

Principle 10

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



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

On 4 March 2018, in **Escazú, Costa Rica**, representatives of 24 countries of **Latin America and the Caribbean** adopted the **Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean**, with the support of **ECLAC** as secretariat and the significant participation of the public.

Article 1 – Objective

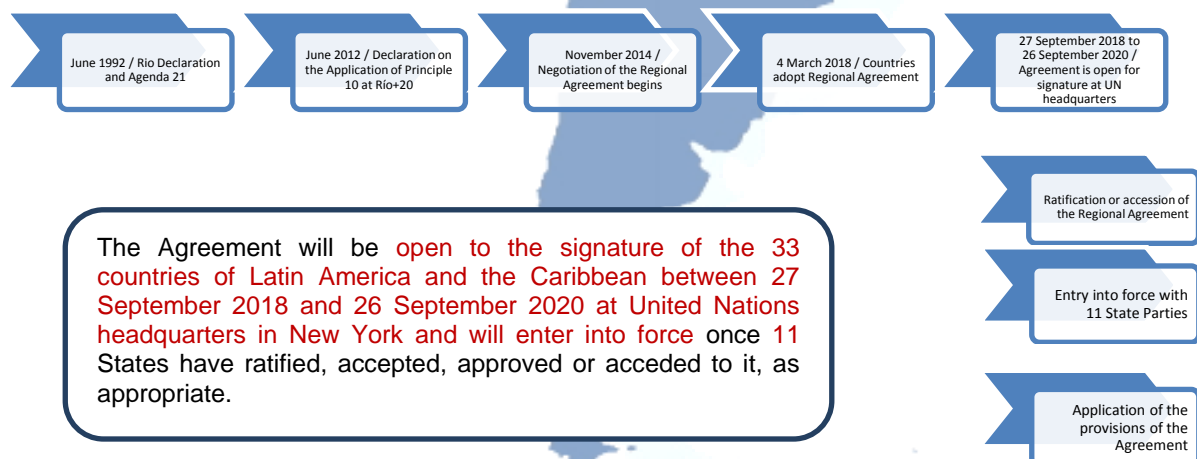
“The objective of the present Agreement is to guarantee the full and effective implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in the environmental decision-making process and access to justice in environmental matters, and 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”.

This binding regional agreement of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is the result of an open, transparent and participatory process for the full implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development of 1992. It is also the first treaty in the world to include specific provisions to ensure a safe and enabling environment for environmental human rights defenders.

Stemming from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012, the agreement was adopted after nine meetings of the Negotiating Committee established in 2014 and composed by the following countries of Latin America and the Caribbean: **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 Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay**.

The countries that were members of the Presiding Officers of the Negotiating Committee –**Chile, Costa Rica, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago**— will steer and conduct the necessary work in the period between the date on which the Agreement will be opened for signature (27 September 2018) and the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, with signatory countries, significant participation by the public and the support of ECLAC as secretariat.

Latin America and the Caribbean is committed and moving from principles to obligations



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Meetings of the Negotiating Committee of the Regional Agreement

Santiago, Chile (May 2015), Panama City, Panama (October 2015), Montevideo, Uruguay (April 2016), Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (August 2016), Santiago, Chile (November 2016), Brasilia, Brazil (March 2017), Buenos Aires, Argentina (July-August 2017), Santiago, Chile (November 2017) and Escazú, Costa Rica (February-March 2018).

Preparatory meetings

Santiago, Chile (November 2012), Guadalajara, Mexico (April 2013), Lima, Peru (October 2013), San José, Costa Rica (September 2014), Santiago, Chile (November 2014)

Importance of the Agreement

"The great merit of this regional agreement lies in placing equality at the center of rights of access and, therefore, of the environmental sustainability of development," the senior United Nations official indicated. "This is a second-generation accord that links the environment to human rights and rights of access, and which undoubtedly will contribute to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda."

Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

"This is one of the most important human rights agreements AND one of the most important environmental agreements of the last 20 years"

John H. Knox, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Environment

"This Agreement showcases globally a region that assumes with maturity and courage the challenges of environmental democracy. The international community sees with optimism and admiration this multilateral effort to give a concrete response to the commitments assumed at Rio+20."

Leo Heileman, Director and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean, UN Environment

"Today we can tell the world that we have taken a concrete, solid and transcendental step to advance towards this Future We Want."

Andrea Sanhueza, elected representative of the public

"Six years ago when we started this journey at Río+20 in Brazil we had the highest level of ambition to what have never been done before in this region, and we did it: The first treaty for the people of Latin America and the Caribbean who want environmental information, who want to participate in decisions that affect them and who need access to justice in environmental matters."

Danielle Andrade, elected representative of the public

"UNECE congratulates ECLAC and Governments and civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean on the adoption of a regional legally binding instrument to promote Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. This Aarhus-inspired agreement grants the public the right to access information, participate effectively in decision-making and to seek access to justice regarding important decisions that affect people and the environment."

Secretariat of the Aarhus Convention, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

How can you get involved?

- 1 Join the [Public Regional Mechanism](#) to stay informed
- 2 **Participate in national and regional activities**
- 3 Contact your [national focal point](#) and/or the [elected representatives of the public](#)
- 4 Organize national and/or regional **supporting actions**

Share with others and spread the word!

For additional information please contact:

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