the poverty rate from 48.4% to 31.4%, and the human development index has grown in the three sub-regions due to productive development policies and stable employment. This underlines the fundamental role of the state. Moreover, progress is shown in the percentage of population with access to drinking water and electricity for mainly urban populations.

**93.** In environmental terms, significant progress has been made in terms of controlling deforestation, especially the Amazon, while emissions of substances that deplete the ozone layer have also steadily declined, reflecting progress of the Montreal Protocol. In this sense, the environmental pillar has been strengthened through improved legislation and institutions. However, the analysis conducted by ECLAC also indicates that in the population living in poverty was higher in 1980 than it was in 2010 (although it is significantly lower with respect to percentage of the total population), and that the region remains the most unequal in the world in terms of income, and very unequal in quality of educational among different social classes and between rural and urban populations. Additionally, emissions of greenhouse gases in the region have increased steadily since 1990.

**94.** The recommendations made by ECLAC cover issues such as environmental statistics. According to Mr Carlos de Miguel, they require greater attention in investment. Similarly, an outstanding issue would be wealth assessment, taking into account the value of the environment and degradation. In many countries, legislation to facilitate the implementation of Principle 10 of Rio Declaration is not yet developed or hard of implementation. Additionally, the analysis highlights that international cooperation was not enough because in 2010 the official development assistance from developed countries reached 0.32% of gross national income, which represents less than half of the target percentage compromised.

**95.** Finally, the ECLAC analysis presents a series of reflections on how to achieve sustainable development, such as: the importance of implementing mechanisms to ensure coordination and coherence of public policies to achieve synergies between social, environmental and economic policies; focus on sustainability of development through welfare, property, investment and governance of natural resources; implementation of Principle 16, the internalization of environmental costs and benefits of social and economic decisions, both public and private; the effective implementation of Principle 10; the production and dissemination of environmental information and statistics and sustainable development; and the importance of human capital for sustainability through education, science, culture and technology.

**96.** In addition, ECLAC concluded the presentation by mentioning some topics of the Regional Preparatory Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio +20, held from 7 to 9 September 2011, in Santiago de Chile.

## 4.2 Regional vision of sustainable development in the framework of multiple crises

**97.** The representatives of the countries discussed the vision of sustainable development within the framework of the multiple crises facing the world today and to address regional perspectives. Bolivia announced it will convene a workshop prior to the Rio +20 Conference to exchange knowledge and experiences on development and implementation of policies aimed at sustainable development, from the perspective that the green economy approach is not acceptable. Venezuela welcomed the initiative of Bolivia. It was agreed to address this issue further in the segment of ministers.

**98.** The meeting proceeded to discuss the proposals for decisions made ​​by delegations in the form of working groups. The discussions resulted in agreements in relation to the following decisions: Governance of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean; Environmental Education for Sustainable Development; Environmental Indicators; Sustainable Consumption and Production; and Chemical Substances, Dangerous Waste, and other Waste.

**99.** The President then opened a session to address the analysis of the Declaration of Quito. After extensive discussion of the participants to define the methodology for the formulation of the proposed Declaration of Quito, a Contact Group (CG) was formed which was composed representativeness of the sub-regions and worked under the direction of the vice-presidencies of Jamaica and the Dominican Republic in the consolidation of a proposed Declaration which would be reviewed in plenary at 9.00pm on Wednesday.

**100**. The present report was approved by the Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean on 2 February, after a general presentation was made by Peru, as the rapporteur of the meeting.

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Annex I
Decisions proposed by the Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts

***The Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Governments present at the Eighteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Quito, Ecuador, 31 January to 1 February 2012, taking into account the recommendations of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts and the deliberations of this XVIII meeting, recommend the adoption of the following decisions:***

**Decision 1**

**Governance of the Forum of Ministers of Environment**

 **of Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Recognizing** the progress made in building a common regional vision and action, as well as highlighting the urgent need for improvements in the organization and functioning of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, to ensure their role as a regional forum for dialogue and effective presence in the political process and increase the integration and mainstreaming in public policies,

**Reaffirming** the regional consensus on the value of the Forum as an instrument of political coordination in Latin America and the Caribbean,

**Noting** the 2012 Caracas Action Plan of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean Community States (CELAC for its initials in Spanish), which indicates the formation of a working group to address environmental issues in the region highlight the need to coordinate efforts with the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen cooperation, promote the coordination and complementarity of public policy on environmental issues, as well as the creation and implementation of plans, regional plans, policies and common priority areas for sustainable development.

