**Final Report**

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

**Ministerial Segment**

**Item I of the Agenda: Opening of the meeting**

1. The opening ceremony began on Wednesday 30th March 2016 at 9:15 a.m. with a message from Mr. Gabriel Vallejo, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia, Mr. Rafael Pacchiano, Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of the Government of Mexico as Outgoing President of the Forum, and Mr. Achim Steiner, the Executive Director of UNEP, which acts as the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.
2. Mr. Pacchiano highlighted that the XIX Meeting of the Forum at Los Cabos had important outcomes which helped in advancing central themes: climate change, biodiversity, chemicals and waste and sustainable consumption and production. As a follow up, Mexico as President of the Forum brought the regional priorities to other fora such as UNEA-1, COP20 and COP21 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. He thanked the support and leadership of Mr. Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Minister of Environment of Peru, and the government of Colombia. He encouraged the region to continue enhancing the balance of the three dimensions of sustainable development and invited all countries to support and participate in the COP13 on Biodiversity.
3. The Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of the Government of Mexico recommended that the Forum elect the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia to serve as Chair of the XX Forum. The meeting approved the proposal.
4. The Minister of Colombia highlighted the need for the Forum to focus more on actions and cooperation rather than on the discussion of long documents and stressed the common responsibility and challenges that the Ministers of Environment are facing in their countries and in the region. One is to demonstrate the infinite benefits of environment to other ministries, which are not always perceived as such, and also to quantify the value of all actions and investments in preventing environmental damage. Colombia is in a historical moment of “proceso de paz” (peace process) which will also lead to important environmental benefits.
5. Later, the Minister acknowledged the presence of and paid tribute to UNEP’s Executive Director, Achim Steiner, noting that he would finish his period in June this year. He then made a brief presentation related to Colombia´s National Development Plan. He cited opportunities such as eco-tourism and the importance of green growth as a means to achieve sustainable development. He further emphasised the importance of environmental education, using the example of (illegal) deforestation. In conclusion, he noted that much remains to be done but that progress is being made in Colombia. Finally, he urged the meeting to conclude with concrete actions related to climate change and other priority issues , and expressed his pleasure for hosting the Forum in the beautiful city of Cartagena de Indias.
6. Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, thanked the Government of Colombia for hosting the Forum. Noting the dynamism of the region, he suggested that widespread changes were on the horizon. Referring the peace process ongoing in Colombia, he linked the issue of conflict to natural resource management and sustainable development. He felt that the role of Ministers of Environment will change, from being a defensive one to speaking of the opportunities provided by it. Referring to the SDGs, he challenged Ministers to change the narrative towards the integration of environment into other sectors such as renewable energy. Highlighting ongoing debates such as green economy, loss of species and global warming, he encouraged Ministers to link such issues to the broader development agenda. He further offered UNEP’s ongoing support, particularly through ROLAC, to the evolving environmental agenda in the region. Finally he appealed for solidarity from the region in support of UNEA, noting that it was Rio+20, held in the region, which decided to establish UNEA. He felt that the voice of the region needs to be heard more at UNEA and invited wide representation from the region at the second session of UNEA.
7. A message was then delivered by the Deputy Minister on behalf of the Minister of Environment from Brazil. He acknowledged the Government of Colombia’s support for hosting the XX Meeting of the Forum and apologised for the Minister not being present. Brazil committed its support also to the government of Mexico for the CBD upcoming Conference of the Parties (COP) in Cancun, and welcomed the support from UNEP in the region, sub-region and country.

**I.1. Adoption of the rules of procedure**

1. The Ministers adopted, *mutatis mutandi*, the rules of procedure of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UNEP to govern the procedures of the meeting.

**I.2. Election of the Bureau**

1. In accordance with the practices established in previous meetings, the Chair proposed that the Bureau maintain the membership adopted during the Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts. The proposal was approved by the participants and the Bureau was constituted as follows:

Chairman: Colombia

Vice Chairs: Costa Rica

 El Salvador

 Ecuador

 Uruguay

 Dominican Republic

 St. Lucia

 Argentina

Rapporteur: Peru

**I.3. Adoption of the agenda and programme of sessions of the Meeting**

1. Under this item, the Ministers considered the Provisional Agenda and Annotated Provisional Agenda and the Calendar of Sessions proposed by the Secretariat and adopted them.

**Item II of the Agenda: Results of the meeting of the High-Level Experts of the Twentieth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**

1. Because of some adjustments in the programme and the need to conclude discussions on the final proposals of decisions and the draft Ministerial Declaration to be submitted for consideration of the Ministers , the results of the high-level experts meeting was presented to the Forum after finishing the thematic panels.

