

## Declaration of Los Cabos

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### **XIX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean**

The Ministers of Environment and Heads of Delegation to the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean gathered in Los Cabos, Baja California Sur, Mexico from 12 to 14 March 2014;

**Affirming** that sustainable development challenges demand innovative visions, coordinated actions and solid cooperation initiatives for Latin America and the Caribbean countries based on regional and national circumstances and priorities;

**Noting** that the wealth of natural and cultural resources of the region should be conserved and sustainably used to achieve an equitable, inclusive and sustainable development, respecting the sovereignty of countries over their natural resources, as set forth in Principle 2 of the 1992 Rio Declaration;

**Bearing** in mind that environmental policies are important tools to achieve higher levels of well-being for and development of our people;

**Recognizing** that in the past three decades, the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean has contributed to strengthening environmental management capacities in the countries of the region;

**Recalling** that the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development, as a tool for achieving the priority goals of the region, was included in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

**Taking in account** that the first meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP will be held from 23 to 27 June 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya;

**Welcoming** the designation of 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the conveyance of the Third International Conference on Small Island Development States which will be held in Apia, Samoa, 1-4 September;

**Recalling** decision 27/2 of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council on the implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which stressed the importance of the regional ministerial environment forums for which UNEP serves as secretariat;

**Taking** into account the Havana Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by Heads of State and Governments of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States on 28 and 29 January 2014;

**Reaffirming** the commitment of countries to engage constructively to achieve a successful outcome of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) process and incorporate the regional development priorities in the Post 2015 Development Agenda, respecting the particular circumstances and capacities of each country;

**Noting** the Secretary General's Summit on Climate Change that will be held in September of this year;

**Welcoming** the adoption of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, last October in Japan, that will be instrumental in protecting human health and the environment;

**Recognizing** that rapid urban, agricultural and industrial growth, in the region has made air pollution and solid waste a growing concern for the region due to its serious impacts to public health, human welfare and ecosystem integrity;

**Expressing** concern about the continuing and significant loss in biodiversity that its having adverse impacts on human well-being, equity, and the region's heritage and ecosystem services, despite increasing efforts for conservation and sustainable use, including an increasing coverage of protected areas;

**Emphasizing** the importance of sound management of chemicals and wastes to protect human health and the environment, welcoming the adoption of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and stressing the importance of strengthening institutional and technical capacities on chemicals and waste management in Latin American and Caribbean;

**Considering** the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity, adopted by the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, on 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan, and Target 16 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets that

provides for the Protocol to be in force and operational, consistent with national legislation, by 2015;

**Noting** that Ecuador is organizing the XI Meeting of the Conference of the Parties on the Convention on Migratory Species;

**Taking** into account the strategic nature of environmental education for the construction of sustainable societies and the need to incorporate the ethic of sustainable development by strengthening design of national policies on environmental education and awareness in countries of the region;

**Reaffirming** that it is essential to promote access to information, informed public participation and access to environmental justice in the exercise of citizens' rights, as well as to strengthen international cooperation and strategic partnerships for technology support, creation of capacities and financing for the effective implementation of Principle 10 of the Declaration of Rio;

**We therefore:**

- 1. Confirm** that the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most relevant spaces for political and policy dialogue to establish and identify the regional priorities. In preparation for the upcoming United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of the United Nations Environment Programme, reiterate the importance of strengthening the UNEP regional and subregional offices. Toward this objective, it is necessary that resources be provided to address regional, subregional and national environment and natural resource priorities, in the framework of the UNEP mandate and Programme of Work.
- 2. Undertake** the update of the ILAC based on the discussions of the XIX Meeting of this forum, identifying priority issues in the inter-sessional meeting of this forum, with the support of the Secretary, and report on its achievements to the XX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers.
- 3. Confirm** the decision to promote capacity building and strengthening to generate, systematize and exchange information, including indicators; and request the Working Group on Environmental Indicators to adjust its work considering the results of ongoing

regional initiatives and negotiation of the SDGs; and once this process is concluded, to submit its outcome to the next meeting of the Forum of Ministers.

4. **Noting** with great concern the increasing adverse impacts of climate change on our region, given its vulnerability, that requires urgent responses by all countries respecting their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in an effective international response, including the provision of new, additional, adequate and predictable financing by developed countries and other relevant actors, to address the responses on the need to adapt to and mitigate climate change.
5. **Reaffirm** the importance of achieving a draft climate change agreement at the COP20 in Lima, Peru, in December 2014, representing a milestone in the renewed effort to achieve a meaningful global agreement by 2015. Note the opportunity for our region to participate in a constructive manner and strongly support Peru in its capacity as President of the Conference. We also recognize the importance of ratifying the Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, as soon as possible.
6. **Urge** the fulfilment of the agreements adopted in COP 16 in Cancun in relation to financing, especially regarding the timely capitalization and operationalization of the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund, and the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage.
7. **Also encourage** the participation of representatives of the countries of the region to the first Social Climate Change Pre-COP, to be held in Caracas, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, from 13 to 16 October 2014.
8. **Commit** our efforts to develop public policies to address the causes of loss of biodiversity and ecosystem degradation, in particular forests, and promote the conservation, restoration and sustainable use, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from access to genetic resources, as well as to promote the capacity building to generate and systematize information on biodiversity.
9. **Encourage** the early entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol, which promotes the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from access to genetic resources.

10. **Offer** our support to Ecuador as President of the XI Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Migratory Species Convention, to be held in Quito, from 1 to 9 November 2014.
11. **Encourage** countries of the region to undertake the necessary steps towards their rapid incorporation as State Party to the Minamata Convention on Mercury.
12. **Adopt** the regional plan of action on Atmospheric Pollution as an option of voluntary guide for the development of national action plans appropriate to the particularities of each country with emphasis on technical exchange, capacity building and design alternatives to reduce air pollution.
13. **Requests** the Secretariat to develop a regional outlook on the main challenges, trends and policies related to integrated waste avoidance, minimization and management, so that it can be used as guidance for the design and implementation of national policies, plans, programmes and projects.
14. **Call upon** the regional and international community to support initiatives for the sustainable development of Caribbean Small Island Developing States and renew our commitment to South-South Cooperation in the region.
15. **Recognizes** that the landlocked States of Latin America face specific and important challenges in the process towards sustainable development, and as such require international cooperation as a necessary complement to their national efforts.
16. **Reiterate** that in order to give full effect to international agreements on environment and sustainable development, new and additional, stable and predictable financial resources, capacity building and access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies are required.
17. **Promote** the increase of South-South cooperation among the countries of the region with the objective to maximize their endogenous capacities on environmental issues.
18. **Request** members of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee of this Forum of Ministers as well as financing and multilateral cooperation institutions, in accordance with their mandates, to dedicate resources for the effective implementation of regional development and environmental priorities.

- 19. Call** on all actors of civil society, the productive sectors and the government to work together consistent with the legislation of each country, and establish a constructive dialogue to solve or mitigate environmental challenges at the local, national and regional level.
- 20. Invite** countries of the region to further develop actions on the implementation of the rights of access to information, public participation and access to environmental justice set forth in Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration, in accordance with national law, and highlight the opportunities offered for regional cooperation by the process initiated by the Rio+20 Declaration for implementation of Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 21. Request** the Chair of the XIX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean to introduce this Declaration to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UNEP and to other relevant environmental processes and forums.
- 22. Express** our deepest gratitude to the people and Government of Mexico for their generosity and fraternity during the XIX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin American and the Caribbean, held in Los Cabos, Baja California Sur, Mexico, from 12 to 14 March 2014.