**Considering** the lessons and experiences related to the institutional development of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, accumulated over the last 30 years, and the exchange of views on the options presented in document UNEP / LAC-GWG -XVIII / 4.

**DECIDE**

* 1. The Forum of Ministers provides for the creation of a working group, consisting of the board of the Eighteenth Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to strengthen cooperation, coordination and complementarity of public policy on environment and for the generation and implementation of common regional policies and plans in priority areas for sustainable development in order to develop a process in consultation with all countries of the region and in close coordination with the *troika* of CELAC.
	2. Give priority to the political dialogue, in order that the region has more elements to meet the emerging challenges of the global environmental agenda, and the defence of sovereignty over our natural heritage for the construction of sustainable development. To this end, adopting the necessary measures for the Forum of Ministers, effectively strengthen its presence in global environmental policy processes.
	3. The proposed measures to strengthen the Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC, referred to in the document UNEP/LAC-GWG-XVIII/4 will be reviewed in consultation with member countries, by the Intersession Committee of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, according to the results of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio + 20).
	4. Establish an additional mechanism of the Forum, the use of communication technologies available for dialogue and the adoption of agreements, which facilitates the accomplishment of virtual meetings, which would allow the opportune and united attention of the agenda of sustainable regional development.
	5. Report to Ministers of the Environment on the proposal that the eighteenth Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean is itself the First Meeting of Ministers of Environment of the CELAC.

**Decision 2**

**Environmental Education for Sustainable Development**

**Considering** the need to broaden and strengthen the mechanisms of operation of the Environmental Education Network, in particular for his contributions to the implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC in Spanish) through a significant effort in training and education environmental, as well as the decision-making and allocation of resources;

**Recognizing** the Latin American and Caribbean Programme for Environmental Education (PLACEA in Spanish) and the Andean Amazonian Communication and Environmental Education Plan (PANACEA);

**Taking into account** the actions taken by various governments of the Region in the framework of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014, in particular the strengthening of environmental public policies and strategies in various countries of the Region;

**Noting** the Global Universities Partnership for Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) led by UNEP which aims to promote the integration of environmental and sustainability considerations in teaching, research, community participation and universities’ management, as well as increase and improve student participation in activities aimed at sustainable development within and outside universities;

**Taking note** that it is imperative to build bridges between policy makers and environmental training and research centers to boost local environmental policies with the support of the academy;

**Emphasizing** that regarding virtual training means, more effort is needed for their development, outreach, installation and use to get more social sectors and also in more varied forms of teaching, flexible and appropriate to the cultural characteristics of different social actors. We also need to promote more varied and flexible teaching methods which are also appropriate to the cultural characteristics of different social actors.

**DECIDE**

1. **To continue and strengthen** the activities of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean under the following criteria:
2. To focus on the priority themes of the Latin American and Caribbean Strategy for Sustainable Development;
3. To seek mutually complementary and mutual support among the activities of the ETN, PLACEA, PNACEA and the activities of the agencies of the Inter Agency Technical Committee of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment;
4. To foster environmental education through virtual and face to face means and in different languages (Spanish, English, French, Portuguese), including at least one national language;
5. To promote the integration of environmental subjects and focus on ecosystem management in University and technological institutes’ research and teaching in different disciplines, and on knowledge management;
6. To build alliances with sub-regional organizations, the private sector and community organizations to boost local environmental policies with the support of the academy;
7. To continue participating and technically assisting the regional Congresses of Environmental Education organized by Latin America and Caribbean countries and to establish an evaluation and monitoring mechanism of commitments made by governments;
8. To extend the financial trust fund of the Environmental Training Network and pursue payment of contributions by countries;
9. To embrace once more the proposal for the “establishment of a Consultative Committee of Focal Points that will allow for a more continuous process of consultation and decision-making, including programming and dissemination of activities, and selection of candidates as beneficiaries of the Network’s activities. This committee would include, at the same time, representatives of the Interagency Technical Committee of the Forum of Ministers and other agencies that collaborate in a concrete manner.” The Committee would meet virtually with the support of electronic tools.
10. **To request** UNEP to continue supporting the countries, from a technical standpoint, in the implementation of PLACEA and PANACEA.
11. **To request UNEP** to promote active participation of the universities of the region in the Global University Partnership for Environment and Sustainability (GUPES), from the perspective of the priorities and needs of the region, with focus around the three pillars of GUPES, namely, education, training and networking and also in initiative such as Mainstreaming Environment in Caribbean Universities (MESCA).
12. **To strengthen** or to create environmental education and citizenship participation units of the Ministries of Environment, to enable them to have the necessary human and financial resources to meet the objectives.
13. **To promote** South-South cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean as a tool for transferring knowledge, best practices and technical resources, among others.
14. To request UNEP to prepare a report on the activities undertaken and the resources used in environmental education in the region over the past three years to December 2011 in the framework of the Environmental Training Network and the level of resources currently available in the Financial Fund Trust. Similarly, to add an explanation of the criteria that, at the time, countries agreed to establish the level of countries’ contributions to the Trust Fund. This report shall be distributed to countries no later than forty-five days as of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Forum.

