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**Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Latin
America and the Caribbean**

**Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
27th January to 1st February 2008**

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Final Report of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

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I. Introduction

1. The Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was held five years after the approval of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), as part of the Action Plan of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, South Africa, September-October 2002).

2. In the past five years, the Latin American and Caribbean countries have been devoting significant efforts for reverting environmental deterioration trends, improving the living conditions of their people and promoting the growth of their economies. Such achievements by the countries of the Region in these areas are evidenced in the indicators and reports on compliance with the goals established in ILAC and with respect to the Millennium Development Goals.

3. However, amongst the important challenges that persist is the pressure on natural resources generated by economic growth in most of the countries of the Region and the infrastructure projects promoted by various productive and service sectors. Such challenges render ever more relevant the need to promote the environmental sustainability agreed to in the Millennium Development Goals.

4. Worth noting at the international level is the renewal of the international dialogue on climate change in response to the dissemination of scientific reports and economic evaluations that warn about the seriousness of the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of the problem. Also worth highlighting is the continuation of debates on international environmental governance; sustainable management of the ecosystems and conservation of the biodiversity that continue to be priority issues for the international community as a whole and for the Latin American and Caribbean Region in particular. These matters deserve the attention of the Forum of Ministers, which is the primary forum for dialogue, and coordination of environmental policies of Latin America and the Caribbean.

5. One of the main inputs for the deliberations of the Forum of Ministers was the report on progress of the implementation of ILAC, prepared by a group of international experts under the Chairmanship of the Fifteenth Forum of Ministers, hosted by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which allowed the Ministers of the Region to evaluate the progress achieved and identify measures for continuing the implementation of ILAC.

6. During the inter-sessions period, Agencies that are members of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC) have maintained an extensive exchange on the options for increasing their contribution to the application of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers. Because of this exchange, several proposals have been developed in relation to the tools and means of action for the application of the ILAC, specifically with respect to the mandate and composition of the ITC, the Working Groups, as well as the structure and contents of the RAP. These topics were the subject of discussion at a Meeting of High Level Government Experts (Panama City, Panama; 30th and 31st August, 2007), which adopted a series of recommendations that were submitted for consideration by the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Objectives of the Meeting

7. Taking into account the background information provided in the preceding paragraphs, the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers has been convened to address the following objectives:

- a) Evaluate progress in the implementation of ILAC five years after its adoption, identify the challenges posed by its future application and determine the areas upon which the countries of the Region and the ITC Agencies should focus their actions;
- b) Consider the means of action for implementing the ILAC and in general, the decisions of the Forum of Ministers, in particular the RAP, ITC and the Working Groups;
- c) Exchange information and experiences on issues emerging from the international environmental agenda that are relevant for continuing the application of the ILAC; such as, for example, climate change, integrated management of ecosystems and environmental mainstreaming;
- d) Comment on some of the topics to be discussed at the tenth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (Principality of Monaco, 20-22 February 2008).

Participation

8. The Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was attended by **122** participants, as follows: **82** delegates from **28** countries of the Region; **1** (one) observer government; **11** representatives from **6** agencies, programmes, commissions, secretariats and conventions of the United Nations system; **18** representatives from **15** inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations as well as **10** special guests. The List of Participants is contained in **Annex V** of this document.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting

9. The ceremony was chaired by Mr. Omar Ramirez Tejada, Secretary of State for the Environment of the Dominican Republic who was accompanied in the presidium by Mr. Roberto Dobles, Minister of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica in his capacity as Chairman of UNEP Governing Council, Mr. Carlos Guerrero, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of El Salvador, currently chairman of the Central American Commission on Environment and Development, Mrs. Ann David-Antoine Minister of Health, Social Security, Environment and Relations of Grenada, on behalf of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean, and Mrs. Romina Picolotti, Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina, representing the Ministers of MERCOSUR.

10. At the opening ceremony, the first speaker was Mr. Ricardo Sanchez Sosa, UNEP Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP/ROLAC), who greeted all panelists and wished success to this Forum during its deliberation on behalf of the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Achim Steiner, who was unable to personally participate in the forum due to the unfortunate events unfolding in

Nairobi, Kenya, which forced him to remain at the organization's headquarters in that city. The Regional Director stressed the commitment of the Dominican Republic in organizing the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, despite the natural disasters that have affected the country thus leading to the postponement of the event in November 2007. He then referred to the importance of the meeting and asked the participants to use this forum as a political debate by the environmental authorities, in order to assess the advances in the implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) adopted by the countries of the Region in 2002 and included in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation which aims to reach consensus in priority actions for the coming years. He also expressed that during the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum, issues emerging from the international environmental agenda would be addressed, such as governance, climate change, management of ecosystems, which are of great importance for Latin America and the Caribbean due to their vulnerability, as well as the cross cutting edge of environmental policies resulting from incorporation of economic and political policies into the environmental realm, as a mandate for sustainable development.

11. The Director of UNEP/ROLAC invited the Director General of UNEP to join efforts in achieving a green economy and the adoption of strategies that take into account the costs of environmental degradation to the economies of the countries of the Region. This will allow the countries to successfully confront external pressures that could lead to stagnation in the global economy. He concluded his address by reiterating the importance of the Ministers of the Environment to participate in the Tenth Special Session of the World Ministerial Summit to be held in Monaco in February 2008.

12. Following this intervention, Mr. Omar Ramirez Tejada took the floor and welcomed the honorable Ministers and he greeted the panelists on behalf of Mr. Leonel Antonio Fernandez Reyna, President of the Dominican Republic. Mr. Ramirez stressed the importance of the Forum, which gathers the highest environmental authorities and agents working in the field, such as park rangers and forest wardens, whose task is to protect the natural resources that are of vital importance for the effective implementation of environmental policies. In this regard, Mr. Ramirez referred to the enormous natural wealth of the Region and to the challenges posed by the high number of people living in poverty. He noted in this regard, that the Region must play an important role in the multilateral arena in order to demand from developed nations an effective implementation of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, climate change being a prime example of this effect since the Region only contributes to 5% of the global emissions of greenhouse gases and yet suffers consequences of this global issue due to its vulnerability and therefore the demand for financing the adaptation and transfer of technology from developed countries must be permanent and irrevocable.

13. Finally, in his capacity as host, Mr. Omar Ramirez reiterated his warm welcome to participants at the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers on behalf of the Government and people of the Dominican Republic. The Forum was formally inaugurated, followed by an audio-visual presentation on the natural beauty of the

various geographic areas of the Dominican Republic and a representative artistic performance of the rich heritage of the country.

Agenda Item 2: Organization of the meeting

14. During the first ministerial session, Mr. Ricardo Sanchez, Director of UNEP/ROLAC welcomed the participants and invited the Vice Minister of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Cristobal Francisco to inform the Forum on the activities carried out by the Chair in charge of this country and to conduct the election of the bureau.

15. Mr. Cristobal Francisco greeted the Minister of the Environment of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mrs. Yurivi Ortega, and expressed that it was an honor for his country to carry out the functions inherent to the Chairperson of the Forum of Ministers, underlining the commitment of the countries of the Region to continue working together. As examples, he cited the ITC meeting held in Isla de Margarita in March 2006, where preparations for the RAP and ITC meetings were concluded in Caracas, Venezuela, in March 2007, during which a number of issues were discussed and will be addressed during this Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers.

2.1. Approval of the rules of the meeting

16. The Ministers decided to adopt, *mutatis mutandi*, the Rules of Procedure of the Governing Council of UNEP to govern the procedures of the meeting.

2.2. Election of Officers

17. At the proposal of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mr. Omar Ramirez, Secretary of State for Environment of the Dominican Republic, was elected Chairman of the Meeting by acclamation and assumed the leadership of the Forum's work. Upon assuming the Presidency of the Forum of Environment Ministers, Mr. Omar Ramirez, noted that in the Region a great integration effort was being deployed, conducive to improving the environmental situation and the living conditions of the population in order to confront poverty.

18. In keeping the practices established in previous meetings, the Chairman proposed that the Presidium maintain the same composition adopted during the Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts. The participants adopted the proposal, and therefore the vice-presidencies of Argentina, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Peru were ratified and Cuba was elected rapporteur.

2.3. Approval of the meeting agenda and Schedule of sessions

19. Under item, the Director of UNEP/ROLAC made a brief presentation of proposed Provisional agenda and the annotated Provisional Agenda and highlighted the importance that the dialogues between the ministers be sincere. He noted that the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Achim Steiner, considered important that countries in the Region should participate actively at the next meeting of the Governing Council to be held in Monaco in February 2008. Both agendas were approved without modification.

20. In response to the invitation by the President, Mr. Ricardo Quiroga, on behalf of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), delivered a speech noting that the Bank is committed to sustainable development and the environment. Furthermore, the Bank is currently restructuring the processes in response to the trends of economic performance in the Region. It reported on the increase of funds available for environmental projects, tourism and agriculture, among other areas, a sum that amounts to US\$1.1 billion dollars. He also noted that there are three main priorities for the granting of non-reimbursable resources: the climate change and sustainable energy initiative, the risk management and natural disasters initiative and the water initiative. On the other hand, Mr. Hugo Guzman, on behalf of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) 2008-2009 highlighted the activities carried out by said commission in conjunction with UNEP in the field of environmental statistics and reiterated ECLAC's support to 2008-2009.

Agenda Item 3: Message from the Regional Forum of UNEP to Latin American and Caribbean Civil Society and Message from the Second Latin American Congress of National Parks and Other Protected Areas.

21. The Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean has continued the practice of convening meetings of environmental organizations in the Region for the purpose of coordinating and submitting to the Ministers of the Region their views and inputs for the discussions and agreements of this encounter. The Meeting of the Forum was held in Monterrey, Mexico on October 12 and 13, 2007. Furthermore, in response to statements by organizations participating in the Forum convened in 2005, a Message from the Civil Society was presented by Mr. Carlos Gomez at the beginning of the deliberations of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum thus encouraging the ministers to take into account the content of said message when addressing the various items on the agenda.

22. Mr. Gómez presented the main recommendations of the Forum, stressing in particular the need to assess, along with Civil Society, the relevance and usefulness of the ILAC indicators and to include among its priorities the measurement of the risks and environmental impacts of neo-liberal trade liberalization processes and treaties and infrastructural projects in the Region, with special emphasis on the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) and the Puebla Panama Plan. He stressed the importance of mobilizing funds that address climate change and the application of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, in hopes that the largest generators of greenhouse gases change their production, distribution and consumption patterns, thus bearing the brunt of measures and adopt appropriate mechanisms. He suggested conducting Forums on Climate Change and Socio-environmental Accountability, one per subregion and commented on UNEP's Medium Term Strategy and the importance of the institutional strengthening of the regional offices. With regard to International Environmental Governance, he stressed the need to take into account the experiences of civil society organizations, the need to establish mechanisms to ensure expression in the global levels of major groups and regions, and expressed concern over the uncontrolled advance of biofuels, their competition with

sovereignty and food security, the risk for the environment and the imposition of an inappropriate agricultural model.

