



31 October 2013  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: SPANISH



Third meeting of the focal points appointed by the Governments  
of the signatory countries of the Declaration on the application of  
Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development  
in Latin America and the Caribbean

Lima, 30-31 October 2013

## LIMA VISION FOR A REGIONAL INSTRUMENT ON ACCESS RIGHTS RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

We recall that in the road map for the creation of an instrument on Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean we decided to reach a common vision on the importance and benefits of Principle 10 access rights to information, participation and justice in environmental matters, the values and principles underpinning them and their implementation, taking into account the Declaration on the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Plan of Action for its implementation,

Our vision is that an instrument for Latin America and the Caribbean will contribute to ensuring effective and timely access to environmental information, participation in decisions that affect the environment and access to justice in environmental matters for all. Accordingly, we, the Latin American and Caribbean signatory countries to the Declaration on the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and its Plan of Action recognize:

- a. That the process leading to the formulation of a regional instrument on the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration of 1992 is open to all the Governments and peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean and must take into account other current regional processes and promote and harness the synergies existing between the relevant regional and international agencies;
- b. That everyone has the right to a healthy environment, which is essential for the full development of human beings and for the achievement of sustainable development, poverty eradication, equality, and the preservation and stewardship of the environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

- c. That exercising rights of access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters deepens and strengthens democracy and contributes to better protection of the environment and thus of human rights;
- d. That, although considerable progress has been made in the region, we all face challenges in the full implementation of access rights, and that cooperation, capacity-building and political consensus-building through effective mechanisms are essential for narrowing gaps in the implementation of Principle 10;
- e. That access rights are interrelated and interdependent, and so each should be promoted and implemented in an integrated and balanced manner;
- f. That it is essential to promote participation by all sectors of society in furthering the issues that form the region's environmental agenda, as an important part of the process of building and forming a collective awareness of the diverse natural and cultural heritage of our peoples, in order to advance social inclusion, enhance solidarity, eradicate poverty and inequality and restore the balance and the health and integrity of our planet;
- g. That participation is essential to confer legitimacy on the process of formulating a regional instrument, especially one designed to regulate the rights to information, participation and access to justice envisaged in Principle 10. Furthermore, participation is key to broadening experience and knowledge of access rights;
- h. That it is necessary to promote awareness and environmental education of the public sector and the public, in order to contribute to the effective implementation of access rights to information, participation and justice in environmental matters, and provide people with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to participate in environmental decision-making;
- i. That, regardless of the measures that we, the signatory countries, agree upon in order to strengthen the full implementation of access rights, nothing shall preclude our ability to take additional measures to ensure even broader access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters.

### **Importance and benefits of access rights**

Recognizing that rights of access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters are essential to the promotion of sustainable development, democracy and a healthy environment, we appreciate:

- a. That they represent an important contribution to the formulation and implementation of informed, transparent and appropriate measures for furthering the well-being of the population and contributing to accountability and the effective rule of law;

- b. That they contribute to greater public awareness and allow the public to express its concerns regarding environmental problems and challenges and this, duly acknowledged by the authorities, leads to greater public involvement and support for the decisions taken;
- c. That adequate access to these rights is essential for the governance of natural resources in the region and contributes to the promotion of dialogue between authorities and citizens in natural resource management;
- d. That the adoption of a regional instrument will contribute to:
  - i. Facilitating concerted action and strategies that better address common challenges facing the region.
  - ii. Promoting and strengthening dialogue, cooperation, technical assistance, capacity-building and regional development in terms of access rights.
  - iii. Boosting the implementation of access rights at the national level by stimulating cooperation mechanisms between countries in the region.
  - iv. Fostering stronger environmental governance in the countries of the region.
  - v. Encouraging the development of a regional agenda on access rights that takes sustainability and equality as its conceptual basis.
  - vi. Improving the conditions of vulnerable populations in the region by facilitating and putting at their disposal mechanisms for access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters.

### **Values and principles**

Emphasizing the importance and benefits of access rights, we agree that the regional instrument will be inspired and guided by the following values and principles:

- a. **Equality.** Everyone must be able to exercise their access rights without experiencing any form of discrimination based on social status, gender, age, nationality, race, religion or any other factor.
- b. **Inclusion.** Special efforts must be made to involve various sectors and to provide equal opportunities for women and vulnerable groups.
- c. **Transparency.** Transparency in environmental matters is fundamental to ensuring that interests and objectives are explicit and that all necessary information is reliable and provided in a timely manner.
- d. **Proactivity.** Governments and the public shall take initiatives consistent with their respective roles, exercised responsibly, to develop their full potential and enrich the decision-making process for sustainable development in an effective and timely manner.

- e. **Collaboration.** Collaborative efforts between the various stakeholders are essential because they facilitate the achievement of common objectives, strengthen and improve the quality of dialogue, enable the exchange of experiences and knowledge, and promote prevention and dispute settlement.
- f. **Progressive realization.** It is necessary to advance progressively towards full implementation of Principle 10 and to avoid taking any step backward, while recognizing the individual circumstances of each country with regard to access rights.
- g. **Non-regression.** The instrument must build on the agreements already reached in the region and aim to strengthen national laws or international agreements on the full implementation of access rights, in keeping with the purpose of the Declaration.