

# United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean



## **Achieving regional sustainable development:** Overview of the Escazú Agreement and synergies

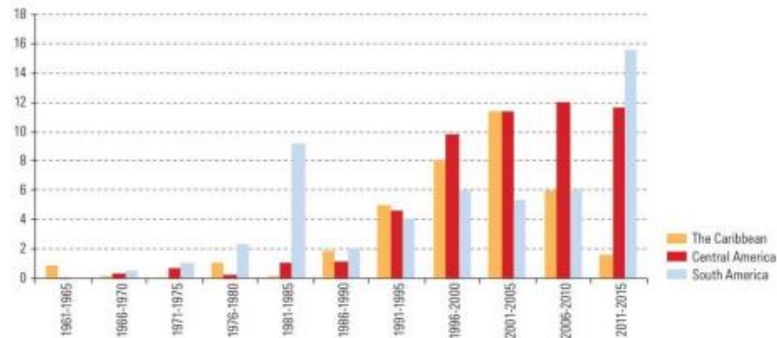
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Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division

Antigua and Barbuda, 8 December 2020

# There will not be development without protecting the environment

## The effects of climate change increase the number and cost of extreme weather events in Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean: cost of extreme weather events, 1961-2015  
(Billions of current dollars)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of International Disaster Database (EM-DAT), 2016 [online] <http://www.emdat.be/>.

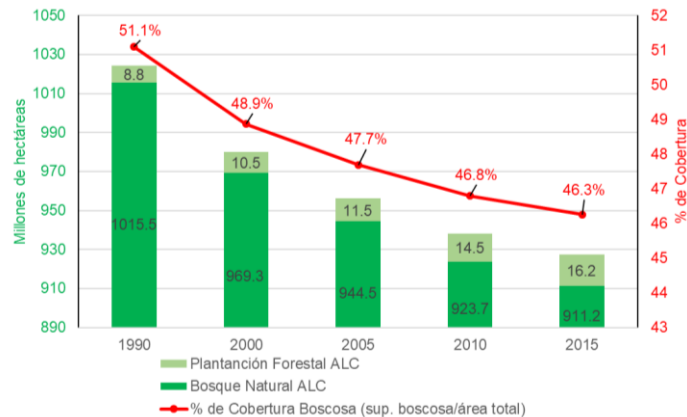
In the region, approximately 60% of the land is arid and more than 300 million hectares of agricultural land are desert

PERCENTAGE OF THE TERRITORY THAT IS SUBJECT TO DESERTIFICATION

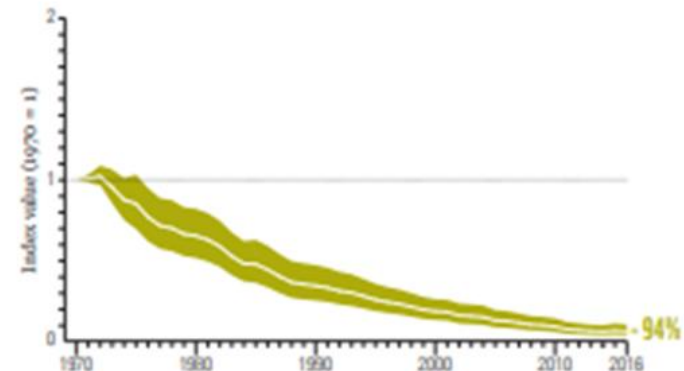


Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of European Union/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Soil Atlas of Latin America and the Caribbean, Luxembourg, 2014; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Country Profiles: Latin America and the Caribbean Region, Bonn, 2015.

