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Summary of the progress in the implementation of the decisions of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

Environmental education for sustainable development

Background: State of Environmental Education for Sustainable Development in Latin America

1. Environmental education has not been far from the global and regional thought to forge a more prosperous and equitable planet, within its natural limits, as well as scientific and traditional knowledge.
2. Currently, all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have legislation, public policies, programmes or plans on environmental education. Over the past six years, at least 10 countries approved new instruments (Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, and Uruguay). See "[List of policies and legislation on environmental education in Latin America, July 2015](#)".
3. According to a survey answered by the focal points of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean (ETN-LAC, i.e. Directors and Heads of Environmental Education of the Ministries of Environment of Latin America) in 2013 it was determined that countries such as Costa Rica frame the issue of environmental education in various laws such as the Organic Law of the Environment, the Forestry Law, etc. Others like Guatemala, have the Environmental Education Law as well as Brazil (Lei No. 9.795). Argentina has a National Environmental Education Programme. Also, Cuba has developed the National Strategy for Environmental Education, and Chile is one of the few countries that have a National Policy on Education for Sustainable Development (PNEDS for its initials in Spanish).
4. Some of the positive developments mentioned in the responses to this survey include: the creation or update of the policy, strategy, or national plan on environmental education, in order to allow a coordinated, multi-sectoral and decentralized implementation in some countries; including environmental issues, with emphasis on climate change, higher education laws; creation of specialized technical courses in environmental management; inclusion of the subject in the national curriculum; participatory processes; joint action with the Ministry of Education, among others.
5. Many countries also emphasized the need for monitoring and evaluation of the strategies, action plans and others, and for defining indicators, in order to know the degree of incidence of citizen participation, and to identify potential short, medium and long term developments and measures in the implementation of policies.
6. Similarly, a common aspect among all countries was that they mentioned the need to have more financial and institutional resources for the implementation and dissemination of policies on environmental education.
7. In the field of higher education, it is worth noting that, according to the report titled "[Development of indicators to assess the implementation of policies in Latin America Universities](#) (2014), based on the voluntary participation of 65 universities in the region: 30% of universities have a board or committee for participation and monitoring of sustainability policies, which are represented by teachers, students and administrators. Also 35% of universities have a communication strategy for the sustainability plan for the university community and external agents. Only 5% of universities have a tool to assess the learning on sustainability, and only in 9% of centres there is a commission or technical group responsible for advising them on the adaptation of curricula to incorporate sustainability criteria.

Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC for its initials in Spanish) and environmental education, training and capacity building of human resources

8. The Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) adopted in 2002 in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (within the framework of the World Summit on Sustainable Development) provided the guiding goal 5 on "institutional arrangements" which included, among others, "environmental education" and "training and capacity building of human resources." In the process of ongoing discussion with governments on the update of the ILAC they remain under the priority area of "Governance and institutional arrangements", environmental education and "training of human resources" with renewed goals.

Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean: Environmental Training Network and environmental education

9. The topic of environmental education has been present in all of the meetings of the Forum of Ministers of Environment. In each meeting of the forum, Ministers adopted a decision in the framework of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean coordinated by UNEP through the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean¹.

10. The Nineteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean adopted Decision 2 on Environmental Education for Sustainable Development. The decision is mainly focused on: (1) Deepening training processes; (2) continuing the provision of technical support in regional environmental education congresses; (3) continuing the promotion among universities in the region to actively participate in the UNEP Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES); (4) strengthening the organization of youth and children for the environment at the regional level; (5) promoting the exchange of knowledge and experiences, as well as South-South cooperation among the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in the areas of education, communication and public participation, including intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchanges.

Ibero-American Congresses on Environmental Education

11. Environmental education in Latin America has been marked by the Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education organized directly by the countries of the region over the past two decades². These congresses have helped to publicize experiences, reflect and discuss concepts and methodologies, and outline new approaches and scopes for environmental education. They have also led to the incorporation of environmental education in schools and out of school spaces with proposals for training specialists, participation of civil society in general and in developing programmes at the national and local levels.

¹ This network is financed through a trust fund established at the Sixth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean on 30 and 31 March in Brasilia. The countries that signed the Fund and agreed to a scale of annual voluntary contributions are: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela (USD 20,000); Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, Panama, Peru (USD 10,000); Bolivia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Uruguay (USD 5000). In addition, in 2002 Barbados contributed USD 10,000

² The first Iberoamerican Congress on Environmental Education was held in Mexico in 1992 and the last one was held in Peru in 2014.

12. The Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean has been associated with the conference to contribute to substantive discussions. The last Iberoamerican Congress on Environmental Education, namely the Seventh Congress was held in 2014 in Peru (Lima, 10-12 September). It was organized by the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Education of Peru with the support of the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), the Environmental Training Network coordinated by UNEP and many other organizations, it concluded with the adoption of the Declaration of Lima reaffirming:

- That environmental education from its transformative and political perspective is indispensable to live fully (sumaq kawsay). This requires a comprehensive, systemic, cross-cutting, contextualized, proactive, forward-looking environmental education with biospheric equity. It also carries an environmental responsibility with the common goods and intercultural knowledge dialogue, within the framework of a peaceful and harmonious coexistence with gender equality and intergenerational solidarity.

Similarly, the Declaration also expresses, among others:

- “Our full commitment to continue working on building environmental citizenship and strengthening the institutionalization of environmental education in the countries of Latin America particularly in the Ministries of Education and the Environment”.

Progress and achievements of environmental education in the framework of the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean

13. At the regional level and regarding cooperation between Ministries of Environment of Latin America, the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean is the only institutionalized space dedicated to environmental education. Progress since the last meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment (Mexico, 2014) is included in detail in UNEP/LAC-IC.1.2015/3.Rev2 report - Progress in implementing the decisions of the XIX Meeting Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. The following summarizes its achievements:

- The Environmental Training Network has been consolidated as a community of practice among directors of environmental education within ministries of environment.
- A work plan for the period 2014-2016 was agreed.
- Training Processes have been promoted (e.g. the international course on ESD organized by the Ministry of Environment of Chile).
- Increased knowledge on sustainability policies of the universities in the region.
- Increased national university networks for the environment and sustainability (e.g. El Salvador and Panama).
- Interaction between ministries of environment and university networks for the environment and broader sustainability (e.g. Ecuador, Peru and Guatemala).
- Exchange of experiences on environmental education ministries of the environment carried out (in general terms and with emphasis on the issues of water and biodiversity), other regional, national and legal organizations (for example, through the VII Ibero-American Congress of Education Environmental).

- Increased knowledge about practices and state of environmental education in the region, for example, through research on community-based environmental education (2015).
- Annual voluntary contributions to the trust fund ETN-LAC collected (an average of USD 60,000 in the last three years).

New developments worldwide

14. In the past two years the international community has discussed and agreed on new agendas for sustainable development where education is an integral part thereof. The main agendas are the "Samoa Pathway" for Small Island Developing States (September 2014), the Global Programme of Action on Education for Sustainable Development (November 2014) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (September 2015).

15. The UN General Assembly in September 2014 approved the document entitled "Samoa Pathway" (Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action). This document includes a section devoted to education and one on capacity building. It also refers to education in the sections on sustained and sustainable inclusive and equitable economic growth, and decent work for all; sustainable energy; disaster risk reduction; health; culture and sports. It also contains a reference to education for sustainable development under the section on sustainable consumption and production.

16. The ESD Declaration on Aichi-Nagoya and the roadmap to implement the Global Programme of Action on ESD were formulated at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) held from 10 to 12 November 2014. The 10YFP programme (Ten Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production) on sustainable lifestyles and education (SLE), which is also supported by UNESCO, was also presented at the World Conference as key leverage points of the new priorities in education.

17. The Global Programme of Action on ESD, recognized by Resolution A/RES/69/211 of the United Nations General Assembly, focuses on five priority areas: (1) advancing policy; (2) transforming learning and training environments; (3) building capacities of educators and trainers; (5) empowering and mobilizing youth; and (6) accelerating sustainable solutions at local level

18. Meanwhile, the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015 includes Sustainable Development Goal No. 4 regarding quality education and its target 7 provides: " By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development, among other means".

19. Likewise, ODS No.4 is linked to the other SDGs that seek to achieve: responsible production and consumption (SDG No. 12); climate action (SDG No.13); life below water (SDG No.14); life on land (SDG No.15); clean water and sanitation (SDG No. 6); affordable and clean energy (SDG No.7); sustainable cities and communities (SDG No.11); peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG No.16); partnerships for the goals (SDG No. 17).

