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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

POLITICAL DECLARATION

We, the representatives of the Parties, gathered in Santiago from 20 to 22 April 2022 on the occasion of the 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 (Escazú Agreement),

1. *Welcome with great satisfaction* the entry into force of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean on 22 April 2021, on International Mother Earth Day, and express our determination to implement the Agreement;
2. *Reaffirm* the importance of cooperation and multilateralism for moving forward as a region with efforts to achieve sustainable development and environmental protection and deepening those efforts;
3. *Recognize* that strategies for economic and social recovery from the repercussions of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and for overcoming the environmental crisis must have sustainability at their core, and must be guided by the pursuit of more inclusive development, accelerated implementation of environmental protection measures and greater climate action;
4. *Highlight* the role of the rights of access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters and of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all the Sustainable Development Goals as vital road maps for bringing about transformative recovery and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean, ensuring that no one is left behind;
5. *Recognize* the important work of human rights defenders in environmental matters for strengthening democracy, access rights and sustainable development and their fundamental contributions in this regard;

6. *Reaffirm* that the Escazú Agreement is a driving force for sustainable development and a crucial governance tool for the development of better public policies in the region, with a view to ensuring a healthy environment for present and future generations;

7. *Commit* to continue working to make progress on the topics to be addressed at the extraordinary 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 to be held in Argentina in 2023, or which may be necessary for the proper functioning and implementation of the Agreement, in particular exploring additional funding options with a view to securing adequate, stable and predictable resources;

8. *Urge* all the countries signatory to the Escazú Agreement that have not yet ratified the Agreement to do so at the earliest opportunity;

9. *Encourage* all countries from the region that are not signatories or Parties to the Escazú Agreement and that wish to accede to the Agreement, to do so at the earliest opportunity;

10. *Call* for continued international cooperation to build national capacities for full implementation of the Escazú Agreement;

11. *Thank* the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in its capacity as secretariat, for its support in the deployment of the Observatory on Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean, pursuant to article 12 of the Escazú Agreement, and in the organization of the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties;

12. *Also thank* the Presiding Officers who have steered the process up to the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties, as well as all the delegations for their dedication and commitment;

13. *Further thank* the public and the representatives of the public for their meaningful participation in the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties and for their contributions;

14. *Thank* the experts and regional and international organizations and other important stakeholders that participated in this meeting.