**Decision 3**  **Regional Financial Strategy**

**Recalling** that in decision 16 of the XVI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), held in Santo Domingo in 2008, Ministers decided to request the Interagency Technical Committee (ITC) and Forum Secretariat in coordination with the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, the development of a regional proposal to indicate patterns and actions needed to increase the flow of financial resources to support implementation at the national, subregional and regional level of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);

 **Also** recalling decision 8 of the XVII Meeting of the Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), held in Panama City in April 2010, the Ministers decided to welcome the proposal for a Regional Financial Strategy (EFIR) produced by the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, in consultation the Interagency Technical Committee (ITC) and general guidelines for developing a process that promotes the mobilization of financial resources to support effective implementation of the UNCCD in a synergistic approach;

**Recalling** that at the same meeting, the Ministers requested the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD and the Regional Coordination Unit of the UNCCD in consultation with the Regional Executive Committee of the UNCCD, with the support of the Secretariat of the Forum and the ITC, the developing a proposal for operationalization of the EFIR, to be submitted to the XVIII Meeting of the Forum, in line with the provisions of the UNCCD Ten-Year Strategy, such that defines ways of financing it, and the methods of operation , necessary actions and institutional responsibilities;

**Recognizing** that countries must strengthen their efforts to internalize the principles of shared responsibility to combat DTDS and multilateral lending agencies have their own criteria and credit lines and procedures in allocating resources to countries, programs, projects and specific actions that they do not always respond to the policies and plans, and it is therefore desirable to define policies, strategies, actions and resources required to guide and collaborate with these agencies so that their contributions are to a greater extent and properly coordinated to be better utilized by the countries

**Bearing in mind** what was stated in the XVIII Meeting of the Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) on the importance of synergies between the funds and programs that are linked to SLM issues and its positive impact in mitigating Climate Change;

**Taking into account** the high level session of the UN General Assembly on Desertification held in New York in 2011, where the international community expressed their concern of land degradation and that strongly recommended that countries work with initiatives related to Sustainable Land Management, also taking into account the approval of UN resolution A/C.2/66/L.72 on the promotion of international consensus as to reduce the excessive price volatility and speculation in commodity markets;

**Welcoming** the document "*Operational Strategy for the Integrated Financial Regional Strategy (EFIR) to Increase the Flow of Funds to Fight Desertification and Land Degradation in Latin America and the Caribbean*", which was requested by the Forum in Decision 8 of the XVII Meeting in 2010, facilitated by the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD and the Regional Coordination Unit of the UNCCD in consultation with the members of the ITC, requesting likewise taken into account the comments and contributions submitted by delegations present at the 18th meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC.

**DECIDE**:

1. Requests the UNCCD to continue the implementation process of the EFIR and to conduct the necessary measures to establish the Technical Management Secretariat for the implementation of the EFIR; and to seek the necessary financial contribution to implement the Multi-Agency Fund Pre-Investment to allow the operation of the Technical Management Secretariat of the EFIR;
2. Recommends to the UNCCD, to develop the work program of the Technical Management Secretariat with a special attention on the Latin America and the Caribbean Dry lands and conduct the necessary consultations with potential host institutions for the EFIR; taking into account the synergies with climate change adaptation financing mechanisms, with special attention on triggering South – South cooperation processes.
3. Also recommends to the UNCCD, to present the results of these processes at the next meeting of the forum of Ministers, including the work program of Technical Management Secretariat.

Decision 4
Atmospheric Pollution within the framework of

the Regional Intergovernmental Network

**Recognizing** that atmospheric pollution continues to exact a heavy toll in terms of damage to human health, eco-systems and crop yields across the LAC region;

**Noting** the agreements and conventions related to atmospheric contamination subscribed by the countries of the region and specifying that the present decision focuses on issues which are not covered by those agreements and conventions;

**Reaffirming** that controlling many atmospheric problems requires effective co-operation at the regional and sub-regional scales;

**Also reaffirming** that the current range of sub-regional initiatives on atmospheric pollution could benefit from a wider framework for regional co-operation and that cost-savings could accrue to all member states from co-operation in monitoring, assessment, emission reduction measures and research on atmospheric pollution;

**Noting** progress so far in understanding the range and diversity of the region’s atmospheric problems from meetings of the Regional Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution established by the Forum of Ministers;

**Taking into account** the Decisions on Atmospheric Pollution during the previous meetings of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment and the request to continue the work of the Regional Intergovernmental Network and to develop an Action plan on Atmospheric Pollution to provide orientation to the work of the Network.

