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Regional Cooperation for Environmental Sustainability in the Latin American and Caribbean Region

**A revision of current regional and subregional
strategies within the framework of the 2030
Agenda for Sustainable Development**

I. Objectives and scope of the report

1. During the 17th period of sessions at the United Nations General Assembly, in September 2015, the document **Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** (UNGA, 2015) was unanimously approved. This document establishes the actions that countries, at individual and collective processes, will have to take in order to advance sustainable development. This Agenda includes 17 goals, known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and 169 targets of indivisible and integrated character, of world scope and universal application, which combine the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

2. The final text of the 2030 Agenda describes the plans that will guarantee poverty eradication, environment protection and the adoption of an inclusive social and economic development. *"We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet"* states the document. The recognition of the complexity, the magnitude and the interconnections between social and environmental changes offers an important opportunity to promote an integrated approach on the planning and implementation of development.

3. In other words, with the objective of ensuring the necessary transformations to achieve sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda must be implemented in an integral approach at all levels – global, regional, subregional, national and local. To be precise, this process will require a transition from the conventional sectorial and fragmented perspective that links human welfare to economic growth, to an integrated approach characterized by its balance between environmental, social and economic needs. In fact, the five dimensions that form this Agenda are: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships (also known as the 5 "P's").

4. The present document aims to inform the discussion about the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, by reviewing on the way in which different regional and subregional forums are integrating the notions of environmental sustainability and sustainable development into their agendas. Additionally, this document identifies critical topics related the SDG in order to underpin international cooperation on environmental issues towards the implementation of the Agenda 2030. This document mainly describes:

- The way in which different regional and subregional intergovernmental strategies consider the integration of environmental sustainability into their priorities.
- The main opportunities for the region so that, in a framework of regional cooperation, advancing environment sustainability and full integration of sustainable development policies in the short and middle term are guaranteed.

II. The integrated approach in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

5. The idea of the need to jointly address the environment and development emerged at the international level for the first time in the midst of the Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and was introduced in the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (UNCED, 1992a). This Declaration reached the agreement of the international community on the need to guarantee the environmental sustainability as an integral part and an essential element of development.

6. In 2002, ten years after the events in Rio de Janeiro, the Johannesburg Summit took place, a conference in which the political commitment to promote sustainable development was renewed. In this context, the obligation to improve the quality of life of people in poverty, while maintaining the efforts against the continuous ecological degradation was ratified at a global level.

7. Nevertheless, the Millennium Declaration (UNGA, 2000), which back in its days synthesized the aspirations shown at different forums, summits and conventions on sustainable development, did not make a pragmatic acknowledgment of the principles for sustainable development that were established at the Rio Declaration. In fact, while having a particular emphasis on the fight against poverty in developing countries, it did not establish the specific mechanisms through which the interconnectedness of the three pillars of sustainable development could be made explicit¹.

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¹ The subject of environment was concentrated in the Millennium Development Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability, which was divided in four targets:

7.A Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

7.B Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

7.C Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

7.D By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

8. At present, having passed the deadline for the accomplishment of the MDG, it is recognized that the MDG constituted an important alliance in relation to the eradication of poverty, hunger and unfulfilled basic needs such as education and universal access to health, water and shelter. However, environmental issues were not considered in a broad way; and not only that, but the reductionist approach of the objectives, oversimplified the politics of development and continued addressing environmental matters only from their consequences and not from a systemic way that provided the possibility to understand the underlying causes and the proper mechanisms to find sustainable and integrated solutions.

9. According to the MDG 7 assessment report, elaborated by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD, 2015), the performance in Latin America and the Caribbean fell short in accomplishing all the agreed goals. Firstly, the coverage of forests and rainforests, as well as the quality of such ecosystems significantly decreased in the region. Secondly, the countries of the region experienced an increase in their carbon dioxide emissions per capita. On the other hand, according to the IISD report, regarding biodiversity loss, even if there was an increase in the percentage of terrestrial and marine protected lands (from 8.7% in 1900 to 20.3% in 2012), the number of extinct species increased from 7.9% to 8.7%, presenting one of the greatest extinction rates at a global scale.

10. In a context of global expectation, and as 2015 approached, discussions on the evaluation of progress of the MDG were not only focused on unresolved matters at the time of the deadline, but they also addressed issues that were not considered before and that had become essential to ensure the cornerstone of sustainability: regulation of fisheries, protection of marine ecosystems, reductions in biodiversity loss, universal access to renewable energies, elimination of organic pollutants, among others (UNEP, 2011).

11. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, known as "Rio+20", celebrated in 2012, became the basis for the establishment of the agenda for sustainable development. It highlighted the importance of "promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supports, inter alia, economic, social and human development while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration and restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges².

12. This, as a matter of fact, is one of the greatest changes of paradigm that the declaration *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable*

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² AG 66/288 Julio 27, 2012, paragraph 4.

Development (UNGA, 2015) adopted in September 2015. But such change is not the only one. Other significant changes that make it different from other agendas are the following:

a. It is a universal, aspirational and transformative agenda, and thus, it is applied to all countries considering the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities that go beyond the contribution of the official development assistance, to incorporate other financial sources (domestic resources, private sector, etc.).

b. It uses the integrated approach in order to advance sustainable development that makes a balance between its three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. Therefore, it requires an institutional evolution that breaks the silos of the sectorial politics planning.

c. It builds on the acquired commitments at an international level, interlinking the diverse global agendas, and at times, amplifying their scope (e.g., it resumes the pending targets of the MDG but it is more ambitious in its proposal).

d. It incorporates not only the connection between growth, inequity and environmental degradation, but it also brings to the front new matters that are key for international development (e.g. migration, oceanic protection, health – environment relation and trade, among others).

e. The whole agenda making process has been the result of an intense concentration and participation by the States, as well as other development agents, which is why there is an important appropriation by all of them.

f. It establishes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and 169 targets that include the overall ends and the means of implementation. These targets must be adapted to the different realities and national priorities in order to define the process of transition towards sustainable development from now to 2030.

13. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the complexity of the transition towards sustainable development. Given this, it considers a greater number of matters through an integral and indivisible approach, and reflects them in specific targets of various kinds. In particular, the environmental elements and their interconnections with poverty

eradication and the rest of the issues related to development, offer a significant opportunity to promote the integrated approach. This will result in the strengthening of global efforts to achieve environmental sustainability.

14. With the starting date of the new development agenda approaching (January 2016), it becomes urgent to translate it into action plans. It has been identified that the greater challenges of its implementation will be at a national level. However, global and regional cooperation will also be a key matter. In this regard, the region of Latin America and the Caribbean has actively participated in the negotiations, being committed to the Agenda, and having started to take the first steps towards its implementation.

15. At this time, it becomes strategic to support the international efforts in order to define the regional strategies, boost collaboration for the achievement of goals, and foster transition towards integrated approaches within regional strategies. In order to ensure the environmental dimension in the process, while advancing sustainable development, it becomes crucial to reach governance at a national, regional and global level. Such type of governance will have to ensure capacities, institutions and mechanisms.