Challenges of environmental education for sustainable development and regional cooperation

20. Considering the above references, the policy and legal frameworks and new developments on education worldwide, it can be said that the importance of environmental education in Latin America has increased. Also, that there are new perspectives in environmental education which are identified as follows:

- a. Promotion of a critical review of educational practices and encouraging renewal through formal and non-formal training processes for teachers and educators, strengthening the design and implementation of participatory methodologies that facilitate learning, understanding diversity, and are inclusive and allows the acquisition of skills for living as well as protecting and improving the environment.
- b. Approach to rural, indigenous and urban communities.
- c. Incorporation of intercultural and interdisciplinary considerations and the link with the worldviews, to increase awareness of local, national and regional realities, accompanied by a growing respect for differences and the recognition and appreciation of ancestral knowledge.
- d. Promotion of innovative environmental education tools through the use of information technologies and social networks.
- e. Strengthening the institutionalization of cross environmental education policies, articulating the management of the Ministries of Education and Environment, and between these and other governmental and non-governmental sectors.
- f. Promotion of public-private partnerships to contribute to education policies for sustainable development partnerships.
- g. Increased incidence of environmental education and training in productive sectors with the focus on the sustainable use of natural resources, generating processes to achieve sustainable patterns of consumption and production, proper waste management, mitigation and adaptation to climate change and disaster reduction.
- h. Update, adaptation and strengthening of curricula in universities and research centres to facilitate clean energy technology transfer.
- i. Strengthening the monitoring and evaluation of strategies, action plans or the like on environmental education and the design of indicators
- j. Promoting the empowerment of youth to become actively involved in managing their territories, appreciating their identity and recognizing their sense of belonging so that they become agents of change for sustainability.
- k. Active involvement of academia in the preparation of teachers, students and all community members of institutions of higher education to meet the challenges of the 2030 Agenda, and in this regard, develop and implement sustainability policies.
- l. Allocation of additional financial and institutional resources for the implementation and dissemination of environmental education policies, promoting other sources of financial support through civil society and the private sector.
- m. Further development of South-South and triangular cooperation in the region in the field of environmental education and training.
- n. Strengthening cooperation between UNESCO, UNEP and other United Nations programme agencies to promote exchanges in education and training within the framework of the decisions of the meetings of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean with emphasis on the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC in Spanish) and the Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration

Access to information public participation and Access to justice on environmental Law in Latin America and the Caribbean

Background

21. Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (“Rio Principle 10”) was adopted at the 1992 Rio Summit by Heads of State and Government with the goal to make progress towards the full access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters.

22. This was reaffirmed in key milestones of environmental governance, including the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (BPOA) in 1994, the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS (MSI) (2005), the Rio+20 outcome document (2012) and the Samoa Pathway (2014).

23. In February 2010 a milestone was achieved in the field of environmental law and the application of Principle 10 when the Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council, Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) in Bali, Indonesia, unanimously adopted the Guidelines for the Development of National Legislation on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Bali Guidelines).

24. In the United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development (Rio + 20) held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, Heads of State and Government encouraged that measures at regional, national, subnational and local levels to promote access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice level were adopted in environmental issues, as appropriate, recognizing that democracy, good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels, are essential for sustainable development³.

25. Now that the international community has defined a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it has been made explicit that good governance, rule of law and resilient institutions are at the same time an expected outcome and drivers to advance in the pillars of sustainable development. In this context, the full application of Principle 10 is more relevant than ever as it provides a clear, pioneering vision of transparency, justice and access to information as a basis for deepening democracy and eliminating global asymmetries.

³ Paragraph 99 of “The Future we want” – Resolution 66/288 n UNGA, of 27 July 2013

Progress and Challenges in the Implementation of Rights to Access

26. Having timely and adequate access to environmental information, strengthening effective engagement of all stakeholders in environmental decision-making and ensuring access to environmental justice (“access rights”) are important pre-requisites of sustainable development.

27. As recognized in UNEA Resolution 1/13 "Implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development", progress has been achieved at national and regional level in strengthening the rights of access to environmental information, justice and participation in decision-making, but there are still challenges for its full implementation.

28. In Latin America and the Caribbean, a review of the current situation, perspectives and good practices⁴ regarding access rights, shows significant progress in the region, with a large number of countries that have incorporated Principle 10 into their domestic legislation, through inclusion in national constitutions, general laws on the environment and through specific laws and regulations that provide operability of such rights.

29. Along the right to access to environmental information as well as the request for the general public, there is a growing tendency to incorporate in national constitutions and environmental laws, forms of participation of civil society in environmental management through mechanisms such as consultations and public hearings and participation of NGOs in environmental management [academic bodies] councils.

30. Progress has also been made in establishing mechanisms to facilitate access to justice in environmental matters through express warranties such as the public interest lawsuits, citizen suits, for environmental protection, and the adequacy of procedural tools and open locus standing rules, waiving of court fees, facilitation of evidence, extensive enforcement powers to protect the affected group or community, among others.

31. In recent years the number of courts and tribunals specialized in environmental issues has also increased. These courts and tribunals already exist in eleven countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and along with specialized environmental prosecutors' offices, they are specialized bodies to address conflicts related to the violation of environmental rights.

32. Despite these advances, in many countries in the region legislation to facilitate access rights are still not sufficiently developed or face implementation barriers. The cultural diversity and social complexity of the region combines important challenges for countries at the time of making access rights a reality, since they demand a multiplicity of forms of social relations and means for solving sectoral conflicts.

33. At the same time the region shows an increase in the scale and pace in infrastructure development and extractive industries, which have led to or exacerbated conflicts related to different views on development and competition over the use of natural resources. This has increased the number and scale of prosecution of socio environmental conflict mostly as a result of demands from local communities and civil society, challenging the legality of decisions to approve projects and demanding a stop to harmful activities and compensation to the victims.

34. These situations highlight the challenges that the region faces towards full implementation of Principle 10⁵. In this regard, a diagnosis of the current state of the right of access was made in

⁴ <http://www.cepal.org/en/node/31822>

⁵ Conclusions of two regional workshops on the implementation of Rio Principle 10 and the implementation of the Bali Guidelines for development of national legislation on access to information and public participation and Access to justice

2013, which highlighted the need to: a) strengthen environmental education and empower citizens to better understand and exercise their environmental rights and mechanisms for their protection, b) train civil servants for better production, processing and dissemination of environmental public information; c) Training public agencies to develop effective measures for the inclusion of vulnerable groups traditionally underrepresented and excluded in the exercise of these rights; d) establish legal frameworks, enforcement mechanisms and sanctions to strengthen the protection of the rights of access; e) strengthen political commitment of the responsible authorities to effectively move towards a more participatory environmental governance; f) Periodically train judges and judicial officials in resolving environmental issues, taking into account the constant and rapid evolution of environmental law; g) adopt policies that take into account the socio-cultural and linguistic diversity of traditionally excluded and underrepresented groups and ensure greater guarantees and safeguards for their participation and representation; vi) To recognize, regulate and encourage alternative methods of dispute resolution on environmental issues.

Regional Initiatives

35. The Santiago Declaration of the First Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) states: "We value the initiatives for regional implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration 1992, based on the rights of access to information, participation and environmental justice as a significant contribution to the participation of the organized community committed to sustainable development"⁶.

36. Indeed, in addition to the legislative developments mentioned above, in recent decades, countries in the region have incorporated environmental management tools that provide access rights, such as: Mechanisms for access to information, environmental information systems, reports on the state of the environment, inventories of toxic releases, records on the release and transfer of pollutants, emergency warning systems, systems for water quality and air monitoring, environmental impact assessments, strategic environmental assessments, prevention and decontamination plans, emission and environmental quality standards, ecological land use plans, hearings for permits, legislative hearings, mechanisms of alternative dispute resolution and specialized bodies with environmental jurisdiction. Civil society also plays an important role in the dissemination and promotion of the rights of access⁷.

The Process of the Regional Declaration on Principle 10

37. At the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, the Declaration on the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was signed. In the Declaration, the signatories committed themselves to advance towards a regional instrument to facilitate the full implementation of the rights of access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters with the support of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) as technical secretariat.

on environmental matters held in 2013 by UNEP, ECLAC, UNITAR the Access Initiative, and WRI (Port of Spain, September 2013 and Lima October 2013)

⁶ Ar.60 of the Santiago Declaration

⁷ About the work on the Access Initiative in the region: <http://www.accessinitiative.org/es>

38. Between 2012 and 2014, four meetings of the focal points of the signatory countries and fourteen working group meetings were held. Through the Decision of Santiago, adopted in November 2014, negotiations began for the regional instrument on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters, where a Negotiating Committee was established composed of 20 countries that have signed the Regional Declaration and a Negotiating Committee was established with the aim to conclude its work by December 2016. The definition of modalities for public participation in the process of negotiating the regional instrument includes the election of two representatives who serve as liaisons between the public and the Bureau at meetings of the negotiation process of the regional instrument.

