



The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement): towards the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

Seminar for Public Officials and Civil Society Representatives

Venue: Finance Administrative Centre, Pointe Seraphine, Saint Lucia

11 November 2019

Duration: 9:00am - 4pm

The seminar is organized by the Government of Saint Lucia, the Saint Lucia National Trust¹ and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN ECLAC)

Summary and objectives

On 4 March 2018, in Escazú, Costa Rica, the first regional treaty on environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean was adopted under the auspices of UN ECLAC as technical secretariat. Stemming from the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and inspired by the tenets of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the UN ECLAC “Escazú Agreement” aims to guarantee the full and effective implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in the environmental decision-making process and access to justice in environmental matters, and the creation and strengthening of capacities and cooperation, contributing to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development. It is also the world’s first treaty to include specific provisions on environmental human rights defenders. Placing equality at the core of sustainable development and striving to “leave no one behind”, the regional agreement will contribute to the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

The agreement opened for signature on 27 September 2018 at United Nations headquarters in New York, coinciding with the Annual General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly. Saint Lucia became one of the first countries to sign the agreement and is currently undergoing its internal ratification process.

¹ The Access Initiative (TAI) network encompasses more than 250 civil society organizations in 60 countries worldwide working to create a global movement promoting environmental democracy. The Saint Lucia National Trust is a TAI member and has received funding to support this workshop through a grant under an Open Society Foundations project entitled “Promoting the Signature and Ratification of the Escazú Agreement”.

Given its strong commitment and experience with environmental access rights, Saint Lucia is especially well placed for the implementation of the regional agreement. The present seminar will seek to provide a general overview of the regional agreement and its synergies with the 2030 Agenda and multilateral environmental agreements, as well as take stock of the implementation of such access rights in Saint Lucia in view of the possible ratification process of the Escazú Agreement.

The **objectives** of the seminar are:

- to raise awareness on the Escazú Agreement and its synergies with the 2030 Agenda and other international processes
- to examine the state of the art of implementation of access rights in the region with a particular focus on the Caribbean sub-region
- to review the Saint Lucian internal framework in the context of the Regional Agreement to support the ratification process

9:00 – 9.30am

- Opening and welcome by GOSL, SLNT and UN ECLAC

9.30 – 11:00am

- The Escazú Agreement: Context and synergies with the 2030 Agenda, Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other international processes
David Barrio Lamarche, Environmental Affairs Officer, UN ECLAC
- Content, implications and future steps
David Barrio Lamarche, Environmental Affairs Officer, UN ECLAC
- Civil Society's role in promoting the early ratification and effective implementation of the agreement
Karetta Crooks Charles, Communications & Advocacy Officer, Saint Lucia National Trust and alternate elected representative of the public
Danielle Andrade, Attorney-at-law, Jamaica, and elected representative of the public
- Q & A / Discussion with participants

11:00 – 11:15am Break

11:15am – 12:30pm

- Status of environmental access rights in the region, with a focus on the Caribbean
Danielle Andrade, Attorney-at-law, Jamaica, and elected representative of the public
David Barrio Lamarche, Environmental Affairs Officer, UN ECLAC
- Overview of environmental access rights in Saint Lucia
Teshia Jn. Baptiste, Project Coordinator, Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender and Sustainable Development, Government of Saint Lucia
- Q & A / Discussion with participants

12:30 – 1:30pm Lunch break

1:30 – 4:00pm

- Moving towards ratification and the effective implementation of the Escazú Agreement: Gap analysis, priorities and opportunities for action
David Barrio Lamarche, Environmental Affairs Officer, UN ECLAC
- Q & A / Discussion with participants