16. On the other hand, with the objective of achieving the environmental targets and priorities agreed, the measures to be established will have to guarantee the open and meaningful participation of stakeholders, open decision-making processes based on appropriate information, and the establishment of incentives to control the management of natural resources in a broader context of sustainable development.

III. Strategic development frameworks in the region

17. Currently, there are different frameworks for action and organization platforms that address sustainable development in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. Such frameworks have different geographic scopes and operational processes. Some of them are broad, some have a continental geographic extent, and some others have only a regional coverture. While some of these frameworks cover a great variety of environmental issues, some others focus on common or cross-border matters. A detailed review of these action frameworks and coordination platforms can be found in the document named **Review of**

existing intergovernmental priorities on sustainable development, with an emphasis on environment, in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XIX/8). Additional to the already mentioned documents, in the 19th Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, other planning documents were consolidated in order to guide the regional and subregional actions towards sustainable development. These documents will be addressed in the following sections.

18. Various platforms for political coordination that exist in the region have a geographic coverture as well as a scope in a variety of matters. While some of them cover most of the countries in the continent, others only cover a few of them sorting them by geographic proximity or ideological affinity criteria. A brief description of the existing regional and subregional planning instruments is presented below. For each document, this review analyses the following features:

- To what extent they incorporate priorities related to the cornerstone of environmental sustainability in sustainable development, and
- How they address the integrated approach for sustainable development, which is key for the 2030 Agenda.

SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway

19. The plan called Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action or SAMOA Pathway (UN, 2014), is a resolution approved in 2014. This Plan was consolidated on the basis of the Barbados Action Plan (UNGA, 1994), and on the Maurtious Strategy of Implementation (UNGA, 2005). Both establish the path to follow by the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) for the transition to sustainable development.

20. In this context, the SAMOA Pathway acknowledges the essential role that the summits and declarations that have taken place after the Rio Declaration have had. It also highlights the importance of small island states given their vulnerability and limitations to achieve their goals in the three dimensions of sustainable development (UNGA, 2014).

21. In the light of the preparation process of the 2030 Agenda, this document acknowledges that it is necessary to adopt a more integral approach towards sustainable development of the Small Island Developing States. Therefore, the SAMOA Pathway introduces a new

base for action in order to ensure an inclusive and equal economic growth; one growth that is sustainable and that guarantees economic opportunities for the whole population, establishing the priority actions in the following realms:

- a. Development models in SIDS for the implementation of sustainable development and poverty eradication
- b. Climate change
- c. Sustainable energy
- d. Disaster risk reduction
- e. Food security and nutrition
- f. Water and sanitation
- g. Sustainable transportation
- h. Sustainable tourism
- i. Sustainable production and consumption
- j. Management of chemicals and waste, including hazardous waste
- k. Health and non-communicable diseases
- l. Gender equity and women's empowerment
- m. Social development
- n. Biodiversity
- o. Means of implementation

22. The SAMOA Pathway is very emphatic and explicit at assuring that each of the realms it addresses is linked to the others, and above all, aimed at the achievement of sustainable development in an integral way. For this reason, and in relation to the level of detail of the established actions for each of the mentioned topics, there is a great confluence with the SDG that are covered by the SAMOA agenda. Additionally, it establishes some necessary measures to institutionalize and consolidate the proposed changes. This assures the continuity of the achievements made, and which is relevant in the 2030 Agenda framework, given its special emphasis in governability matters.

Caribbean Community Strategic Plan 2015-2019

23. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), as part of its development agenda, and with the clear intention of having specific objectives and targets with more precise periods for compliance, developed the Strategic Plan 2015 – 2019 (CARICOM, 2014), which is particularly important given the limitation of resources that Caribbean countries face. The Plan was prepared through a consultative process with a broad group of actors.

24. This first Caribbean Community Strategic Plan establishes the repositioning process of the Community and launches the development agenda towards the future. It includes a review of the development needs, a resilience model to measure socioeconomic progress, strategies to renew the commitment and to reinforce the regional unity, and an agenda to renew the mechanism of regional governance. One of the most innovative aspects of the Plan is the establishment of an action framework that allows selecting and agreeing on the actions to be implemented each year of the Plan's validity term.

25. The Plan is articulated around four main objectives:

- Economic growth and reduction of poverty and unemployment
- Improvement of quality of life
- Reduction of environmental vulnerability
- Community integration with equity for everyone

26. In order to achieve the Plan, a work proposal is centered in the following topics:

- Construction of economic resilience
- Construction of social resilience
- Construction of environmental resilience
- Construction of technological resilience
- Strengthening of the identity and spirit of the CARICOM community
- Strengthening of regional governance

Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (2015-2030)

27. The Organization of American States (OAS), through the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (ICID) has developed the Inter-American Program on Sustainable Development (IPSD) for the period 2015-2030 (OAS, 2015), built on the basis of the program for the former period (2006-2014). While this program does not incorporate additional subject areas, it does emphasize the consistency and strengthening of the programmatic areas. In this sense, the IPSD has as a main objective to "support all member states through an effective environmental management at all levels and to identify, design and implement appropriate actions and programs that incorporate the objectives related to environmental protection into the policies for poverty reduction, economic and sustainable development". The IPSD includes the following subjects:

- a) Climate change and disaster risk management

- b) Sustainable management of land and ecosystems
- c) Water resources management
- d) Sustainable energy management
- e) Sustainable cities
- f) Good governance for inclusive and sustainable development

28. The actions for the these subject areas are grouped in three work lines that set the tone for the way in which each one of the six subjects is addressed:

- a) Serve as a hemispheric forum to promote dialogue and coordinate progress in the area of sustainable development;
- b) Support the exchange of information related to sustainable development, and facilitate the exchange of experiences among countries, institutions, and organizations; and
- c) Act as a partner in cooperation among stakeholders involved in sustainable development in those areas in which the OAS General Secretariat has a comparative advantage.

29. The IPSD pursues to identify options that allow assessing the processes for sustainable development in a comparative way in a hemispheric level, taking into account the available information sources and avoiding duplications. Also, it has the objective of supporting joint efforts for the exchange and sharing of knowledge in order to advance in the resolution of challenges in each subject area.

30. One of the IPDS' major achievements is the recognition of its role as a forum for concerted action and for technical cooperation between nations, institutions and organizations regarding sustainable development that highlights the interdependency and mainstreaming of the economic, environmental and social dimensions of development. In the light of such a cooperation scheme, the close affinity with the 2030 Agenda targets is evident.

Regional Environmental Framework Strategy 2015-2020

31. The Regional Environmental Framework Strategy (CCAD, 2015), also known as ERAM, of the Central American Integration System (SICA, by its Spanish acronym), searches to "promote environmental integration in the region for the economic and social development of its population, articulating efforts and potentializing the available resources". Such Strategy integrates not only the Central-American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), but also the other subsystems that compose the SICA, in order to facilitate and assure the progress towards

sustainable development. The Strategy was developed through an exhaustive participative process, and responds to the following subject areas:

- a) Climate change and risk management
- b) Forests, oceans and biodiversity
- c) Integral management of water resources
- d) Environmental quality
- e) Trade and environment
- f) Financing mechanisms

32. This strategic framework represents an important reference for Latin America and the Caribbean, because it responds to the specific challenges of the Central American region in the search of sustainable growth that allows poverty eradication and environment conservation. In this regard, the member countries advocate for boosting a process for the integration of the region prioritizing the economic growth with social equity, in a context of ethnic and cultural diversity. In this way, the document supports the transformation of production methods and consumption patterns, in evident correspondence with the accomplishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (notably goals 8 and 9).