DECIDE:

**1. To continue** work on the elaboration of a Regional Action Plan which would provide orientation to the work of the Regional Intergovernmental network, in which potential sources of funding are assessed, with the aim of presenting it to Ministers at the next Meeting of the Forum for consideration of possible approval.

**2. To participate** in a collective exercise to assemble and review information and resources for monitoring and assessing atmospheric pollution impacts across the countries of the region, as an essential basis for developing the Action Plan, and to provide their inputs of priority subjects and abatement opportunities.

**3. To strengthen** initiatives targeting the promotion of public transport and non-motorized transport, the production and use of cleaner and more efficient vehicles and fuels.

**4. To promote** the strengthening of the institutional areas in each country, which are responsible for atmospheric pollution control and to maintain an active participation of these institutions in the regional activities related to this topic.

**5. To build** the regional capacity for the generation of air quality information for national decision-making.

**6. To strengthen** the public-private dialogue and the role of all sectors involved in the promotion of commitments and actions oriented to reduction of atmospheric pollution for all the priority areas defined, within regional, sub-regional and national planning.

**7. To ensure** coordination of the initiatives promoted within the framework of the Regional Intergovernmental Network with the activities development in the context of other commitments and agreements assumed by the countries of the region on issues related to atmospheric contamination.

**Decision 5
Environmental Indicators**

**Convinced** thatone of the most complex challenges that our international community faces is achieving sustainable development in harmony with nature

**Reaffirming** our commitment to fight against poverty, the meeting advocates for sustainable development in harmony with nature, based on the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. In this context, we support the Declaration for Harmony with Nature, given the interdependent and complementary systematic interconnection between human beings and natural resources , and that we are united by a genetic code that is based on a sacred union of life in its multiple forms, and therefore, Humanity is part of the community of life, the conscience and intelligence of the Earth, and it advocates for social, ecological, ethic, and moral justice of a new global economic regime;

**Recognizing** the contribution of the indicators of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) to the capacity of the countries to measure their achievements and advancements in social, economic and environmental development, parallel with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), especially MDG 7, which permits the effective application of national development plans;

 **Recognizing** that the matrix of indicators of the Work Group for Environmental Indicators requires updating and improvements taking into consideration the reality of peoples and nations in the framework of their visions and sovereignty, adjusting for the framework of Agenda 21.

**Recognizing** the efforts of many countries in the region to systemize environmental information through the creation of entities, inter-institutional coordination and methodological development and the incorporation of technology;

**Taking Note** of the necessity to increase even further the availability, access, regional harmonization and coordination of environmental data and information for decision making in matters of sustainable development, as well as the periodic updating and monitoring of this data and information;

**Understanding** the special contribution of geo-referenced and Earth Observation System data for the development and the dissemination of information and environmental indicators;

**Underlining** the necessity to increase efforts at a regional level, so that all countries have an integrated national system for statistics and environmental indicators, including the Small Developing Island Nations of the Caribbean;

**Reaffirming** the commitment of the countries in the region to harmonize the methodologies used for the gathering of statistics and environmental indicators under the framework of the Forum;

**Taking note** of the necessity to periodically review the relevance of the indicators for the regional and sub-regional priorities, and in a coherent manner align the objectives of the ILAC with the concrete objectives of the indicators within them;

**Taking into account** the inter-institutional cooperation between the UNEP and the ECLAC, whose main objectives are to strengthen and develop national technical capacities, helping to improve the production and quality of the environmental statistics in the country, and promote the dissemination and use of environmental information for the strengthening of decision making and evaluations;

**DECIDE:**

**1. To adopt** the recommendations of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators (WGEI resulting from the meeting held the 11 and 12 of October of 2012 in Mexico city;

**2. To express satisfaction** with the work performed by the WGEI and **support** its continuation, promoting attention to the strengthening of the indicators related with the environmental, social and economic pillars of the ILAC;

**3. To accept** the action plan of the WGEI in order to continue with the methodological development of environmental indicators, harmonized at the regional level, and their adoption by the countries in the region;

**4. To analyze,** update, modify and reformulate the structure and content of the matrix of indicators in their thematic areas, 24 specific goals and 38 specific objectives, in accordance with Annex 3 of the UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVIII/5.Rev.1 document;

**5. To agree** that said process must be guided by a focus on integrated and sustainable development, contemplating the reduction of poverty, food security, food sovereignty and harmony with nature, taking into account, among other things, the socio-cultural visions of indigenous peoples and local communities.