39. The negotiating committee held two meetings in 2015 (in Santiago de Chile, from 5 to 7 May and Panama, from 27 to 29 October) and will meet again in Montevideo, Uruguay from 5 to 8 April, 2016. The purpose of this meeting is to continue the negotiation of the substantive aspects of the draft regional instrument on the basis of the second version of the text compiled by the Board that integrates text proposals provided by countries.

40. Due to its broad scope having the three dimensions of access rights (information, public participation and access to justice) and its ambition to consolidate a regional instrument on the subject, the regional Declaration process raises increasing attention in the regional and international arena, including the resolution on Principle 10 of the first United Nations Environmental Assembly⁸ which takes note of the progress made in this regional process, and the decision of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean that acknowledges the progress of the process of the Declaration on the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and encourage its consolidation as an inclusive and participatory space at regional level for building a common vision and to strengthen national capacities⁹.

Capacity Building

41. The importance of the implementation of Principle 10 for strengthening environmental governance and the rule of law in environmental matters is recognized in the region and there are numerous outreach activities, capacity building, training, and systematization of good practices, which has been promoted in recent years at the regional, subregional and national levels¹⁰.

⁸ UNEA Resolution 1/13

⁹ Decision 1/3

¹⁰ Among them, the Regional Conference on Freedom of Information (Kingston, Jamaica, March 2013) Regional workshop on the implementation of Principle 10 (Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, September 2013) Regional workshop on the implementation of Principle 10 and application of Bali Guidelines (Lima, October 2013), parallel event "Strengthening environmental democracy through international processes" under the Regional Meeting of the Americas of the Alliance for Open Government (San Jose, Costa Rica, November 2014) Regional Meeting on the State of the access rights in the Caribbean (Kingston, Jamaica, 20 and 21 November 2014) Meeting on the implementation of the access rights in the Caribbean (St. Lucia, 15- August 16, 2015), parallel event on the regional Declaration during the Meeting of Government Experts for the review of the Montevideo Programme of UNEP environmental law (Montevideo 7 to 11 September 2015) training workshop for civil society organizations on participation in international negotiations on environmental issues (Panama, October 26, 2015).

Principle 10 at the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

42. The Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC 2002) covers this issue with emphasis on aspects of participation, which are included in the objectives and operational guidelines "Increase participation by non-governmental agents and improve transparency in decision-making processes by strengthening initiatives such as the establishment of National Councils on Sustainable Development and the preparation of national and local Agendas 21". Also in the goals on institutional arrangements, includes "Create and strengthen participation mechanisms to deal with sustainable development issues, with representatives from government, non-government and major groups in all countries of the region."

43. In this context, the work of the Working Group of ILAC Environmental indicators has been very important in relation to access to information. As one of the regions that are most active and committed to the development of environmental information, Latin America and the Caribbean (including not only generation but also access to information), in recent years there have been great progress, particularly, the development of technical and analytical capabilities at the national level, in addition to the commitment and willingness to cooperate at the regional level, which provides good prospects to support decision-making in the future.

44. Decision 1/3 of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Forum, in addition to recognizing the progress of the regional process, renews its commitment to work towards achieving full implementation of Principle 10 of the Declaration of Rio de Janeiro on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and continue efforts to strengthen dialogue and regional cooperation, technical assistance and capacity building in support of the construction and implementation of its own regional agenda on access rights, considering the advances, instruments, experiences and practices in the field since the establishment of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.

Cooperation on Chemicals and Waste in Latin America and the Caribbean

Background

45. At the XIX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean (Los Cabos, Mexico, 11-14 March 2014), countries adopted **Decision 4 on Cooperation on Chemicals and Waste**. The Decision covers different areas of the chemicals and waste agenda (i.e. SAICM; Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions; Minamata Convention; and Implementation activities) and calls, *inter alia*, to:

- The development, with the support of UNEP, of regional work programmes to foster the sound management of chemicals and waste;
- Recommend a comprehensive assessment at the ICCM4 of the achievements by governments and other stakeholders of the 2020 target with a view to identifying and addressing any remaining challenges
- Strengthen, in collaboration with the international organizations and other relevant stakeholders, the financial and technical capacity of the Basel and Stockholm Regional Centres Network in LAC;
- Urge countries of the region to increase their efforts and collaborate in the prevention and control of illegal traffic of hazardous waste and chemicals;
- Invite countries in the region to take necessary steps to ratify, accept, approve or accede to the Minamata Convention, and to cooperate with other governments and stakeholders in a range of topics related with mercury, including inventories and ASGM;
- Call upon UNEP to support governments of the region in the development of a regional clearinghouse to support enabling activities related to the Minamata Convention;
- Formally communicate to the GEF Assembly and the UNEA the region's concern that the 6th replenishment of the GEF fully takes into account the need to allocate sufficient financial resources dedicated to the implementation of the chemicals and waste conventions and SAICM.

46. The ministerial Declaration (**Los Cabos Declaration**) also addressed chemicals and waste, encouraging countries to undertake the necessary steps to become a Party to the Minamata Convention, and requesting UNEP to develop a regional outlook on waste management.

47. During the last period, relevant developments have taken place in the global sustainability and chemicals and waste agenda. In 2015 world leaders adopted the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, where chemicals and wastes are reflected in a number of goals and targets, including health, water, cities and human settlements, oceans, and sustainable consumption and production, calling for detoxifying air, water and soil, promoting the use of safe chemicals and chemical alternatives, minimizing the use of toxic substances in production and consumption, preventing or reducing the generation of hazardous and other wastes, and safely managing them.

48. Many of these targets related with chemicals and waste have also been reflected in the proposed revised version of the **Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC)**.

49. In addition, the different chemicals and waste conventions convened their respective Conferences of the Parties and international meetings, with a significant engagement of the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, as described later below.

Overview of chemicals and waste situation and challenges in the region

50. As outline in the draft thematic report on “**Healthy Environment, Healthy People**”, prepared for UNEA-2, there is evidence of the linkages between environmental quality and human health and well-being. Despite the health gains achieved during recent decades due to science and technology improvements, there is also evidence that current environmental trends may slow or inhibit further improvements, as a result of unhealthy living and working environments, including exposure to harmful chemicals.

51. Yet recognizing that chemical products are of key importance to satisfying human needs and welfare, unsound use and manufacturing practices, and inadequate management of wastes poses a range of challenges, that particularly affect those countries that lack the capacity for their proper management.

52. The **chemicals industry** has grown steadily over the past several decades, and in the LAC region, with an increasing share of the global production, it is expected to grow 33% between 2012 and 2020¹¹. In Latin America and the Caribbean, chemicals are intensively used and released across the region in a range of sectors like agriculture or mining. The unsound management of discarded products containing harmful substances (e.g. by open burning), is also a key source of chemicals releases.

53. Among the chemicals of concern, **persistent organic pollutants** (POPs) are a group of substances that have toxic properties, resist degradation in the environment, bioaccumulate through food chains and are transported long distances. These chemicals, which are widely used in agricultural and industrial practices, as well as unintentionally released from many anthropogenic activities, are addressed by the Stockholm Convention on POPs. The Convention foresees an effectiveness evaluation to assess whether releases and environmental levels of POPs are being reduced. The related regional monitoring reports to date^{12,13} are not conclusive due to lack of sufficient baseline data and systematic monitoring over time. Some scientific reviews show that POP levels in the LAC region appears to be lower in comparison to other regions. However, adverse health effects have also been reported in populations exposed to chemicals across the region. Acute poisoning from pesticides and management of obsolete stockpiles represent also a challenge for some countries.

54. During the last years particular attention has been drawn to **mercury** due to increased evidence of its global adverse effects on human health and the environment. In the LAC region, mercury is mainly emitted and released by its use in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (accounting for about 71% of total regional emissions)¹⁴. This sector, which is present in at least a dozen countries of the region and involves more than 500,000 artisanal miners, has a significant influence on the current demand and trade of mercury in the region. Other challenges related to

¹¹ UNEP, 2013. Global Chemicals Outlook. Towards Sound Management of Chemicals

¹² UNEP, 2009. Global Monitoring Plan for POPs. First Regional Monitoring Report – Latin America and the Caribbean.

