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First meeting of the Conference of the Parties
to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information,
Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters
in Latin America and the Caribbean

Santiago, 20–22 April 2022

DRAFT DECISION I/6

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling article 9.1 of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, which refers specifically to the protection of persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters,

Stressing the importance of the work of human rights defenders in environmental matters for strengthening democracy, access rights and sustainable development and their fundamental contributions in this regard,

Reaffirming the critical importance of guaranteeing an enabling environment for the work of persons, associations, organizations or groups that promote environmental protection, by recognizing and protecting them, in accordance with article 4.6 of the Agreement,

Stressing that the Escazú Agreement contributes the right of every person to live in a healthy environment, the operationalization of the rights of nature is a fundamental enabler of access to justice in environmental matters for defenders of nature,

Recalling article 15 of the Agreement, which states that the Conference of the Parties shall examine and promote the implementation and effectiveness of the Agreement and, to that end, shall examine and adopt any measures needed to achieve its objective,

1. *Decides* to establish an open-ended ad hoc working group on human rights defenders in environmental matters, which shall allow for meaningful public participation and receive the assistance of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in its capacity as secretariat;

2. *Agrees* to entrust the open-ended ad hoc working group on human rights defenders in environmental matters with the preparation of an action plan in that regard, to be presented at the second ordinary meeting of the Conference of the Parties for consideration and adoption;
3. *Also agrees* to hold an annual forum on human rights defenders in environmental matters with recognized specialists in the field, with the assistance of the secretariat, following which a final report will be prepared to serve as input for drafting and review of the relevant action plan;
4. *Invites* the Parties and all countries of the region to step up their efforts to develop and strengthen all necessary measures at the national level to ensure the rights of human rights defenders in environmental matters.