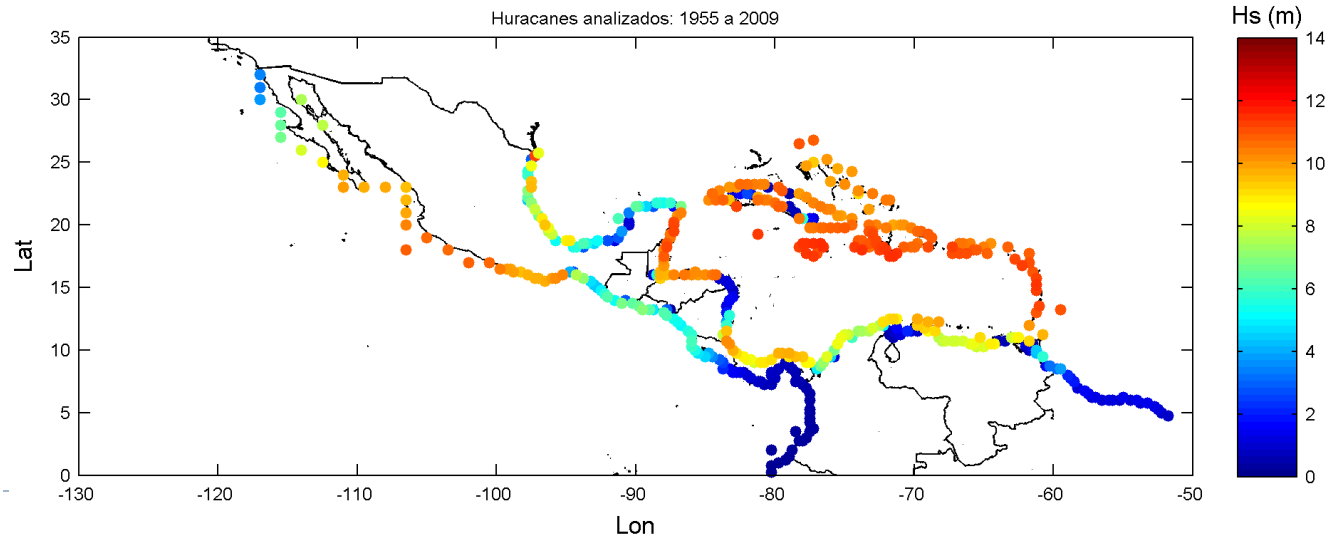
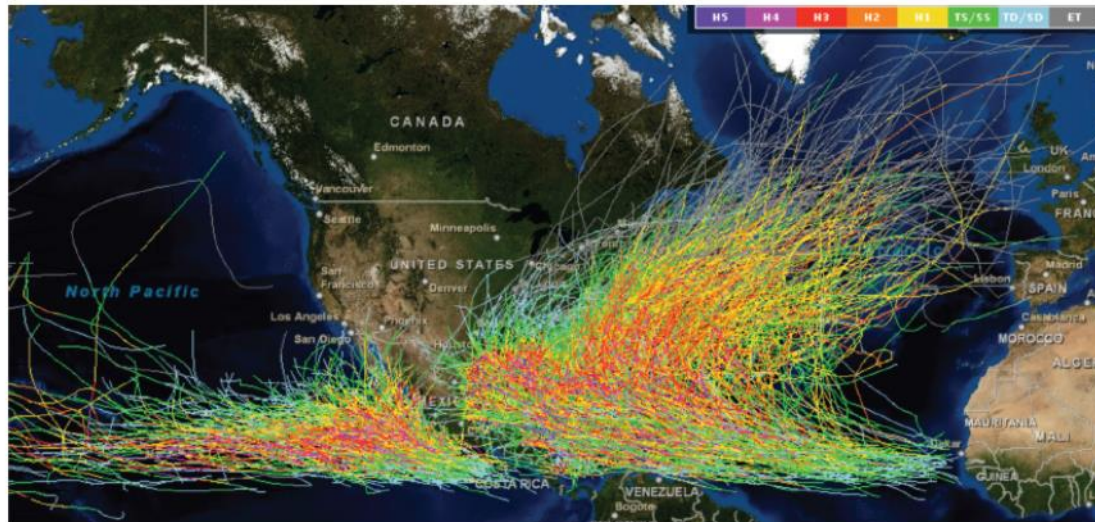
## The región lost forest área equivalent to Venezuela since 1990