Agenda Item 4: Message from the Second Latin American Congress on National Parks and Other Protected Areas

23. Mr. Hector Espina, Head of the Organizing Committee for the Second Congress of National Parks and other Protected Areas, presented the conclusions of the meeting, where 2,300 participants from over 30 countries in 70 workshops were present. He said that an important aspect of the Congress was the participation of indigenous peoples, while also recognizing the leadership of Latin America in this issue and indicated the need for further progress, in particular with regard to protected areas declared on the territories of said indigenous populations. The Congress also identified the need for budget goals to be defined and necessary reforms implemented during 2007-2017, in order to provide National Park financial Systems with sustainability, the proper value of goods and services, the role of strategic sites in the process of land planning and management, and in strengthening the conservation of biological corridors.

24. Regarding climate change, Mr. Espina reported that the issue had been addressed at the Second Congress and that the importance of monitoring protected areas had been highlighted. Another important issue at the meeting was the need to increase marine protected areas, which currently accounts for 0.5% of the total. With regard to potential threats to the environment, he stressed that progress in agriculture, biofuels, mining and other activities are opportunities for generating employment and stimulating development, but this would be possible only if these items are inserted into the national and regional planning mechanisms of land management. Finally, he emphasized some key elements of the Declaration of Bariloche.

Agenda Item 5: Implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development

5.1. Assessment of progress made in the implementation of ILAC

25. Under this agenda item was submitted for consideration of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers a report presented by Mr. Enrique Provencio on the progress made in the implementation of ILAC, which describes the processes in incorporating ILAC as a part of the Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit on the Environment and Sustainable Development (2002) and highlights steps taken for its implementation through the decisions of the Forum of Ministers and the actions undertaken by countries in order to make headway in reaching the objectives, goals, and purposes indicated by the Initiative. The report also contains an assessment of the implementation of ILAC since 2003, based on a set of selected indicators.

26. Some of the highlights of Mr. Provencio's presentation suggest a continued reduction of forest coverage in the Region, with the resulting impact on biodiversity, although there has been a growth in the number of protected areas, while there is a lag in marine coastal areas. With regard to water resources, there is

a reduction in availability, as well as increased population in coastal areas, leading to their pollution and degradation along with a decline in fish catch. The coverage of water and sanitation services has increased in cities, accompanied by an increased vulnerability to disasters. Similarly, while the increased motorized vehicles is obvious, there are no indicators to provide a more accurate monitoring of emission and waste management.

27. The social, health, economic and energy areas, environmental improvement schemes and education, are incorporating ILAC among others, while having some indicators that show some trends, they also require a check and upgrade that leads to an appropriate follow-up. A periodic review of the implementation of ILAC every four years is also recommended, with concise reports aimed at monitoring; with an emphasis on the urban aspects and the risk variable; avoiding any redundancy (with the MDGs, for instance); taking into account the countries' scale and enabling a weighted monitoring; and giving the necessary support to those countries that need it in order to improve the monitoring and evaluation system. This information is contained on a CD-ROM that was made available to the Ministers and Heads of Delegation.

5.2. Regional Action Plan 2008-2009

28. The Director of UNEP/ROLAC presented this agenda item with a brief overview of the discussions held since the Meeting of High-Level Experts in Panama (August 2007) and the Preparatory Meeting of Experts of the Region's Sixteenth Forum for Environment Ministers. In this regard, it was proposed to develop of a new matrix that clearly identifies and demarcates the scope of eleven areas established as priority goals, the main areas of work, indicators, and actions undertaken by countries. The Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers also requested to continue to develop the matrix for consultation with the ministries.

29. Several delegations noted the importance of continuing to work on the development of indicators that include clear goals to crosscut the environmental agenda with other institutions in the priority areas identified and to lead the availability of additional resources at the national level. Some countries pointed successful inter-agency working experiences that led to an increase in the budgets and the availability of information for the promotion of South-South cooperation in the spheres of marine and coastal areas, the energy sector, environmental management of the territory, payment for environmental services, tourism in protected areas, and adaptation to climate change, among others.

30. Some delegations acknowledged the RAP as an important instrument for the implementation of ILAC, proposing, in turn, adjustments with regard to its operation and reviewing the role of the ITC member agencies. It was also proposed that there be a prioritization in the eleven areas previously identified by the Experts. After a significant number of interventions that supported the role played by experts in recent days and considering that the proposal could reopen a discussion that would not circumvent the existing timeframe, the Plenary agreed that this work should be left for the Inter-Sessional Meeting scheduled for the second half of 2008.

Agenda Item 6: Ministerial Dialogues on Emerging Issues Relevant to the Implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative on Sustainable Development

6.1. International Environmental Governance and the United Nations reform

31. The issue has been considered on several occasions in fora convened in the framework of the United Nations General Assembly and the UNEP Governing Council, and formal and informal consultations on the future of the International Environmental Governance have recently been brought forth. On the other hand, the Government of Brazil convened the "*Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development: Challenges for International Governance*", in Rio de Janeiro in September 2007.

32. Environment Ministers exchanged information and views, in order to:

- a) Have an update on recent developments in this field;
- b) Discuss the various exchanges; international governance processes and options that have been considered in the consultations that have been carried out thus far; and
- c) Analyze the challenges and identify prospects that can be derived from the discussions held so far, and their implications for the sustainable development of the Region.

33. This first segment of the ministerial dialogues started with an intervention by Deputy Minister Wei Britto, Secretary of Biodiversity and Forests of Brazil, who conveyed the greetings from Minister Marina Silva and explained that she had been unable to attend, having to deal with activities related to recent reports of increasing deforestation in the country. He also referred to the meeting held in Brazil on this issue in September 2007, which Achim Steiner had attended, which discussed environmental governance. He noted that Brazil supports initiatives to strengthen the United Nations system, and the need to set up an organization to serve as an umbrella for UNEP, the Fund for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Secretariats of the Conventions. He stressed the need to review the operation of the Commission on Sustainable Development because, since its inception, it has not justified its existence. He noted that the transformation of UNEP is necessary for the mobilization of resources, technology transfer and dissemination of information in a more efficient and effective manner. He also stated that the system is overburdened with too many mandates and commitments, and that access to funding is a very complex process, especially in the case of the GEF. The ITC agencies should develop a joint program of work to use the scarce financial resources. This amalgam of issues will be raised during the next meeting of the Governing Council to be held in Monaco (February 2008). Lastly, he urged all Ministers to actively participate in this Forum so that they can begin to take actions and create initiatives that cope with environmental problems.

34. Mr. Roberto Dobles, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, said that environmental issues are of great significance and presence in various international forums, not only environmental ones, but also in the United Nations

Security Council, where they have started to talk about environmental security. He added, however, that this discussion is still rhetorical and we need to move on to action because ecosystems continue to deteriorate and the status quo is not a solution. He described that many options have been discussed that are related to updating mandates and their execution. This includes maintaining UNEP in its current situation and strengthening its financial resources, but the point is how to ensure an adequate and timely flow of these resources. He added that there is a war against the environment and that wars suppress development and welfare. In this light, Costa Rica unilaterally launched the "Peace with Nature" initiative, which seeks greater human welfare and the well-being of the ecosystems that sustain life, and thus the country has taken on the climate change initiative, in order for Costa Rica to be carbon neutral by 2021. The goods and services to join the initiative will be certified, for example in the tourism sector and through the production of carbon-neutral banana. Costa Rica is consulting with other countries to convene a global consultation on international environmental governance.

35. The Director of UNEP/ROLAC on behalf of the Executive Director of this organization emphasized the major issues raised in the Medium Term Strategy proposal (see **Annex III** to this report) that will be addressed at the next session of the UNEP Governing Council. He recalled the UNEP deliberations held in Cartagena, Colombia, in 2002, where he spoke about strengthening the program. He stated that work has been completed on the availability of adequate and predictable financial resources, the GEO 4 report, the synergy between conventions, and that significant progress has been achieved in capacity building and technological development since the adoption of the Bali Plan of Action. The Medium Term Strategy is being put forward with a proposal of six cross-cutting thematic areas based on four basic objectives: i) to strengthen the capacity for implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan; ii) to strengthen its role as an environmental program within the system of the United Nations; iii) To make sure that its interventions are based on sound scientific principles; and to fully adopt results-based management.

36. The official also stated that the contribution of developed countries has reduced during 2006/07, but there were contributions for specific activities (e.g. the agreements with Spain, the UK and the Netherlands), with sources that provide funds for launching joint planning of results reflecting the priorities the countries had defined. Finally, he commented that if the medium-term strategy were approved in Monaco, it would be possible to make progress on environmental governance and other key issues.

37. Following the UNEP/ROLAC Director's remarks, there was an exchange of views among Ministers and heads of delegation, in which Ligia Castro de Dones, General Administrator of Panama's environmental authority reported that currently the companies in the Region were better informed, while national capacities had been enhanced and environmental matters were now incorporated in the educational systems and university curricula. She pointed out the need for private-sector involvement and for allowing scope to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to ensure that these voices were represented financially.

38. The idea of having an umbrella organization that brought together the elements scattered throughout the UN system was supported by Argentina, Brazil and Panama, whose representatives felt that such a scheme would promote results and responses to the needs of the people. It was stated that thus far this had not been deemed possible because of fragmentation of efforts and resources, which otherwise should be applied to local problems, apart from which, when there were intermediaries, the resources were not reaching the communities.

39. Several ministers and heads of delegation commented that the issue of strengthening UNEP had been on the table since the Rio summit, and GEF set up expectations which remain unfulfilled; also, lengthy periods were involved in approving funding. Some delegations expressed concern by the absence of ITC agencies. In this context, it was remarked that in this approach countries were applying different methodologies for project integration and these needed to be harmonized. A mapping of projects was needed to reveal which agencies were implementing them and to agree regional positions on the three main conventions, which should have joint approaches. César Villacorta, Executive Secretary of Peru's National Environmental Council, reported on the formulation of an Environment Ministry in his country, replacing the existing National Commission for the Environment.

40. Mr. Fernando Tudela Abad, Sub-Secretary of Planning and Environmental Policy of the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico, highlighted the consultation process on environmental governance taking place within the UN framework, clarifying that the status quo is not a solution. He added that Mexico and Switzerland have received from the President of the UN General Assembly a mandate to undertake extensive consultations on the content of a document of options of the co-chairmen, which identified two paths or stages for dealing with the problem of environmental governance. He felt the way forward was to focus the debate beyond the question of whether there was a world organization for the environment, and to also raise the core discussion about the requirements of environmental governance. He also stressed the need to maintain the link with sustainable development as well as the specificity of environment issues.

41. Mr. José Antonio Díaz Duque, Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment of Cuba, believed it was necessary to ask why, despite the good intentions, UNEP had not been strengthened; he acknowledged that the debate on environmental governance had a lot of ground to cover. He felt the problem was not just one of names, and that it could encourage the strengthening of UNEP or could be inclined towards other variants, but that was not the heart of the matter. He said the funding issue did not depend on one or other type of organization, but on a joint determination to proceed and acceptance of commitments. He commented on the working of the Montreal Protocol Fund and the Adaptation Fund, on the basis of the technological and financial interests that were presented in the former. Mr. Díaz Duque said that governments of Latin America and the Caribbean could not tie their hands as regards the necessary development of their countries, and should therefore examine the present negotiations very carefully. In short, countries had to attack the causes. He concluded by supporting the Bariloche and the Civil Society Declarations.