**Item III of the Agenda: Ministerial Dialogues**

**III.1. Ministerial dialogue on Sustainable Development**

1. Ms. Paula Caballero, Senior Director of the Environment and Natural Resources Global Practice of the World Bank, Moderator of this Dialogue, referred to the two frameworks adopted in 2015, which represent a landmark for redefining the traditional view of development and recognize the environment as a core component of development. The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement provide an opportunity to reposition the Ministries of Environment, and to demand greater attention and budgetary commitment for environmental issues.
2. The public sector faces a sizeable challenge arising from the current economic slowdown. Several countries are experiencing tax-related reform, prioritizing other issues without understanding that the environmental aspect is central to many economic and social achievements. Furthermore, bringing an end to short-sightedness is another challenge we face.
3. The 2030 Agenda is a call to rethink development in a structural manner, using a systemic approach. We must question our understanding of concepts such as prosperity and well-being, for which traditional approaches are no longer appropriate.
4. She highlighted three central considerations: the relationship between the environment and poverty needs to be understood in order to reposition environmental agendas, as poor communities are more vulnerable to climate change, more dependent on natural resources, and are more exposed to the impacts of environmental degradation. The eradication of extreme poverty, today and tomorrow, requires resilient and functional natural systems.
5. Secondly, the complexities of development demand cross-sectoral responses and a systemic approach. The Ministries of Environment are neutral agents that can transcend sectoral agendas. The Ministries must be able to develop scenarios that set out the different development paths provided by various investment and policy options, to thus enable informed decision making. We also need to perform an assessment of ecosystem resources and services, as well as the costs of environmental degradation. Growth that is not sustainable may decrease certain countries' GDP by 4-10%. It is also the time to encourage programme-based approaches that boost resources from various sources.
6. Finally, she highlighted the importance of SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production), which she considered the essence of the 2030 Agenda, and gives Ministries the opportunity and responsibility to rethink development.
7. After this introduction, the moderator invited the panellists to share their thoughts on the subject.
8. To the question on how UNEP should work in a cross cutting manner related to the SDGs and the role of UN in assisting countries to the implementation of this agenda, Mr. Achim Steiner identified two approaches which has been adopted by Ministries of Environment.
9. In the last thirty years the role of the Ministries was one of an intrusive mandate, which implies looking at the environmental footprint of sectors. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda the role will now be one of a demand role. In this regard also UNEP is considered as a resource to other UN organizations.
10. Environmental responsibility has become mandatory to all ministries, and sectors as well as to the UN system. It is not an exclusive role for the Ministries of Environment, but for society as a whole, in light of the intrinsic linkages between the environment and other sectors, such as health and environment.
11. UNEP has started to work on these integration and partnerships. One example is the FAO-UNEP partnership on food waste and food loss and the campaign “think.eat.save”. Another one is the Green Finance, where UNEP is the Secretariat of G20 on “Green Finance” and provides support to showcase the relevance of environment. Poverty and Environment Initiative implemented by UNEP and UNDP is another example.
12. He referred in particular to the importance of implementing the SAMOA (SIDS Accelerated Modalities Of Action) Pathway, which is a framework for SIDS sustainable development.
13. Mr. Antonio Prado, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), addressed the question on what are the main challenges for the region to track implementation of the SDGs and the role of indicators.
14. According to the central nature of SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production), the great challenge we face relates to the environment and climate change. Our economies are based on ever-increasing consumption, representing both material and symbolic needs that generate a never-ending race towards greater consumption. This is a cultural issue that can be addressed through public policies.
15. Monitoring the SDGs is complex and may require new instruments. For example, SDG 11 (sustainable cities) still requires the harmonization of statistics to enable the comparison of data. An effort is needed in terms of capacity building and statistics harmonization, thus generating synergies; this in turn will require the involvement of the Ministries of Finance for the necessary budget. Cooperation in the context of the Statistical Conference of the Americas and South-South cooperation is essential in this process to strengthen capacities.
16. Finally, he emphasized the importance of adopting integrated accounts to not only measure flows, but also stocks, taking into account national capital.
17. Then the Moderator asked the Ministers at the Panel on what changes are needed to achieve the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development.
18. Dennis Lowe, Minister of Environment and Drainage of Barbados, commenced his presentation indicating that the Sustainable Development Goals began a new conversation on sustainable development as opposed to just development. The important question is how to tackle implementation. In tackling implementation one must recognize a scenario full of complexities, including, inter alia, the global space, local communities, national development policies, human behaviour (lifestyles, waste, conservation, learning styles). Changing people’s behaviour and attitudes (towards consumption, conservation, compliance, and partnerships) is the business of today. It does not matter how formidable our policies are if our peoples do not see their actions in a different way.