**6. To construct** and implement these indicators while respecting the sovereign vision of the development models and paradigms of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

**7. To urge the governments** to dedicate more human and financial resources to the generation of relevant information for the development of policies to achieve environmental sustainability; strengthening the generation of environmental information and the creation of offices for environmental statistics in the Ministries of the Environment and other relevant public entities in the region, in agreement with national policies.

**8. To promote** horizontal and triangular cooperation between countries of the region with the purpose of promoting the development of capabilities and replicate the best practices in the generation of information and management;

**9. To promote** inter-institutional coordination, the sistematisation of the monitoring of the ILAC indicators and capacity building between ministries, geo-spatial and statistical agencies, universities and other relevant institutions, with the purpose of using resources efficiently, avoiding the duplication of efforts and the integration of environmental information as a fundamental element for the development of policies; as well as the strengthening of processes for establishing the national indicators within the framework of the ILAC, at the national and regional level.

**10. To promote**, in coordination with the “Work Group for Environmental Statistics of the Statistics of the Americas Conference”, the creation of capabilities focused on the basic data and indicators to support the processes of evaluation of the state of the environment, through the use of virtual tools, forums and on-line educational seminars.

**11.** To leverage on GTIA experience of the measurement of sustainable development objectives for developing a regional position to the next "United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development" and the implementation of the initiatives arising from the Rio +20;
**12.** **To promote,** within the region, in countries and in international forums, the use of ILAC indicators to complement the MDG indicators, to ensure proper measurement of environmental variables, in particular MDG Goal 7, and Sustainable Development Goals that could be approved at Rio +20;

**13.** **Promote** the organization of a workshop previous to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be the space in which countries can present and discuss their views and proposals for sustainable development towards the Rio +20 process.

**14.** **Continue** supporting the development of integrated environmental assessments (IEA) at regional, sub-regional, national and ecosystem levels, reflecting both the specific areas of environmental priority of the ILAC as well as the identification of data gaps on various topics;

**15.** **Continue to** support UNEP´s work on Global Environment Outlook and capacity building for developing countries as a component of the evaluation process, to enhance the construction and application of sustainable development indicators.

**16.**  **Request** Inter-Agency Technical Committee, in accordance with their respective mandates, and other regional and sub-regional organizations, to cooperate with the Working Group on Environmental Indicators of the Forum of Ministers of Environment for the strengthening and consolidation of environmental indicators, geo-spatial information and Earth observation systems.

Decision 6
Sustainable Consumption and Production

**Considering** the call of Agenda 21 for action to change unsustainable patterns of consumption and production;

**Recognizing** that the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 identified Sustainable Consumption and Production as an overarching objective of and essential requirement for sustainable development; and called on all stakeholders to “*Encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production to promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems*.”;

**Considering** the sustainable consumption and production plans and programmes promoted by the countries of the region to achieve progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of Agenda 21;

**Considering** that sustainable consumption and production is an important tool for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and to contribute to the reduction of desertification and the conservation of biodiversity;

**Recognising** the high potential and leadership that the countries of the region have in adopting more sustainable consumption and production patterns, the work of the Council of Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in Latin America and the Caribbean as an instance to come to agreement, and to exchange experiences and information on the subject, the results of the previous Regional Meetings of Experts on SCP, and the Decisions on SCP adopted by the Forum of Ministers in its sessions;

**Recalling** that the priority areas identified by the Forum of Ministers in its Decision 5 / 2010 to focus efforts on common SCP issues in the region are: 1) policies and national action plans on SCP, 2) SCP implementation in Small and Medium Enterprises, 3) sustainable public procurement, 4) sustainable lifestyles;

**Recognising** the efforts from the United Nations Environment Programme, together with the CAF - Development Bank for Latin America, which, following up in the process of implementation of the Regional SCP Strategy and encouraging the continued discussion on the 10 Years Framework of Programmes on SCP, conducted the Sixth Meeting of Government Experts on SCP in Latin America and the Caribbean, "Regional Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production and its contribution to Resource Efficiency" in Panama City, Panama, the 24 and 25 of November of 2011;

**Recognising** the significant participation and valuable contributions made at the Sixth Meeting of Government Experts on SCP by representatives of various Governmental institutions, Sub-regional Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, the Cleaner Production Centres, academia, business sector, experts in the field, and cooperation agencies and from the United Nations System;

DECIDE:

**1. To promote** the adoption of the 10 Years Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), based on the final text approved during the 19th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

**2. To reaffirm** the priority areas, that are common to the countries in the region, recognizing the significant progress achieved in the implementation of activities in each one of them and, at the same time, highlighting the need of additional support to implement, replicate and disseminate successful experiences at national and regional level.

