



Agenda and Concept note for the:

Annual Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM) of the Latin American and Caribbean Civil Society in preparation to the 2017 UN Environment Assembly under the theme:

“Towards a Pollution Free Planet”

7 and 8 June 2017- Hotel Villa Lapas, Puntarenas Province, Costa Rica

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The RCM is preceding the Oceans Day and Dialogue (8-9 December)¹, in Villa Caletas, Puntarenas Province, Costa Rica to which all civil society participants attending the RCM are also invited. **Please note that transport will be provided from San Jose airport only to the Hotel Villa Lapas and between the two different meeting locations which are about 9km apart on 8th and 9th June.**

A. Background / Introduction

TOWARDS A POLLUTION FREE PLANET

Pollution is one of the main obstacles for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. Pollution is destroying our ecosystems and is hampering our prospects for long-term economic growth. Most importantly, pollution is reducing the prospects for humanity to live fulfilled lives in harmony with

¹ Please see separate Oceans Day agenda.

Nature. Our citizens are beginning to recognize the long-term ill effects of pollution and are asking us to take action. *(Edgar Gutiérrez-Espeleta, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, President of the UN Environment Assembly)*

The third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly “Toward a Pollution Free Planet” will take place in Nairobi, 4-6 December 2017. Ministers of Environment of all countries around the world, will gather to discuss the status, trends and actions needed to be taken to address pollution in all its forms: air, marine, freshwater, soil and land, including chemicals and waste. They will be joined by private sector representatives, civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

A background document is being developed to guide discussions, to provide the latest scientific information on current pollution impacts on ecosystems and human health and well-being, as well as state and trends, and identify key principles and transformative actions. In all regions, consultations with Member States and representatives will take place ahead of the UN Environment Assembly, providing an opportunity to provide inputs and shape the document.

In order to make change happen, Member States, businesses, citizens, mayors, local governments, partnerships, civil society organizations are invited to make voluntary commitments of actions in support of a “Pollution Free Planet”.

The commitments of actions consist of concrete targets or actions designed to avoid, reduce, mitigate, measure, monitor, report, and/or manage pollution

The backdrop against which the regional multi-stakeholder/ civil society meetings are being organized include:

(1) The need to reinforce the visibility and impact of the UN Environment Assembly in the context of the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global and regional levels (including the High Level Political Forum and the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development convened by the UN Regional Commissions);

(2) The mandate set out in the Rio + 20 Conference in 2012, where governments highlighted that the engagement of civil society in the Un Environment Assembly and its decision making process is an important factor that will ensure relevance and success of the UN Environment Assembly.

In order to make UNEA- 3 success relevant preparations at the regional, sub-regional and national level are of key importance, involving all relevant stakeholders.

B. Overall Objectives of the Regional Consultative Meeting (RCM)

1. Increase the relevance of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly by allowing all relevant stakeholders to engage actively and meaningfully with the preparatory process;
2. Build the capacity and knowledge base of civil society organizations in UNEP regions;
3. Increase the number of civil society organizations that engage with UNEP, including through formal accreditation;
4. Raise awareness of the general public about UNEA and its achievements, in particular by reaching out to them through civil society organisations and media;
5. Information and capacity building for civil society participants on the upcoming UN Environment Assembly 2017. There will be also an opportunity to introduce the mechanisms of engagement for civil society at UN Environment and UN Environment Assembly level which will include the opportunities and modalities for engaging with these processes, including accreditation as observer to the UN Environment Assembly.
6. Provide a space for dialogue on the structure and content of the upcoming UNEA-3 with the theme “Pollution Free Planet” with a special focus on Oceans and Clean Seas in the region.
7. Formulate joint civil society positions on the challenges and needs expressed by the participating civil society in relation to the UNEA theme and its subthemes as well as strategize interventions for the Ocean s Dialogue. Preparation of a statement towards the Information Document which entails the regional statements by all regional civil society to become official background documentation for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly.
(A template will be made available).
8. Facilitate sharing and exchange on challenges faced by the various constituencies and discuss alignments and areas of partnership/cooperation and possible commitments.
9. Global and Regional Processes for Follow up and Review and the Realities of Engagement:
This session will discuss the interlinkages of the global, regional, subregional, and national processes involved in the implementation and review of the SDGs, and how CSOs are engaging in them.
10. Reflect on the work of UNEP Latin America and the Caribbean Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism in 2015-2017, and possible improvements and innovations such as the establishment of an online platform of dialogue similar to what the ASIA PACIFIC civil society forum has established.
11. Agree on any other future joint actions and follow up to civil society positions adopted and discuss the preparation of the Election of new Regional Representatives from the region to also

represent the region at the Environment Assembly 2017. (Will most likely be done electronically at a later stage following this meeting.)