19. He explained that our biggest challenge is to preserve the globe for generations to come. All people have to get on board on that commonality. When we talk about changing behaviour it is continuity versus progress and the real challenge comes at political level to integrate new views.
20. We have to see the bigger picture, not just about donors, recipients and institutions such as the UNEP. It is about generating partnerships with all partners sharing the same passion. In order to go forward we have to support one another by sharing the same vision.
21. He ended his presentation by calling for: 1) engaging world citizenship on the 2030 Agenda, and 2) institutional and governance reform at all levels to ensure fit for purpose in the context of the 2030 Agenda, including the relationship between the Forum and the UNEA, so as not to be left behind.
22. Sergio Bergman, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina, began his intervention by referring to the creation of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in Argentina, a political decision that shows a shift of paradigm of the environmental policy of the country, placing environment as an essential element of sustainable development. This change is necessary at all spheres, and should put people in the centre, because there is only one ecology, which comprehensive and humanist, the “human sustainability”.
23. Part of this new paradigm is a change to the hierarchical order; First, the world is our nation, our common home which does not recognize political frontiers. "Our homeland is the planet, and all human beings are its people”. This vision challenges the current institutional framework, and demand for a change in the structures of States by redefining politics and power. The key aspect is that the States' objective should be to lead by governing the common good, ensuring that this prevails over individual interests. Therefore, the discussion about the common good is not technical, but ethical: a healthy environment is a human right that we have, and which our children and future generations should also have. As it is said in the encyclical Laudato si´, it is not about a social or environmental crisis, but an integrated crisis that requires a fraternal dialogue which allows us to move forward towards a comprehensive ecology.
24. The common good and social peace are achieved through four ways or principles that are entrusted to politics: 1) the whole always prevails over any individual aspect, 2) unity will always transcend conflict, 3) time is always more important than space, 4) what's real surpasses what it is in the ideas. Practical and specific ideas are needed to transform reality, considering that others will reap these fruits in the future.
25. Attitudes need to be changed, especially with regard to SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production); the current development model discards goods, resources and even the human being. Therefore, the change should be based on principles of ethics, sustainability and social inclusion.
26. In the ensuing discussion, the issues raised by Costa Rica and Cuba were highlighted in relation to mainstreaming the pillars of sustainable development and changing the patterns of consumption and production. The main conclusions could be summarized as follows: engaging the world’s citizens regarding the 2030 Agenda and making available the means for its effective implementation, to ensure effective implementation of the Agenda 2030 there is a need for institutional and governance reform at all levels. Business as usual is not an option, and the cost of doing nothing is immense. It is necessary and possible to change the culture of consumption through public policies, and seek technological development to enable a change in the production processes and components that form part of consumption. The main problem is consumption. Education is needed to foster values based on attitudes and role models. Caring and not wasting. The generation that grew up amid trash (recycling needs etc.), versus the generation that was born into the circular economy. We must react to penalties or incentives, but young people must instead lead based on their own, distinct outlook. Consumption has to be sustainable and responsible, so that it doesn't end up consuming us all.
27. Another critical concept is the one on urgency, we need ethics, the notion of complexity, change, but it is urgency that is critical: Water stress, agricultural production, 7 million people die because of pollution every year. This morality justified by our economies and our ways of consumption and production.
28. They also indicated that the multilateral system created a zone not to act, no one leading by example. Double standards every day, not only among countries but also from governments to their peoples. No generation before ours has had to reinvent its economic models in a couple of decades.
29. The Moderator brought the meeting to close by highlighting three key aspects regarding this stage:
30. The need to operate at scale. Identify the paths for development and not development solutions, as well as how we can lead that change at scale.
31. Think of well-being and not prosperity, because while prosperity is for a select few, well-being is for the many, including the planet.
32. The cornerstone of the SDGs is No. 12, but let's not forget about poverty. What are we doing for the poor of tomorrow? The path we’re currently heading down is condemning the human beings of the future to that poverty.
33. The Minister from Colombia concluded the meeting by expressing that the environmental-ethical issue represents one of the values that we must preserve. Environmental education is key because our generation was raised believing that natural resources are unlimited. Changing that way of seeing the world is a challenge, this is the vision we want to put out, and it’s the legacy we want the ministry to achieve. The countries' environmental responsibility rests not just in the ministry of environment but with the government cabinet, private sectors, and individual citizens.