## Global Living Planet Index – biodiversity (1970-2016)

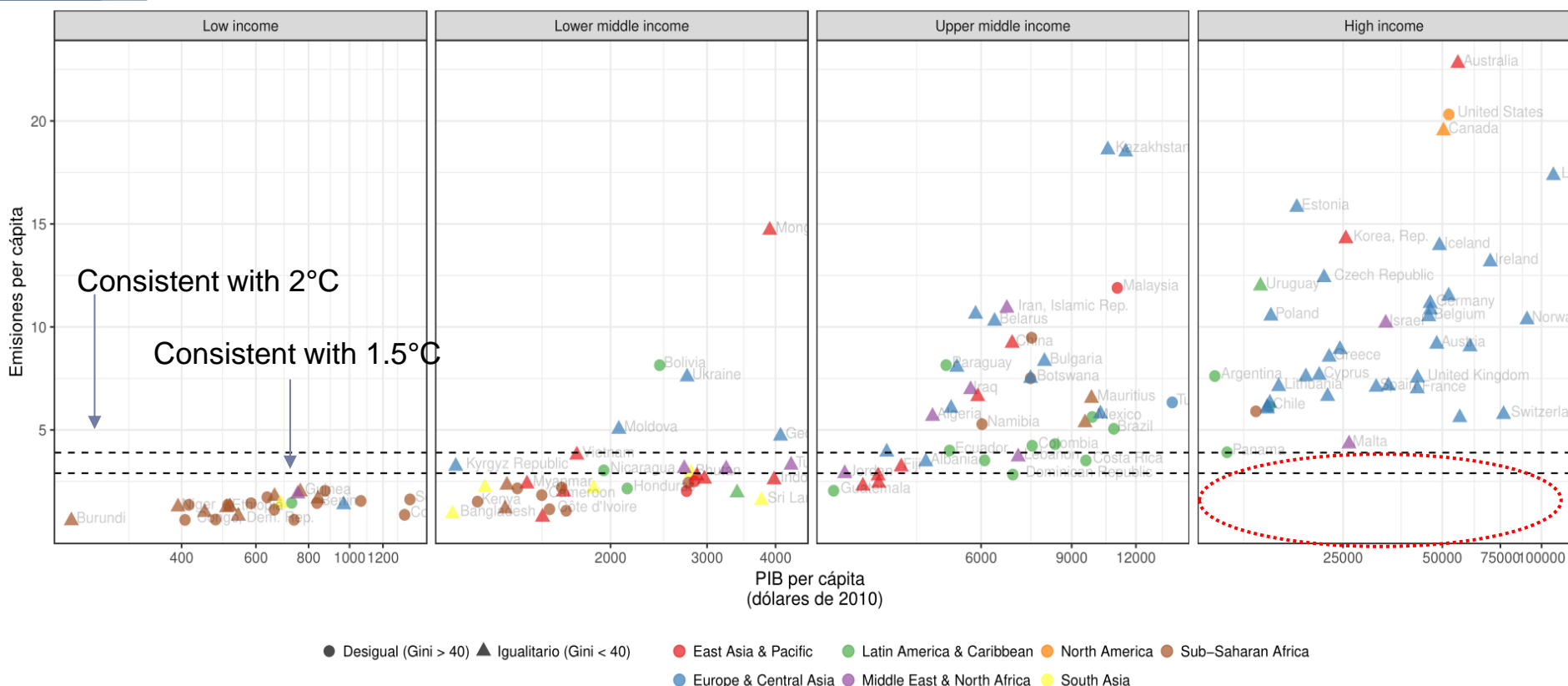


# Position and intensity of hurricanes



# There