**3. To mainstream** SCP objectives into the design and implementation of State policies.

**4. To integrate**, in national development plans, actions that promote and strengthen SCP.

**5. To urge** inclusive participation of the different social sectors in the formulation, capacity building and implementation of SCP policies, action plans or strategies and foster SCP strategies in all development sectors, according to the national priorities of each country in the region.

**6. To guarantee** the allocation of national resources, in addition to external financial support, for SCP implementation.

**7. To internalize** social and environmental costs and opportunities in the formulation of public policies.

**7 alt. To include** in public policies the internalization of costs produced by environmental and social impacts.

**8. To take advantage** of local and national capacities and potential to generate regional synergy with the objective of achieving greater opportunities of supply and demand of sustainable goods and services which contribute to the promotion of SCP patterns.

**9. To promote** the life cycle approach as an instrument to identify sustainability criteria, as well as transparent information in regards to sustainability attributes and characteristics.

**10. To support** research, innovation and technological development, with the intention of increasing resource efficiency.

**11. To ask** for the ratification of the Executive Committee members for the Regional Council of SCP Government Experts for the 2011 – 2013 period.

**12. To include** the topic of Sustainable Consumption and Production and chapter III of the Implementation Plan of Johannesburg in the agenda for the Nineteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment.

**13. To recognize** that SCP implementation contribute to the efficient use of natural resources.

**Decision 7
Chemicals, Hazardous Wastes and Other Wastes**

**Aware** of the serious adverse effects on human health and the environment that can be derived from the unsound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes;

**Considering** that the lack of suitable information about the trade, supply chains, and content of hazardous chemicals in products, the levels of harmful substances in the environment, the lack of updated national profiles on chemical substances, as well as inventories of hazardous wastes and polluted sites, and the limited access to hazardous waste treatment technologies, hampers the design of effective policies to reduce exposure risk to the people and the environment;

**Highlighting** the relevance of the outcomes and decisions adopted at the Conferences of the Parties of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (ODS), as well as the work under Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management;

**Acknowledging** the efforts and leadership played by the Government of Colombia within the framework of the 10th Conference of the Parties of the Basel Convention, which were undoubtedly decisive to achieve historical results, including the adoption measures to strengthen the implementation of the Convention, and the Cartagena Declaration, which provides the Convention of the strength and necessary instruments to move forward in the minimization, control, and sound management of hazardous wastes and other wastes at international level;

**Stressing** the progress of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, as well as the active participation of the countries of the region during intersessional periods, and highlighting that the next meeting of the INC will be held in the region (Punta del Este, Uruguay, June 2012);

**Acknowledging** the role as facilitator and the support provided by UNEP to the countries of the region in the preparation and organization of regional meetings on chemicals and wastes, that contributed to the identification of key issues for the region as well as to the adoption of common positions;

**Recalling** that all the countries in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean are parties to the Montreal Protocol and therefore must comply with the established timetable for the elimination of ODS;

**Reaffirming** the need to increase the technical capacity of the countries of the region, and acknowledging the work developed by the regional centres of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions, as well as the support provided by their hosting countries;

**Reiterating** the importance of mobilizing the necessary financial resources to strengthen global, regional and national efforts, in order to comply with international instruments related to chemicals and hazardous wastes and other wastes;

**DECIDE:**

**1. To reaffirm** thewillingness to establish effective policies and to apply the measures needed to ensure the environmental sound management of chemicals and wastes, fostering collaboration of public and private actors, considering the differentiated possibilities of each country and the need of an effective transfer of resources and technology;

**2. To request** UNEP and other ITC agencies, in accordance with their respective mandates, to continue to provide technical support to the countries, including the development of inventories and profiles of hazardous chemicals and wastes; the strengthening of monitoring capacities; and the design of suitable plans and policies.

**3. To promote** the effective implementation at national, regional and global levels, of the decisions on cooperation and coordination between the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, in order to facilitate its application and to ensure the rational use of resources.

**4. To encourage** those countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Ban Amendment to the Basel Convention in accordance with the decisions adopted at the 10th Conference of the Parties of the Basel Convention.