3. Agenda

Day 1: 7th of June 2017

7th June 2017 (Arrival of civil society participants in the morning in time to attend the first session at 10.30am)

Local transportation from San Jose main airport to Puntarenas will be provided by the Costa Rica Government, further information about time and location of pick-up points will be given in due time to all confirmed participants.

| Time | Session |
|--------------------|--|
| 10:30-10:45 | Welcoming remarks and objectives of the meeting by UN Environment, UN Environment Regional Office for Latin American and the Caribbean and the Governance Affairs Office. |
| 10:45-11.45 | Round of introductions by all the participants (Moderator: Major Groups Facilitating Committee) |
| 11:45-13:00 | Discussion and adoption of the agenda. Brief history of civil society engagement at UN Environment and modalities of engagement, such as accreditation, Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF), RCMs and UN Environment Assembly. Introduction the Pollution theme and UNEA 3 preparations: presentation of relevant elements of the draft Pollution report background document, structure of the UNEA including the commitments, as well as the preparations of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum as well as the Multi Stakeholder Dialogue at UNEA. Questions and Answers |
| 13:00-14:30 | Lunch Break |
| 14:30-16:00 | Regional and major groups perspectives on the 5 pollution themes and the main challenges and needs identified by civil society present . This panel session with UN Environment representatives and CSOs will explore how environment is integrated with the two other pillars of sustainable development and in the implementation of the SDGs. UNEP will present UNEA 3 priorities followed by inputs from CSOs on UNEA-3 themes and CSOs' perspectives on achieving environmental justice in the context of |

sustainable development. CSO speakers will focus their deliberation on 1) the trend and problems of pollution at national and regional level, 2) Vision of pollution free world, 3) How and what needs to change to achieve the vision of pollution free world.

Set up of working groups:

1. Air
2. Chemicals
3. Fresh Water
4. Land & Soil
5. Marine
6. Waste

More general information available here:

<http://drustage.unep.org/environmentassembly/dimensions-pollution>

Suggested discussion points with CSO Speakers:

- Food waste and contamination, soil contamination, GMO/genetic pollution, pesticides, fertilizer, land issues, mining and extractives industries and the situation of Indigenous and local communities
- Health and gender- climate indoor and outdoor pollution for women and children
- Marine pollution, fresh water pollution, oceans, microplastics and the linkage between terrestrial pollution and marine pollution (agriculture toxic waste, mining |
- Waste – Industrial pollution, occupational hazards, e-waste
- The International year of Sustainable Tourism and the realities on the ground for local and indigenous communities

16:00-16.30 Presentation of Working group Outcomes

16.30-16:45 Tea and coffee break

16.45-17.45 Regional and national references to the following Ocean's Day dialogue topics (participants to contribute with a brief presentation):

1. Sustainable tourism sector: Combatting pollution that affects recreational waters, coral reefs and other assets the sector is reliant on. Consideration of the role of the cruise and yachting sectors. Partnerships with local and state-level stakeholders.

Sharing of experiences and relevant partnerships by participants

2. Maritime transport sector: Addressing pollution from commercial shipping activities including from shore-based facilities. Innovation to reduce risks of pollution accidents.

3. Conservations efforts and strategy on oceans by the Government of Costa Rica.

4. Marine Resource Conservation: How conservation policies and positively impact in the private sector. Reducing pollution from discarded fishing (ghost) gear, reducing pollution from aquaculture operations.

5. Agriculture sector: Addressing pollution from crop and livestock operations through improved agronomic practices, waste recycling. Consideration of certification schemes to enhance food safety and mitigation of adverse environmental impacts.

6. Marine litter and waste management: Innovation in manufacturing to minimize direct pollution, reducing packaging, increase durability of plastics, recycling and investment in cleaner production

18.00-19.00 Discussion about the set up of a Latin American and Caribbean Civil society platform in support of UN Environment activities with civil society: structure, objectives, responsibilities, feasibility (led by Regional Representatives and MGFC members from the region). Set up of a small working team to finalize the structure over dinner and present it the next day.

19.30 **Common dinner with participants at Hotel Villa Lapas**

Day 2: 8th June 2017

| Time | Session |
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| 8.30-10.30am | Recap of first day: |
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- Regional Civil Society platform establishment
- Summarizing main discussion points of the previous day on relevant topics
- The main regional challenges and needs in regards to pollution captured in the draft statement

10.30-11.30am Finalization of statement

Ideas for GMGSF and Multi stakeholder Dialogue are shared including the possible commitments and suggestions for future partnerships with UNEP and among present partners.

11.30- 11.50 *Tea and Coffee break*

11.50-12.20 Informal dialogue with the Deputy Executive Director of UN Environment (tbc)

12.30- 13.00 Final Preparation towards OCEANs day inputs.

Finalization of inputs and experts contributions to the Ocean's day themes and discussions as well as appoint focal points for statement production over the coming day.