¹³ UNEP, 2014. Global Monitoring Plan for POPs. Second Regional Monitoring Report – Latin America and the Caribbean.

¹⁴ UNEP, 2014. The Minamata Convention on Mercury and its implementation in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

mercury in LAC include its phasing out from certain products and processes, such as dental amalgams, controlling unintentional emissions (e.g. in non-ferrous metal or cement production), surveying and managing contaminated sites, and the proper management of mercury-containing products.

55. Another metal of major concern is **lead**, due its toxic, persistent and cumulative properties, and its affectation to multiple body systems, which includes learning disabilities and reduced fertility. It is particularly hazardous to young children and pregnant women. A recent study shows that in the LAC region, childhood exposure to lead arises economic loss of 143 billion dollars a year (2% of the region GDP), through lowering the intellectual ability¹⁵. The use of lead in fuels has already been phased-out, but lead is still present in some paints, which demands more regulatory action in some countries. Batteries are the largest and still increasing use of lead. The capacity to recycle used-lead acid batteries has improved in the LAC region, but illegal traffic and unsound management are still taking place causing severe pollution and health damage.

56. Waste management is also a major challenge for LAC countries. During the last years waste generation rates and complexity of waste streams are rapidly increasing due to expanding urbanization, economic development and changes in lifestyles. In the LAC region the total municipal waste generation has been estimated in 160 million tonnes per year (12% of global waste generation)¹⁶, and these figures are expected to more than double by 2025. Waste collection rates in the region's cities notably increased from an average of 80% in 2002¹⁷ to around 93% in 2010¹⁸. However, collection rates vary significantly between countries and cities, depending on a range of factors such as income or size of the cities. The use of sanitary landfills for final disposal has also improved (54.4% by 2010⁸), but a significant amount of waste is still disposed in open dumps, where it is frequently mixed with medical and hazardous waste. Despite the efforts of LAC countries to improve this situation, some challenges persist, like the effective enforcement of regulations, promoting self-sustaining municipal waste management services, ensuring the sound management of hazardous waste and emergent waste streams including e-waste, and enhancing waste prevention and resource efficiency.

Progress and achievements in the region

57. During the period since the last Forum of Ministers, some significant progress has been achieved by LAC countries in those items addressed by Decision 4 on Cooperation on Chemicals and Waste, as summarized below.

Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM):

58. Countries from Latin America and the Caribbean actively participated at global meetings such as the 2nd meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (Geneva, 15-17 December 2014), and the Fourth International Conference on Chemicals Management –ICCM4 (Geneva, 28 September - 2 October 2015). At the ICCM4, the region welcomed the approval of the Overall Orientation and Guidelines (OOG) for achieving the 2020 goal, as well as the establishment of the inter sessional

¹⁵ Attinal and Trasande (2013) "Economic Costs of Childhood Lead Exposure in Low- and Middle-Income Countries", *Environmental Health Perspectives* 121(9) 1097-1102

¹⁶ World Bank, 2012. *What a Waste – A Global Review of Solid Waste Management*

¹⁷ PAHO, 2005. *Regional Evaluation of Municipal Solid Waste Management Services in LAC.*

¹⁸ IDB/AIDIS/PAHO, 2010. *Regional Evaluation of Municipal Solid Waste Management in LAC: 2010 Report.*

process to debate on SAICM. GRULAC also supported specific proposals promoted by countries of the region, such as the inclusion of environmental persistent pharmaceutical pollutants as a new normative issue.

59. The SAICM LAC regional coordinator has also been facilitating informal consultations on priority issues for the region. Countries have also undertaken specific actions, such as national profiles on chemicals, establishment of multi-stakeholder platforms, or the review of the legal and institutional frameworks on chemicals, based on the SAICM approach. The information collected during the 2009-2010 SAICM reporting cycle¹⁹ indicates some progress in the region has been made, particularly in the areas of governance and capacity building. The information has also pointed to gaps in risk reduction, particularly in the areas of control of hazardous substances, the implementation of legislation regulating electronic waste and the development of messages directed at vulnerable groups.

Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions:

60. During recent months, several LAC countries had the opportunity to enhance its institutional and technical capacities to facilitate the implementation of the chemicals and waste conventions, by means of at least ten capacity building activities delivered through the Basel and Stockholm Regional Centre's Network in Latin America and the Caribbean. These workshops covered a range of topics such as sound management of chemicals and wastes (including POPs waste, e-waste and used lead-acid batteries), Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans, sampling and monitoring of POPs and mercury, soil pollution, or industrial chemicals under the Rotterdam Convention. In addition, four countries updated their National Implementation Plans, and others developed related legal framework (e.g. register of chemicals).

Minamata Convention on Mercury:

61. Several countries of the LAC region have taken significant steps to advance in the process to ratify or accede to the Minamata Convention on Mercury. This includes the ratifications of 7 countries in the region: Bolivia, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Uruguay. In addition, many other countries informed about progress of the ratification process in accordance with its national legal framework, which shall contribute to the early entry into force of the Convention, which might take place during second half of 2016. The region has been particularly active at the related international meetings (e.g. INC6) and contributing to expert groups (e.g. BATs, financing).

62. Moreover, during several recent events, countries informed and shared experiences about legal and management measures already adopted to facilitate the early implementation of the Minamata Convention. This includes the three sub-regional workshops to support the ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which were joined by representatives from 32 LAC countries and a range of stakeholders. The sub-regional workshops for South America, Central America and the Caribbean, were held during 2014-2105 in Brazil, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago, respectively.

63. LAC countries also had an opportunity to exchange updated information at the workshop in Support for the Ratification and Effective Implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury for the LAC region, jointly with the regional Preparatory Meeting for the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions COPs, which took place during 14-17 April 2015, in Montevideo,

¹⁹ SAICM/ICCM4/INF/1

Uruguay. More recently, the LAC mercury regional consultations (Montevideo, Uruguay, 9-12 February 2016) contributed to adopt regional positions in preparation of the INC7, to be held in March 2016 in Jordania.

64. Several LAC countries have also initiated work to develop the Minamata Initial Assessments, within the framework of regional and national projects supported by the GEF. A joint inception workshop with 11 countries was organized last 18-20 November 2014 in Montevideo, with the support of the Basel Convention Coordinating Centre for LAC, with the aim of synchronizing work plans, harmonizing methodologies, and to identify common priorities. Countries are also initiating the developing of national plans to reduce the use of mercury, particularly in the artisanal and small scale gold mining sector (ASGM).

65. Also, UNEP has progressed in its support to the exchange of information on mercury among countries, including the design of an on-line regional clearinghouse.

Waste Management:

66. During the last period, arrangements were conducted to develop a regional outlook on waste management in Latin America and the Caribbean, as requested within Los Cabos Declaration. This included preparation of the project concept, fund raising activities, establishment of partnerships, nomination of focal points, preliminary table of contents, and establishment of the editorial team. The outlook, which is expected to be concluded by end of 2016, will provide an overview on main regional challenges and trends, so that it can be used as guidance for the design and implementation of national policies.

Regional challenges for the implementation of international agreements and to achieve the sound management of chemicals and waste

67. The LAC countries had the opportunity to state as a region the main challenges to implement the international agreements on chemicals and waste at the different meetings that were convened during the last period²⁰. Some of the common issues that were raised in relation to the implementation of the BRS and Minamata Conventions provisions, and SAICM goals are summarized below based on the GRULAC statements:

- General, cross-cutting challenge: lack of stable, predictable and adequate **financial resources**.
- Inclusion of **new chemicals** within the Conventions: to consider related financial implications, technology transfer and technical assistance needs.
- Capacity building and technology transfer: strengthening of the network of **regional and sub-regional centres** of the Basel/Stockholm Conventions.
- Strengthening of **legal and institutional frameworks** to enable a sound management of chemicals across its whole life-cycle.
- Enhancement of **inter-institutional** coordination and **multi-stakeholder** participation.
- Effective **regional coordination** and exchange of experiences.

²⁰ Sixth session of the Intergovernmental negotiating committee on mercury-INC 6 (Bangkok, Thailand, 3-7 November 2014); Meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (Geneva, Switzerland, from 4 to 15 May 2015); 4th International Conference on Chemicals Management –ICCM4 (Geneva, Switzerland, 28 September - 2 October 2015),

Potential actions to further promote regional cooperation

68. During the last Intersessional Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, Mexico, 17-19 November 2015), participants acknowledged the progress made in the implementation of Decision 4 on Cooperation on Chemicals and Waste, as well as the leadership of the region in fostering the international chemicals and waste agenda. However, in order to reflect this leadership at regional level, and to facilitate the implementation of the international agreements at national level, the strengthening of regional cooperation on this area was recommended.