33. On the other hand, it is worth highlighting the integrated approach and the emphasis made on the implementation of inter-sectorial strategies that such instrument incorporates. In other words, the addressing of environmental, economic and social challenges that the region faces is based on a perspective of articulation of public policies. Such articulation is meant to contribute to the promotion of sustainable productive actions, which improve the quality of life of the population while enhancing the maintenance of ecologic balance.

34. While the transversal approach proposed by the Strategy is evident, it is possible to identify a lack of institutionalization for such instrument, since it does not stipulate a legally binding commitment for agents that represent other sectors apart from the environmental sector. Given this, the explicit establishment of its planning and following-up from an integral approach that allows concrete steps towards development remains unsettled.

Andean Environmental Agenda

35. The Andean Environmental Agenda (AAA, by its Spanish initials) is an instrument for environmental management established in the frame of the Andean Community (Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia). This Agenda has as background the elaboration of the "Andean Plan for the follow-up of the

Johannesburg Summit” and was approved by the Andean Community's Council of Environmental and Sustainable Development Ministers, being entrusted to the Andean Committee of Environmental Authorities (CAAM, by its Spanish initial) to monitor implementation and compliance.

36. In this context, the four Andean countries, in their determination to jointly face the opportunities and challenges of sustainable development, have opted to promote the harmonization of their public policies, by jointly implementing the Andean Environmental Agenda for two periods: the first one (2006-2010), and the second and current one (2012 – 2016). The aim of this new phase for the Agenda contemplates the orientation of joint actions for the coordination of community strategies that help to improve environmental management and sustainable development in harmony with conservation of nature, while deepening the process of integration and strengthening of the national and subregional competences in environmental matters.

37. The AAA is structured for its implementation through actions grouped in three thematic axes:

1. Biodiversity
2. Climate Change
3. Water Resources

38. Additionally, it establishes some of the following mainstreaming instruments:

1. Research and information for environmental management
2. Environmental education and communication
3. Institutional capacity building in environmental management
4. Sustainable production and consumption patterns that are in harmony with nature.

39. While the AAA is an instrument strictly regionalized, it represents one new important initiative for the collaboration and cooperation around the common objectives for the four involved countries.

40. Regarding its first thematic axis, the AAA evidences a new close affinity with the SDG related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (14, 15). In this line, it establishes action lines guided towards regional management, as well as encouraging the participation of civil society in the benefits of its sustainable use. Additionally, it promotes the strengthening of the national frameworks focused on to the protection of traditional knowledge and practices, with participation of indigenous, Afro-American and local communities (targets 2.5, 15.4 and 15.6)

41. On the other hand, the thematic axis on Climate Change provides the action lines through which, in the light of the UNFCCC framework, the effects of climate change will be assessed. It also establishes the measures for adaptation and mitigation that will be implemented and the way to increase the public awareness of the problem. Such actions significantly supplement the 2030 Agenda goals, by explicitly endorsing the implementation of projects and programs for clean production and sustainable consumption patterns (target 8.4), disaster risk management and land planning (target 11.b), and the implementation of national and subregional actions guided towards integrated forests management and deforestation reduction (SDG 15).

42. Finally, through its third thematic axis, regarding Water Resources, the AAA directly contributes to the 2030 Agenda commitment, by explicitly promoting inter-border cooperation for integral water management (goal 6.5), apart from supporting experiences and technologies interchange for the sustainable use of this resource (targets 6.a, 17.6 and 17.7).

43. It is worth mentioning that, among the AAA's greatest successes, it is the strong emphasis that it grants to civil participation in the efforts made to reach sustainable development, denoting the importance of communitarian policies for environmental management and sustainable development. Such emphasis also denotes the importance of participant governance for the management of natural resources. In this sense, the Andean Agenda matches with the 2030 Agenda, whose perspective highlights the importance of social participation as an essential element of sustainable and inclusive development.

44. Another AAA's great hit corresponds to its committed institutionalization and operability, through the settling of the Annual Operative Plans. Such plans are instruments that define specific commitments, and establish the implementation times and the financial resources, as well as the institutional responsibilities for each nation, for the CAAAM General Secretary and for the cooperation entities.

Amazonian Strategic Cooperation Agenda

45. The Amazonian Strategic Cooperation Agenda (ASCA) is an instrument launched by the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO), whose members are Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam and Venezuela.

46. This organization is an instrument that owns a broad vision of the process of South – South cooperation, which strengthens the government of the member nations in their vocation to built synergies with other actors, nations, multilateral organizations, promotion agencies, social movements, scientific communities, productive sectors and society as a whole.

47. The ACTO coordinates studies and pilot projects about the economic potentials that improve rent and opportunities for the Amazonian region. With this, it provides an effective cooperation – integration of the Treaty State Members.

48. Issued in 2010, the Amazonian Strategic Cooperation Agenda, incorporates a cross-cutting and multisector view of all of the identified programmes, projects and activities, to address requirements from Member countries and the mandates of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty.

49. Since it has been designed for its implementation in a long, medium and short term, this Agenda includes the vision, mission and strategic objectives of the ACTO. In this sense, it is structured on the basis of two mainstreaming axes: conservation and sustainable use of renewable natural resources, and sustainable development. Additionally, it sets the role and guidelines for the Permanent Secretary, the ACTO projects cycle and the institutional structure for the management of the Agenda, as well as the different financing modalities.

50. The ASCA presents a thematic approach that incorporates realms that are also present at the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, such as forests, water resources, management, monitoring and control of wild plant and animal species endangered by trade, sustainable use of biodiversity and promotion of biotrade; indigenous affairs; knowledge management and information sharing, regional health management, infrastructure and transport; commercial navigation; tourism; and emergent topics such as regional development, climate change and energy.

51. In correspondence with the 2030 Agenda objectives and goals, the ASCA thematic and sub-thematic objectives consider a series of environmental, economic and social aspects. Without such aspects, a transition towards sustainable development in the region would not be feasible. The included topics are some of the following: sustainable livelihoods (target 2.4), integrated forest management that results in real benefits for local populations (Goal 15). Regarding water resources, it states the objective to create a reference frame for efficient, integrated management (target 6.5), to promote population's access to water

resources (target 6.1) and to its services, mainly through sanitation, as a measure that will contribute to improve the quality of life of all Amazonian people (target 6.2).

52. With regard to wild animal and plant species, the ASCA searches to strengthen the technical capacity of Amazonian countries for the management, monitoring and control of endangered species (targets 15.5 and 15.6), as well as to promote the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity through regional actions that favor investment and product trade, prioritizing local development and food security (targets 2.4 and 2.5).