are many things to change:

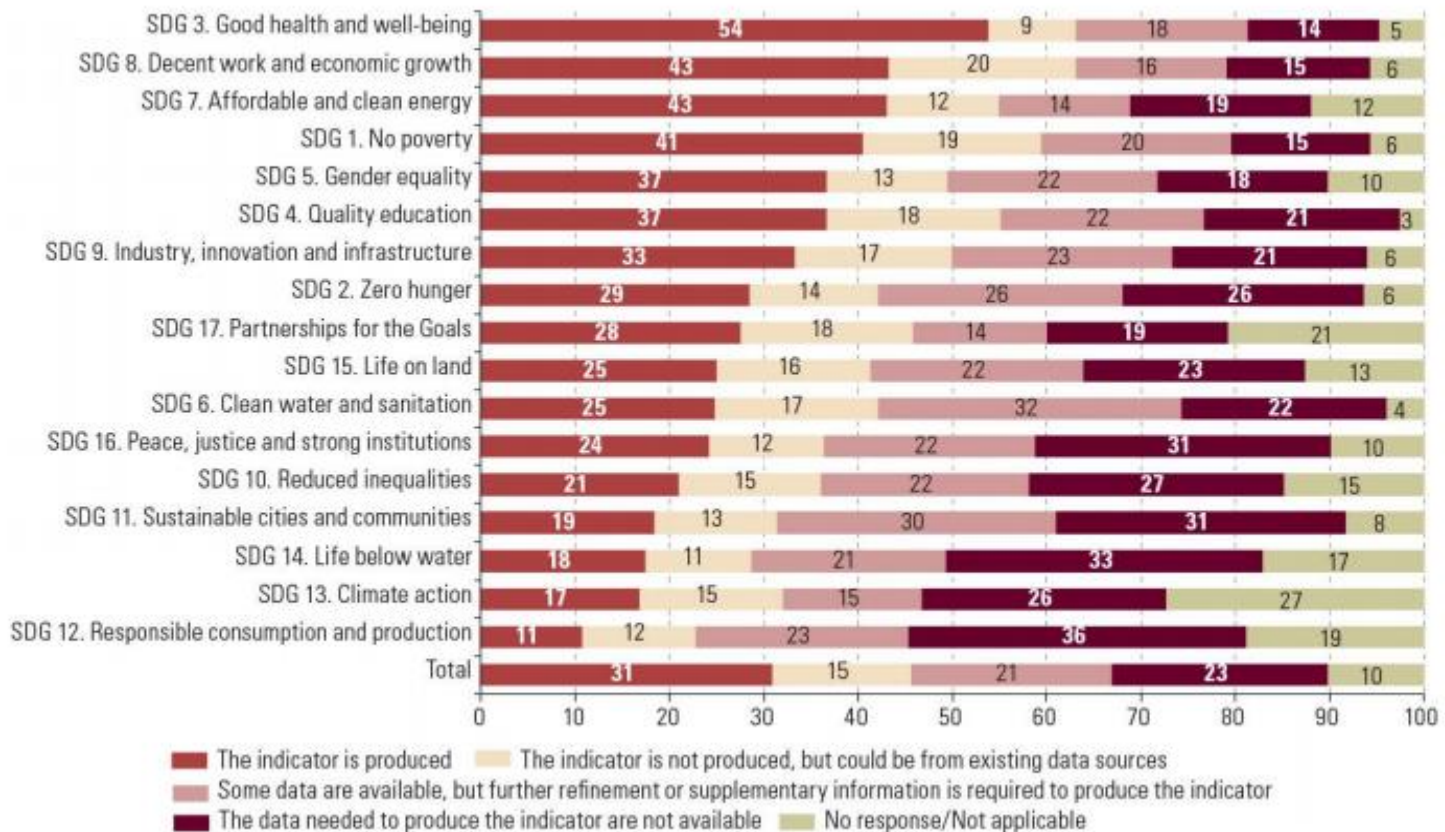
World: GDP per capita y CO2 emisiones per capita, 2016  
(Escala logarítmica)