69. To this end, the **establishment of a regional network on chemicals and waste** was suggested, with the objective of (inter alia): strengthen regional cooperation; facilitate exchange of experiences; and provide recommendations at policy and action level for consideration of the Forum of Ministers.

70. With the support of the network, a **regional plan** on cooperation on chemicals and waste could be established, taking into account existing networks and initiatives (e.g. BRS Conventions, SAICM,...), and in agreement with priorities reflected within the ILAC.

71. Participants also highlighted the relevance of using the Forum of Ministers to agree on **regional priority issues** on chemicals and waste to be raised at relevant international forums, such as UNEA.

72. Finally, it was also recommended to strengthen the area of **waste management** (in broad sense, including municipal solid waste), in synergy with other initiatives (e.g. 10YFP), and considering emerging priority issues such as health impacts.

Small Island Developing States

Background and Context

73. The Member States that are categorised as Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Latin America and Caribbean Region, commonly referred to as Caribbean SIDS constitutes 48.8% of the Member States of Latin America and the Caribbean. This category of Member States is considered by the international community as a special case for environment and development. Furthermore, the international community in “The Future We Want” note with concern that the outcome of the 5-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI+5) concluded that SIDS have made less progress than most other groupings, or even regressed, in economic terms, especially in terms of poverty reduction and debt sustainability” .

74. To date three international conferences have been held on the sustainable development of SIDS: in Barbados in 1994, in Mauritius in 2005 and in Samoa in 2014. To provide the context for specific action in support of SIDS Sustainable Development three instruments have been endorsed by the international community, which represents the outcomes of the three international conference on SIDS Sustainable Development: the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA), the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (**SAMOA Pathway**). These instruments highlight the challenges faced by SIDS in their transition to sustainable development.

75. In successive meetings, the Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean have adopted Decisions on the sustainable development of SIDS; the most recent being Decision 5 of the XIX Meeting of the Forum held in March 2014. This report highlights some of the actions which have been taken in the support of the implementation of Decision 5.

Achievements

76. Caribbean SIDS played an active role in the preparatory process for Third International Conference for Small Island Developing States and the Conference itself which was held in Apia, Samoa from 1 to 4 September 2014. More specifically, in terms of the implementation of Decision 5, a number of actions were taken, including *inter alia*,

- **The Meeting on Implementation of Forum of Ministers Decision 5 “Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, hosted by the Government of Barbados with the support of the Secretariat”:** This was one of the main actions taken to facilitate a focused discussion by Caribbean SIDS in identifying critical interventions which could be implemented within the framework of the Decision. The meeting took place on 27-29 January 2015 in Bridgetown, Barbados. In addition to Decision 5, the meeting also considered outcomes of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. In the framework of the follow up to Decision 5, the meeting discussed the implementation of the Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) for SIDS Initiative within the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP Patterns (10YFP).

77. Member States successfully identified a number of critical areas on which intervention could be made. These areas include, *inter alia*,

- The systematic collection of environmental data and its integration into the existing statistical infrastructure to facilitate decision making. Though some Member States have sought to address this issue, progress remains slow and patchy and the need remains for a process aimed at the strengthening the capacity of Caribbean SIDS to collect data in a more systematic manner.
- **Sustainable Consumption and Production.** Though some countries have shown considerable interests in sustainable consumption and production it remains a relatively new area of focus for most of the Member States of Caribbean SIDS. The interest shown by Caribbean SIDS for the further development of the SIDS for SCP Initiative within the framework of the 10YFP should contribute to the expansion of this area of endeavour in Caribbean SIDS.

78. This interest of some Caribbean SIDS is exhibited by the action taken by The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica and Saint Kitts and Nevis in collaboration with the Secretariat of developing a project proposal entitled “*CLimate Smart Investment for Energy and Resource Efficiency in Tourism Services (CLIEnts)*” for the consideration by CARICOM/CARIFORUM for funding. Within this context other areas which have been identified by SIDS includes, sustainable livelihoods and support to Small and Medium Size enterprises.

- Support for the preparation of draft **elements that can form a Caribbean Biodiversity Strategy** to encourage the conservation and sustainable use of the marine and terrestrial biodiversity in the Caribbean basin as part of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The aim of the Caribbean Strategy for Biodiversity is to take action to slow, halt and reverse the trends of loss of biodiversity and decline of ecosystem services, in both marine and terrestrial landscapes, in the Caribbean basin by 2020.
- Support for initiatives aimed at the promotion of **Ecosystem-Based Adaptation** Options in response to the adverse impacts of Climate Change. Given **the importance of adaptation** to climate change to Caribbean SIDS, ecosystem-based adaptation approaches are becoming more attractive options for Caribbean SIDS. This interest has been awakened by the Pilot Demonstration Project which is being implemented in Grenada and Seychelles as part of the UNEP Global Project entitled “*Building Capacity for Coastal Ecosystem – Based Adaptation in Small Islands Developing States (SIDS)*” which is funding by the European Commission. The project aims to strengthen climate change resilience and adaptive capacity of communities in SIDS where there is a high dependence on ecosystem services provided by coastal ecosystems. Considerable progress has been made in the testing of Ecosystem based approaches, particularly coral reef restoration by the Grenada Pilot.

79. The participation of two SIDS countries from different SIDS regions has demonstrated the utility of designing initiatives which involves SIDS from different regions as it provides a basis for knowledge sharing between SIDS, among other benefits such as facilitating experiences on approaches to common environmental issue.

80. As a means of sharing the experiences of both the Grenada and Seychelles Demonstration Pilots a Caribbean SIDS Training Workshop was held in St. George's Grenada from 23-25 February 2016. The report of this meeting is circulated under separate cover. The conclusions of the Workshop included, *inter alia*, the following:

- That a building on the Grenada and Seychelles Pilot Project experience a regional approach could be adopted in facilitating the integration of EbA in development planning in Caribbean SIDS. Caribbean SIDS, have in principle, therefore agreed to the development of a regional initiative for facilitating the integration of Ecosystem-based Adaptation into development planning in their respective countries. Some of the possible areas which have been defined by Caribbean SIDS which could form part of that Regional initiative include *inter alia*.
 - A modality for Information Sharing on EbA between Caribbean SIDS with emphasis on how we manage information.
 - Specific initiatives aimed at building capacity in EbA, including the strengthening of SIDS-SIDS technical assistance transfer between Caribbean SIDS. Additionally it is recommended that capacity building be emphasized among young people, local communities and resource users. The training of a core number Coral Gardeners as part of the Grenada Demonstration Project to assist with coral rehabilitation has been sighted by Caribbean SIDS as one of the areas which could be used as a basis for South-South technical assistance transfer. The Government of Cuba has also expressed a willingness to participate in SIDS-SIDS technical assistance transfer.
 - Valuation of Ecosystem Goods and Services.
 - An enhance coordination mechanism for EbA Integration in Caribbean SIDS. An integral part of this enhance coordination mechanism could be a Permanent Secretariat Network to support the promotion of Coastal EbA as a developmental.
- The implementation of the Ecosystem based Adaptation is a relatively new area for most of the Caribbean SIDS, nonetheless, some Caribbean SIDS, notably, Belize and Jamaica have had experiences in this approach.
- Caribbean SIDS are examining their currently legislation with the view of integrating provisions which strengthen both adaptation and mitigation measures to climate change. A good example of this is Trinidad and Tobago which with resources from the IADB undertook a legislative review that purpose in mind. As a means of the strengthening of Caribbean SIDS in this area, UNEP in collaboration with the Government of Grenada organized a Regional Training Workshop on Climate Legislation in St. George's, Grenada 2 to 4 March 2016 with the view of contributing to Strengthening Capacities of Caribbean SIDS in Climate Change Environmental Law. The Secretariat also facilitated the participation of Caribbean SIDS in the

Inter-American Conference on the rule of law on environmental matters held in Montego Bay, Jamaica from 30 March to 1 April 2015.