**III.2. Ministerial dialogue on Biodiversity in the 2030 Agenda**

1. The Ministerial Dialogue on Biodiversity within the 2030 Agenda was aimed at highlighting the importance of biodiversity for development, and rendering an overview on how it is framed within the sustainable development objectives and the 2030 Agenda on development.
2. This dialogue was led by the Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico, Rafael Pacchiano. The members of the panel were Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Biological Diversity Convention, Mr. Edgar Gutierrez, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, and Mrs. Brigitte Baptiste, Director General, of the Humboldt Institute of Colombia.
3. The moderator started the session with a video made by Mexico on the preparations for the Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to be held in Cancun, Mexico, from December 4-17, 2016. At the end of the video, he invited all participants to attend the COP 13 and thanked the confirmation from the Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia.
4. The moderator, to give context to the session, highlighted the importance of biodiversity for development, and stressed the close connection between life biodiversity and well-being. He mentioned the privilege and responsibility of the region, as it has the most biodiversity in the world. Likewise, he reminded that Mexico is a mega-diverse country, but like with many other countries in the region, it has faced biodiversity loss issues. In such regard, he referred back to the conclusions of the 4th edition of the Global Biodiversity Objectives (GBO 4) report, which acknowledges the efforts made to reach the Aichi goals on biodiversity, but which also concludes that national actions are not sufficient to reach the goals defined for 2020.
5. The moderator urged the parties to join efforts and drives towards the coordination of public policies with the different international instruments available, such as biodiversity conventions, desertification and climate change, as well as with productive sectors. He mentioned the benefit of including the Aichi goals within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular the relevance of SGDs 14 and 15, which reflect the importance of biodiversity.
6. Mexico has achieved important political momentum to reach the Aichi goals before 2020. This commitment has led to the integration of biodiversity into national and sub-national programs and action plans. Hence, expeditious work is being undertaken to achieve gains on this matter. Furthermore, this commitment led Mexico to offer its country as venue for the upcoming meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 13) to be held from December 3-17 in Cancun, where the motto is ´Integrating Biodiversity to Wellbeing´. Likewise, he invited to the top-level session to be held prior to the COP 13, on December 2-3, where Ministers from important productive sectors such as fishing, forest, agriculture and tourism whose involvement is essential to biodiversity will be invited. Therefore, he explained that COP 13 will result in the industry's ability to provide essential services after incorporating biodiversity into its plans. He highlighted the importance of coordinating with the private sector and the formulation of alliances with stakeholders to ensure biodiversity becomes the main driver of development, as well as an instrument for risk mitigation. He concluded that the goal of COP 13 is to exchange information, and to achieve a political support declaration integrating biodiversity as part of wellbeing. He invited the countries to share success cases where biodiversity is integrated within the industry, including the private sector.
7. The moderator invited Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity to give his presentation, particularly to explain the importance of biodiversity and the main challenges and opportunities on the integration of biodiversity within public policies.
8. The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity highlighted how many SDGs refer to biodiversity, and their integration to the new 2030 agenda for sustainable development. He emphasised that if the intent is to eradicate poverty, fight against hunger, ensure water availability and ensure health and wellbeing, biodiversity must be maintained. For example, he explained that without biodiversity, agriculture cannot be increased, and neither can the provision of medicines. Likewise, he highlighted that the fight against poverty is not just a matter of income, but also the access to ecosystem services that ensure a quality of life. This is a new agenda to improve the quality of life of people.
9. He mentioned the Paris Agreement and the role of the sustainable use of soil for mitigation and adaptation purposes. He also recalled the Sendai framework that acknowledges the role of ecosystems on the prevention of natural disasters and the results of the last meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Desertification.
10. He noted that this is the time for synergies on the promotion of sustainable development and indicated that sustainable development without biodiversity will not be possible. Therefore, the sustainable development framework will require the integration of other important sectors as a means to achieve the Aichi goals. He highlighted the complementarity of the SDGs with the Aichi goals – an aspect that will be addressed in the SBSTTA 20 and SBI 1, and commended Mexico's approach to the COP 13.
11. However, he indicated that further national efforts are required to integrate biodiversity into the laws of each country, and the need to have strong legislative frameworks where the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Benefits Sharing derived from their Utilization, and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety can be incorporated.
12. In such regard, he reminded that 29 countries from the region have not ratified yet the Nagoya - Kuala Lumpur Protocol on responsibility and supplementary compensation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. 21 countries of the region have not reviewed their national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) and 5 countries have not delivered their fifth national report. He highlighted that in the past 4 years, 46 workshops on CBD have been carried out in the region.
13. He concluded that there is potential to expand information and increase governance through suitable regulatory frameworks to ensure the integration of biodiversity on the sustainable development of countries.
14. The moderator invited Mrs. Brigitte Baptiste, Director General of Instituto Humboldt to give her presentation. The Director General mentioned that the difficulty to integrate biodiversity is partly due to the lack of information. In such regard, information must be arranged to introduce knowledge as part of comprehensive management. In other words, how can knowledge become an area to benefit other areas, thus improving services and wellbeing. He highlighted that knowledge is derived from those who learn-by-doing, such as farmers, traders, private sector. He wondered how this knowledge is integrated to the conversation we are currently having.