# Lack of environmental information

## Different degrees of statistical development in sectors involved in the 2030 Agenda

**Latin America and the Caribbean (25 countries): SDG indicators by level of production, 2018**  
(Percentages)

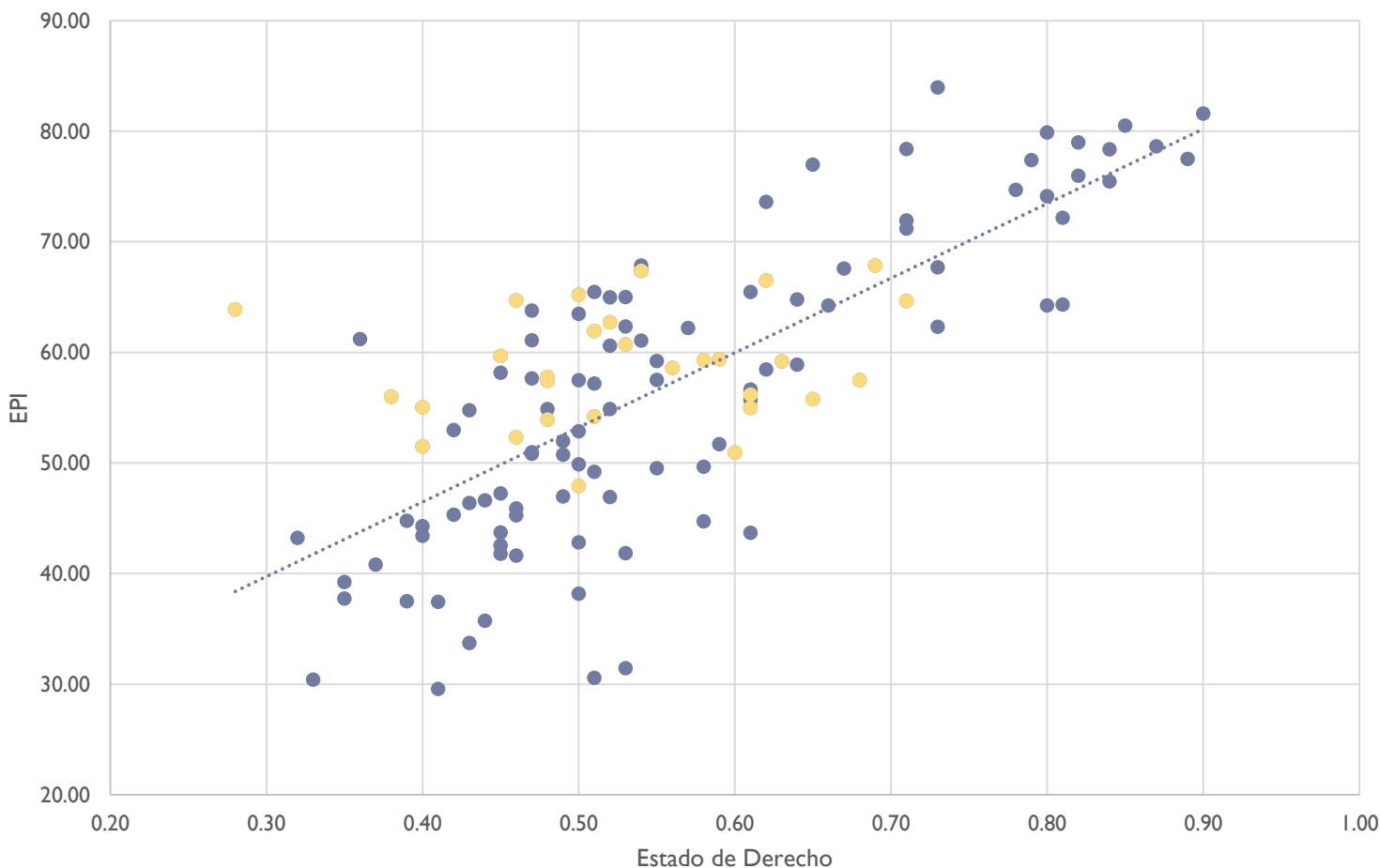


Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).



# Good governance, rule of law and strong institutions are necessary conditions for sustainable development

## Correlation between Rule of Law and Environmental Performance



● Rule of Law Overall Score ● LAC ..... Linear (Rule of Law Overall Score)

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

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1. Environmental issues are best handled **with participation of all concerned citizens**, at the relevant level.
2. 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.
3. 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.

*Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992)*

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# Why Principle 10?