- The Secretariat also provided support to and participated in the Caribbean Regional Workshop on Sustainability, Energy and Development for Caribbean Parliamentarians convened by the British Parliament in collaboration with the Caribbean Parliamentarian Association. The meeting was held in December 2015 in Jamaica and the Sustainable Development Goals were the context of the discussion. A major conclusion of the meeting is that a greater effort is needed to sensitise parliamentarian in the respective Caribbean Countries on development taking place on environmental and sustainability issues at the regional and international levels which have policy implications.
- In a response to the Caribbean SIDS priority on sustainable lifestyles, two representatives have accepted invitations to sit on the Editorial Committee for the Publication on “State of the art of sustainable lifestyles in Latin America and the Caribbean”. The specific objectives of the publication are to analyse and review the concept and understanding of "sustainable lifestyles" in the LAC region, identify which favourable conditions (political, economic, technological and social) are to achieve sustainable lifestyles in the region; providing policy recommendations and necessary actions to accelerate the adoption of sustainable lifestyles in the region as well as contributing to the 10YFP.
- Transitioning to a Green Economy continues to be one of the priorities of the Government of Barbados. This is exemplified by the recent application of the Government of Barbados has made a request to join the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE). This presents a great opportunity to further deepen Barbados and by extension other Caribbean SIDS engagement on Green Economy. Building on the success of the Barbados Green Economy Initiative back in 2009, a number of other Caribbean SIDS countries, namely, Haiti, Jamaica and Saint Lucia have undertaken Green Economy Scoping Studies within the framework of the UNEP/EC Project “*Advancing Caribbean States’ Sustainable Development Agenda through Green Economy Policies*” (ACSSD-GE). The overall objective of the ACSSD-GE is to enable countries in the Caribbean to advance sustainable development through the design and implementation of policies that result in a strong and sustainable economy, which is environmentally responsible and socially inclusive. The results of these pilot countries will be officially launched in the coming months. The lessons learned from the Caribbean project are the basis for the GE Pacific SIDS initiative UNEP is implementing.
- **Sustainable Land Management:** Caribbean SIDS continues to develop cooperation actions within the framework of the Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management for Caribbean SIDS. In the period under consideration emphasizes the National Action Programmes (NAP) alignment with national policies and plans.

Challenges

81. Many of the challenges faced by SIDS in their transition to sustainable development have been highlighted in the SAMOA Pathway, a few of which are restated here.

- The adverse impacts of climate change remains a critical issue impacting on the sustainable development of SIDS. As observed in the SAMOA Pathway these impacts compound existing challenges in SIDS and has placed additional burdens on their national budgets and could compromise their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The growth prospects of SIDS are hindered by factors, including climate change, the impact of natural disasters, the high cost of imported energy and the degradation of coastal and marine ecosystems and sea-level rise.

ILAC Environmental Indicators

Background

82. Access to relevant and timely environmental data is a major prerequisite to support policy and decision making. The importance of environmental information is widely acknowledged across Latin America and the Caribbean, and the countries in the region continue to invest in the establishment and consolidation of their national environmental information systems. However, significant gaps still persist, not only in terms of national capacities but also in relation to thematic, geographic and temporal coverage of the available data. This is why the work on environmental indicators is recognised as a top priority, particularly now in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

83. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators offer a new framework for addressing the above mentioned gaps, from the underlying data collection and monitoring platforms, to the actual presentation and use of the indicators to effectively support the transition pathways to sustainability. The various accomplishments of the Forum of Ministers in this regard, in particular through its Working Group on Environmental Indicators (WGEI), offer a very robust foundation to bridge gaps and ensure that the region improves substantially its capacity to track changes in the environment and its impacts to human development. The opportunities for innovation and impact are many and at the reach of the countries in the region, especially through South-South cooperation.

Progress and achievements in the region

84. There are many important results concerning Decision 6 of the Forum of Ministers. These can be organised around four main areas: a) indicator development, b) national ILAC reports, c) use of the ILAC indicators at the regional level, and d) strengthening of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators (WGEI).

- a. Indicator development: The most important activity in this area was a joint meeting of the WGEI and the Group of Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), held as part of Regional Environmental Information Network (REIN) Conference, (4 – 8 May, 2015, Panama). This meeting was focused on discussing the criteria to develop or adapt indicators tailored to respond to the priority topics of the Regional Strategy of SCP. A set of technical recommendations were agreed, which will support the implementation of SCP indicators in LAC.
- b. National ILAC Reports: Several countries report ILAC indicators periodically through their National Environmental Information Systems (NEIS). This way, indicators can be updated easily and more frequently than through printed reports. The REIN Conference addressed this topic extensively with the presentation of the latest developments in the NEIS and in UNEP Live, the new global environmental information platform of the United Nations (www.uneplive.org). The importance of these platforms to share data, monitor the enforcement of national regulations and ease the report to Multilateral Environmental Agreements was highlighted. Representatives of the Caribbean Island States stressed the need for international support to produce indicators and develop their National Environmental Information Systems.

- c. Use of ILAC indicators at the regional level: During the last years, the capacities in statistical and geospatial environmental information management have been significantly developed in the region. Valuable data on biodiversity, atmospheric emissions and others have been gathered. In order to promote the systematization and publication of ILAC indicators, the Secretariat of WGEI organized an online training on the spatial dimension of environmental indicators (May 5 – June 13, 2014). This course, part of the GeoSur and Eye on Earth initiatives, had the participation of 61 representatives of National Geographic Institutes, Ministries of Environment and Statistics Offices of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- d. Strengthening the Working Group on Environment Indicators: During this period several synergies and linkages of the WGEI with other relevant groups and initiatives were promoted and coordinated. These include the joint activities with the Group of Government Experts on SCP; on water quality, through the Regional GEMS Water Centre at the National Water Agency of Brazil; with the Project “Development and Strengthening of National Official Statistics through the creation of a Regional Framework in Latin America and the Caribbean” (led by the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico, INEGI), on geospatial information, in the framework of GeoSur and Eye on Earth; and on National Environmental Information Systems and data sharing through UNEP Live, in the framework of the cross-cutting capacity development portfolio of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Opportunities and challenges

85. Based on the achievements from the last two years, and the discussions held by the various group contributing to Decision 6, especially the WGEI, some challenges as well as ideas on the way forward have been identified. These are summarised below:

- a. There is an important opportunity to advance the alignment of the ILAC indicators with the SDG indicators and those related to the Samoa Pathway. This work should focus on fast-tracking the implementation of the SDG indicators by building from the ILAC and identifying those indicators which could be easier to implement and have a greater impact in terms of their relevance for the regional priorities.
- b. It is very important to ensure that the WGEI works closely with all the other areas of work of the ILAC, in particular to help develop (performance) indicators to track progress in the implementation of the ILAC
- c. In such case, the WGEI could propose a set of indicators responding to specific thematic areas relevant for the ILAC and as decided by the Forum of Ministers. This set of indicators could also have a geographic scope (for instance, Mesoamerican countries or the Caribbean).
- d. A key area of work for the next phase refers to the collaboration in the production of regional integrated assessments based on indicators. This requires the commitment from the countries in order to document those indicators as decided within the framework of the ILAC.
- e. On another hand, it has been recommended to explore and evaluate the feasibility and relevance of using other sources of data and information (e.g., not produced directly by the

countries) to produce the indicators. There are collaboration opportunities with initiatives such as the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and GEO-Sur which could be further evaluated. The key message here is to consider novel ways to mobilise relevant data on the environmental dimension of sustainable development, not restricted to what is regarded as official national-level data.

- f. It is important to continue strengthening the capacities in the region in relation to expertise and technology transfer. This might imply the organisation of workshops, training courses as well as country visits as required. It could also include the transfer of informatics tools and technologies, together with the necessary training. UNEP Live and the National Reporting System (NRS) could be a good option for those countries that still don't have any platforms in place.
- g. Consolidate the collaboration with initiatives such as the project "Development and Strengthening of Environmental Statistics Offices through a Regional Framework in Latin America and the Caribbean".

Sustainable Consumption and Production

Background

86. Our global consumption exceeds one time and a half the regenerative capacity of the Earth. On current trends of population and consumption, humanity will need the equivalent of two Earths to live in 2030.²¹ Global resource extraction is estimated to reach 140 billion tons in 2050, compared to around 7 billion tonnes extracted in 1900. This demand will outstrip resources availability and accessibility and the Earth's ability to absorb the impacts of their extraction and use. The International Resource Panel warns that under the present consumption patterns water demand will exceed 30 percent of the available supply by 2030. It also estimates an increase in overall waste generation, rising from today's 3.5 million tons per day to more than 6 million by 2025.²²

87. This shows the current imperative to change unsustainable consumption and production patterns. Currently, one third of all food produced worldwide each year, 300 million tons, end up in the trash. This waste costs the global economy a billion dollars a year, which is unacceptable considering that 800 million people worldwide lack access to food. Moreover, this "society of the throw away" is also present in our markets, where 80 percent of marketed products are discarded after a single use or within the first 6 months of use.²³ This symbolizes a huge waste of natural and economic resources.