15. She highlighted that in the last 20 years, a better panorama has been achieved on the role of biodiversity, especially in the region; it has been possible to identify the wealth of biodiversity within countries and the status thereof. However, the use of this information must be part of the creation of sustainability scenarios - an aspect that’s currently dispersed - not because of lack of data, but due to the type of data provided, and which must be restated to support national and production policies.
16. Information platforms must be carefully considered to determine their use; i.e. preservation, restoration. Such platforms are already in place, such as the Ibero-American Biodiversity Network, which is in decline due to the lack of financial resources. However, this network may be reactivated to build relevant information for decision-making.
17. She mentioned the work within the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), which suggests the systematization of ecosystem services as grounds for biodiversity management and national economic management. For example, pollinator value chains, which are established through the economic use on harvests. For example, the importance of pollinators for the production of goods and services, such as tequila and cocoa. In such regard, information and knowledge networks are required, which are not only used by the academia and by scientific developments, but also for decision making.
18. In Latin America and the Caribbean the process of the IPBES evaluation brings together over 100 experts who are writing on and reviewing information with an interdisciplinary approach that is to be launched in 2019. The first draft contains modelling of scenarios with indigenous, economic and social knowledge from local communities.
19. The moderator invited the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, Mr. Edgar Gutierrez to share his comments. The Minister referred to the need to align agendas for the agendas to achieve the Aichi goals, including the SDGs.
20. He recalled that the Earth Summit of Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was important to incorporate the environment into countries’ development and place people’s well-being at the core of the Development agenda. The Rio conventions on Biodiversity, Desertification, and Climate Change were achievements of the utmost importance. He also underlined that the Paris Meeting was an equally significant achievement. Environment was highlighted as a key axis for development and the need to see people as the core of development to fight poverty and inequality. He mentioned that well-being cannot be mentioned separate from biodiversity. In this regard, quality of life is to be improved through knowledge. Traditional knowledge is important, provided it leads us to new sustainability paradigms.
21. The Minister mentioned the need for SDGs and Aichi objectives to support poverty eradication. Similarly, he emphasized the need to align our national and regional goals with international goals. However, he said that these national and regional goals must be registered based on the understanding of national and regional priorities, rather than of foreign schemes and agendas.
22. He recognized the frequent dilemma faced by countries regarding conservation and development decisions, the need for a more fair and equitable distribution, and the reduction of poverty. He proposed national experiences in the implementation of comprehensive projects, such as in the case of productive settings incorporating biodiversity, desertification and climate change, that is to say, the three Rio conventions.
23. To conclude, he underlined the COP13 opportunity for the agendas to become aligned within priorities among the countries and the NBSAPs as instruments that support identification of these biodiversity priorities and their combination of national development plans.
24. The moderator mentioned that it is not possible to talk about well-being if degraded soils and poverty persist, and he recalled that this effort should come not only from the Ministries of Environment, but from all Ministers for industry.
25. The moderator opened the session to comments from the countries for panellist comments.
26. The Viceminister of Brazil congratulated the panel. He recalled the role of the private sector and the need to integrate them into the biodiversity integration role. For example, he mentioned how in Brazil the forest code provides for maintaining nearly 50% of their properties for conservation. This goal is currently being achieved, and this therefore means that the same can be achieved with respect to biodiversity conservation. Almost half of Brazil operates under the federal code structure. Likewise, he mentioned the case of Congress, which approved the new laws on ABS where the private sector is recognized as an important stakeholder.
27. The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina emphasized the need that laws integrate biodiversity to support executive decisions. He also underlined the importance of sustainable consumption and production, proposing eco-labelling to protect biodiversity, in line with the social dimension. He ended by recalling that the biodiversity capital of the region is important and must be valued and taken into account for the region’s development.
28. A civil society representative emphasized the role of local governments for sustainability. He mentioned that there are many groups allied to these processes as local partners and, if the impact is to be expanded, the civil society is needed. It is also necessary to integrate with local governments towards COP 13.
29. The Minister of Environment of Chile mentioned that climate change has overshadowed certain environmental themes such as biodiversity. However, he said that biodiversity is a priority and, therefore, there will be actively participating in COP 13. He shared three important concepts: (1) The conceptual point of view of biodiversity as a resource that can be harnessed but there are numerous species that are part of a fragile equilibrium that must be protected; (2) It is key to increase the level of knowledge. For example, marine coastal ecosystems are important but quite often not very well understood; (3) It is relevant to deepen on the concept of biodiversity and territorial planning,
30. The moderator thanked the panellists and the countries for their comments.
31. The President of the Meeting thanked the Secretary of the Environment and Natural Resource, Rafael Pacchiano, for the conduction of the panel.
32. He finalized indicating that COP 13 should explore and define three key areas, (1) land use, renewable energies and sustainable cities. Where are the boundaries between sustainable development and the conservation of biodiversity; (2) the dilemma in oil producers and the generation of jobs, where given the low prices these jobs are disappearing. Despite the challenges this generates, it should be seen as an opportunity to reshift sustainable development; (3) new areas of bioprospection and biotechnology which provide opportunities for the development of new industries such as the pharmaceutical industry.