53. In direct connection with the social dimension of 2030 Agenda, the Amazonian Agenda pursues to promote inclusion and participation of indigenous and tribal communities in the management of resources (target 10.2), as well as to guarantee the protection of their traditional knowledge (target 2.5).

54. Finally, in respect of regional health management, the initiative searches to create an operative and instrumental framework for sanitary and environmental risk management (target 3.c and 3.d), and for the institutionalization of the environmental health surveillance (targets 3.9 and 12.4).

St. George's Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability

55. The St. George's Declaration (OECS, 2006) emerged as a result of the Third Meeting of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), in which Ministers of the Environment from the participant nations requested to formulate a new strategy that served as a framework for the environmental management of the region. Given this, the Declaration was signed in 2001, and a broad action framework for environment regional management was established.

56. The St. George's Declaration (SGD) is structured around 21 Principles, which were grouped, through a review process, in a logical framework under one overall aim and four mayor goals. Such review also allowed the establishing of common indicators in the region, which enabled the monitoring of the progress made in the accomplishment of goals.

57. In 2006, the Member States of OECS reaffirmed their commitment towards sustainable development, accepting the challenge to meet the targets established in the updated edition of the Declaration.

58. As mentioned earlier, the Declaration's overall aim points to foster equitable and sustainable improvement in the quality of life in the OECS region. Accordingly, the four general goals are the following:

1. Build the capacity of member states and regional institutions to guide and support processes of sustainable development.
2. Incorporate the objectives, perspectives, resources and talents of all of society in environmental management.
3. Achieve the long-term protection and sustained productivity of the region's natural resource base and the ecosystem services it provides.
4. Ensure that natural resources contribute optimally and equitably to economic, social and cultural development.

59. While the accomplishment of the St. George's Declaration represents a great challenge, especially for the smallest countries given their limited technical, financial and human resources, the political will is clearly reflected in this document, through the setting of national objectives and international obligations regarding sustainable development.

60. On the other hand, it is worth highlighting the approach that this strategy integrates for the three dimensions that conform sustainable development. In this sense, the Member States share a vision on development based on the principles of sustainability, key actors' participation, equity and justice. Also, such approach pursues the protection and improvement of livelihoods, reduction of risk vulnerability and poverty alleviation for the region's population. Therefore, the initiative recognizes that achieving such notion of sustainable development demands for a coordinated effort between governments, individuals, civil society, private sector and regional and international institutions.

61. Parallel to the accomplishment of the SDG defined by the 2030 Agenda, the SGD sets the commitment to integrate social, economic and environmental considerations into national development policies, plans and programs. Subsequently, the Declaration succeeds in founding a solid base for the regional cooperation for the sake of sustainable development.

62. Additionally, in this document, the signing countries declare their conviction that human welfare depends on the preservation of a healthy environment, including its ecologic systems, biodiversity, fertile soils, as well water and air quality. On the other hand, and in close affinity with the 2030 Agenda, the St. George's Declaration establishes as a priority the right of human population to development. This denotes the level of commitment of the decision makers in regards of the imminence to achieve

development goals agreed at a global level, being the SDG the most relevant of our times.

63. The SGD clearly defines its general objective, targets, principles, expected outcomes, indicators and support actions, facilitating its interpretation and implementation at a pragmatic level.

64. In the regional context, the Declaration has become an essential platform for sustainable development planning because one of its commitments is the institutionalization of the objectives it declared. This is one of the expected outcomes from the establishment of the normative and institutional frames that support the goals and targets for sustainable development.

65. Finally, some of the keys that support an integrated approach to sustainable development, and in concordance with the SDG, are the following: assign public budget and mobilization of financial resources for the achievement of sustainable environmental management (2030 Agenda, p.11); strengthen scientific and technical knowledge that leads to appropriate decision making in regards to environment management (target 4.7); maintain ecosystems' health and sustainable use of biodiversity (targets 14.2, 15.1, 15.2 and 15.4); guarantee that quality of life is not diminished by emissions of waste and pollutants (target 11.6, 12.4 and 12.6), safeguard the natural, cultural and historical inheritance of the region by assuring its long term preservation (target 11.4), and guarantee sustainable, efficient and cost-effective energy management (targets 7.2, 7.3, 7.a and 7.b).

Latinamerican and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development

66. The Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), approved in 2002, is the platform that makes the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (UN, 2002) operative in the region. The ILAC has been crucial to the promotion of sustainable development, since its objectives include the consolidation of regional efforts, from governments and civil society to cross the barriers in the path of the implementation of the Agenda 21 (UNEP, 2002). In November 2015, this initiative was reviewed as the means to analyze the advance in its implementation, and to update it in the light of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. Up to this moment, it has been recognized that ILAC has played a role as a mainstreaming tool which continues to be relevant, and that should be used to enhance regional discussions on the

interconnections between the three pillars of sustainable development, while following-up the DSG (UNEP, 2015).

67. The new ILAC will have as its main objectives to continue and consolidate the efforts for the inclusion of environmental sustainability in the region, by following the Agenda 21 recommendations and, above all, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. In this line, the ILAC will develop specific cooperation actions, always promoting the instrumentalization of sustainable development models based on informed public policies (UNEP, 2015b).

68. Particularly, priorities for action have been set in the following subject areas:

1. Protection and restoration of ecosystems and their biological diversity .
2. Management of water resources.
3. Vulnerability, human settlements and sustainable cities.
4. Social issues, including health, inequity and poverty.
5. Economic aspects, including competitiveness, trade and the production and consumption patterns (energy).
6. Institutional aspects for capacity building, participation and monitoring.

Other coordination platforms

69. It is worth mentioning that even if other regional and subregional coordination platforms do not have a specific planning document for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, that does not mean that they do not have a defined stance about it. In this sense, the positioning of the platforms about specific issues related to sustainable development has been established either through diverse declarations at State Members meetings, or through declarations and positioning shown at conferences and summits, as well as in documents developed for other ends. This situation significantly hinders the characterization of those platforms in regards of the implementation of the commitments acquired with the signing of the 2030 Agenda. It In such category we can place the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC for its Spanish initials), the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of our Americas (ALBA for its Spanish initials)³, and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR by its Spanish

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³ In January 2015 the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States approved the Political Declaration of Belem and the CELAC Action plan. While such declaration is not a strategy of action plan guided towards the accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda (not prescribed by that time), it does

initials), among others. Given this, such platforms are not addressed in detail throughout the present document.

IV. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Environmental sustainability in the 2030 Agenda and the SDG

70. As above mentioned, one of the main innovations in the 2030 Agenda, compared to the Millennium Declaration (UN, 2000), and which resulted from the Declaration “The Future We Want” settled in Rio + 20 (UN, 2012), is the promotion of the integrated approach to sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda and, therefore, the SDG, show such integrality through the explicit recognition of the interconnectedness between social progress, economic growth and environmental sustainability. Given this, each SDG contains targets that combine aspects related to those three dimensions, and that conform an indivisible set of targets. In other words, it is not possible to selectively make progress in some of the topics, but on the contrary, it is necessary to recognize the multi-causality of the challenges of sustainable development and the need to simultaneously achieve irreversible goals in social, economic and environmental realms. Such interconnectedness is more evident in the goals related to the means of implementation (targets categorized with letters in each SDG) and in SDG 17.



establish some general commitments and aspirations around it. In this sense, the CELAC Action plan does not integrate a vision or specific actions for the long term, but only the general thematic commitments and activities for the following months.