42. Mr Cristóbal Francisco, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, considered that the issue of governance did not depend on the form of institutional organization, but that the problem was a development model which preyed on the environment and was a voracious consumer of energy. He mentioned the attempts to design an environmental organization along the lines of the WTO - an inhospitable setting for the developing nations. The lack of clarity on the mission of this organization had resulted in opposition to it by many of the countries in the Region, as currently reiterated by several delegations. The ministers and heads of delegation also wanted to reach a regional position on the Monaco meeting.

43. Several Caribbean nations called for greater representation of the subregion in the processes that were being implemented. The view was expressed that governance should be approached within the framework of the discussions on reform of the United Nations, taking into account that any critical element of any new scheme must not impose greater burdens on the small island states.

6.2. Integrated ecosystem management

44. On the opening of the discussion of this agenda item, the President of the Forum commented that the natural wealth of the countries of the Region represented one of the alternatives for improving the wellbeing of the population. Therefore, its sustainable management was critical to meeting the goals with an inter-generational perspective. Latin America and the Caribbean has been blessed with significant natural resources, including the largest reserve of arable land in the world: 576 million hectares, 30% of the Region's total territory¹. Despite the abundance and diversity of its natural resources, the Region's environmental prospects were exacerbated by inequality and poverty, adversely affecting the stability and productivity of its ecosystems:

- a) In the last 30 years, over 40% of the Region's forestry resources have been lost through high rates of deforestation;
- b) The main threats to biodiversity derive from loss of habitats, soil degradation, land-use changes, deforestation, unplanned urban development and pollution of the seas;
- c) 31 eco-regions in Latin America and the Caribbean are in critical condition;
- d) Over 300,000 hectares of land is degraded;
- e) 40% of the population lives in areas that account for only 10% of the water resources;
- f) The Region's major water resources have been affected in their management, while serious pollution levels are present in the surface and subterranean aquifers;
- g) Destruction of habits and pollution coastal areas are significant;

⁽¹⁾ GEO LAC 2003.

45. Under the agenda item, following the planned presentations, José Antonio Díaz Duque, Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment of Cuba, described the initiative on the Caribbean biological corridor implemented by Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, whose objective was to reduce the threats to biological diversity in the Region; it was being operated on the basis of South-South cooperation. He invited the other Caribbean countries to join the initiative and advocated support by other agencies.

46. Ms. Idalia Acevedo, Under Secretary of State for the Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic, expounded on the biological resources of the islands and repeated the invitation to extend the initiative to other islands of the Caribbean.

47. Mr. Jean Marie Germain, Minister of the Environment of Haiti, felt that if the industrialized nations were those responsible for the CO₂ emissions and hence the primary culprits in regards to global warming, the nations with emerging or developing economies, given their weaknesses, were the most vulnerable. Thus the Caribbean island states were being more heavily affected by natural disasters that caused environmental damage and other problems such as migration. The Caribbean biological corridor initiative envisaged analyzing the vulnerabilities and identifying ways of adapting to climate change. He supported the idea of extending the initiative to encompass all the Caribbean island states.

48. Ms. Romina Picolotti, Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development of Argentina, gave a presentation on the experience and challenges faced in her country in regards to integrated ecosystem management. She stressed the challenges involved in applying this approach under a federal-court political-administrative system such as that in Argentina. In reference to the management of river basins, the Secretariat had taken on tasks that went beyond the management of water resources, such as public sanitation works. They were changing over from sectoral management to cross-border, integrated management independent of the administrative jurisdictions. As regards to forestry management, she mentioned an innovative law recently passed which protects native woodland. The law suspends the granting of new falling permits by the federal governments for a year; it introduces the concept of the bio-region as the basis for territorial planning; and sets up a fund to support the agricultural and cattle-ranching sectors in forestry conservation activities (70% of the funds go to small landowner producers, and 30% is applied to strengthening the institutions involved in forestry management); among others. She added that, at regional level, Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay had signed a convention for protecting the Chaco Americano. She also put forward a number of ideas for forging regional cooperation which revolved around: control of cross-border hazardous wastes; illegal traffic in flora and fauna; environmental emergencies and contingencies.

49. Mr. John Fabien, Minister of Health and the Environment of Dominica, presented the "Organic Dominica" initiative. He described Dominica's wealth of natural resources, especially those relating to water resources. The Organic Dominica concept covered: reducing poverty, expanding international trade, creating jobs, generating capacities, improving the infrastructure, macroeconomic planning, managing the environment and natural resources. He highlighted the help

received from Cuba in several of these aspects. Also, the initiative aimed to reduce dependence on oil and develops renewable sources of energy. Organic Dominica was reflected in the national budget, while it was also hoped that it would attract the attention of donors.

50. At this point, Alejandro Kilpatrick, Programme Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Global Mechanism of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, mentioned that on the issue of integrated ecosystem management and in rural area matters, various actors, strategies and public policies related to development and the environment were converging with little or no coordination and were competing for resources; it was therefore necessary to promote their integration into the rural development policies relating to productivity, economic growth, food security and eradication of poverty. Among the activities carried on by the Global Mechanism in collaboration with UNEP's Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, he highlighted the processes of harmonization of public policies promoting the coordination and focussing of programmes and of improving the efficiency of the assignments. Similarly, experience had shown that policies on sustainable land management had contributed effectively not only to raising the profile of the UNCCD but also at the same time to promoting greater participation by important actors. Finally, it had made available to the participating nations the experience and methodologies acquired in these initiatives, as an input to the development of measures concerned with integrated management of the ecosystems of Latin America and the Caribbean.

6.3. Latin America and the Caribbean vis-à-vis Climate Change

51. Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), emphasized that the Kyoto Protocol was small step for humankind in reducing GHG emissions, but a giant leap for man for establishing the first international agreement for reducing these emissions. It set a price on carbon, created a market of 30 billion of US dollars and boosted international cooperation. Since then, there has been no significant advance because many rich countries are not yet on track to meet their commitments and financial and technological obligations under the Convention and the Protocol have not meet. All of this has created a North-South standoff. However, 2007 has created new momentum culminating in the successful outcome of the Bali Climate Change (see **Annex IV** to this report) Conference. The Bali Road Map has created a new chance to come to grips with climate change. Bali made important progress on current work regarding technology, the Adaptation fund, the reduction of emissions from deforestation and the review of the financial mechanisms. Furthermore, Bali has launched formal negotiations on a post-2012 climate change agreement, decided on the main elements for these talks (mitigation, adaptation, technology and finance) and set the ambitious time line to conclude the negotiations at the Copenhagen Climate Conference in December 2009. Failure is not an option: the negative consequences of climate change (sea level rise, droughts and floods, extreme weather events) are already showing. Therefore, it is important to maintain the positive momentum and not to slide back in old North-South rhetoric. One of the biggest challenges is to design a clever architecture of financial and technical arrangements that will form the glue between developed country commitments and

developed country actions (as shown in the chart included in the annex.). These arrangements can be established inside the Convention, through its rules and outside the Convention. In fact the world needs, can be called a Marshall Plan on Climate Change that will create value and unleash financial flows and support to help your economies grow in a green, low carbon direction, reduce your energy bills and help you adapt. So it is important for developing countries to make clear what you can do and what you need to go to the green extra mile to be able to change the direction of your growth and adapt to the inevitable.

52. Mr. Roberto Dobles, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, stated that his country has a climate change strategy. He added that Costa Rica had decided to move on to a neutral carbon economy so that the traces of carbon will be smaller. He recalled that in January 2007, Costa Rica announced its neutral carbon plan for 2021, followed by New Zealand and Norway. He emphasized the need to highlight the issue of water resources, since droughts and floods are becoming more severe, the agricultural, fisheries, farming and health sectors are increasingly affected, and consequently the preparedness of countries to deal with these issues must change. Regarding international action, he noted that it is necessary to have a greater presence in international fora, which requires funding, technology transfer and quick access to existing resources. He added that the tourism sector in Costa Rica is carbon neutral and offset 100% of its emissions and that the industrial sectors and some crops for example bananas are joining the initiative. In addition, the implementation of neutral carbon is being organized regionally. He proposed the integration of a network for exchanging experience in all sectors (education, public, private, NGOs) which is vital for facilitating the transfer of information.

53. In relation to this issue, Mrs. Ann David Antoine, Minister of Health, Social Security, the Environment and Ecclesiastical Relations of Grenada, stated that the Caribbean Region, particularly SIDS, is facing the challenge and vulnerability to climate change. She highlighted the destruction caused by Hurricanes Ivan and Emily, noting that the threat is especially latent in territories and countries with low-lying coastal areas devastated in the mid-1990s. After two years of negative economic growth, economy has started to recover almost all of the forest areas and wildlife have been recovered; resources such as beaches and waterfalls deteriorated causing serious challenges in tourism, in addition to the problems of solid waste management, which amounted to a cost of US\$1.1 billion dollars to be resolved. She stressed that a key issue in the debate on international environmental governance is the need to establish parallel processes outside international process and conventions. She referred to initiatives at regional and sub regional levels conducted within a context of governance framework linked to international processes, such as the Declaration of Saint Georges on Principles for Environmental Sustainability and the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas at the level of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. She noted that there are ongoing initiatives in CARICOM member countries aimed at generating regional policies for the transversality of adaptation to climate change. After his speech, a video was presented showing the devastating effects suffered by Grenada due to Hurricanes Ivan and Emily.

54. Then Mr. Ricardo Quiroga from Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) reiterated that year 2007 has been a momentous year in terms of the environmental issue, in particular climate change. Thus in 2007, the IDB approved the Initiative on Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (SECCI) and commented in general terms the position of the IDB regarding climate change and renewable energy. He said that the aforementioned initiative considers the agenda on climate change a high priority for channeling the bank's resources and support to countries, recognizing the major threats associated with global warming and energy needs in the Region. He mentioned that in order to implement its initiative, the Bank established a fund of US\$2 million dollars, a multi-donor fund of US\$25 million, with the expectation of increasing this sum as the various donors begin to contribute join. He reiterated that funds are available and can be accessed by the countries, both at the public and private level.

55. For its part, the World Bank Representative, Mr. Walter Vergara, made a presentation on the Strategy on Climate Change in Latin America and the Caribbean, which includes three elements: a) To support improvements in the quality of life through the development of low emission carbon b) as a top priority, to support the process of adaptation to the impacts of climate change and c) the transfer and development of knowledge and technology in support of environmental policy decision-making. He presented visual material in which images showed the disappearance of glaciers in Gibraltaya, and the impact of climate change reflected in coral bleaching, which had been anticipated at the proper time by the scientific community. He emphasized the cost of recessed water in Quito, noting that there are places in Mexico where there is already a water shortage. He said that decision-making on climate change should be associated to the provision of information and technological development, which is supported by the World Bank, and added that it is interested in supporting the science sector of the Latin American community.

