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

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Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division

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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.

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

The región lost forest área equivalent to Venezuela since 1990.

Global Living Planet Index – biodiversity (1970-2016)

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of International Disaster Database (EM-DAT), UN (online): http://www.emdat.be/
Position and intensity of hurricanes
There are many things to change:

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

Consistent with 2°C
Consistent with 1.5°C
Lack of environmental information
Different degrees of statistical development in sectors involved in the 2030 Agenda
Good governance, rule of law and strong institutions are necessary conditions for sustainable development.

Correlation between Rule of Law and Environmental Performance

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)
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

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

Escazú Agreement

UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 Sendai Japan
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 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

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<th>International context</th>
<th>Developments in Latin America and the Caribbean</th>
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<td>2012 Declaration on the Application of Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<td>2013 Declaration of the First Summit of the Community of Latin American and the Caribbean (CELAC)</td>
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<td>2013 Guadalajara Action Plan for the implementation of the Declaration on the Application of Principle 10 in LAC</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>2013 Lima vision for a regional instrument on access rights relating to the environment</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>2014 Declaration of the XIX meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>2014 Resolution 686 (XXXV) of the thirty-fifth session of ECLAC</td>
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<td>2014 San Jose Contents for the Regional Instrument</td>
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<td>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</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>2016 Declaration of the XX meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>2016 Resolution 706 (XXXVI) of the thirty-six session of ECLAC</td>
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<td>2018</td>
<td>2018 Adoption of the Escazu regional agreement</td>
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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

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

Climate Action

- Each Party shall have in place one or more up-to-date environmental information systems, which may include [...] climate change sources.
- Each Party shall take steps to establish a pollutant release and transfer register.
- Each Party shall develop and implement an early warning system.

Escazú Agreement
Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean

Mutual reinforcement for climate empowerment

Paris Agreement

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Art. 6.3
Art. 6.4
Art. 6.5
Art. 12
Art. 6
## Access rights in Multilateral Environmental Agreements

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<th>Access to justice</th>
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<td>United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification</td>
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<td>Convention on Biological Diversity</td>
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<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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<td>Kyoto Protocol</td>
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<td>Ramsar Convention</td>
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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
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<th><strong>Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction</strong></th>
<th><strong>New Urban Agenda</strong></th>
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<td>Substantially increase availability and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to people by 2030</td>
<td><strong>Sustainable, participatory and people-centered urban development</strong></td>
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| • **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 | • **Right to the city:** all persons are able to enjoy equal rights, opportunities and fundamental freedoms |
| • **Coordination mechanisms**  
  - Relevant stakeholders at all levels | • **Cities and urban settlements shall:** |
| • **Risk-informed decision-making** based on open exchange and dissemination of information |  
  • 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 |
| • Strengthen public education on disaster risk reduction | **New Urban Agenda** |
Contact

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United Nations, ECLAC

http://www.cepal.org/en/escazuagreement
http://observatoriop10.cepal.org

#AcuerdodeEscazú  #EscazúAgreement