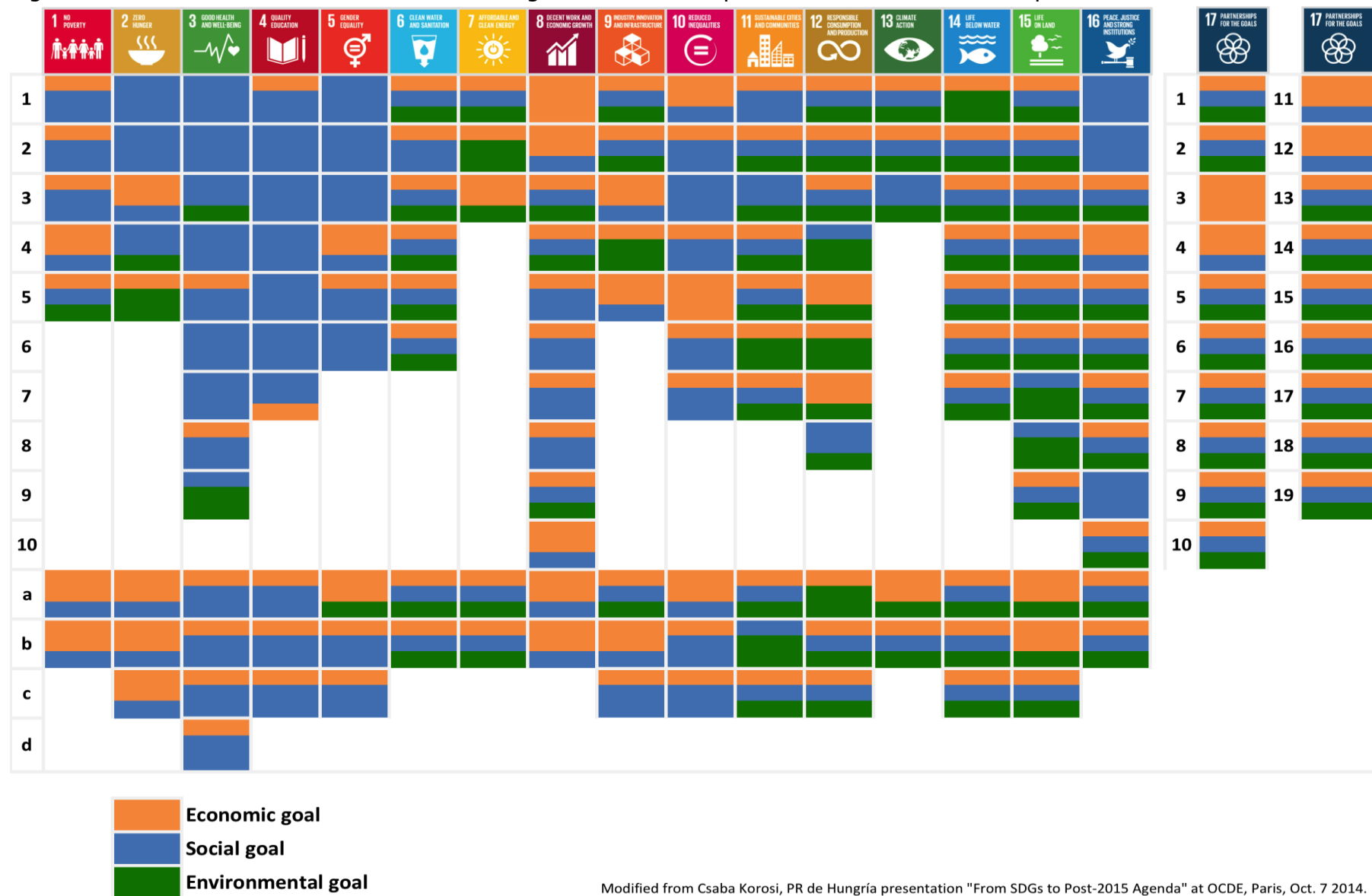


Figure 1. Thematic areas in the Sustainable Development Goals.

71. It is worth mentioning the importance of the qualitative progress made by the 2030 Agenda in reflecting an integrated approach to achieve sustainable development. The formulation of the 2030 Agenda involved broad discussions on the inclusion of specific mechanisms to assure that the three pillars of sustainable development were interrelated in an indivisible way, even in the definition of the SDG. Also, it should be stressed that there was a significant progress in the number of targets that explicitly addressed some elements directly related to environment. Such dimension is virtually present in all SDG.

72. In regards of the specific influence of the environmental agenda, Figure 2 shows an analysis of the contribution of each target of the 17 SDG to the three pillars of sustainable development. It is important to recognize that, unlike the MDG, it is possible to identify targets with environmental implications in 16 out the 17 SDG.

Figure 2. Contribution of each SDG and its targets to the three pillars of sustainable development.



Modified from Csaba Korosi, PR de Hungría presentation "From SDGs to Post-2015 Agenda" at OCDE, Paris, Oct. 7 2014.

73. It is also relevant that the 2030 Agenda strongly emphasizes in reflecting a greater interrelation between the different objectives and goals that allow to significantly advancing towards sustainable development. In this way, targets that contribute to the environmental dimension, such as the promotion of infrastructure and industry that consider the connection with ecosystems' health (e.g. targets 8.4, 9.2, 11.3, 11.a), investment in sectors that consider the environmental dimension (e.g., 12.c, 14.6, 15.a); and similarly, environmental targets that improve social and economic dimensions such as pollution and environmental damage reduction (e.g. 3.9, 11.6, 12.4), management of natural resources (e.g. 12.2) or the increase of social and ecological resilience (e.g. 1.5, 11.b, 13.1).

74. The diversity of types of actions established in the SDG targets, along with the inclusion of the environmental dimension in all of them, makes evident the complex challenge of facing and following-up the 2030 Agenda, as well as the importance of coordination and coherence in the actions at all levels: horizontal (intersectorial) and vertical (at a global, regional, national and local scale).

Sustainable development planning in Latin America and the Caribbean

75. The different regional and subregional platforms have already incorporated, with different levels of depth, the integrated approach to sustainable development and the issues included in the 2030 Agenda.

76. The present section introduces an analysis of the way in which the different platforms and their corresponding environmental and development strategies address the integrated approach to sustainable development. In addition, it assesses the level of depth in which each of the platforms incorporates mechanisms, objectives and targets that add to the achievement of the SDG.

77. The analysis here presented employed a series of characteristics to define whether an agenda or planning document incorporates environmental sustainability along with other priorities and political agendas in an integrated way, in the pursuit of sustainable development. The assigned mark corresponds to the following characterization:

1= Specific mention of the interconnectedness between economy, society and environment as interrelated and inseparable elements in the search for sustainable development.