**III.3. Ministerial dialogue on Health and Environment**

1. The moderator for the panel, Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, gave an introduction on the issue, pointing out how important chemicals currently are to the entire economy, as well as to social well-being. However, at the same time, he warned of the risks to health and the environment arising from its unsound management. As an example, he quoted reports from the World Health Organization that have identified approximately 100 types of diseases related to exposure to chemicals. He also noted that children and women are particularly vulnerable, as are the poorest populations. Problems stemming from pollution are reversible, but in order to address them, one must also understand their economic dimension. Finally, Mr. Payet emphasized the intrinsic relationship between a healthy environment and a healthy population, and he also illustrated examples of work done on food waste and waste from electrical and electronic equipment.
2. He then invited Ms. Agnes Soares, Regional Advisor of the Pan- American Health Organization, to comment on the challenges faced by Latin America and the Caribbean in this regard. Ms. Soares started by expressing the importance of developing public policies and awareness regarding the cost of inaction, which is extremely high given the impact in both deaths and years living with disability. She reported on trends that relate a range of environmental factors to an increase in non-transmittable diseases, and discussed some of the main sources of impact, such as air pollution or the use of biomass as fuel in households. Moreover, she mentioned some of the strategies recommended for the reduction of this risk, such as the use of public transport, the introduction of clean energy for cooking and heating in households, the reduction of occupational exposure, increased controls for the registration and use of chemicals, and improved access to water and sanitation. She concluded by calling for further development regarding public policies, greater private sector involvement, and the need for joint work between the environment and health sectors.
3. Meanwhile, Mr. Rafael Zabala, FAO Representative in Colombia, delved into issues related to food security, stressing the need for inter-sectoriality in order to produce food in an efficient, sustainable and safe manner. While agriculture has traditionally been seen as a source of environmental pressures, it is essential in order to feed a population of 7 billion people, which continues to rise. He stressed the importance of moving towards a model of sustainable agriculture, shortening distances between producers and consumers, operating under quality standards, promoting smart subsidies, and producing healthy food at affordable prices. He agreed on the importance of joint work between ministries of health and environment, and concluded by recalling the need for new approaches to combat illicit crops.
4. Mr. Alejandro Gaviria, Colombia's Minister of Health, further analysed the integration of sectoral policies. He provided some specific examples for the country, including the actions taken to ban aerial spraying of agro-chemicals in certain crop areas, based on health and environment considerations, in line with the precautionary principle. He mentioned the challenge of working under a scenario where actual health determinants differ from those that are perceived by the population (for example, where they assign greater importance to health services than lifestyles). Beyond health sector policies, he highlighted the importance of health aspects being considered among the group of policies from other sectors, as well as the need to influence changes in lifestyles.
5. Ms. Eneida de León, Minister of Housing, Land Planning and Environment of Uruguay, agreed on the need to adopt specific actions, as well as the appropriateness of addressing these issues from a perspective of human rights and equity. He warned of the impact from chronic non-transmittable diseases, and the effects of agrochemical pollution on human health, particularly with regard to the poorest populations. He reported on the actions that have been carried out with the Ministry of Health in Uruguay in areas such as monitoring of pollutants in water, soil and air, as well as developing action protocols and institutional frameworks. With specific regard to mercury, in addition to exposure studies, progress has been made in controlling the main sources, as well as the regulation and replacement of mercury-containing products and their disposal. She stressed the importance of involving private stakeholders and financial institutions.
6. During interventions from the countries, the representative from the Bahamas agreed on the importance of strengthening communication between ministers of health and environment, and noted that mercury pollution is relevant to all countries, although the sources of exposure may be different. Meanwhile, the Cuban Deputy Minister noted that it was difficult for some countries to address some particular problems, due to a lack of technological solutions, such as in managing electronic waste, or addressing certain environmental liabilities, e.g. lead-contaminated sites. The Minister from Argentina suggested working together on the development and implementation of indicators to measure progress on issues related to health and environment.
7. Finally, Mr. Payet summarized some of the key elements identified by the panel, including the consideration of cultural aspects and lifestyles, the need for studies and information, and the importance of developing suitable cross-cutting policies together with other ministries and involving the private sector, all under the precautionary principle.
8. In their final messages, the panellists added that inter-sectoral policy is necessary but more difficult to implement, and that in addition to inter-ministerial work it is also important to involve civil society. Some specific challenges were also identified, such as illegal mining and air pollution.