**5. To maintain and strengthen** the active and coordinated participation of the countries of the region within the framework of intergovernmental negotiations to prepare a global legally binding instrument on mercury, so that this instrument ensures a balance between the obligations and the provision of means of implementation, and include an effective and long-term financial mechanism to support the countries of the region in the achievement of the objectives of the future instrument.

**6. To request** UNEP and other agencies to continue providing technical support to the region in the negotiations on mercury, as well as for the development of related projects within the framework of the Global Mercury Partnership, and to express the interest to continue regional consultations during the intersessional periods with the support of donors.

**7. To welcome** the results and constructive discussions to date within the framework of the Consultative Process on Financing Options for Chemicals and Waste, and to express interest in continuing to participate actively in this process, in order to promote an integrated approach to long-term financing contributing to the effective implementation of international instruments.

**8.** **To** **highlight** theimportance of the Quick Start Programme (QSP), within the framework of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, as an alternative for accessing financial resources.

**9. To encourage** those countries that have not yet done so to ratify the amendments of the Montreal Protocol, and to maintain a high level of participation in the negotiations of the Multilateral Fund (MLF) for the Montreal Protocol in order to ensure proper funding for the needs of the countries of the region;

**10. To invite** UNEP and the Secretariats of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention to continue their support to the regional and subregional centres in Latin America and the Caribbean, to facilitate the fulfilment of its objectives and functions in the field of capacity building and technology transfer.

**11. To increase** efforts and establish regional mechanisms to prevent and control illegal traffic of hazardous wastes, ODS and chemicals.

**12.** **To promote** the development and implementation of integrated policies, programmes and projects for the management of hazardous wastes and other wastes, including electrical and electronic waste, considering the principle of the "3 Rs" (reduce, reuse, recycle), and in line with the Cartagena Declaration from the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention;

**13. To welcome** the initiative of UNEP and other agencies to establish a Global Partnership on Waste Management, including the creation of an Information Platform, and to express interest in participating in the assessment of the needs on capacity building, so that priorities of the countries of the region are taken into account.

**14. To promote** thecooperation and exchange of information between the countries of the region in relation to policies and best practices for the management of chemicals and wastes, in particular as regards to substances of recent inclusion in the different Conventions.

**15. To request** UNEP to transmit this decision to the Secretariats of the Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, as well as to the Montreal Protocol Secretariat and other relevant bodies.

**Decision 8**

**Landlocked Countries**

**Emphasising** that there are regions in Latin America and the Caribbean that due to their weather, geographic, characteristics and/or biological diversity are especially vulnerable as considered in paragraph 18 of the preamble in the text of the Framework Convention on Climate Change of the United Nations.

**Considering** that the Great American Chaco is approximately 1,14 million km2 wide and covers from the farthest areas of the Andean Cordillera in Argentina and Bolivia to the basins of rivers Paraguay and Paraná in Brazilian and Paraguayan lands. And from north to south from the Izozog in Bolivian lands to Salinas Grandes in Argentina. The region of the Chaco plays a fundamental role to keep climate, hydrological, and ecological dynamics in South America. The Chaco registers the highest temperatures in a continental level and constitutes the second forest region in South America and is characterized by its great rivers and water bodies with high biological and cultural diversity

**Considering** that the Amazonia is a region of approximately 6 million km2 and that represents more than half of the rain forest in the world, it constitutes part of the earth´s balance. This region is known as having the widest biodiversity in the world housing half of the world´s animal species. Despite the importance of this region to the world, it is suffering an accelerated process of habitat reduction, fragmentation, and ecosystem transformation.

**DECIDE**

1. **To recognize** that there exist regions especially vulnerable to environmental impacts such as the Grant American Chaco, the Amazonia and coastal zones.
2. **To Invite** countries in the region and international organizations to support the fight against climate change, desertification, and deforestation.
3. **To recognize** that certain conditions such as the landlocked condition exacerbate the vulnerability of the countries to diverse impacts.

