

CIVIL SOCIETY STATEMENT

presented at the
Conference on Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean:
Follow-up to the Development Agenda beyond 2015 and Rio+20

Ms. María Ángela Holguín, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia
Ms Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC
Mr. Heraldo Muñoz, Latin America and the Caribbean Director, UNDP
Members of High Level Panel
Representatives of Governments and Multilateral Organizations
Civil Society Organizations
Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of civil society organizations represented at this meeting, I would like to begin by saying thanks for this opportunity to contribute to the deliberations over the last couple days as well as to highlight the humanistic approach taken in the convening of this conference. We wish to commend those governments that are already engaging civil society in a transparent manner in the consultations leading up to post 2015 and would like to call for a more open and participatory process involving civil society at the national, regional and international levels.

We call also for the continued strengthening of the partnership between Latin America and the Caribbean, towards the definition of a common goal for the region.

Governments are encouraged to continue implementing Principle 10 and to participate fully in the process, facilitated by ECLAC, to explore and determine the feasibility of a regional instrument applicable to Latin America and the Caribbean.

We are aware that there are a number of factors that must be considered in striving towards sustainable development and commend those countries that have been making significant progress in this regard. However, we humbly suggest that more emphasis be placed on the following:

- The need to change the consumption and production paradigms, whilst guaranteeing the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which civil society fully supports.

-
- Governments are encouraged to promote decent work for both men and women in our societies.
 - Efforts must be strengthened to protect our biodiversity, identified as part of our heritage and which has been recognized as a common denominator in the region, and therefore considered an essential component of sustainable development.
 - There is need to advance specific implementation mechanisms of the development agenda, which, as part of these agreements are critical to initiate change at the local, national and regional levels, and which must be held up to the highest accountability and transparency standards.
 - It is important that the new agenda take into consideration the unique characteristics and the inequalities that exist among the regions, and that adequate financial support be provided for its successful implementation.
 - We reaffirm the importance of the inclusion and empowerment of women, youth, children and the elderly to participate fully in the consultative processes leading to the development of the new agenda.
 - At the end of the consultative process, we encourage Governments to integrate both agendas into one global sustainable development framework beyond 2015 taking into consideration the Cairo +20 process.

We wish to express our appreciation for the work of the Colombian Confederation of NGOs in facilitating the involvement of civil society at this meeting and pay recognition to ECLAC, for its support and coordination of the meeting. We also wish to thank the Colombian Government for being such gracious host of this event.

- Finally, we reiterate our call to our governments to continue involving civil society at all stages of this process and we strongly recommend that the statements of civil society be included in the final report of this meeting.

I thank you for your attention.