**III.4. Ministerial dialogue on Climate Change**

1. The Minister from Peru, Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, began the panel by thanking Colombia for its excellent chairmanship of the forum, as well as the UNEP Secretariat for the role it played. Then, as the central theme of the panel, he suggested exploring the priorities for the Paris Agreement work programme, so that the region could have tools to reduce its vulnerability.
2. To put this issue in context, the Minister reflected on the multilateral climate change process. He expressed that Latin America played a fundamental role when hope in multilateralism had been lost, following the Copenhagen COP. The region demonstrated significant negotiation capacity during the most difficult stages of the process. As such, he appreciated that Argentina had put itself forward to host the 2018 COP, the year in which the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions will be reviewed with a view to being more ambitious.
3. The Minister also mentioned that the region has not always lived up to what's been required by the circumstances, specifically in terms of internal unity; this is in contrast to other regions such as Africa, which have managed to act as a united negotiating group, thus resulting in greater global impact for African countries.
4. The Minister also argued that sustainable development had become part of the States' political agendas. Despite existing for 25 years, there has been an apparent slowness in the maturing and generation of results from these processes. What role should the Ministries of Environment play if we want the Paris, New York and Sendai agreements to come to fruition? The Ministries have great weaknesses and limitations, which is why he suggested finding support in (and becoming) leaders who promote the mainstreaming of environmental issues. At the same time, he called on the contribution of the private sector, where there are also leaders capable of achieving influence, and who are also critical in terms of attaining the financing necessary to achieve everything agreed in 2015.
5. This makes it necessary to set out agendas and messages to communicate clearly what the Paris Agreement means. The Minister stressed the critical importance of the Forum of Ministers of Environment in terms of sharing information among all countries in the region, to thus make it possible for Latin America and the Caribbean to not only have Ministries of Environment that demonstrate better leadership, but also take specific action on climate issues.
6. Addressing the issue regarding the scientific aspects that determine vulnerability, which should be considered for implementation of the Paris Agreement in the region, Mannava Sivakum, Director of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), explained that the IPCC was established in order to provide scientific knowledge, as well as scenarios and impacts regarding climate change. According to the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, last year marked the highest emissions of greenhouse gases in history, with levels not seen since 800,000 years ago. This is coupled with a population increase of 2.3 billion (to 7.4 billion people) in only the last 50 years.
7. Global warming has increased the temperature in the region from 0.7 to 1 degree compared to pre-industrial times. In some areas, warming has been between 3 and 4 degrees. Also, the region has experienced 613 weather events between 2000 and 2013, where 53 million people have been directly affected, causing losses totalling 52 billion dollars.
8. Land use in the region has changed dramatically in recent years, causing massive deforestation, which has had a critical impact on environmental degradation. This has turned ecosystems into a significant driver of climate change, species extinction, depletion of fisheries, water shortages in cities, power generation limitation and food reduction, among others.
9. The IPCC Fifth Assessment Report concludes that Central America could suffer warming between 2 and 3 degrees by mid-century on average. In some areas of the sub-region, this increase would be between 5 and 6 degrees, resulting in dramatic impacts.
10. In small island states, the following is expected: a water level rise, intensified cyclones, changes in the distribution and frequency of rainfall, all of which will have a profound effect on the countries. This will have impacts on the sub-region's economy, affecting tourism (which is the main economic driver) due to the erosion of coasts and beaches, coral bleaching and a rise in diseases such as malaria or dengue fever.
11. In South America, there will be a large temperature increase in the region south of the Amazon, as well as a reduction in precipitation in Chile. The rainfall extremes will cause water shortages and will transform the Amazon forest into savannah. This "savannisation" will have significant impacts in terms of biodiversity loss, as well as critical health effects.
12. Regarding agricultural productivity, as an example, it is expected that by 2030 Brazil will lose 50% of its current meat production and 70% of its soy production. Countries such as Peru and Colombia will be those hardest hit in terms of losses of fisheries. All of this reflects the need for the Ministries of Environment to work hard to strengthen resilience among each of these sectors.
13. Minister Daniel Ortega, Minister of Environment of Ecuador, began his presentation by stating that the 33 countries are extremely diverse in terms of their positions and interests, but that this is also the main advantage that the region possesses. He also referred to the region's great wealth in natural resources, as it contains nearly 50% of the planet's fresh water, 23% of its oil reserves, and seven of the main strategic minerals. However, in contrast to this, only 1% of global patents are generated in the region.
14. Despite economic growth of 1.3% this year, the region is expected to become the third-leading global economy over the next 30 years, behind Asia and North America.
15. The region generates about 9% of global emissions, mainly due to the change in land use and agriculture. However, the region will see a 5% GDP loss due to climate change (or 100 billion per year) according to figures from the ECLAC.
16. Minister Ortega spoke of the opportunity presented to the region by climate change. He suggested thinking of carbon neutrality at a regional level. There is already a list of identified projects that would generate a large amount of investment, and therefore economic development. An example of this is the forthcoming construction of an electric vehicle factory (backed by Chinese capital) in Ecuador, with support from the CAF. In this regard, he mentioned the importance of the upcoming CELAC meeting in June 2016, which will set out how climate investment should be made in the region.
17. The Minister believes that the Meeting of CELAC Environment Ministers in 2012 was a political dialogue opportunity supplementary to the Forum of Ministers of the Environment. Minister Ortega reiterated the willingness of his government (rebutting the rumours that had been spread) to uphold and not work against the object of the Forum of Ministers of Environment.
18. Minister Vallejo of Colombia subsequently responded, stating that they hope the Forum of Ministers will become a centre of innovative ideas, with fewer debates, and more practical ideas created, in line with that set out for the future Regional Platform on Climate Change proposed in this forum, with specific actions at the regional level. He also stated that this Forum represents a shared vision for the region, despite their different views.
19. Minister James Fletcher, Minister of Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology of Saint Lucia, began his presentation by reflecting that it was the Lima COP that enabled the success of the Paris Agreement in 2015. He also said that the Ministries of Environment need to achieve an impact and communicate beyond their parishes/provinces/regions, which are already cognisant of the need to take action. He mentioned the importance of working with civil society and the media to create greater social awareness, to thus achieve continuous action.
20. He also spoke about the need for environmental data to generate metrics, and thus measure progress or the lack of it. He also called for closer ties with the Ministries of Health, because climate change represents the greatest threat to public health, based on a recent study published by the University of London.
21. He set out the fundamental importance of coasts for Caribbean islands and how these will be affected by rising waters, fishing or the acidification of the seas, as well as the impact on infrastructure, which costs billions each time a new hurricane or storm hits the islands.
22. Minister Badenier of Chile spoke during the comments segment, and said that the region must work to reach common and agreed positions, like Africa, so as to further its ability to negotiate in international negotiations. He also reflected on the importance of having emission inventories, economic instruments and verification systems, and downplayed the importance of the Green Climate Fund, because despite its impact, it isn't the only solution available to the countries.
23. The Minister of Environment of Panama, Mirei Endara, also reported her Cabinet's recent approval of the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions for Panama, as well as the creation of a REDD centre in line with the Paris Agreement, to bring sustainable development for communities living around or in forests. Finally, she informed those present that on 24th June the Meeting of CELAC Ministers will be held in Panama, and on 26th June the Panama Canal expansion will be opened, inviting the ministers to attend both events.
24. The Minister from Peru concluded the panel by thanking all the speakers and stating that the region will be able to implement the agenda agreed globally in 2015, provided it is able to reach consensus positions on key issues. He also concluded with the need for the Forum to include important issues like subsidies, and have a thematic and technical regional agenda aimed at decision-making and action.