88. The only alternative we have for our economies to continue to grow is radically increase the efficiency of our resources and their productivity. That is, *do more and better with less*, abandoning the current patterns of both production and consumption of our linear economic system of extraction, production, consumption and waste, and move to a circular and inclusive economy, inspired by natural processes within which there is no concept of waste, since all waste is food for another organism or process.

89. This global context is no stranger to the region. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region is the most significant reservoir of biodiversity on the planet, with 17 mega-diverse countries with high genetic and natural wealth, but it has been showing for decades a growing trend in biodiversity loss. This loss is largely due to deforestation, agricultural practices and urbanization. In the Andean region, 90% of deforestation is caused by unsustainable farming practices.²⁴ LAC region is also the most urbanized region in the world with 80% of its population living in cities and it has the world's highest rate of private motoring. Additionally, waste generation has now risen to 370,000 tons per day in the cities of LAC. Despite the increase in GDP in several countries, the region has the world's highest inequality in cities. Pressure for natural resources is increasing, as shown in energy demand, which is expected to double by 2030.

90. It is in this context that member states have reaffirmed once again in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in the month of September 2015, the importance of changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

²¹ WWF, Living Planet Report, 2010.

²² World Bank, Report: "What a waste", 2012

²³ AAAS Atlas of Population and Environment (<http://atlas.aaas.org/index.php?part=1&sec=waste>).

Atlas Overview = Natural resources and waste

²⁴ UNEP, Global Environmental Outlook 5 (GEO 5), UNEP, 2012

emphasize that "Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development".

91. SCP is included in the SDG, not only as a specific target (SDG No. 12) and its related goals, but also linked transversely to the achievement of several of the other SDG. In this context, both the Addis Ababa Third International Conference on Financing and the recent Climate Change Paris Agreement (COP 21) in their resolutions reaffirm the relevance of SCP.

92. Earlier, during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20) in 2012, the Heads of State adopted the [Ten-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production](#) (10YFP). Also, within the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), the issue of sustainable consumption and production has always been relevant. In ILAC's 2003 version, SCP was included as one of its priority areas (Economic issues, including competitiveness, trade and patterns of production and consumption (energy)). In response to the urgent need to move towards more sustainable patterns of SCP, within ILAC's new version, this issue is reflected with more momentum and transversally.

93. LAC region has been working on the promotion of SCP since 2003, when the regional strategy on SCP and the Regional Council of Government Experts on SCP were developed. Both were ratified by the Regional Forum of Ministers of Environment. This Forum has issued a series of decisions on the issue of SCP. In this context, the Regional Forum of Ministers at its XIX meeting in Mexico during March 2014, reiterated the commitment of the region to support the implementation of the 10YFP and to maintain a leadership role in promoting it.

94. Following up on this decision, governments of the region, with the support of UNEP as Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers and the Regional Council of Government Experts on SCP, have worked together with other actors in implementing policies and initiatives on SCP. Among the biggest advances are the revision and the update of the Regional Strategy on SCP, which already integrates the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG); development and update of its Action Plan 2015-2016; national progress on implementing sustainable public procurement; and strengthening dialogue and regional cooperation for the promotion and implementation of SCP through workshops, regional forums and periodical exchange of information and knowledge (webinars and seminars).

Achievements at the regional and national levels relevant to Decision 7 on SCP

Government role: progress on the integration of SCP in the national strategies and inter-ministerial cooperation

95. In this context several countries in the region have developed their **SCP programs/plans** such as Cuba, Costa Rica, Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay, among others. Chile is launching its National Program on SCP in the first half of 2016. Other countries have made progress in the integration of SCP in their regulatory frameworks, such as Ecuador within its high environmental law framework (TULSMA), which chapter IX includes SCP; Peru developing its Ecoefficiency National Strategy; Cuba including SCP transversally in various national policies; and Costa Rica launching soon its National Policy on SCP with the involvement of 5 ministries.

96. The **inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder committees** on SCP are key in order to develop and implement such national programs and to promote the mainstreaming of SCP in other public policies. Several countries in the region have inter-ministerial committees on SCP. In addition, inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder policy dialogues have proven to be of great value in order to identify synergies, to strengthen cooperation within the national agendas and to socialize the urgency of changing consumption and production patterns. Cuba, Ecuador and Costa Rica developed multi-stakeholder national roundtables on SCP during 2015.

97. Over the next few months, the project "National Action Plan on SCP" will begin in Honduras and the project "Advancing and measuring the Sustainable Consumption and Production for a low carbon economy in middle-income and newly industrialized countries" in Chile and Peru.

98. Likewise, **sustainable public procurement is an issue of great importance and a policy area where governments can greatly influence patterns** of consumption and production and promote sustainable markets (supply and demand). In some developing countries, government procurement may constitute up to 30% of GDP. The progress of the region in this field has evolved together with the implementation of "SPPEL" (Sustainable Public Procurement and Ecolabelling) project. At the regional level, in 2015 a project component started with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay focused on the development of voluntary sustainability criteria for two pilot product areas selected by participant countries. At the national level, it supports countries according to their needs to develop and implement policies and action plans for sustainable public procurement (in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Peru). It is relevant to mention the official launch of the Sustainable Public Procurement National Policy of Costa Rica in January 2016 and the progress of the Chilean public procurement portal (Chilecompra). Following a request from the countries, UNEP will develop, starting in 2016, possibly in conjunction with the Organisation of American States (OAS), an online platform to facilitate the search and exchange of information on sustainable public procurement, eco-labelling and voluntary standards of sustainability.

Private sector: key stakeholder in the promotion of SCP.

99. The **active participation of the private sector** of both large companies and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) is of great importance for the region. Although there are Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives led mainly by large companies in the region and isolated efforts on cleaner production and eco-innovation, among others, the SCP approach has not permeated to all sectors or companies. On the other hand, adapt the language of SCP to SMEs introducing the "business case" associated with its implementation is very important. SMEs represent in the region up to 40% of the GDP, provide more than 65% of private employment and currently constitute 95% of all private enterprises in Latin America.²⁵ They are an important source of economic growth and employment, and the basis of productive supply chains. SCP implementation in SMEs is considered one of the four main priorities for the region by the Regional Forum of Ministers of the Environment (SCP decisions adopted in 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014). Implementing SCP approaches can enable SMEs to work on the development of innovative

²⁵ Source: Perspectivas económicas de América Latina, (OCDE, 2013)

products and services and the expansion into new markets. Given the importance of the issue of SCP in SMEs the region requested the 10YFP Secretariat the creation of a new program on SMEs.²⁶

100. Incorporate SCP in sectors such as tourism, construction, agriculture and food production is very important for the region because of their associated environmental and social impacts as well as their potential in generating employment and wealth. With regard to the food production sector and responding to the request of the region, and other governments, the 10YFP Board approved a new Programme on Sustainable Food Systems to be officially launched the first quarter of 2016.

101. Sustainable tourism is very relevant for the region and especially in the Caribbean sub-region, being an important part of the countries' GDP and with the potential to generate a lot of decent jobs and promote change towards SCP in sectors such as waste management, agriculture and food production. In the region, countries like Costa Rica, Colombia and Brazil have strengthened their offer of sustainable tourism through tools such as the Green Passport or the Sustainable Tourism Certification, among others. However, there are significant weaknesses regarding legal frameworks, installed capacities, infrastructure, implementation of voluntary sustainability standards and mainly the lack of involvement of the private sector.

102. With regard to **sustainable buildings and construction**, in Latin America buildings consume 21% of potable water and 42% of electricity, while generating 25% of CO₂ emissions and 65% of waste. The design and construction of sustainable buildings and retrofitting existing ones is key to reduce environmental impacts of large buildings in the region. At the national level, there are several countries with environmental / sustainability criteria construction guidelines, including Colombia and Costa Rica. There are also relevant national efforts from Sustainable / Green Building Councils in countries such as Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Panama and Costa Rica, among others. Also the efforts of Chile optimizing air conditioning in buildings and the incentives associated with eco-efficient buildings developed in Ecuador are relevant initiatives to mention.