2= Inclusion of targets, objectives and social, environmental and economic considerations in the agenda or planning document, but in an fragmented manner.

- 3= Specific recognition in thematic areas, objectives and targets of:
- a. The contribution that the maintenance of ecosystem goods and services makes to economic development, poverty alleviation, individual and collective health, and increase of resilience.
 - b. Environmental considerations in non-environmental policies, for example sustainable production and consumption (SCP), sustainable cities, sustainable energy, among others.

4= Explicit establishment of an institution for the planning and following-up with an integrated approach, which allows to take firm steps towards sustainable development.

78. Based on the description of each strategic document presented in the previous sections, it was determined if each one of them covers or considers the above-mentioned characteristics. The results are presented in Table 1.

Platform	Document or strategy	Features			
		1	2	3	4
Small Island Developing States	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM)	Caribbean Community Strategic Plan 2015-2019	✓	✓	✓	✓
Organization of American States (OAS) - Inter-American Council for Integral Development (ICID)	Inter-American Program on Sustainable Development (2015-2030)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Central-American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD)	Regional Environmental Framework Strategy 2015-2020	✓	✓	✓	
Andean Community	Andean Environmental Agenda (2012-2016)	✓	✓		
Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization	Amazonian Strategic Cooperation Agenda	✓	✓	✓	
Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)	St. George’s Declaration (SDG)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean	Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States	Political Declaration of Belem and Action Plan	✓			

Table 1. Features of the planning instruments in different platforms. The check

marks indicate that the planning instruments present the chosen features for the analysis. .

79. On the other hand, the content of each strategy was compared to the SDG with the aim of determining to what extent each one of them is addressed. The following figures show the results of the analysis made on the level of incorporation of the SDG into the environmental and development strategies in the region.

- A value of 3 is assigned to those strategies that directly incorporate the subject dealt in the SDG, and that establish specific mechanisms or targets for their achievement.
- A value of 2 is assigned when the strategy partially incorporates the subject, establishing an objective or specific mention, but without setting targets or mechanisms for its accomplishment; and
- A value of 1 is assigned when the strategy either mentions the subject without relating it to any objective, mechanism or target, or simply does not mention it.

80. While the regional priorities established by the different planning instruments make evident that sustainable development represents their overall aim, it is not necessarily clear the way in which it is addressed through an integrated approach. In general, elements and indicators from the three dimensions of sustainable development are assimilated. In some instruments, however, the definition of the institutional and organizational mechanisms that will allow to performing of effective diagnosis, or the planning and following-up of policies and actions guided towards the incorporation of the three pillars of sustainable development remains pending.

AOSIS/SAMOA Pathway

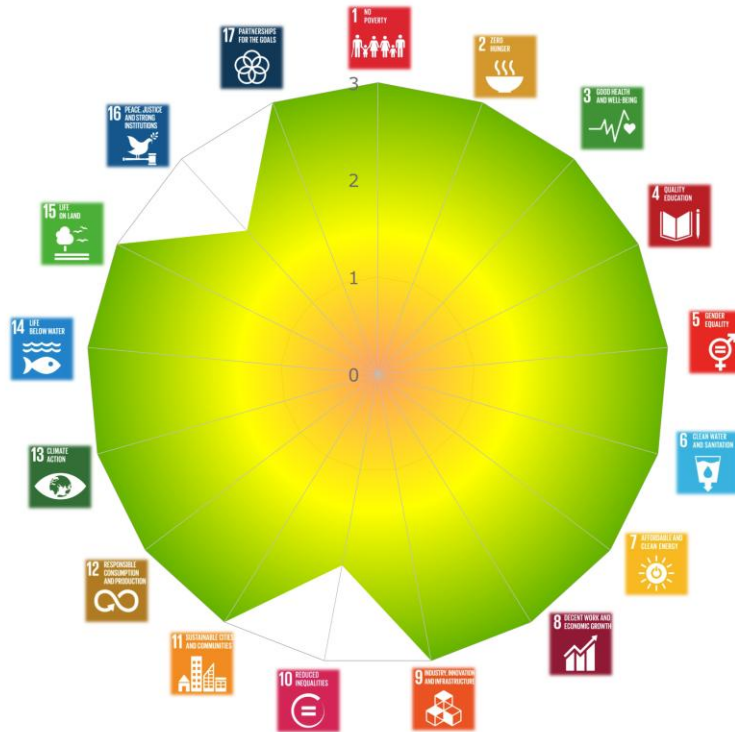


Figure 3. Approach to SDG by the SAMOA Pathway.

1: It does not incorporate the issue or just mentions it. 2: It partially incorporates the issue. 3: It incorporates the issues in depth.

81. The SAMOA Pathway, elaborated for the small island developing countries of the world, is applicable either to the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), as well as to the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS). Such platform accomplishes the 4 identified features by the present document, according to the following particularities: it explicitly refers to the interconnections between the environmental, economic and social pillars, emphasizing the importance of specific actions that allow the region’s transition towards sustainable development.



Figure 4. Approach to the SDG by CARICOM’s Strategic Plan.
 1: It does not incorporate the issue or just mentions it. 2: It partially incorporates the issue. 3: It incorporates the issues in depth.

82. The Caribbean Community Strategic Plan is a document that guides the CARICOM State Members in a performance that favors the transition to sustainable development in the region. Given this, the document contains a group of realistic objectives and corresponding indicators that allow them take concrete steps towards their fulfillment. It is worth highlighting that the Strategic Plan covers a wide range of interrelated issues, entirely covering the subjects comprised in the 2030 Agenda. This represents an important referent for its accomplishment, given that the 17 SDG are considered in an integral manner.



Figure 5. Approach to the SDG by the Inter American Program on Sustainable Development.

1: It does not incorporate the issue or just mentions it. 2: It partially incorporates the issue. 3: It incorporates the issues in depth.

83. The Inter American Program on Sustainable Development (IAPSD), by the Organization of American States, particularly by the Inter-American Council for Integral Development, presents a solid strategic framework that supports the Member States in the implementation of guided programs and actions that allow them to face the challenges around issues such as climate change (SDG 6), energy (SDG 7), cities (SDG 11), and governance (SDG 16 and 17). The role of the IAPSD is that of a facilitator of the actions and processes that result in the achievement of targets established at a national or subregional level, mainly in the environmental realm. For this reason, while the value attributed includes the four assessed features, the success of the program’s proposed activities greatly depends on the actions implemented in other coordination platforms.