**Item IV of the Agenda: Other matters**

1. No other matters were included in the agenda.

**Item V of the Agenda: Review of the Draft Final Report of the Twentieth Meeting and adoption of the Ministerial Declaration**

1. The Chairman invited the representative from the Civil Society to make a statement. Following is an abridge summary of the Statement made by the Civil Society on the behalf of Civil Society including women and youth.
2. The representative of the civil society commented that they firmly believe that the sum of cumulative local actions have a regional and global impact. He request urgently, to the Presidency of this Forum, more active and collaborative participation of the Major Groups and Stakeholders, with at least one representative from each of the nine (9) major groups, beyond the current 2 regional representatives, proposing that the next meetings of the Forum include side events of the Mayor Groups and Stakeholders to deliver proposals to the Forum Presidency before the development of the Forum, for review and analysis from ministries.
3. He also indicated that they strongly insist that forum resolutions include language on gender equality and women's rights. Second, a crucial element of Agenda 2030 is the practical concern for the rights, livelihoods and well-being of indigenous people, especially those who practice traditional occupations that preserve and maintain the habitat and biodiversity. In their view, this concern is not adequately represented in the current proposals. The implementation of these agreements requires a huge increase in the human capacity for sustainable development at local, national and regional level. We believe that the only way this happens is through improving education.
4. Finally, he indicated that the Small Island Development States have special and different needs and call for increasing specific efforts to ensure that these needs are reflected in the resolutions. In UNEA -2 should emerge substantial development and implementation of the New Urban Agenda to be agreed at Habitat III in October 2016. In this, the contributions from the Major Groups of Local Governments has a key role as facilitator of the parties and the others Mayor Groups and Stakeholders considering that the sum of local actions cumulatively have a regional impact and global.
5. Delegations reviewed the draft final report presented by the Rapporteur, including the entire set of decisions and the draft Ministerial Declaration for the meeting, which were developed during the two days of the Meeting of Experts, based on timely proposals submitted by delegations.
It should be noted that the various versions of these eleven ( 11) Decisions proposed and the draft Declaration were enriched by dialogue and input from delegations at successive meetings in which all delegates participated . It is pertinent to point out that, at the request of several delegations, it was also agreed to limit (deadline) the opportunity for the inclusion of additional draft decision texts. The delegations provided proposals and new texts were included not only during the meeting of experts but also during the first day of the Ministerial Meeting. Finally, delegations after reviewing the final report, adopted them after incorporating the agreed amendments, and noting in this report, at the request of the delegations mentioned below, of the following:
6. With respect to decision 7 regarding to the Regional Platform on Climate Change, Bolivia’s delegation, on behalf of the Minister of Environment and Water, Dr Alexandra Moreira, thanked “the government of Colombia for its hospitality in hosting the twentieth Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, where sister countries have gathered and come together to identify common interests and to adopt strategic decisions for the Latin America and Caribbean region.”
7. The Bolivian delegation stated that “in this specific decision of this forum relating to climate change, the Bolivian delegation expresses its profound concern that because of aspects referred to as “methodologies and rules”, the inclusion of essential and substantive aspects was not permitted, despite their submission within the agreed terms and deadlines.”
8. The paragraphs proposed by the Bolivian delegation “to enrich the document and which were not inserted, not even in brackets, in spite of the request from our delegation for consideration by the ministerial segment”, are as follows:

“In the preamble section:

* Recalling the fundamental Principle of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change regarding Common but Differentiated Responsibilities. When the responsibilities of developed countries are recognised and evident with respect to severe impact from climate change, damage and losses. “

In the decisions section:

* Integration of the Regional Platform on Climate Change with other platforms such as the platform for the exchange of knowledge, practices and technologies of indigenous peoples and local communities, the platform for the non-market based approach, and that of the Climate Technology Centre (CTC).

Echoing the comment by the Minister from Ecuador, this decision should have tacitly included:

* That every action in this platform must fall within the context of the indicative framework of priorities adopted by our Heads of State in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) at its IV Summit held on 27 January2016.
1. The Minister of Environment of Panama requested that it be noted that Panama will host the Second Meeting of Ministers of the Environment and High Level National Authorities related to Climate Change of the CELAC, on 24 June, 2016.
2. The delegations from Cuba, Ecuador and Bolivia supported the statements made by Bolivia in relation to the importance of ensuring the coordination of the Regional Platform for Climate Change with other existing platforms, as well as other political bodies in the region Cuba also mentioned that all resolutions must maintain the same structure.
3. The delegation from Bolivia stated: “We express our pleasure that in the Declaration of the XX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, we recalled Resolution 1/10 of UNEA-1m whereby the countries mandated the Executive Director of the UNEP to organize a workshop at UNEA-2 on the various approaches, visions, models and tools to achieve sustainable development, considering the Good Living approach in balance with Mother Nature.”
4. The Viceminister from Honduras referred to the whereas section relating to vulnerability of the Latin America and the Caribbean region vis-à-vis the adverse effects of climate change. He mentioned that his country is the second most vulnerable with respect to climate change.
5. The Minister from Santa Lucia, as regards the paragraph on vulnerability, recalled that the exact wording of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change regarding the Caribbean is “highly vulnerable” instead of simply “vulnerable” and that, in fact, it is so expressed in decision 7 of this meeting.
6. The delegation from Bolivia made a call for self-reflection, referring to the short time devoted to reviewing the decision proposals, as the delegations only received them on Holy Thursday. As regards the methodology, he stated that inflexible rules had been put in place. In his opinion, these forums must be used to strengthen the region and its positions in terms of international negotiations, acknowledge countries’ achievements and express the region’s solidarity.
7. With regard to the report of the meeting with this agenda item, it was agreed that the Secretariat would send the draft to the delegations and that a period of ten days open to post comments
8. Based on the submissions of Argentina and Paraguay, it was agreed that the XXI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean will be convened jointly by Argentina and Paraguay.
9. Regarding the proposals from the countries for Chairing UNEA-2, the Minister from Costa Rica nominated himself to this role. He underlined that the UNEA is an opportunity to seek joint visions and define specific actions in pursuit of environmental and sustainable development. He also stressed that Latin America and the Caribbean must actively participate in this process by means of proposal-related positions and by taking the decisions made in the region’s Forum of Ministers of Environment to that meeting, so that these are integrated into the global environmental agenda and also so that the region can achieve greater visibility. The Ministers from Peru and Colombia supported this nomination, as did the other countries.
10. The Director and Regional Representative of UNEP reminded everyone that the UNEA has seven Vicechairs and that a country from the region may be nominated to each of these. The Minister from Santa Lucia proposed Barbados, whose delegate accepted the nomination, as did the rest of countries.

**Item VI of the Agenda: Closing of the Twentieth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**

1. After thanking all participants for their efforts to reach agreements and progress on the path of regional cooperation for sustainable development, the Minister Vallejo adjourned the meeting at 17:00 hrs.
2. The Regional Director of UNEP thanked the Government of Colombia for their hospitality and for the excellent work for the preparation and conduct of the meeting.