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**Nineteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of
Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean**

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A. PREPARATORY MEETING OF EXPERTS

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**Report of the Meeting of the Regional Inter-
Governmental Network on Air Pollution
Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Mexico City, Mexico
October 28-30, 2013**

Introduction

1. Following decision 4 adopted by the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean, in which it was agreed to continue developing a Regional Action Plan to guide the work of the Regional Inter-Governmental Network, to be presented to the Ministers at the next meeting of the Forum for consideration and approval, the Regional Inter-Governmental Network on Air Pollution of Latin America and the Caribbean met in Mexico City from 28 to 30 October, 2013.
2. In order to facilitate the discussion, the Secretariat, with support from the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change in Mexico and the Clean Air Institute, prepared a document entitled "Draft Regional Action Plan on Air Pollution," which considered the results of the Network's discussions to date.

Meeting of the Regional Intergovernmental Network on Air Pollution

3. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. Monday October 28, 2013. Enrique Lendo, Coordinator of International Affairs, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico. He noted the importance of the meeting to conclude the final draft of the Regional Action Plan on Atmospheric Pollution, for consideration of the Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean in the upcoming 19th Meeting of the Forum of Ministers to be held in March 2014 in Mexico.
4. During the opening session, the President of the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change, Dr. Maria Amparo Martinez Arroyo, and the Environmental Commissioner of the Megalopolis, Dr. Francisco Urban Barnes Regueiro, welcomed all participants and commented on the importance of following up on the decisions taken at the 19th Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Mexico from 11 to 14 March, 2014.
5. The Secretariat thanked the Government of Mexico for its hospitality and support in holding the meeting. At the start of the meeting, the Secretariat requested participants to elect the chair of the meeting. The representative of Mexico was unanimously elected.
6. After the opening, UNEP Deputy Regional Director, Mara Murillo, in her role as Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, made a brief presentation on the background of the establishment of the Inter-governmental Network and its activities since its inception, as well as the monitoring of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.
7. She also thanked the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change in Mexico and the Clean Air Institute for their valuable support in the preparation of the second draft of the document *Regional Action Plan on Air Pollution*. The background presentation noted the existence of excellent examples of monitoring with available and regular information in some member countries of the network. However, that further opportunities were identified to strengthen the scientific information available in other countries, specifically in the case of the systematization of data on air quality in cities, as

well as the generation of standardized techniques for monitoring, data collection and calculation protocols.

8. Dr. Beatriz Cardenas, representative of the INECC of Mexico, country that is a founding partner and leader of the Coalition for Clean Air and Climate, made a brief presentation about the Coalition, its objectives and its main activities. The presentation stressed the importance of complementing the mitigation of climate change through the reduction of emissions as set by the Regional Network, as these measures complement the actions and efforts to reduce carbon dioxide. Moreover, air pollution mitigation highlights strategies to improve human health with local and regional impacts.
9. During the afternoon session, Dr. César Rafael Chávez Ortiz, SEMARNAT General Director of Environmental, Urban and Tourism Promotion, presented the impacts of used car imports in Mexico, as a result of the Free Trade Agreement with North America. The effects of air pollution as a result of liberalization of the imports of used cars in Mexico are clearly seen through the growth of the number of vehicles. In 2011, there was a fleet of 22 million light motor vehicles. Meanwhile, from 2009 to 2011, 1.3 million light used motor vehicles were imported, of which 56% entered the country under a legal waiver.
10. Moreover, Dr. Chavez noted that the high rates of car motorisation, particularly in the cities along the U.S. border, have generated greater fossil fuel consumption, traffic congestion and hazardous waste.
11. He also expressed the importance that the Regional Action Plan incorporates measures to address the motorisation of the cities in order to reduce nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons and fine particles emitted by light motor vehicles; which contribute to local and regional air pollution.
12. The participants thanked him for his presentation and shared their experiences in the field.

Debate on the draft Regional Action Plan on Air Pollution

13. At the suggestion of the meeting Chairman and after submitting general comments on the draft action plan, delegates agreed to review the draft beginning with its objectives.
14. With regard to the definition of priority pollutants to be included in the Regional Action Plan, some participants proposed the elimination of methane and hydro-fluorocarbons, arguing that these substances are regulated by other multilateral conventions and are already subject of specific to other negotiations processes.
15. After some discussion, the participants agreed on the list of priority pollutants, ensuring the inclusion of those with the greatest impact on the air quality in the Latin America and the Caribbean region.
16. The participants agreed to establish a working group to review the section on the characterization of selected priority pollutants. Chile, Colombia and Mexico, with the support of Dr. Sergio Sanchez, prepared a proposal.