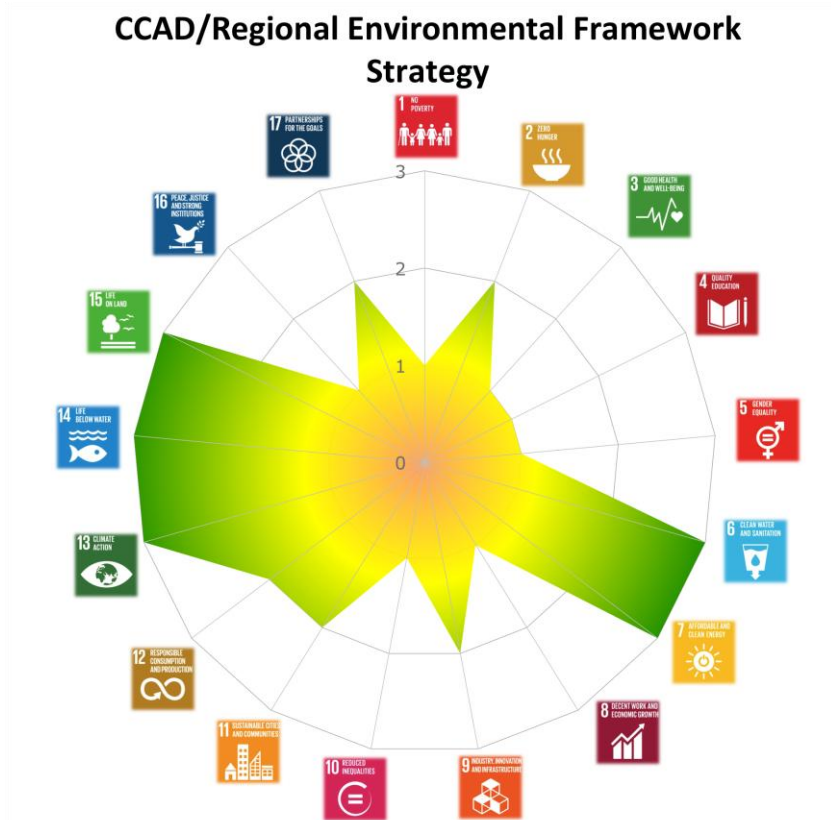


Figure 6. Approach to the SDG by the Regional Environmental Framework Strategy.

1: It does not incorporate the issue or just mentions it. 2: It partially incorporates the issue. 3: It incorporates the issues in depth.

84. One of the agendas with a deeper level of specificity is the Regional Environmental Framework Strategy (REFS) of the CCAD, since it establishes in a direct and concise way not only the aspirations of the Central American countries around environment and development issues, but also the targets to pursue in the medium term. The REFS clearly connects the different topics in order to assure the accomplishment of the targets proposed by the Strategy itself. However, it does not explicitly establish the way in which an inter-sectorial planning could be institutionalized, in order to assure an integrated approach to development, and beyond the Ministries of Environment.

85. The REFS includes issues such as climate change, emphasizing in the increase of resilience and risk management (SDG 13); while also addressing in detail the protection and sustainable use of ecosystems, including a complete objective for the integrated management of water resources (SDG 6, 12,14). Additionally, it contains specific objectives for the means of implementation and financing schemes (SDG 17).



Figure 7. Approach to the SDG by the Andean Environmental Agenda Strategy.

1: It does not incorporate the issue or just mentions it. 2: It partially incorporates the issue. 3: It incorporates the issues in depth.

86. The Andean Community’s Environmental Agenda, for its part, is focused in assuring the proper management of natural resources with a sub-regional ecosystem approach. Such Agenda pursues coordinated work in such issues as biodiversity (SDG 15), climate change (SDG 13) and water resources (SDG 6). However, it does not strictly determine the way in which those issues are connected to the social and economic pillars, which is why, despite its vision of sustainable development, its scope remains limited, leaving aside the integrality in the implementation of the Agenda.



Figura 8. Approach to the SDG by the Amazonian Strategic Cooperation Agenda.

1: It does not incorporate the issue or just mentions it. 2: It partially incorporates the issue. 3: It incorporates the issues in depth.

87. The Amazonian countries, through the Amazonian Strategic Cooperation Agenda, resume the important issues at a subregional context, in order to assure sustainable development. In this way, the Agenda, has among its priorities, the appropriate management of natural resources (SDG 6 and 15), public health (SDG 3), indigenous issues and routes of communications, as the essential elements to assure sustainable development through an integrated approach. The Agenda, however, lacks the specific mechanisms for integral planning in the long term that allow the sustainability of their actions.



Figura 9. Approach to the SDG by the St. George’s Declaration.
 1: It does not incorporate the issue or just mentions it. 2: It partially incorporates the issue. 3: It incorporates the issues in depth.

88. The St. George’s Declaration (SGD), as a guidance instrument for the SIDS, is based on 21 principles for sustainability, which makes clear its subregional approach to assure an integrated work. Those principles are the general frame for the environmental management in the region, in which the objectives and targets clearly define the path to follow, as well as the mechanisms to assure permanency.

89. Among the SGD objectives, the need to face climate change impacts stands out (SDG 13), along with sustainable use and conservation of marine and terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 14 and 15).



Figure 10. Approach to the SDG by the Latina American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development.

1: It does not incorporate the issue or just mentions it. 2: It partially incorporates the issue. 3: It incorporates the issues in depth.

90. The Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development is indeed a key leader in the region with respect to coordination for the promotion of sustainable development, not only for its comprehensiveness to address the three pillars, but as an integration platform for all countries of the region. The new formulation of the ILAC integrates entirely the topics set out in Agenda 2030, with the exception of Objective 2 on reducing hunger, that although touched tangentially, can be addressed through the development processes promoted with other objectives.

91. ILAC, in its new version, which will be discussed more precisely in 2016, can be considered a fundamental platform for addressing the Agenda 2030 in the region.

CELAC/Declaration of Belem

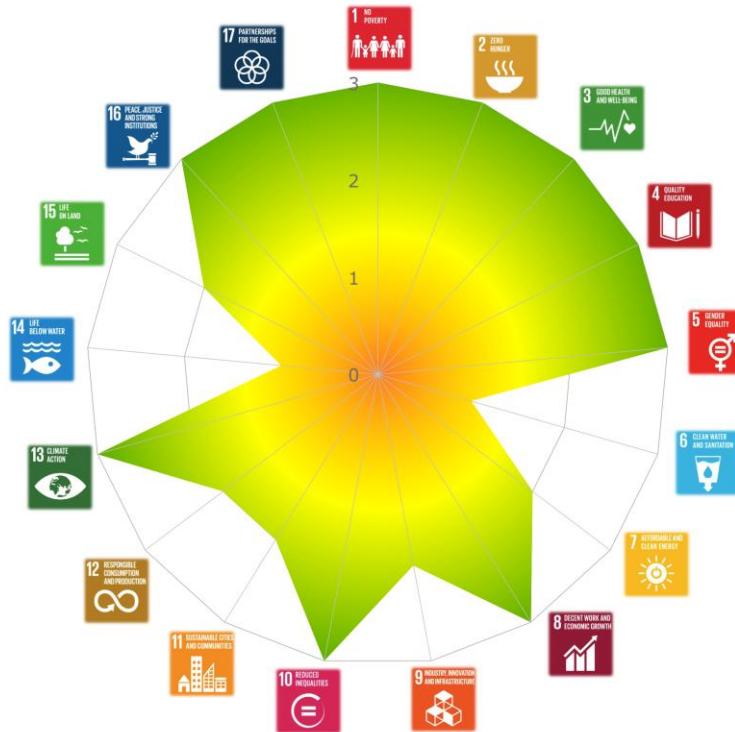


Figure 11. Approach to the SDG by the Political Declaration of Belem.

