

Buenos Aires Declaration

XXI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

The Ministers and Heads of Delegation participating in the XXI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from October 9 to 12, 2018:

Reaffirming that the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean is a space to contribute to integrate the environmental dimension in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals in our region;

Highlighting the efforts made to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the commitments taken on within the framework of the Bilateral and Multilateral Environmental Agreements;

Recognizing the resolutions adopted by the Third United Nations Environment Assembly and **taking into consideration** the agreement to fight against pollution achieved by the international community through the Ministerial Declaration “Towards a pollution-free planet”;

Reaffirming the Human Right to Clean Water and Sanitation as an essential Human Right for the full enjoyment of life and recognizing that water is the source of life, a factor of integration, cooperation and peace among peoples; **highlighting** the need to focus on assuring that the water sources are free of pollution;

Bearing in mind that the Fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly will take place in Nairobi, Kenya, in March 2019, with the main motto “Innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Consumption and Production”;

Acknowledging the development of the Waste Management Outlook for Latin America and the Caribbean, as a reference document for the design and implementation of policies and programmes for integrated waste management in the countries of the region, and highlighting the importance that the United Nations Environment Programme updates the document on a regular basis, through the strengthening of the capacity of the countries to provide data and information;

Recalling that the Ten-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) adopted at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20) in 2012 promotes the shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns, incorporating different views, models and instruments, according to the circumstances of each country, as one of the essential requisites for achieving sustainable development;

Acknowledging UN General Assembly Resolution 71/225, that reaffirms inter alia, small island developing states remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities; that calls for the review of progress made in addressing the priorities of small island developing states through the SAMOA Pathway; and that also decided to convene a High-level review at the UN Headquarters in September 2019;

Recognizing that the region, and continues to suffer environmental emergencies, including climate-related and other disasters caused by natural hazards, and industrial accidents, which impact the ability of countries to effectively pursue the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the ILAC;

Noting that the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) was adopted on the 4th of March, and is open for signatures from September 27, 2018 to September 26, 2020;

Reaffirming the relevance of Environmental Education as an unavoidable instrument of environmental management to build citizens that are ethically committed to caring for the environment;

Recognizing the efforts of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee and the need for continued and enhanced integrated approaches, strengthened collaborations and cooperation, and the consideration of new institutional partners to support the implementation of decisions of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, and in scaling up the implementation of the ILAC;

We agree:

1. **To highlight** the importance of the 2030 Agenda as a referential action framework for public policies and, at the same time, highlight the contribution of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) to follow scheduled activities in the region;
2. **To consider** the gender perspective as a significant variable for the development and implementation of public policies on environmental issues, considering the gaps that are present in the region today and the opportunities that arise from the exchange of experiences on this matter to meet the 2030 Agenda requirements and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
3. **To request** the help of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators to review of the main Agenda items of ILAC; and to define and note relevant environmental indicators for the region, consistent with the SDGs, and to monitor the environmental regional progress towards the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Samoa Pathway and Sendai Framework, as well as to promote the dissemination and use of that information;
4. **To call** the attention of the countries about the importance to develop and sustain environmental information production, analysis and dissemination systems that include primary and geospatial data, statistics and indicators to satisfy regional reporting and monitoring frameworks, providing support and coordinating this task with the ILAC Working Group on Environmental Indicators;
5. **To constitute** a peer learning space for international and regional cooperation and capacity building for the implementation of SDGs;
6. **To recognize** the efforts of the countries, to the best of their abilities, regarding the implementation of systems of access to information, citizen participation and justice in environmental matters according to Principle 10 established in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; as well as to **encourage** the countries of the region to consolidate international cooperation on matters of environmental access rights and strengthen government institutions and legislation on this matter, inter alia, through the new Program for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme V), to be considered at the next United Nations Environment Assembly, for its implementation from the year 2020;

7. **To invite** the countries of the region to complete their designation of national focal points to participate in the ongoing revision to the Montevideo Programme for Development and the Periodic Review of Environmental Rights (Montevideo IV Programme)
8. **To recognize** the achievements of the region in the development of strategies and national plans on sustainable consumption and production, and the implementation of sustainable public procurement policies; and request the support of other financing sources, to develop a Regional Program to boost the implementation of the Regional Sustainable Consumption and Production Strategy, in a way done by the European Union with the SWITCH Programme;
9. **To encourage** the decision-making processes and the design of policies that favor the transition towards sustainable consumption and production patterns based on scientific knowledge and tools on the efficient use of natural resources; for this purpose, the support of the International Resources Panel will be requested to support regional reports on the efficient use of resources, in order to increase the knowledge and capacities of the countries;
10. **To call** on the governments of the region to promote models of inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements, for which support is requested to the United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GABC) to analyze the development a road map on buildings and low-emission, resilient and efficient construction;
11. **To invite** the countries of the region, based on the different national development models, realities and capacities, to boost, develop and strengthen public policies and instruments that promote innovative and sustainable business and ventures, without this representing the transfer of responsibilities;
12. **To urge** the international community to recognize the relevance and urgency of the implementation of measures that are consistent with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, including the adaptation, mitigation and provision of means of implementation;
13. **Support** the process of operationalizing the Platform for the exchange of experiences and best practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, established within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which recognizes the need to reinforce knowledge, technologies, practices and efforts of local communities and indigenous peoples to address climate change;