There is a growing recognition that access rights are a central component of environmental protection and sustainable development

## Better democracies

- Partnerships and consensus-building for sustainability
- Increased trust in decisions
- Social cohesion and conflict prevention

## Better economies

- Tool to overcome market and policy failures (information asymmetries and lack of coherence/coordination)
- Transparency
- Sustainable recovery

## More justice

- Affirmative measures to exercise rights
- Rule of Law
- Accountability



# Sustainable development: Global developments



UN World Conference on  
Disaster Risk Reduction  
2015 Sendai Japan



# Escazú Agreement

# Consensus

Human wellbeing depends on environmental quality and peace

## Interdependence between human rights and the environment

Whole-of-Government and whole-of-society approach is essential to achieve sustainable development

## Objective (art. 1)

**Guarantee the full and effective implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean of environmental access rights *and* the creation and strengthening of capacities and cooperation**



Information



Participation



Justice



Capacity-building  
Cooperation

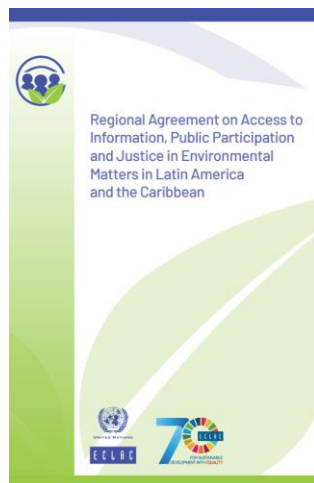


**contributing to the protection of the right of every person of *present and future generations* to live in a healthy environment *and* to sustainable development.**

# The road to the Escazu Agreement

International context		Developments in Latin America and the Caribbean	
1992	Río de Janeiro – UN Conference on Environment and Development (Principle 10 of the Declaration)	2012	Declaration on the Application of Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean
1994	Barbados – Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States	2013	Declaration of the First Summit of the Community of Latin American and the Caribbean (CELAC)
1998	Aarhus – Aarhus Convention	2013	Guadalajara Action Plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Application of Principle 10 in LAC
2002	Johannesburg – World Summit on Sustainable Development	2013	Lima vision for a regional instrument on access rights relating to the environment
2010	UNEP Bali Guidelines	2014	Declaration of the XIX meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean
2012	UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20)	2014	Resolution 686 (XXXV) of the thirty-fifth session of ECLAC
2014	Resolution on the implementation of Principle 10 at the First UNEA	2014	San Jose Contents for the Regional Instrument
2014	Lima Ministerial Declaration (COP 20 UNFCCC)	2014	Beginning of the negotiations on the regional instrument on access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean
2016	Resolution on Principle 10 at the Second UNEA	2016	Declaration of the XX meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean
2016	Resolution on Principle 10 at the Second UNEA	2016	Resolution 706 (XXXVI) of the thirty-six session of ECLAC
2018	Final report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment	2018	Adoption of the Escazu regional agreement

# Basic facts about the Escazú Agreement



Adopted in Escazú (Costa Rica) on **4 March 2018**

Opened for signature at UNGA on **27 September 2018**

- Only treaty stemming from the UN Rio+20 Conference
- First regional environmental treaty of Latin America and the Caribbean
- First treaty in the world with specific binding provisions on environmental human rights defenders

Open to the **33** LAC countries

**24** have signed it

**10 + (2) ratifications**

**11** ratifications required  
to enter into force



Adoption ceremony at Escazú (Costa Rica), 4 March 2018

## A valuable tool to seek people-centred solutions grounded in nature (SG, July 2020 brief on the impact of COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean)



“[The Escazú Agreement] **affirms the value of the regional dimension of multilateralism for sustainable development.**”

“Above all, this treaty **aims to combat inequality and discrimination and to guarantee the rights of every person to a healthy environment and to sustainable development.** In so doing, it devotes particular attention to persons and groups in vulnerable situations, and places equality at the core of sustainable development.”

*António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations*

“

When the agreement enters into force and is implemented, countries will be better placed to preserve their strategic natural heritage through more inclusive and community-oriented actions.

