Principle 10

Regional agreement on access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters

UNITED NATIONS

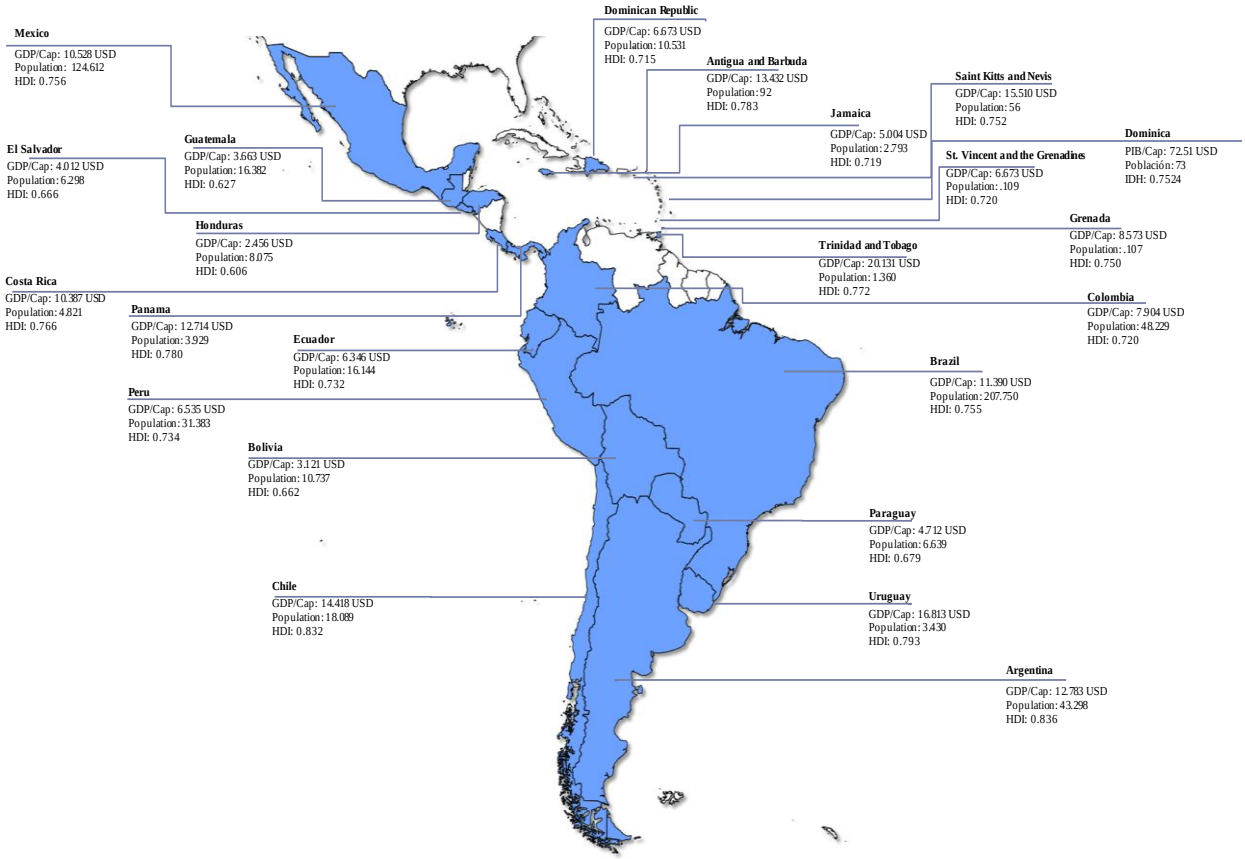
ECLAC

"Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided"

(Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992)

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012, the Declaration on the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean was signed. In this Declaration, signatory countries committed, with the support of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) as technical secretariat, to advance the implementation of a regional agreement for the full implementation of the rights of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters. In November 2014, the countries launched the negotiation phase of the regional agreement and established a **Negotiating Committee** with a view to concluding its functions **by December 2017**.

Thus far, the Declaration has been signed by **23 countries**: **Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago** and **Uruguay**.



Source:
GDP/ Cap (Dollars at current market prices) and total population (Thousands of persons, at mid-year):
ECLAC (2015) Statistical yearbook of Latin America and the Caribbean.
HDI: UNDP, 2015.
Note: The names and boundaries shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

http://www.eclac.org/en/principle10

Open to all Latin American and Caribbean countries, the process has been making progress through regular meetings and the adoption of documents. Between 2012 and 2014, four meetings of the focal points of the signatory countries and fourteen meetings of working groups were held. In addition, during this period the Road Map, the Plan of Action, the Lima Vision and an annotated index of topics of the instrument (San José Content) were adopted.

The Negotiating Committee is composed of the signatory countries with the significant participation of the public and met for the first time in Santiago in May 2015. At that meeting, it adopted its organization and work plan which established that countries would continue with their national consultations on the preliminary document of the regional agreement prepared by ECLAC and submit language proposals on the document by 31 August 2015. The Committee met again in Panama City (October 2015), Montevideo (April 2016), Santo Domingo (August 2016) and Santiago (November 2016), where progress was made in the negotiation of the regional agreement based on the document that gathers the language proposals of countries and compiles them into the preliminary document.

The process is coordinated by the Presiding Officers, comprising Chile and Costa Rica as co-chairs and Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

Why should you get involved in the Principle 10 LAC process?

An open and convening process: 23 countries of the region have become signatories

A political, ambitious and justified process where commitment is reaffirmed

- Fifth meeting of the Negotiating Committee – Santiago, November 2016
- Fourth meeting of the Negotiating Committee – Santo Domingo, August 2016
- Third meeting of the Negotiating Committee – Montevideo, April 2016
  - Modalities for participation of the public in the Negotiating Committee
- Second meeting of the Negotiating Committee – Panama, October 2015
- First meeting of the Negotiating Committee – Santiago, May 2015
  - Presentation of the Preliminary Document of the Regional Agreement prepared by ECLAC
  - Organization and Work Plan of the Negotiating Committee
- Santiago Decision – Santiago, November 2014
- Proposal of contents for the instrument (San José Content) – San José, September 2014
- Common vision for the regional instrument – Lima, October 2013
- Plan of Action 2013-2014 – Guadalajara, Mexico, April 2013
- Road map – Santiago, November 2012
- Declaration – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 2012

A valued process: main tasks agreed upon, being implemented and welcomed internationally: CELAC, CELAC EU, Forum of Ministers of the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, Session of ECLAC, Meeting of the Parties of the Aarhus Convention and United Nations Environment Assembly

A participative process: public regional mechanism in place

- On-line register permitting all interested parties to receive periodic information on the meetings and the developments of the process. All meetings are open to the participation of the public.

How can you get involved?

❶ Join the **Public Regional Mechanism** to stay informed

❷ **Support** and **participate** in the in-person and virtual meetings of the process

❸ Participate in the **national consultations** and send **inputs**, commentaries and suggestions

❹ Contact your **national focal point** and/or the **elected representatives of the public**

❺ Carry out **national and/or regional supporting actions**

Share with others and spread the word!

For additional information on the process please contact:
Technical Secretariat of the LAC Principle 10 Process
Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division - ECLAC
E-mail: principio10.lac@cepal.org

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