56. After these introductory remarks, started an exchange of information and views on climate change between the Ministers and Heads of Delegation. In this regard, some Caribbean countries showed that small island developing States face the challenge of finding ways and means to make their voices heard, because of the lack of resources to participate in events in the international arena. The GEF was referred to as a body to which there is no access, so emphasis must be made on the need for other sources of financial resources for adaptation that can be accessed through mechanisms with greater flexibility. It was also mentioned that climate change is a challenge not only from the environmental viewpoint, but also to promote the development of those countries whose economies are closely linked to the tourism sector.

57. Data and reports on the progress of initiatives on climate change adopted domestically, including changing incandescent bulbs for energy saver bulbs, a sustainable transformation of transport systems, and reforestation plans. It was also mentioned that the theme of clean energy and hydroelectric plants must be enriched and addressed within the Convention on Climate Change.

58. Ms. Marcela Aguiñaga Vallejo, Minister of Environment of Ecuador, emphasized the initiative launched by the Government last year of maintaining the oil under the ground provided in a joint effort with the international community to compensate

the country with at least fifty percent of the revenue that would be received in the event that it would explode outside the oil field. The initiative called Yasuní ITT, located in the national park of the same name in the Ecuadorian Amazon Region and has the largest oil reserves in Ecuador, harbors the greatest biodiversity of tropical forests and is home to indigenous peoples in a state of voluntary isolation.

59. Even taking into account the economic importance of the revenue on oil for the country, given the value that biodiversity maintains for the planet, Ecuador would give up nearly one billion barrels of heavy crude from the ITT field, which remain close to 432 million of carbon dioxide in the subsurface and pledging to transform this natural capital in a financial capital that allows energy to change on a small scale

60. The Minister of Ecuador also stressed that with this initiative, Ecuador is also opening a third channel in climate change negotiations, an alternative based on the promotion of projects to avoid the release of carbon (carbon depletion model) and at the same time , lays the groundwork for global energy transition.

61. The delegations also further elaborated on the consequences of natural disasters that have occurred recently in the Region and the devastating social, economic and environmental effects. In view of this, it was reiterated that while the region's countries contribute less than 5% of the emissions, they also get the greatest damage and, therefore, adapting to climate change must be a priority and the international community must move on, as quickly as possible, in the consolidation of an adaptation fund. Promoting this vision would need the Region's countries to engage in consultations with a view to adopting common positions.

62. Other delegations commented on specific issues, such as Venezuela's Deputy Minister of the Environment. Mr. Cristóbal Francisco commented on the proposal launched under the Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution Protocol to establish the Caribbean Environment Bank to particularly support island developing countries in the Caribbean whose funds come from their oil bill and that can support projects aimed at mitigation and at the climate change issue.

63. Ms. Marta Perez, Assistant Secretary for the Environment of Dominican Republic, pondered the impact of storms Noel and Olga, and recalled the main activities in the country in terms of climate change. For his part, the representative of ECLAC insisted on the point raised by Brazil regarding the importance of the regional agenda and making good use of regional spaces that could address the Region's priority issues, such as climate change.

64. Mr. Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of UNFCCC, made some general considerations at the end of the dialogue between the Ministers of the Environment. Mr. de Boer called on countries to continue discussing the issue of climate change at the regional level; he recognized that while criticisms of the GEF are known, the mechanism can be improved, and that GEF has not refused to consider projects on adaptation. He reaffirmed his view that climate change mitigation and adaptation are equally important, but acknowledged that, for the Region, adaptation is a priority, while it was necessary for the Region's countries to take positions on the issue of mitigation in international fora where the issue will be addressed.

6.4. Incorporation of the Principles of Sustainable Development in National Policies and Programmes: Mainstreaming of Environmental Policies

65. Mr. Fernando Tudela Abad, Sub-Secretary of Planning and Environmental Policy of the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico, made a presentation on the transversality, which has been underway for nearly seven years in his country and recently identified by expert groups and personalities as most important for the sustainable development of the country. However, further work is required to establish both top-down and bottom-up participative strategies. In order to implement this transversalization in the environmental agenda of national policies, SEMARNAT has taken part in several cabinets and has geared its actions to specific areas, as opposed to individual projects in a broader range of subjects. Regarding the experience in inter-agency work, he pointed out sustainable housing, reforestation with the strengthening of nursery networks, forest fires, sustainable rural development, seas and coasts and the environmental performance of public entities regarding the saving of water, energy and the use of recycled paper. Special emphasis was accorded to the recent Acquisitions Law, which requires institutions to purchase certified wood as well as recycled paper.

66. Along with the experiences presented, Mr. Fernando Tudela also discussed some challenges, notably the environmental planning of the territory, the formalization of concurrent activities, promoting the involvement of other institutions, consultation with financial authorities so that they incorporate environmental management systems as requirements, strengthening the environmental variable in development projects, building awareness on environmental costs, assessing inaction, and identifying areas of opportunity for the development of laws, regulations and other instruments. Lastly, he concluded that one of the keys to success is political support at the highest level, the concentration of efforts, monitoring mechanisms, the incorporation of States and municipalities, the leadership led from the Secretariat and results management systems with goals and indicators.

67. Mr. Philip Dobie, Director of the Initiative UNDP-UNEP on Environment and Poverty, submitted to the Ministers and Heads of Delegation a progress report on the Environment and Poverty Initiative between UNDP and UNEP, which emerged from recognizing the importance of environmental management, still regarded as an externality in national accounts and for which it has entertained external support mostly through projects focused mainly on conservation, but not on sustainable use, which are also faced with limited national budgets to supplement them. This has led to recognize that the environment is important for development; environmental degradation generates poverty; poor population depends on the environment, so that the environment is being placed again within the paradigm of sustainable development.

68. The Initiative is made up of three phases: one preparation, and the others are aimed primarily at supporting countries in terms of incorporating the environmental variable into national development processes (e.g. poverty reduction policies, MDG plans, other development processes) and the development of national capacities to

identify the links between poverty and environment, to manage integration processes and implement the sectoral level with central policies and decentralized processes. At present, there are some programs in Africa, a regional team for the Asia-Pacific Region has been established and its launch has begun in Latin America and the Caribbean.

69. Mr. Douglas Slater, Minister of Health and Environment of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, presented its views on incorporating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and program and shared by Small Island Developing States (SIDS). For these States, environmental protection becomes a matter of survival, given their own characteristic with ever-increasing populations and limited availability of land. This makes them vulnerable socio-economically, environmentally and, especially, before natural disasters, which may delay development for several years, as was the case of the almost total destruction of Grenada by Hurricane Ivan in 2004. In addition, the effective use of resources, the monitoring of environmental impacts by both marine and terrestrial sources, the prevention of oil spills, habitat destruction, and the implications of climate change are some of the challenges. The foregoing are some of the issues that should be incorporated into national development policies in the context of limited resources and a fragmented environment institutionalism.

70. An initiative employed in the Caribbean island states is the incorporation of the principles of sustainable development, which are part of Saint George's Declaration of Principles, through the formulation of National Environmental Strategic Plans that, once approved with the relevant legislation, will make it possible to integrate the environmental variable. Likewise, managing the Caribbean Sea calls for collective action by States, so that the extraction of resources is done in a sustainable manner. Lastly, access to and transfer of appropriate technologies, data management, monitoring and evaluation, along with the participation of the main groups, education and public awareness were identified as issues of critical importance. For the Caribbean Island States, most wealth is closely linked to the natural resources of the Region; therefore, integrating the principles of sustainable development into national policies is of paramount importance.

71. The representative of ECLAC, Mr. Jose Luis Samaniego, Director of the Division of Sustainable Development and Human Settlements, speaking on behalf of the ITC, proposed as interagency support to the Forum to make a resolution that, taking into account the positive implications for policy integration (transversality), initiates a round of environmental performance evaluations across countries, involving an analysis of the economic and environmental relations in, at least, the areas of energy, air, water, biodiversity and socio-economic relations; agreed recommendations; participation in the assessment of countries in the Region and monitoring results across countries. It also noted the importance of national statistical institutes for the integration of development policies and integrated economic-environmental accounts.

72. During the Ministerial dialogue, the delegations granted the opportunity to speak, thanked the presenters who preceded them. In this regard, they stressed the importance of fighting poverty as a necessary condition for sustainable development; the use of instruments such as the tax exemptions and the formation

of human resources for public institutions and those in the private sector, taking into consideration the reduced demand for professionals and technicians in the environmental area in some countries; interdisciplinary work not only at the national level but also regionally and the possible role of UNEP in support of these initiatives.

73. It was noted that in order to ensure the mainstreaming of the environmental issues in public policies, it was necessary to articulate a number of aspects including: education, the environmental legal framework, systems for control and rendering account. Furthermore, this articulation should be reflected by legislators in the policies that will result in a number of strategies for identifying programs and concrete environmental projects.

74. Particular importance was paid to inter-agency coordination, which is essential for the formulation of development plans, to the central role of solidarity commitments in order to ensure their success as well as to ongoing dialogues in the relevant democratic ambits. Due to the limited management resources that some institutions normally face, it was considered that inefficiency and waste are unviable and the right to demand that the historical culprits of the present environmental situation honor their commitments before the international community is indeed viable.

75. Some of the countries that have been developing environmental institutionality are characterized by national constitutions that pay great importance to the environmental variable. As a result, various entities have been created at the national, regional and local levels and progress has been made in the consolidation of spaces that result in the transversalization of the environmental dimension into development policies which in the eyes of other countries is viewed as internal governance and consider necessary for consolidating a common position that will provide regional advantage in international negotiations. On the other hand, some countries are reviewing the mechanisms by which the environmental dimension was previously incorporated to national development plans, with the view of providing greater participation at all levels, especially the local level, and to strengthen institutions beginning at the highest level, reaffirming the need for social justice as a prerequisite for embarking along the path to sustainable development.

Agenda Item 7: Recommendations of the Preparatory Meeting of High Level Experts

76. Under this agenda item, the recommendations and specific proposals resulting from the exchanges of the Preparatory Meeting of High Level Experts, which precedes the Forum, were presented for considering the adoption of decisions on this matter. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation discussed certain paragraphs, expressing a variety of few points. After this debate, the proposed decisions submitted by the Preparatory Meeting of High Level Experts were adopted. Decisions are included as **Annex II** of this report.

Agenda Item 8: State of implementation and future perspectives of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (Messages by the High Level Representatives of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements)

77. Mr. Gonzalo Pereira Puchy, representing the Executive Secretary of the Action Plan of the Southeast Pacific, commented on the scope of the Plan, which groups Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru, whose Executive Secretariat rests with the Standing Committee of the South Pacific. He reiterated the commitment of the Executive Secretariat to continue to support governments in the Pacific Region Southeast to address environmental issues, traditional and emerging. In this context, he stressed the importance of international cooperation through UNEP and expressed the will of the Executive Secretariat to further strengthen ties with the UNEP Regional Offices.

78. Mr. Alejandro Kilpatrick, Representative of the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought commented on the progress made in the implementation of the Convention. Most of the countries of the region have ratified the Convention and most of them have also prepared their National Action Programmes to Combat Desertification and Drought. He also reported that the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-8), held in Madrid in September 2007, adopted a 10-Year Strategy for the Implementation of the Convention in 2008-2018. Mr. Kilpatrick indicated that this 10-Year Strategy established obligations for the bodies of the Convention (the Executive Secretariat, the Committee on Science and Technology and the Global Mechanism). In this framework, the Global Mechanism, together with the Executive Secretariat, is preparing a Joint Work Plan.