14. **To exchange** information and experiences in the matter of implementation National Determined Contributions, and the elaboration of long term strategies towards low greenhouse gas emission to comply with the Paris Agreement; and **promote** the development, regional collaboration, and the exchange of information on national or regional strategies, as well as the formulation of public policy instruments on innovation, clean technologies and sustainable urban transport and mobility, according to the realities of each country.;
15. **To invite** the countries of the region to promote the planning and implementation of adaptation measures based on risk indexes and indicators and other innovative tools; capacity building and exchange of experiences in monitoring adaptation;
16. **To manifest** that, Developed Countries must fully comply with the requirements of Article 9 of the Paris Agreement, in relation to the provision of financial resources to Developing Countries with respect to the provision of assistance in both mitigation and adaptation, and to continue leading the efforts aimed at mobilizing climate finance from a wide variety of sources, instruments and groups, representing a progression with respect to previous efforts. Likewise to strengthen regional cooperation within the framework of the Regional Platform for Cooperation on Climate Change, through capacity building and cooperation among the countries of the region, with the support of international cooperation programmes such as EUROCLIMA+ and REGATTA, to facilitate the regional implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers on climate change;
17. **To promote** the adoption of sustainable land management to achieve land degradation neutrality, as well as **promote** regional commitment to reverse the process of loss of forest cover, flora and fauna species, and other key ecosystems, such as grasslands and wetlands, at the regional level and **reinforce** actions aimed at recovering and restoring ecosystems;
18. **To support** the proposal of the Government of El Salvador and the countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA), requesting the 73rd Session of General Assembly of the United Nations to designate the 2021-2030 decade as “The Decade of the Restoration of Ecosystems;”
19. **To boost** the conservation of biodiversity throughout the territory and through protected areas, promoting the development of capacities through regional technical cooperation, and **to promote** actions aimed at reducing the extinction rates of species, as well as loss of biodiversity at all levels, genetics, species and ecosystems;

20. **To promote at a regional level** the mainstreaming of biodiversity in all sectors, for its conservation and sustainable use, encouraging innovation in solutions based on nature and sustainable infrastructure;
21. **To recognize** the importance to adopt appropriate measures to guarantee access to genetic resources of biodiversity and fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use. Likewise, to recognize the need to adopt simplified access measures for non-commercial, research purposes and also for emergencies that could threaten or damage human, animal or plant health, including the genetic information digitally available. The importance of genetic resources for food and agriculture, and their role in relation to food security, should also be considered.
22. **To reiterate** the region's commitment to the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans by all countries and the protection of the marine biodiversity, including the creation of new, and enhancing the capacity of existing marine protected areas;
23. **To develop** a Regional Cooperation Programme on Biodiversity for Latin America and the Caribbean;
24. **To celebrate** the approval of the Action Plan for Regional Cooperation in Chemicals and Waste Management 2019-2020, as a technical cooperation tool to strengthen the capacity of countries in the effective and coordinated implementation of the international agreements on chemicals and wastes, and their sound management beyond 2020;
25. **To encourage** the regional development and adoption of policies and strategies for the integrated management of plastics throughout their life cycle in order to prevent and reduce marine litter, including the promotion of mechanisms to restrict single-use plastics and microplastics, properly managing and minimizing plastic waste, encouraging greater corporate social responsibility and private sector innovation, as well as strengthening monitoring and treatment of water bodies;
26. **Support** the Caribbean Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) in the ongoing review of the SAMOA Pathway and their call for scaled-up international cooperation and support for the implementation of the environmental dimension of the SIDS Sustainable Development framework;
27. **To recognize the importance to respond** quickly to environmental emergencies with the support of United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant organisations, and commit to work on actions to reduce the risk of these events;

28. **To call** on the Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution for Latin America and the Caribbean to update the Regional Action Plan and the Resource Mobilisation Strategy, given the importance of air quality matters in the region.
29. **To strengthen** environmental education as a cross-cutting issue and provide more support to the Environmental Training Network of Latin America and the Caribbean to promote cooperation in the exchange of experiences among the countries of the region, generating synergies with other initiatives and networks that promote environmental education;
30. **To consult and prepare** proposals to the XXII Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC for the expansion of the membership of the Interagency Technical Committee taking into consideration regional development banks and agencies, relevant United Nation system agencies, and other regional technical institutions;
31. **To invite** International Credit Organizations, cooperation agencies and other entities to support the implementation of the regional priorities adopted by the XXI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean;
32. **To recognize** the work being done by the region and the efforts to fulfill the commitments assumed in the ambit of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, as well as in other environmental forums, both regional and multilateral non-binding;

And finally, they agreed:

33. **To request** the Chair of the XXI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to present this declaration on behalf of the countries of the region in the Fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development and other relevant environmental forums and processes;
34. **To express** deep gratitude to the Government of Argentina for its kind hospitality as host of the XXI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from October 9 to 12, 2018.