- 17.** Over the three days, representatives of the countries reviewed the draft Regional Action Plan on Air Pollution in order to reach an agreement on the elements to be included.
- 18.** It was agreed that the evidence relating to the air quality situation in the region, as well as specific initiatives which can be used to promote synergies, such as the Coalition for Clean Air and Climate, will be integrated in an informational document to be prepared by the Secretariat to be presented at the 19th Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 19.** Delegates recognized that the Action Plan is a framework for regional cooperation and the importance of providing sufficient flexibility to consider the particularities of each country during its implementation.
- 20.** It was recognized that the Regional Action Plan will enable the exchange of information, experiences and success stories implemented by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, for the implementation of measures to help improve air quality in the region.
- 21.** Delegates commented on the importance of identifying sources of domestic and international funding, as well as public and/or private sector resources for the implementation of the Regional Action Plan in each country.
- 22.** In order to draft the recommendation for consideration of the participants in the meeting, a working group was formed, composed of representatives from Mexico, Chile, Panama and St. Lucia.
- 23.** It was agreed to add a section on indicators. A working group was established with the participation of the representatives of Panama, Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Paraguay. They discussed and submitted a proposal.
- 24.** SEMARNAT shared with participants its experience in implementing the Emissions Release and Transfer Register (PRTR), which is a national database with information on pollutants released to the environment: air, water, soil and subsoil, or that are transferred in the wastewater and/or hazardous waste.
- 25.** They commented that the information contained in the PRTR can propose effective policies to preserve and protect the environment, and supports the evaluation of international conventions. Also by providing emissions information generated nationwide is known with greater certainty the environmental infrastructure that the country needs. It also allows evaluating the emission sources and identifying opportunities for reducing emissions and transfers.
- 26.** The participants appreciated the exchange of information on PRTR and SEMARNAT's offer to share with other countries the guides developed.
- 27.** At the conclusion of the meeting, delegates approved the text of the draft Regional Action Plan on Air Pollution and the recommendation will be submitted for the consideration at the 19th Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Closing session

- 28.** During the closing of the meeting, the representative of Panama, on behalf of all participants, thanked the Government of Mexico for the hospitality and UNEP for the work and the opportunity given to the Network to meet and comply with the mandate given by the Ministers.
- 29.** The Undersecretary for Environmental Protection Management, Rafael of Pacchiano Alamán, closed the meeting of the Regional Intergovernmental Network on Air Pollution on behalf of the Secretary Juan Jose Guerra Abud. The meeting was organized in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- 30.** He explained that the planning of air quality management is vital for governments to define successful strategies for reducing emissions and improving air quality. In this sense, he indicated that the Regional Action Plan is an excellent support tool and guide. He stressed that this tool will promote the development of national action plans and regional strategies on emissions into the atmosphere, including short-lived climate forcers (SLCFs).
- 31.** He noted that in Mexico there are more than 80 localities with monitoring networks or stations, which includes cities with fewer than 500,000 inhabitants and large metropolitan areas such as the Valley of Mexico, with over 20 million inhabitants. Some of these monitoring networks have operated from the mid 80's, contributing to the assessments of trends in air quality over time, including the effectiveness of measures for pollution control as in the case of the Mexico City.
- 32.** He acknowledged the work done by the participants in the meeting and the importance of the proposed Regional Action Plan to be submitted for consideration to the next meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment in March 2014. He also thanked UNEP for work done before and during the meeting.
- 33.** The meeting concluded at 16:30 hours on 30 November 2013.

Annex I
Recommendations of the
Intergovernmental Network of Experts on Air Pollution
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Pollution

The Intergovernmental Network of Experts on Air Pollution gathered in Mexico City from 28 to 30 October, 2013:

In accordance with the mandate of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean held in Quito Ecuador in February 2012, agreed to submit for consideration and possible adoption of this draft Regional Intergovernmental Plan of Action for the Cooperation in the Field of Air Pollution for Latin America and the Caribbean.

This Regional Plan of Action provides guidelines for the short, medium and long term, common to all members of the Intergovernmental Network on Air Pollution of Latin America and the Caribbean in order to reduce air pollution and its health impacts in the region and contribute to the mitigation of climate change and its consequent effect at the local, regional and global levels.

We recommend:

1. The immediate adoption and implementation of this regional plan of action to guide the development of national action plans appropriate to the particularities of each country with emphasis on technical exchange, capacity building and design alternatives to reduce air pollution.
2. That the plan be reviewed and updated every four years and make a call to the Ministers of Environment to ensure the economic resources needed for the sustainability of the air quality monitoring networks as an essential and priority element for decision-making, due to the importance of the issue of air quality.
3. To request the support of UNEP for the establishment of the general criteria to prioritize actions and the organisation of the modalities of mutual assistance based on the intergovernmental diagnosis set forth in this Regional Plan of Action.
4. The establishment of a *Clearing House Mechanism* with the support of UNEP and other partners of the Intergovernmental Network of Epxerts on Air Pollution of Latin America and the Caribbean, to facilitate exchanges on the progress towards the implementation of the action plan, challenges and solutions.