79. Mr. Kilpatrick referred to the Global Mechanism activities being carried out in the region, including outstanding sub-regional cooperation and resource mobilization initiatives, such as the MERCOSUR Strategy to Combat Desertification, the Platform to Promote Investment in Central America and the Partnership Initiative for Sustainable Land Management (PISLM) in the Caribbean. The Global Mechanism has been cooperating with several countries in the region in designing Integrated Financing Strategies to fund implementation of the Convention, as well as to promote innovative funding sources, to harmonize public policies and to make cost analyses of failing to combat desertification and drought. The Global Mechanism is also developing a Strategic Programme on Climate Change and Compensation for Environmental Services.

Agenda Item 9: Other Matters

80. When this agenda item was discussed, the Delegation of Mexico offered to host the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean in the year 2010.

Agenda Item 10: Review of the Draft of the Final Report of the Sixteenth Meeting

81. Under this agenda item, participants reviewed the draft Final Report, including the decisions adopted at the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum. The Rapporteur received proposals of amendments from various delegations with respect to their own interventions. The Report was adopted and it was agreed within the next fifteen days interested delegations will send to the Secretariat of the Forum amendments to the report. The Secretariat will prepare the final version of such report.

Agenda Item 11: Closing of the Meeting

82. The Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean was closed by Mr. Omar Ramirez Tejada, Secretary of State for the Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic. On this occasion the UNEP/ROLAC Regional Director, thanked the support of the countries of the Region, and expressed that UNEP appreciates the political willingness reaffirmed by Latin American and Caribbean countries to continue to make progress towards sustainable development and the implementation of ILAC. He also reiterated the invitation to the Environment Ministers of the Region to participate in the Tenth Special Session of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum (Monaco, 20-22 February 2008), and expressed his appreciation for the presence of representatives of the ITC and the State Secretariat for having discussed in a frank and open manner the items on the agenda, and for adopting ad hoc decisions on the implementation of ILAC and for putting the Region at the forefront of international environmental debates.

83. The Ministers and Heads of Delegations congratulated the Dominican Republic for its hospitality and the efficiency as host Chair of the Sixteenth Forum of Ministers.

84. The Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers was closed at 10:30 p.m. hours of Friday 1 February 2008.

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Annex I Declaration of Santo Domingo

We, the Ministers of the Environment and Heads of Delegations gathered in the city of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, at the Sixteenth Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean,

Reaffirming that the Forum constitutes the main body for regional inter-governmental political consensus building on environmental issues, which offers a space to agree on actions and reflect on the main challenges of the global and regional environmental agenda, in the context of sustainable development;

Recognizing the favorable situation in the Region for the promotion of sustainable development policies, as a result of greater public awareness, improved availability of information on the state and dimension of environmental challenges, and the manifested will of governments and societies to conserve the environment;

Expressing our concern about the negative environmental, social and economic impacts from climate change in view of the vulnerability of the Region, and in particular that of the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS);

Recalling paragraph 169 of resolution A/RES/60/1 of the United Nations General Assembly, which recognizes the need for having a more coherent institutional environmental framework, including a more integrated and strengthened structure within the United Nations System;

Reaffirming the consultative process of the UN General Assembly known as the "Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the United Nations' Environmental Activities of the UN General Assembly", which is a central platform for advancing and determining specific actions towards a greater coherence and efficacy of the international environmental institutional framework;

Reaffirming that Global Environmental Governance should support the effective implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs);

Recognizing that effective consensus on Global Environmental Governance will strengthen the efforts of the international community, towards sustainable development;

Reiterating that the provision of predictable, new and additional financial resources is crucial for the promotion and implementation of environmental policies and strategies;

Acknowledging the success in the fulfillment of the Montreal Protocol commitments in the Region, and the contribution of the Multilateral Fund in its effective implementation;

Recognizing the role of UNEP's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, in addressing the environmental priorities determined by the countries of the Region as well as the implementation of the decisions of this Forum;

Reaffirming the need that the agencies of the ITC committee provide a continuous support for the work of this Forum;

DECIDE TO

1. Reiterate that the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) establishes a common regional agenda geared towards achieving sustainable development, whose main implementation tool, the Regional Action Plan's (RAP) structure and execute modalities, we commit to review in order to achieve greater effectiveness in attaining our objectives.

2. Reaffirm that a Global Environmental Governance system will only be effective if it has a clear and strong mandate, as well as appropriate, predictable and stable financial resources and the political will of the states to attain the proposed objectives.

3. Reiterate that Global Environmental Governance must result in improved environmental performance, as well as coordination and complementarity between MEAs at international, regional, subregional and national level.

4. Participate actively and constructively in the debate of Global Environmental Governance, particularly in the informal consultative process of the United Nations.

5. Promote and contribute to the regional debate on Global Environmental Governance encouraging the full and effective participation of the countries of the Region, with the purpose of building consensus on the issue and contributing to the process of the United Nations.

6. Maintain an active participation at international environmental fora and negotiations, promoting interaction and communication amongst Latin American and Caribbean countries, leading towards effective coordination and the adoption of shared positions.

7. Assume a proactive position in the design of a new climate regime, in the framework of the Bali Action Plan, reaffirming the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

8. Promote the effective implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought, and its linkages with initiatives of mitigation and adaptation to climate change and integrated ecosystem management, considering the urgency to promote sustainable land use including avoided deforestation as a possible instrument for the Region. This requires a profound revision of available financing opportunities particularly the Global Environment Facility.

9. To demand developed countries to comply with their obligations of reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases in order to mitigate climate change, generate the financial flows, technology transfer, capacity building needs required for the adaptation and mitigation needs of the countries of the Region.

10. Participate actively in the negotiations for the adoption of an international legal regime on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Benefit Sharing under the Convention on Biological Diversity, to ensure that the needs and interests of the Region will be duly considered and protected.

11. Increase efforts for the conservation of biodiversity through the strengthening of national protected area systems, both terrestrial and marine, as well as other conservation mechanisms.

12. Recognize the importance of increasing protected areas, transition zones and biological corridors in the countries of the Region, and urge that the implementation process will combine efforts between new initiatives, such as the Caribbean Biological Corridor, as well as those already consolidated, to achieve concrete results and actions.

13. Promote South-South cooperation between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, as a tool for transferring knowledge, best practices and technical and other resources.

14. Promote the mainstreaming of the environmental dimension in our countries' policies, to attain sustainable development.

15. Highlight that sustainable development can only be achieved through the participation of all sectors of society, and that therefore we will promote involvement of local communities and indigenous peoples in the policies and programmes for sustainable development.

16. Continue strengthening environmental education and public awareness for sustainable development in our Region through processes that include communication, cooperation and exchange between countries, such as the Latin American and Caribbean Program for Environmental Education (PLACEA).

17. Reaffirm the commitment of the Region in the implementation and enforcement of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration as a way to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental policies in the Region.

18. Urge the further development and implementation of the Caribbean SIDS Programme, including the provision of predictable, new and additional financial and technical resources as well as a review mechanism to monitor its implementation, and to ensure that the goals and priorities emerging from the Caribbean SIDS are reflected.

19. Appeal to the members of ITC agencies to increase their support for the implementation of ILAC and particularly the RAP, also calling other agencies within and outside of the United Nations system to join in a concerted effort at the Forum Ministers, within their respective mandates and building on their skills and comparative advantages.

20. Express our gratitude to the people and government of the Dominican Republic for their warm welcome and hosting of delegations to this Sixteenth Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and congratulate for the successful outcome of this Meeting.

Signed in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on Friday 1st February 2008 by the Ministers and Delegates to this Sixteenth Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr. Dr. John Ashe
Ministerial Representative for
Sustainable Development Matters
**Permanent Mission of Antigua
and Barbuda to the United Nations**

Antigua and Barbuda

Sr. Juan Pablo Ramos Morales
Vice-Ministro de Biodiversidad,
Recursos Forestales y Medio Ambiente
**Ministerio de Desarrollo Rural
Agropecuario y Medio Ambiente**

Bolivia

Sr. Alvaro Sapag
Director Ejecutivo
**Comisión Nacional del
Medio Ambiente (CONAMA)**

Chile

Sr. Roberto Dobles Mora
Ministro
Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente

Costa Rica

Mr. John Fabien
Minister
**Ministry of Health
and the Environment**

Dominica

Sra. Marcela Aguiñaga Vallejo
Ministra
Ministerio del Ambiente

Ecuador

Sra. Romina Picolotti
Secretaria
**Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo
Sustentable de la Nación**

Argentina

Sra. María Cecilia Wey de Brito
Secretaria de Biodiversidad y Florestas
Ministerio de Medio Ambiente

Brazil

Sra. Claudia Patricia Mora
Viceministra
**Ministerio de Ambiente,
Vivienda y Desarrollo Territorial**

Colombia

Sr. José Antonio Díaz Duque
Viceministro
**Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología
y Medio Ambiente**

Cuba

Sr. Omar Ramírez T.
Secretario
**Secretaría de Estado de Medio Ambiente
y Recursos Naturales**

Dominican Republic

Sr. Carlos José Guerrero
Ministro
**Ministerio de Ambiente
y Recursos Naturales**

El Salvador

Mrs. Ann David-Antoine
Minister
**Ministry of Health, Social Security, the
Environment and Ecclesiastical Relations**

Grenada

Mr. Shyam Nokta
Chairman
National Climate Committee of Guyana

Guyana

Sra. Yessenia Yamileth Moncada Ponce, Subsecretaria
**Secretaría de Recursos Naturales
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Honduras

Sr. Fernando Tudela
Subsecretario de Planeación y Política Ambiental
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Sra. Ligia Castro
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Panama

Sr. César Villacorta Arévalo
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Sr. Gabriel Roberto Motta
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Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales

Guatemala

Mr. Claude Jean Marie Germain
Minister
Ministère de L'Environnement

Haiti

Ms. Leonie Barnaby
Senior Director
Ministry of Land and Environment

Jamaica

Sra. Juana Argeñal
Ministra
**Ministerio del Ambiente y
Recursos Naturales (MARENA)**

Nicaragua

Sr. Carlos Ovelar
Asesor
Secretaría del Ambiente

Paraguay

Mr. Douglas Slater, Minister
Ministry of Health and Environment

**Saint Vincent and
the Grenadines**

Mr. John Calixte
Deputy Permanent Secretary
**Ministry of Economic Affairs, Economic Planning,
Investment and National Development**

Saint Lucia

Sr. Mariano Arana Sánchez
Ministro
Ministerio de Vivienda, Territorio y Ambiente

Uruguay

Ms. Joyce Amarello Williams
Minister
**Ministry of Labour, Technological Development
and Environment**

Suriname

Sr. Cristóbal Francisco
Viceministro
**Ministerio del Ambiente y
de los Recursos Naturales**

Venezuela

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Annex II Decisions

The Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Governments present at the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, from Sunday 27th January through Friday 1st February, 2007, taking into account the recommendations of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts and the deliberations of this Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, adopted the following decisions:

DECISION 1

EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ILAC)

Bearing in mind that the Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean is the main regional intergovernmental political forum on environmental matters and offers the Region's environmental authorities a platform for organizing action and deliberating on the main challenges on the world and regional environmental agenda, in the context of sustainable development;

Given that the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for sustainable development (ILAC) recognizes the importance of the sub-regional and regional processes for promoting sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and addresses the need to bring practical sense to the process of sustainable development, reflecting the peculiarities, visions and goals of the Region;

Recognizing that five years on from their adoption, the processes applied in implementing the ILAC need to be evaluated, with a view to defining priority areas and, where necessary, adjusting the Regional Action Plan for the ensuing two-year periods;

Bearing in mind the evaluation carried out on the implementation of the ILAC, as well as the recommendations contained in that document;

DECIDE:

1. To take note of the report coordinated by the presidency of the Fifteenth Forum of Ministers on the progress achieved in applying the ILAC. In this context, they thank the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for its leadership and contribution to this first assessment.