Changes in demand: Sustainable Lifestyles and Consumer Information

103. Regarding **consumer information**, although still weak in the region, initiatives such as the Colombian environmental seal (SAC) and the Brazilian label (ABNT), both type I eco-labels, are examples of how the region is moving towards voluntary environmental qualification systems that identify and certify certain more environmentally friendly products or services throughout their life cycle. Costa Rica is working on its environmental labelling national program and Peru in its energy efficiency labelling project. Stakeholders like the German PTB with its eco-labelling project involving Chile, Mexico and Costa Rica contribute to strengthen this kind of tools so important to promote responsible consumption and to facilitate sustainable public procurement.

104. The promotion of **sustainable lifestyles** in the region is vital. Given the exponential urbanization of the region and therefore the growth of the population living in large cities (approximately 80%), promoting sustainable lifestyles will be essential to make sustainable use of resources. These lifestyles should take into account the inclusion of different approaches, visions, models and tools for sustainable development, respecting traditional and indigenous knowledge and be in harmony with nature. In this context, Universidad El Bosque (Colombia) and Colectivo

²⁶ Together with another 10YFP Program requested from the region on integrated waste management.

Ecologista Jalisco (Mexico) are working on the development of a regional study on the state of the art of sustainable lifestyles in LAC, including cases of success and policy recommendations. Universities and not-for-profit organizations are key actors in identifying and promoting this type of lifestyles nationwide.

105. Resource mobilization is very important for the implementation of SCP projects in the region. Brazil is the first country in the region to contribute to the 10YFP Trust Fund with a total of a million dollars to finance SCP projects and to support cross-cutting activities, such as a conference on South-South cooperation on SCP, to be carried out by the end of 2016; and to support the 10YFP Global Survey on SCP policies and initiatives, which aims to define SCP baselines. With regards to the 10YFP Trust Fund calls for proposals, there have been six calls launched to date and the LAC region has been especially active obtaining funding for two projects.²⁷ There are funding opportunities for SCP projects in development banks and in the various international environmental funds together with the private sector and foundations. Domestic resource mobilization and South-South cooperation are also options to explore.

106. With respect to **communication**, the region has registered to date, a total of 172 initiatives, policies and best practices in the SCP Clearinghouse. In addition, 12 countries in the region participated in the Global Survey on SCP policies and initiatives developed by the 10YFP Secretariat.²⁸ Another effort to identify initiatives and stakeholders at the national level has been developed in Cuba, Ecuador and Costa Rica by completing a national mapping of SCP initiatives that has served as input to national roundtables. On the other hand, UNEP has developed a regional and sub-regional mapping of SCP initiatives and policies with the support of graduate students from the University of Buenos Aires where more than 200 initiatives under the 9 SCP regional priorities were identified and documented.

107. In **measurement and monitoring**, it is important to consider the work developed by the Working Group on Environmental Indicators (GTIA) of ILAC (Decision 6 of the XIX Regional Forum of Ministers of Environment) as well as targets and indicators associated with the SDG. In this context, a project with the GTIA financed by the Latin American Development Bank (CAF) it is ongoing and aims to make a proposal for SCP indicators for the region.

Opportunities and challenges

108. Taking into consideration the recommendations from the inter-sessional meeting in November in Mexico the following challenges and opportunities are identified:

- **Actively involve the private sector**, especially industry and micro, small and medium enterprises in the region.
- Position **SCP as a crosscutting approach** to highlight its relevance for many other ministries and sectors so as to achieve Agenda 2030.
- Mobilizing more resources by identifying other **sources of funding and cooperation mechanisms**. Additionally identify and formalize strategic alliances and establish the necessary links with other relevant areas, such as green growth.

²⁷ One in Uruguay on sustainable public procurement and another one in Chile on consumer information.

²⁸ Participating countries were: Antigua y Barbuda, Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, República Dominicana, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico and Perú.

- **Communicate and spread** the work of SCP regarding the need to involve the "unconverted" and to adapt the language of SCP for the private sector and other relevant ministries.
- Implement **resource efficiency in cities** where different SCP tools, methodologies and programs can complement to generate significant decreases in environmental and social impacts of cities.
- Address the sub-region of **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**, specifically articulating actions in the SCP for SIDS Initiative within the 10YFP launched in Samoa during the Third International Conference of Small Island Developing States in September 2014.
- Build and strengthen **synergies with other decisions of the Forum and ILAC** for example those related to indicators, education, climate change and waste management.
- Promoting **South-South cooperation** for the implementation of SCP policies and initiatives at regional and sub-regional levels, with particular emphasis on cooperation with Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- **Include and present the 10YFP and the SCP Regional Strategy in other relevant** fora at national, regional and multilateral levels.

Regional plan of action on atmospheric pollution

Background

109. Air pollution is a serious concern in Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC). The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 100 million people in Latin America are exposed to high levels of air pollution that exceed the recommended guidelines. The Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) also states that, among other public health effects, urban air pollution in Latin America causes at least 35,000 premature deaths per year. Furthermore, the World Bank estimates that the health related cost of urban air pollution in some Latin American and the Caribbean countries represents about 1% of the national GDP. By 2050, outdoor air pollution is projected to become the top cause of environmentally related deaths worldwide.

110. Indoor air pollution is also a major concern. According to WHO, about 3 billion people worldwide use biomass fuels or coal for cooking and heating. In such cases, Particulate Matter (PM) levels may be 10–50 times higher than the guideline values.

111. In addition to its health impacts, air pollution damages agriculture and ecosystems. Furthermore, recent scientific research has found that some air pollutants can also contribute significantly to global warming. Those pollutants have been grouped under the term “Short-Lived Climate Pollutants” (SLCPs).

112. As a response to this challenge, the Regional Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution of Latin America and the Caribbean, which was established in 2008, approved the Regional Plan of Action on Atmospheric Pollution, and is to be reviewed every 4 years.

Progress and achievements in the region

113. The Regional Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution met in Mexico City in February 2015, in order to develop and approve an annual work programme for the implementation of the Regional Plan of Action. This has allowed:

- A more focussed and organised work. The steering committee of the Network has been created and has held a couple of online sessions.
- Guidelines for National Plans for Air Quality management are currently under development.
- Increased Regional Cooperation through technical webinar sessions on air quality management tools.
- A UNEP Live community of practice has been created and will host information on policies exclusively from the region.
- Increased coordination in awareness raising activities.
- Enhanced involvement of governmental focal points of the Network in the pursuance of decision 1/7 of UNEA on Air Quality and other UNEP initiatives related to energy efficiency, transport and Short Lived Climate Pollutants.

At the regional level:

- Regional technical cooperation increased: 4 webinars on air quality management issues held. Brazil, Chile and Mexico have shared their expertise in topics such as: Air quality

monitoring, Emission inventories, Vehicle inspection and Pollutant release and transfer registers.

- Increased participation of countries in relevant policy-science interface projects, such as the Regional Evaluation on Short-Lived Climate Pollutants, in which the Regional Network has provided relevant inputs on emissions, trends and policy perspectives to this report.
- Increased awareness raising, celebration of the Inter-American Air Quality Day.

National efforts:

- Mexico has undertaken a review and update of its diesel standards and regulations.
- Paraguay's institutional capacity has been strengthened for addressing air quality issues by approving the creation of the new Direction General of Air Quality as part of the Ministry of Environment structure. The government has also updated the air quality national standards, thus, the regulatory framework has also been improved.
- El Salvador, Honduras and Peru, have led national efforts to develop awareness raising activities through national workshops on air quality.
- Peru has launched their first Information System on Air Quality and developed an air quality index. Starting with the City of Lima, five more cities are expected to join in the near future.

Opportunities and challenges

114. In order to continue to serve the Regional Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution, the Secretariat needs to increase its technical capacity at UNEP to provide sound technical advice to the network and its members. Among other needs, UNEP has been requested to provide technical assistance to the countries for preparing and implementing their national programmes of air quality, perform baselines assessments, preparation of emission inventories, air quality modelling, methodologies and tools to assess impacts of different intervention options and underpin the harmonization of priority issues such as: emission and fuel standards, air quality standards, testing methods, emission inventories, air quality monitoring, etc.

115. Throughout the implementation of this work it has become evident the need to build the necessary synergies among UNEP's different initiatives addressing air quality and mainstreaming them through the Regional Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution. UNEP's efforts in this regard and after the UNEA decision 1/7 on air quality will be of great support towards the effective implementation of the Regional Plan of Action on Atmospheric Pollution.

116. In order to support countries throughout the region UNEP should be making a strategic use of information gathered in upcoming UNEP reports, and develop an effective outreach strategy, including:

- The Regional Assessment on Short-Lived Climate Pollutants for LAC.
- UNEP's Report on Air Quality efforts performed by governments (Decision UNEA 1/7).
- GEO 6 and GEO LAC.