**Decision 9**

**Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**

**Recalling** Decision 4 of the 14th Meeting of the Forum of Ministers held in Panama in 2003 establishing the Caribbean SIDS Programme,

**Further recalling** Decision 9 of the 17th Meeting of the Forum of Ministers held in Panama in 2010 on Small Island Developing States,

**Acknowledging** the contribution made by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in formulating the Caribbean SIDS Programme

**Noting** that a number of successful initiatives have been undertaken within the context of the Caribbean SIDS Programme, including, inter alia, the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM); the Caribbean Biological Corridor (CBC), the Change for a Better Environment Project and that Caribbean small Island Developing states have participated in various projects and plans under the Regional Action Plan;

**Further** noting that since the commencement of the UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2010-2013 (MTS), there is no specific focus on SIDS

**Taking** into account challenges that have proven to be new and emerging issues for Caribbean SIDS including: non-communicable diseases, energy security, ecosystem services especially those pertaining to REDD+, marine ecosystems including blue carbon as well as the issue of volatile food markets on food prices and security as noted in UN General Assembly Resolution A/C.2/66/L.72

**DECIDE**

1. **To call** for the establishment of a SIDS-specific sub-programme within the current MTS and future MTS, taking into consideration the specific requirements contained in UNGA Resolution 56/165 of 21 January 2011, urging that timely action be taken for the effective implementation of and follow-up to the Mauritius Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, including the further development and operationalisation of concrete projects and programmes; agenda 21
2. **To call** for urgent and full implementation of Decision 9 of the 17th Meeting of the Forum
3. **That any** framework which evolves under the theme “Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development” must be designed in a manner so as to provide a clear institutional mechanism, to address, in a concrete and focused manner, the sustainable development of the most vulnerable countries (i.e. SIDS and LDCs), at the global and regional levels. Such a mechanism must provide, inter alia, a context for enhanced UN coherence; the facilitation of adequate and predictable financial resources to facilitate transition to sustainable green economies, given the financial gap which exists on most of these countries as well as commitment to capacity development and technology transfer, underpinned by sound science.

**Decision 10**

**Central American and Caribbean Countries**

**Welcoming** the agreement reached by the 3rd Summit of the Head of States and Government of the Central American integration system (SICA) and the Caribbean Community, held in San Salvador in August 2011 as a further step to regional integration on issues of common interest

**Recognizing** the high vulnerability of both sub-regions

**Acknowledging** their interest to intensify efforts and improve collaboration for the definition of common positions in international fora and negotiations, and particularly to promote a common position on the Green Economy and on an effective and efficient institutional framework for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

**Further acknowledging** the contribution made by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to the Caribbean and the support given to the Central American countries in the promotion of the sustainable development agenda

**DECIDE**

1. To Support the implementation of the joint declaration of the 3rd Summit of the Head of States and Government of the Central American integration system (SICA) and the Caribbean Community, held in San Salvador in August 2011 through:
	1. Strengthening cooperation at the multilateral level within the preparatory process of the United Nations conference on Sustainable Development, RIO 20 to be held in Brazil in 2012 with the objective to provide an assessment of the principles of the Earth Summit Declaration of 1992,
	2. Fostering a discussion and profound analysis on the green economy, which includes principles of sustainable development, eradication of poverty, and
	3. Establishing an efficient and effective institutional framework in this matter in both sub-regions

Decision 11
Gratitude to the People and Government of Ecuador

**To express** the deep gratitude of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean held in Quito, Ecuador from 31 January to 3 February 2012, to the People and Government of Ecuador for the generous hospitality shown during this Meeting.

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Annex II
List of Participants

**I. Government Delegations**

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**Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO)**

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**International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**

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| Sra. Mónica Ribadeneira Sarmiento, Coordinadora de Proyecto Regional GEF ADB LAC, UICN – SUROficina Regional para América del Sur**Unión Internacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (UICN)** Calle Quinteño Libre E15-12 y la Cumbre, Sector BellavistaQuito, Ecuador | **Tel.:** (+593 2) 2261-075 ext 23 **Fax:** (+593 2) 2463713**C.E.:** Monica.ribadeneira@iucn.org  |
| Sr. Vìctor Hugo Inchausti Oficina Regional para América del Sur**Unión Internacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (UICN)** Calle Quinteño Libre E15-12 y la Cumbre, Sector BellavistaQuito, Ecuador Secretario General | **Tel.:** (+593 2) 2261-075 ext 23 **Fax:** (+593 2) 2463713**C.E.:**  |

**Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)**

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**C. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO)**

**Asociación Civil Red Ambiental**

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**Humboldt Centre**

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**Movimientos Sociales para Meio Ambiente e
Desenvolvimiento - Forum Brasileiro de ONG**

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| Sr. Pedro Eduardo Aranha, Vicepresidente de Red de PNUMA **Movimentos Sociais para Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento** - **Forum Brasileiro de ONG**Rio de Janeiro, Brasil | **Tel.:** (+55 21) 2581-8384**Fax:** (+55 21) 2581-8384**C.E.:** pedrorma@yahoo.com.br |

**D. Special Invitees**

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**E. Forum Secretariat**

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1. See document “Proposal of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators to the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean” (UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVIII/5) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)