2. To redouble regional, sub-regional and national efforts in applying the ILAC, to be able to honour the commitments assumed at the Johannesburg summit and the Millennium Development Goals, especially those relating to the cross-border aspects of environmental policies.

3. To decide that, with the aim of continuing the implementation of the ILAC, the priority action areas of the Initiative where the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean will be concentrating their efforts, during the period 2008-2012, shall be:

ILAC AREA	PRIORITIES
Climate change *	It is recognized the linkages between climate change and all ILAC areas (including renewable energy and energy efficiency)
Biodiversity	Increase of the forest area
	Genetic resources- equitable sharing of benefits
Water management	Watershed management
	Management of marine and coastal areas and their resources
Vulnerability, human settlements and sustainable cities	Vulnerability and risk management
	Waste management
Social issues, including health, inequity and poverty	Health and environment (pollution and chemicals)
Economic issues, including competitiveness, trade and production and consumption patterns (energy)	Sustainable Production and Consumption
Institutional arrangements	Evaluation and indicators Environmental education

* Added in the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama, 2003).

4. To step up cooperation initiatives, especially South-South cooperation, oriented towards implementation of the ILAC.

5. To conduct a review of lessons learned and challenges arising from the implementation of the RAP, and to prepare during the inter-sessional period, a conceptual review of its structure and implementation modalities, in order to assess the establishment of joint programs with the agencies of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee, without prejudice to the activities carried out by agencies individually. In this respect, they accept the invitation extended by the Government of Argentina to hold an inter-sessional meeting of decision makers in that country during the second half of 2008.

6. To thank the agencies of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC) for their efforts supporting implementation of the ILAC.

7. To seek contributions from the ITC's agencies in the areas where they have experience and comparative advantages and in the framework of their respective mandates, with a view to supporting the efforts of the nations of the Region in continuing the implementation of the ILAC.

8. To agree to adopt a system for monitoring the implementation of the ILAC, every four years with the aim of regularly evaluating the progress of the Initiative leading to an overall assessment in 2012.

DECISION 2

REGIONAL ACTION PLAN 2008-2009

Reiterating that the Regional Action Plan is the primary tool of the Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean for launching the implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC);

Taking into consideration, likewise, that the Regional Action Plan 2006-2007 was approved by the Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean was approved at its Fifteenth meeting, in Venezuela in November 2005;

Highlighting the need to maintain implementation of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), prepared and adopted by the Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean and approved at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg;

Bearing in mind the evaluation of, and recommendations on, the implementation of the ILAC submitted to the Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean at its Sixteenth Meeting⁽²⁾;

DECIDE:

1. To reaffirm that the Regional Action Plan is a basic tool for the progressive implementation of the ILAC.

2. To develop a new matrix for drawing up the Regional Action Plan 2008-2009, to reflect the following aims:

- a) Define the scope and perspective for implementation of the eight areas of ILAC priority action;
- b) Determine the objectives for each of the eight areas mentioned;
- c) Identify the main areas of work needed to carry the proposed actions forward;
- d) Agree on indicators for assess progress in the implementation of the seven priority-action areas;
- e) Record the actions taken by the countries and by the ITC's agencies in the context of the priorities set.

3. To request the Forum Secretariat to prepare a draft Regional Action Plan for 2008-2009, aimed at the implementation of ILAC, focusing on the lines of action agreed by the Forum of Ministers through decision 1 at its Sixteenth Meeting, incorporating the comments made during the preparatory expert meeting. This proposal should be distributed to countries in the Region within 30 days from the conclusion of the meeting, so that they may send their observations within a maximum of fifteen days upon reception. The Secretariat will circulate the final version for approval fifteen days after receiving comments from the countries.

⁽²⁾ See document UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/3/Rev.2.

4. To adopt the matrix appearing as **Appendix 1** to this Annex which is part of this decision, for the Regional Action Plan 2008-2009, as a model for development of RAP 2008-2009.

5. To urge the ITC agencies to support the countries of the Region and involve themselves actively in the implementation of the Regional Action Plan 2008-2009; in particular:

6. To request the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers to prepare a report on the implementation of the Regional Action Plan 2008-2009, in consultation with the countries and the ITC agencies, for submission to the 17th meeting of the Forum of Ministers.

DECISION 3

COMPOSITION AND MANDATE OF THE INTER-AGENCY TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

In the light of the process of reform of the United Nations, addressing the need to maintain progress in coordinating and supporting efforts to use resources more efficiently and to work together to produce concrete results responding to needs identified by the countries;

Ratifying the decisions adopted at the Eleventh Meeting of the Forum of Ministers in Lima, Peru, in March 1998, by means of decision 8 determining the composition and terms of reference of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC);

DECIDE:

1. To maintain the operation of the ITC under the coordination of UNEP, which will facilitate participation in the Committee by both the United Nations system agencies and programmes and other international institutions, based on the alliances forged with the UNDP, ECLAC, the IDB and the World Bank.

2. To ratify the decision taken at its Eleventh meeting, that it is the responsibility of the Forum of Ministers to review proposals for the addition of further agencies, based on their compliance with the following conditions:

- a) They offer comparative advantages and would add value as members of the ITC;
- b) They have experience and skills in the implementation of projects, programmes and other activities related to the priority issues on the Region's environmental agenda and reflected in the ILAC;
- c) They contribute new, additional resources for the implementation of the ILAC, especially as regards the application of the Regional Action Plan;
- d) They demonstrate the ability and readiness to cooperate with all the countries represented on the Forum of Ministers.

3. To express its willingness to make use of the experience and comparative advantages of the various international agencies that carry out activities addressing environmental matters and sustainable development, as a mechanism for intensifying the efforts and activities and promote inter-agency coordination as

regards the programmes undertaken by such agencies in Latin America and the Caribbean, and thereby respond effectively to the priorities agreed by the Forum of Ministers, in the Regional Action Plan.

4. To renew the mandate of the Inter-agency Technical Committee, on the basis of terms of reference including the following:

- a) To work on a coordinated basis on the preparation, business and monitoring of the meetings of the Forum of Ministers.
- b) To submit alternatives for implementing the Forum's decisions regarding continued progress in the implementation of the ILAC.
- c) To seek technical support for design and development of projects to be implemented as part of the Regional Action Plan.
- d) To conduct activities aimed at identifying possible sources of funding for the projects.
- e) To obtain the agreement and coordinate the actions of the participating agencies and institutions, on the Forum agenda's priority issues.
- f) To support the performance of specific tasks assigned to the relevant ad-hoc working groups,

5. To consider the development of joint programs within the framework of ILAC for the effective implementation of such initiative.

6. To thank the UNDP, ECLAC, UNEP, the World Bank and the IDB for their contributions to the individual and collective efforts of the Latin American and Caribbean nations to improve the environmental conditions.

7. To urge the ITC's agencies to continue supporting the dialogue, the efforts to get agreement and the regional, sub-regional and national projects undertaken by the Latin American and Caribbean nations, towards sustainable development and environmental safeguarding, in line with the relevant ILAC strategy.

DECISION 4

FUNCTIONING OF THE WORKING GROUPS

Bearing in mind decision 1 at the Eleventh Meeting of Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean (Lima, Peru, 1998); decision 2 of the Fourteenth Meeting (Panama, November 2003) and other relevant decisions of the Forum of Ministers, which established the mandate and terms of reference of the working groups;

Aware that the working groups have been more productive in the implementation of decisions of the Forum of Ministers when they have focussed on specific issues;

Acknowledging that the working groups with greater representation by the ITC's executive agencies have achieved better results;

Taking account of the recommendations of the High Level Government Experts Meeting (Panama, Panama; 30 and 31 August, 2007);

DECIDE:

1. To reaffirm that the criteria for setting up or maintaining the working groups include the following: that they contribute to the implementation of the ILAC, focussing on specific actions; that they generate specific outputs to a set timetable and receive the resources and/or support needed to undertake their given tasks.⁽³⁾

2. Urge countries to support the effective functioning of the working groups through the following measures:

- a) The member countries of the Working Groups shall designate appropriate focal points, which should have the ability to communicate with the appropriate institutions within their countries, and be committed to participate efficiently in the Working Groups.
- b) Languages requirements addressed.
- c) The technical and administrative support shall be provided by the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers.

3. Establish based on the above criteria, and subject to compliance with the provisions of paragraph 4 of this decision for the biennium 2008-2009, the following Working Groups, which will be open to participation by all countries in the Region:

- a) Environmental Indicators
- b) Risk Management;
- c) Access to Genetic Resources;
- d) Climate Change;
- e) Management of Marine and Coastal Areas and their Resources;
- f) Environmental Education for Sustainable Development.

4. Request that the coordinating countries of the Working Groups engage in consultations with the member countries of the respective Working Groups for the purpose of preparing a matrix that would set up (i) the group's objectives, (ii) the specific results, (iii) the resources that will be used to undertake the activities, and (iv) the agencies that should support the activities of the same groups. The coordinating countries of the Working Groups will report to the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers about the preparation of said matrix within 30 days as of the adoption of this decision. A precondition for the existence of the Working Groups is the adoption of the respective matrix by the member countries of the Working Group. This proposal should be distributed to countries in the Region within 15 days, so that they may send their observations within a maximum of fifteen days upon reception. The Secretariat will circulate the final version for approval fifteen days after receiving comments from the countries. Countries will have 15 days thereafter to communicate their final approval.⁽⁴⁾

⁽³⁾ **Appendix 1 to Annex II** to the present document contains the description of preliminary terms of reference for the five working groups approved by the Preparatory Meeting of Experts.

⁽⁴⁾ A set of preliminary proposals were integrated in the course of the deliberations of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, these are attached in Appendix 2, as an indicative source.

5. Request the ITC's agencies to support the tasks of the working groups and other interested partners, financially and otherwise, based on the agencies' mandates and work programmes.