1: It does not incorporate the issue or just mentions it. 2: It partially incorporates the issue. 3: It incorporates the issues in depth

92. The Political Declaration of Belem, by CELAC, given its condition as final synthesis of the Heads of State summit, has not the level of depth when compared to other strategies. However, it clearly establishes the need for Member Nations to jointly work for the achievement of sustainable development, always taking into account the three pillars and their interconnectedness. On the other hand, while CELAC Work Plan does not specifically determine the work methodology to follow for the implementation of actions that guide towards sustainable development, it is focused in short term general activities.

93. The Political Declaration of Belem is considerably more explicit regarding social issues (SDG 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), along with those that have the economic dimension as their central element (SDG 8 and 10).

94. Given its nature, and considering the time in which they were formulated, not all the analyzed strategies have the objective to address the 2030 Agenda. While some of them were formulated with other purposes; they all have in common the recognition of the importance of

the three dimensions of sustainable development and their interconnectedness. Another common characteristic is that they all mention the need to avoid duplicating actions and functions that other platforms already implement.

V. Opportunities

95. Derived from the review made throughout the present document, the diverse coordination platforms in the region of Latin American and the Caribbean, show a common interest in the SDG 7, 13, 15 and 17, meaning that the emphasis made by most of the reviewed agendas covers in a wide way those goals, as it is shown in figure 12.

96. Despite the fact that the different strategies flow together mainly in such issues as energy, climate change, terrestrial ecosystems and strategic partnerships, it could be stated that the goals related to cities and sustainable communities (SDG 11), and sustainable production and consumption (SDG 12) can be an important driving force that allows the addressing of the other goals through an integrated approach. This process could also trigger other actions and results in regards to other objectives.

97. In all the analyzed subject areas, there are still some other spaces that could assure greater coherence in the planning instruments for sustainable development. Probably, some of the greatest challenges have to do with the means of implementation that allow the profiting of the existent platforms, avoiding duplicity while increasing coherence and interconnection with other actors that are external to the environmental realm (SDG 17.14) and to the government structure.

98. The follow-up process of the Rio and Rio+20 commitments has been a solid basis for those commitments established in the 2030 Agenda, since many or those agreements are reaffirmed in the SDG. Besides, the ILAC indicators integrally address the essential elements for the monitoring of the progress made towards sustainable development, considering the contents of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In addition, those indicators are being refined to assure inclusion and addressing of emergent topics. In the light of the 2030 Agenda, and considering the Decision 6 of the XIX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Working Group on Environmental Indicators has the pending revision of the ILAC priority topics, and the harmonization with the Initiative environmental indicators with the SDG.

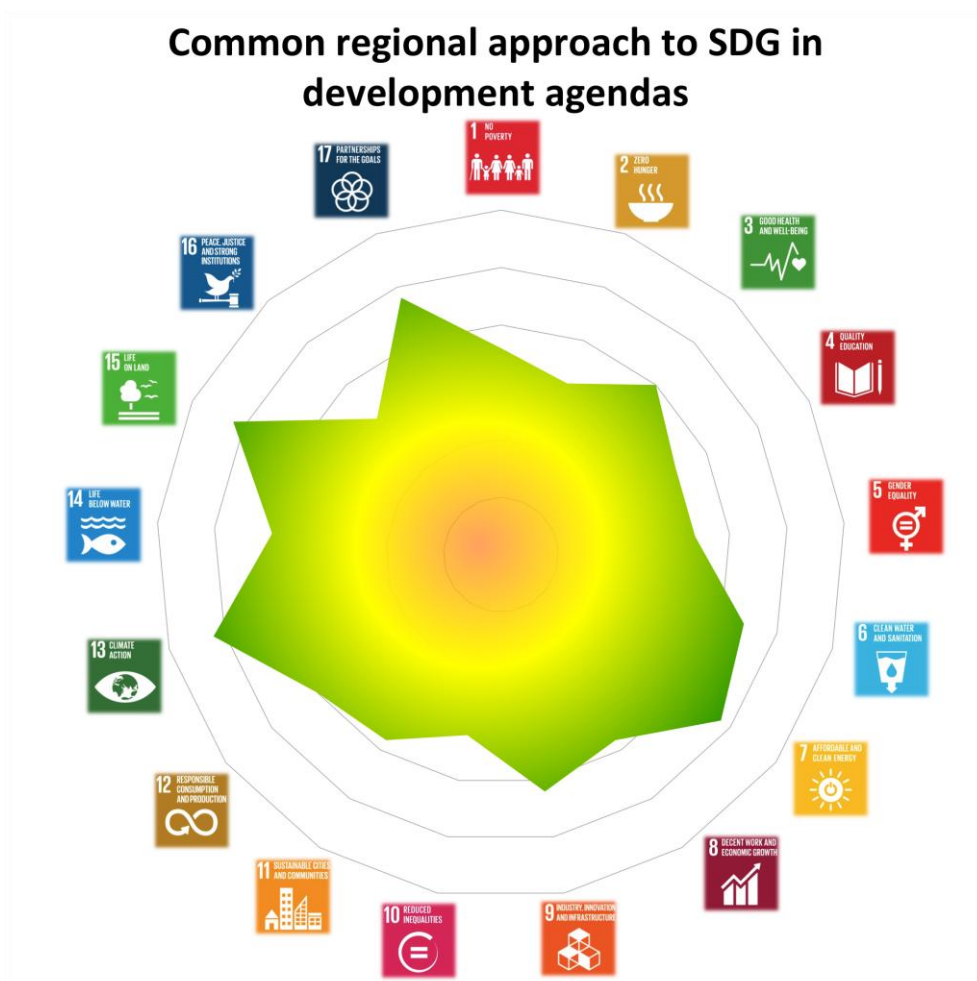


Figure 12. Common approach of the development agendas in Latin America and the Caribbean with the SDG. This figure is the conjunction of the individual figures 3 to 11

99. The LAC region has important challenges to face in order to advance and consolidate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

- Openness to discuss and participate with other sectors to reach effective integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, particularly assuring the appropriate incorporation of environmental sustainability.
- Foundation and strengthening of platforms (for discussion, planning, implementation and follow-up) that guarantee an integrated vision for the accomplishment of the 2030 Agenda and its SDG.
- Long term planning that allows constant advance towards an ideal state of coordination and institutional structure for an integrated approach towards sustainable development.

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List of acronyms

AAA	Andean Environmental Agenda
AOSIS	Alliance Of Small Island States
AC	Andean Community
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CCAD	Central-American Commission on Environment and Development
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
ICID	Inter-American Council for Integral Development
ERAM	CCAD Regional Environmental Framework Strategy
ILAC	Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
OAS	Organization of American States
OECS	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
OCTO	Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization
PIDS	Inter-American Program on Sustainable Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
SAMOA	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action
SGD	St. George's Declaration
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly

Annex 1. The Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*.
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.