*Report of the UN Secretary General: The impact of COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean (July, 2020)*

”



“Visionary and unprecedented, it is an agreement reached by and for Latin America and the Caribbean, **reflecting the ambition, priorities and particularities of our region.**”

*Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC*

# Proudly and truly Caribbean

- 9** Caribbean countries negotiated and adopted it
- 11** Caribbean countries have signed it (6 OECS)
- 5** Caribbean countries have ratified it  
(one was the first of the region)
- 2** Caribbean countries are Presiding Officers

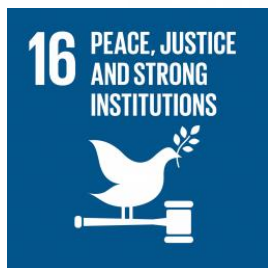
- ▶ Based on capacity-build and cooperation
- ▶ Special consideration of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
- ▶ Enabler of key international commitments for the Caribbean





# Development Agenda and the Escazú Agreement

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



- Ensure equal access to justice
- Effective, accountable and transparent institutions
- Ensure inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making
- Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms
- Non-discriminatory law and policies for sustainable development



# Access rights in Multilateral Environmental Agreements

		Access to information	Participation	Access to justice	Capacity-building
	Paris Agreement	x	x		x
	Minamata Convention	x	x		x
	Stockholm Convention	x	x		x
	Rotterdam Convention	x	x	x	x
	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification	x	x	x	x
	Convention on Biological Diversity	x	x	x	x
	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	x	x		x
	Kyoto Protocol	x	x		x
	Basel Convention	x	x	x	x
	Vienna Convention	x	x	x	x
	Montreal Protocol	x	x		x
	CITES	x	x	x	x
	Ramsar Convention	x	x		x

## S.A.M.O.A. Pathway

### Sustainable development of SIDS with the full participation of civil society

- **Sustainable tourism:**
  - Policies that allow local communities to **participate** and gain optimum benefits from tourism
- **Climate change:**
  - **Engaging** a broad range of stakeholders at all levels including local governments, the scientific community, private businesses and civil society, and also including youth and persons with disabilities. Gender equality and the effective **participation** of women and indigenous peoples are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change.
  - Raise **awareness** and communicate climate change risks, including through public **dialogue** with local communities, to increase human and environmental resilience to the longer-term impacts of climate change
- **Disaster Risk Reduction:**
  - Increase **participation** in international and regional disaster risk reduction initiatives
- **Oceans and seas:**
  - **Cooperation** to address the causes of ocean acidification and further study and minimize its impacts, including through **information-sharing**
- **Capacity-building:**
  - Establish national and regional **information** and communications technology platforms and information dissemination hubs in small island developing States to facilitate information exchange and **cooperation**, building on existing information and communications platforms

## Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

Substantially increase availability and access to multi-hazard **early warning systems** and **disaster risk information** and assessments to people by 2030

- **All-of-society engagement and partnerships**
  - Empowerment, inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation in policies
  - Gender, age, disability and cultural perspective; women and youth leadership promoted
- **Coordination mechanisms**
  - Relevant stakeholders at all levels
- **Risk-informed decision-making** based on open exchange and dissemination of information
- Strengthen public **education** on disaster risk reduction

## New Urban Agenda

Sustainable, participatory and people-centered urban development

- **Right to the city:** all persons are able to enjoy equal rights, opportunities and fundamental freedoms
- **Cities and urban settlements shall:**
  - Be participatory, promote civic engagement, engender a sense of belonging and ownership among all their inhabitants, prioritize safe, inclusive, accessible, green and quality public spaces
  - Gender equality and empower all women and girls
  - Protect, conserve, restore and promote their ecosystems, water, natural habitats and biodiversity, minimize their environmental impact and change to sustainable consumption and production patterns



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# Contact

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<http://www.cepal.org/en/escazuagreement>

<http://observatoriop10.cepal.org>

**#AcuerdodeEscazú    #EscazúAgreement**

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