6. To urge the working groups to:

- a) Invite the secretariats of the regional integration organizations and fora to participate in specific activities, in line with the content of paragraph 2 *supra*;
- b) Meet between sessions following the ITC meetings to review progress and decide the future direction for obtaining the outputs sought, in accordance with their mandate from the Forum of Ministers;
- c) Inform the secretariat of the Forum of Ministers regarding progress in obtaining the output sought, to enable the secretariat to keep the chairman of the Forum informed, providing a report on the results of the inter-session meetings for circulation among the countries participating in the Region's Environmental Forum of Ministers;
- d) Use electronic media for maintaining communication and the flow of information between physical meetings.

7. To request the Secretariat of the Forum of Ministers to continue its operating support for and facilitation of the activities of the working groups, especially as regards calling meetings, including but not limited to electronic communications and simultaneous interpreting.

8. To take note of the focal points designated by the countries, the former assuming responsibility on behalf of the latter for the commitments by each working group to generate a specific output. The designation of the focal points will be notified to the secretariat of the Forum of Ministers.

DECISION 5

SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS)

Recognizing the special vulnerabilities and particular structural circumstances as regards small size, extreme open exposure, the concentration of a narrow range of basic export products, limited capacity for diversification and high susceptibility to natural disasters as articulated by Agenda 21, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (BPOA), the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI);

Taking into account decision 4 of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean;

Recognizing and appreciating the work done by UNEP in collaboration with the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD and the Caribbean Community in the development of the Caribbean SIDS Programme;

Acknowledging the role played by the Ministerial Support Group on South-South Cooperation between Latin American countries and Caribbean SIDS under the

Chairmanship of Chile in supporting the implementation of the Caribbean SIDS Programme;

Acknowledging also the contribution made by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, and other regional and international organizations including *inter alia*, the GM/UNCCD, the UNCCD Secretariat, FAO and UNEP/ROLAC to the development of the Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management as part of the Caribbean SIDS Programme;

Taking note of the adoption by the Heads of State and Governments of paragraphs 55(d) and 66 of Resolution No. A/60/L. 1 of the United Nations World Summit of September 2005 and the adoption in August 2005 of United Nations General Assembly Resolution No. 59/31 concerning the International Meeting to review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS);

Also noting at a meeting in St. Kitts and Nevis in October 2005 that the Caribbean SIDS have engaged in follow-up activities on the implementation of the MSI;

Further noting the important contribution made by the Caribbean Environment Programme Regional Coordinating Unit in advancing the relevant priorities of the BPOA and MSI;

Noting also the considerable efforts that the Caribbean SIDS have made in the implementation of the BPOA and the MSI;

DECIDE:

1. To urge further development and implementation of the Caribbean SIDS programme and the establishment of a review mechanism consisting of Caribbean SIDS to monitor its implementation and to ensure that it reflects the goals of the MSI and emerging development needs and priorities of the Caribbean SIDS.

2. To request the Inter-Agency Technical Committee of the Forum to provide technical and financial support for the implementation of the Caribbean SIDS Programme, as well the strengthening of the institutional capacity of SIDS at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.

3. To call on UNEP to maintain and further develop its technical programme for Caribbean SIDS.

4. To assist Caribbean SIDS to address the environmental dimensions of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) through the development of appropriate policies and programmes at the national and sub regional levels.

5. To call on UNEP to continue its support to the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) as a means of strengthening the region's institutional and technical capacity to adapt and respond to the adverse impacts of climate change and to develop cooperative initiatives with similar institutions within Latin America and the Caribbean.

6. To urge the Inter-Agency Technical Committee of the Forum to assist Caribbean SIDS in the development of programmes, strategies and action plans to prepare for and respond to the effects of global climate change and to develop a facility which

encourages the development of technology transfer to assist with the implementation of these activities.

7. To call on the Inter-Agency Technical Committee and other relevant development partners to assist the Caribbean SIDS in strengthening their ability to reduce risk and to mitigate and respond to the consequences of natural and man-made hazards, and to address issues such as insurance and re-insurance.

8. To urge UNEP to provide additional support in addressing trade and environment issues, particularly in view of the entering into force of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

9. The request to UNEP, GM/UNCCD, FAO and UNCCD Secretariat to continue supporting the Partnership Initiative on Sustainable Land Management as a main component of the Caribbean SIDS Programme and as a vehicle for enhancing synergistic implementation of related MEAs.

10. To urge the Forum of Ministers through its Ministerial Support Group, chaired by the Government of Chile to further explore the development of a modality for facilitating the South-South cooperation between Latin American countries and Caribbean SIDS, and to make specific recommendations to the Forum at its next meeting.

11. To urge the full and effective participation of representatives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities in the work group on Access to Genetic Resources and the equitable sharing of benefits.

12. To identify gaps in the existing data, information and capacity for environmental monitoring, assessment, and decision-making, including ILAC indicators, in SIDS and make an effort to fill the gaps through institutional capacity building with the help of the ITC and the working Group on Environmental Indicators.

13. To urge that support be given to Caribbean SIDS for the development and strengthening of environmental awareness programmes, campaigns and materials targeting all stakeholders, including, *inter alia*, decision makers, the public and private sectors and civil society – using traditional and non-traditional means, such as: Caribbean artistic, cultural and sporting activities and experiences as the primary media.

14. To urge that a greater effort be made by the ITC, the Forum Secretariat and other relevant partners including *inter alia* the Regional Coordinating Unit of the Caribbean Environment Programme to seek to coordinate their interventions in Caribbean SIDS, to increase complementarity between them as well as their effectiveness and to maximize the benefits to be derived there from.

DECISION 6

ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

Noting that the indicators approved in relation to the guiding goals and indicative purposes of the ILAC enhance the ability of the countries to measure their achievements and successes against the Millennium Development Goals (MDG);

Observing the need to increase the availability, accessibility, harmonization and articulation of information on the environment and sustainable development, to assess progress in the implementation of the ILAC, the MDGs, and other international and regional initiatives;

Underlining also the need to double up regional efforts to equip every country with a national system of environmental statistics and indicators;

Reaffirming the commitment of the nations of the Region to harmonize their methods for collecting environmental statistics and indicators, within the framework of the Forum led by the Government of Costa Rica as coordinator of the working group on the Forum's environmental indicators;

Acknowledging the progress in implementing decision 11 of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum (Venezuela, November 2005) on environmental indicators;

In the light of the inter-agency cooperation framework agreement signed by UNEP and ECLAC in May 2005, with the main goals of strengthening and developing national technical capacities, contributing to improvements in the production and quality of environmental statistics and in access to these within the countries, reducing the burden imposed by the preparation of information needed for integrating environmental statistics in the countries of the Region and promoting the dissemination and use of environmental information to strengthen the decision-making processes and related assessments;

Also taking into account the resolution of the seventh meeting of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas that created an initiative group, under the leadership of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee (Colombia) and with participation of ECLAC, UNEP, and interested member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas for the purpose of establishing the terms of reference and mandate of a future working group on environmental statistics for consideration and approval at the next meeting of the Executive Committee;

Having regard to the debates and recommendations of the meeting of High-Level Government Experts in Panama on 29-31 August 2007⁽⁵⁾;

DECIDE:

1. To endorse the recommendations of the Forum's working group on environmental indicators, arising from its meeting on 4 and 5 July, 2007 and of the Meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee in Geo-Spatial Information and Systems of Observation of the Earth of the same working Group that was held on 6 July, 2007⁶.

2. To accept the work plan of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on Geospatial Information and Earth Observation Systems of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators of the Forum.

⁽⁵⁾ See document **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/4**.

⁽⁶⁾ See documents **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/Ref.2** and **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/Ref.2/Add.1**.

- 3. To support** the continuation of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators of the Forum, coordinated by Costa Rica, and its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on Geospatial Information and Earth Observation Systems, coordinated by Panama.
- 4. To request** the help of the said Working Group and its TAC to finalize the methodological sheets of the agreed indicators, and define missing indicators for ILAC goals, especially the Guiding goals 3.1 and 6.1.
- 5. To request also** the Working Group a regular review of the relevance of the indicators to the regional and sub-regional priorities, as well as to main lines of PAR 2008-2009.
- 6. To initiate** application of the ILAC indicators, with the schedules for calculating these, at national level, within the framework of the Forum, in order to assess progress in the implementation of the ILAC and request UNDP and ECLAC and other ITC Agencies to contribute and support the mobilization of the necessary financial resources so that in the 2010 all the countries of the Region they count with a system of ILAC indicators.
- 7. To request** the Working Group of Environmental Indicators to serve as body for consultation so that countries can obtain assistance in the application of ILAC indicators.
- 8. To designate** national focal points to facilitate and promote the application of ILAC indicators in countries.
- 9. To promote** use in the Region and in the international fora of the ILAC indicators to complement those of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) so as to ensure proper measurement of environmental variables, especially as regards Objective 7.
- 10. To renew** the proposal for the Regional Environmental Statistics System for Latin America and the Caribbean (SIREA) and draw up a strategic plan for its implementation and building of the capacities required at national level for generating, processing and disseminating statistics and indicators, including development of national information systems, with particular attention to the strengthening of national capacity of Caribbean island states.
- 11. To initiate** exchanges of national experience in order to advance with the application of national accounts, for integrated management of the environment and natural resources.
- 12. To continue** supporting the preparation of GEO reports at regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national levels, reflecting both the ILAC indicators and other specific priority issues.
- 13. To request** the ITC's agencies, in accordance with their respective mandates, and other regional and sub-regional organizations, to cooperate with the Working Group of Environmental Indicators of the Forum on enhancing and consolidating the environmental indicators and geospatial information and Earth Observation Systems.

DECISION 7

ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

Recognizing that the Region has undergone increasing atmospheric pollution of primarily urban origin, affecting public health, productivity and the inhabitants' quality of life;

Reaffirming the importance of having reliable information as the basis for accurate appraisal of such impacts and the associated costs;

Noting that there is a clear diagnosis of the key factors in the region's urban pollution, namely extensive urban development with serious problems in regulating land use, increasing levels of automobile traffic, population growth, and economic development accompanied by higher energy consumption and erosion of the biogenic factors;

Recognizing also the efforts in the Region to control air pollution and establish information systems that contribute to comprehensive management of air quality as a public policy;

Reaffirming the importance of pollutant emissions from transport in relation to the total atmospheric emissions, and of making progress in reducing the sulphur content in vehicle fuels, with the aim of cutting the emission of pollutants into the atmosphere and taking advantage of the latest automobile and associated technologies;

Taking account of UNEP's participation in the Global Atmospheric Pollution Forum;

DECIDE:

1. To establish a regional network of authorities tasked with addressing atmospheric pollution, to effect technical exchanges and promote the development of capacities during the period 2008-2009, and evaluate options to reduce the atmospheric pollution, including the articulation of actions relating to the Iberoamerican Network on Atmospheric Pollution, and at the same time, undertakes the coordination of actions together with other regional and subregional initiatives that enable the formulation of joint programmes that are complementary of said actions.

2. To review the operation of the network just mentioned at the 17th meeting of the Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2009, and define the subsequent actions.

3. To express its willingness to enhance the public-private dialogue and the roles of all the various sectors involved; to promote commitments and action to promote the reduction of atmospheric pollution, within a regional, sub-regional and national planning framework.

4. To continue participating, through the Global Forum on Air Pollution in the activities on exchange of information, the capacity building and to evaluate the appropriate measures to reduce the contamination of the air.

DECISION 8

BETTER FUELS FOR BETTER AIR QUALITY

Recalling the recommendation of representatives of governments and experts at the South American Conference on Sulfur Fuels held in Quito on February 13-14, 2007;

Considering that the introduction of cleaner fuels along with policies and programs for more efficient cars harmonized at the regional level is one of the most efficient ways to deal with the problems of urban air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions;

Recognizing that the high content of sulphur in gasoline and diesel increases emissions of pollutants from vehicles, including particulate matter, and affects the proper operation of emission treatment systems, such as, for example, catalytic converters;

Mindful that political and technological solutions exist and have proven their effectiveness in many places around the world; however, it is necessary to enhanced financial resources and strengthened technology support to developing countries;

Noting the positive experiences in the introduction of clean fuels and vehicles in some cities and countries of the region;

Recalling the work to date on clean fuels and vehicles to improve air quality by the UNEP-based Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV), the Pan American Health Organization, the Latin American Initiative for Clean Air (now Clean Air Institute), the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CICAD), the Center for Inter-American Commission for Environment and Development (CICAD) and other regional organizations, their partners and collaborators.

DECIDE:

- 1. To advocate** improving fuel quality in order to enhance the protection of people's health through cleaner fuels and vehicles with lower-emission technologies, in line with the global goals of the UNEP-based Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV).
- 2. To highlight** the successful phase-out of leaded gasoline from the Latin American and Caribbean market and that the application of lessons learned can significantly help reduce the levels of sulfur in fuel.
- 3. To recognize and support** the commitments to reduce sulfur content already programmed in several countries in the Region.
- 4. To promote** the reduction of Sulfur content in fuels, targeting a goal of 50 parts per million of sulfur with an emphasis on countries with air quality problems in their metropolitan areas.

5. To stress that in order to comply with the target of improving the fuels quality and the living conditions it is necessary to take into account the national conditions and to promote access to financial resources and technology transfer.

6. To include enhanced fuels and vehicles in the priorities of the Forum of Ministers on matters of Health and Environment.

7. To enhance public /private dialogue in order to promote commitments and actions on clean fuels and vehicles and to ensure proper implementation and participation by all the sectors involved.

8. To request technical, financial and capability support from the above organizations, their partners and collaborators, especially at country level in Latin America and the Caribbean, to achieve the above desulphurization goals and promote more efficient regulations and improvement of cleaner fuels and cars.

DECISION 9

NATURAL PROTECTED AREAS

Confirming the commitment of countries in the Region to Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Implementation Plan, the Millennium Goals, and decision 5 of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, to promote sustainable and integrated management of natural resources;

Recognising that protected areas make a vital contribution to the conservation of the world's natural and cultural resources, and are indispensable instruments to achieve sustainable development objectives and improve the well-being of our peoples;

Stressing the important contribution that natural protected areas and their sustainable management make to achieve Goal 2010, to significantly reduce the present rate of biodiversity loss, and in helping to diminish poverty and following up on sustainable development;

Bearing in mind the celebration of the 2nd Latin American Congress of National Parks and Other Protected Areas, held from 30 September to 6 October 2007 in Bariloche, Argentina;

Reaffirming the importance of local communities and other organized groups of the society in defining and implementing natural protected areas management programmes;

DECIDE:

1. Reaffirm its support of and commitment to the conclusions of the Declaration of Bariloche, put forward by the 2nd Latin American Congress of National Parks and Other Protected Areas.

2. Support the consolidation of the work of the Latin American Technical Cooperation Network on National Parks, Other Protected Areas and Wildlife (REDPARQUES) as a regional integration and cooperation mechanism.

3. Thank the Government of Mexico for the invitation to participate in the next meeting of the National Coordinators of the Latin American Technical Cooperation

Network on National Parks, Other Protected Areas and Wildlife (REDPARQUES) to be held in March 2008 in Merida, Yucatan (Mexico).

4. Make progress on the Programme on Protected Areas, agreed within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, particularly in formulating goals designed to produce results concerning extension, representation and effectiveness of national protected areas systems, including terrestrial and marine and coastal areas.

5. Strengthen regional cooperation and technical assistance activities, in order to support the region's efforts to implement sustainable management of its natural protected areas.

6. Promote the international dissemination of information about the benefits of cooperation in the Region during the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Protected Areas Programme, to be held in Rome, Italy, from 11 to 15 February 2008.

DECISION 10

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Considering that the World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place in Johannesburg called for the promotion of a 10-year framework of programs to support national and regional initiatives in order to accelerate the transition toward sustainable consumption and production patterns;

Bearing in mind that the Marrakech Process is a global process to support the implementation of concrete projects on SCP and the elaboration of a 10-year framework of programmes on SCP which will be presented to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) during its 2010-2011 cycle;

Considering that in the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Latin American and Caribbean countries expressed the need to incorporate the concepts of cleaner production in industry and, at the same time, to work toward sustainable consumption;

Bearing in mind the results of the meetings of Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the existence of the Regional Council of Governmental Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production; and the previous decisions approved by the Forum of Ministers in Panama (2003) and Venezuela (2005) ratifying their agreement on implementation of the Regional SCP Strategy;

In view of the Marrakech Process has had an important achievement in the development and implementation of national and sub-regional policies and projects on SCP;

Considering the valuable contributions made by sub-regional organizations, NGOs, the network of national cleaner production centers, scientific and technical communities, trade unions, and business and industry during the Fourth Regional Meeting of Experts on SCP.

DECIDE:

- 1. To approve** the Action Plan on SCP⁽⁷⁾, prepared according to the needs and priorities of each sub-region, taking into account the ILAC, the prior decisions made by the Forum of Ministers on this subject, the Regional Strategy of SCP, the pre-existing plans in the sub-regions, and the contributions made by the major groups (business and industry, NGOs, trade unions, scientific and technical communities, youth, and local authorities, among others).
- 2. To ratify and provide support** for the implementation of the priority areas of SCP those are common to all sub-regions, taking into consideration the themes identified in the Final Report of the Fourth Meeting of Experts on Sustainable Production and Consumption of Latin America and the Caribbean (Sao Paulo, Brazil; 18th and 19th October 2007) including inter alia:
 - a) National Dialogues to be open and participative to all sectors of society and other processes
 - b) Small and medium size enterprises
 - c) Sustainable public procurement;
 - d) National policies and action plans on SCP;
 - e) Regional information networks on SCP.
- 3. To take** the necessary actions to guarantee the fulfilment of the Regional Action Plan on SCP related to the mobilization and allocation of funds for national and regional activities.
- 4. To promote** the strengthening of institutions responsible for SCP in each country and to maintain the active participation of these institutions in the regional activities related to SCP.
- 5. To promote** the mainstreaming of SCP in other areas of economic and social development of the countries of the Region.
- 6. To request support** from development cooperation agencies as well as subregional organizations in order to secure additional funding to increase SCP activities in the Region.
- 7. To include** the topic of the Marrakech Process and Chapter III of the Implementation Plan of Johannesburg in the agenda for the next meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment. The 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production should be then reviewed and approved, so that it can be submitted to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in 2010-2011.

⁽⁷⁾ See **Annex IV** of reference document **UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVI/6/Rev.1**.

DECISION 11

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Considering the decision adopted by the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, referring to the adaptation of the Environmental Training Network Work Programme and the implementation of ILAC and the incorporation of the Latin American and Caribbean Environment Education Programme (PLACEA), as well as the Andean-Amazon Plan on Environmental Education and Communication;

Recognizing the coordinating role of PLACEA by Venezuela during the biennium 2006-2007, as well as the rule established by PLACEA to rotate the leadership of the Programme among the countries of the Region, and the initiative of Brazil to conduct the PLACEA in coordination with ROLAC during the biennium 2008-2009;

Considering the need to expand and strengthen current operational mechanisms of the Environmental Training Network Programme, especially regarding the adoption of decisions and the allocation of resources;

Considering the actions being taken by different governments of the Region in the framework of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014, in particular the strengthening of public policies and National strategies of Environmental Education;

Recognizing the existence of a significant environmental education movement in Latin America and the Caribbean that reflects the growing commitment of communities to education processes and their contribution to the construction of sustainable societies;

Convinced of the need to make progress in strengthening environmental education programmes as part of the public policy of various countries in the Region through cooperation, communication and exchange processes among countries;

DECIDE:

1. To strengthen the capacity of the Environmental Training Network to promote, articulate and coordinate the process of environmental education and training in the countries of the Region, particularly in the development of the activities of PLACEA (and of other associated subregional programmes), and the establishment and development of National Environmental Training and Education Networks.

2. To extend the operation of the Network Trust Fund through the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers, asking UNEP to continue managing this Fund.

3. To ask the countries of the Region to pay their pending contributions, and to meet their annual commitments to the Network Trust Fund.

4. To continue the activities of the Environmental Training Network in accordance to the guidelines approved at the Fourteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment, adapted to the priorities of the ILAC and ROLAC's Regional Action Plan.

- 5. To establish** regional strategies and inter-governmental, inter-institutional and inter-agency cooperation mechanisms, including consortia, alliances and associations of Universities for the development of environmental training courses, and e-learning non-resident courses on priority subjects of the Region that enable a multiplying process in the creation of capacities.
- 6. To continue** supporting the organization of national, regional and sub-regional conferences and seminars on Environmental Education, in particular the VI Ibero American Congress on Environmental Education, in order to channel actions on behalf of environmental education and foster Ibero-American cooperation in this field.
- 7. To continue** supporting the training of teachers, including local community teachers, within the basic education systems.
- 8. To continue** promoting and developing the community training project for sustainable development.
- 9. To assign** to the Government of Brazil the organization of the PLACEA during the biennium 2008-2009 in coordination with ROLAC.
- 10. To reiterate** the request made to UNEP and the Inter-Agency Technical Committee to identify and manage financial resource, in accordance with their specific mandates and the contents of ILAC, to support the implementation of PLACEA.
- 11. To support** the orientation and development of PLACEA training activities towards the furthering and strengthening of capacity-building at the national level, especially considering the priority topics identified by the Forum in the framework of ILAC, as well as the Johannesburg agreements and the millennium development goals, through formal and informal education.
- 12. To exhort** the Ministers of the Environment of the countries to strengthen the environmental education units so that they may count with the necessary human and financial resources to comply with the PLACEA objectives and biennial programme of activities.
- 13. To organize** a workshop with the participation of the representatives of the Network's National Focal Points during the first months of 2008, to define a Regional Action Plan 2008-2009 for PLACEA, as well as subregional plans, as well as the strategies for their implementation.
- 14. To support** the organization of a subregional programme on environmental education, targeting all stakeholders, including *inter alia*, decision-makers, public and private sector and civil society, of the non-Spanish speaking Caribbean countries, and its integration to PLACEA.
- 15. To make** progress in the promotion of new education strategies (including digital technology) that strengthen the participatory processes in the collective building of environmental knowledge, especially knowledge rooted in the poorest communities and other traditionally excluded groups, that permit an exchange of experiences and a dialogue of knowledge, while at the same time recognizing their contribution to nature conservation and socio-environmental sustainability, and

furthering their linkage to the environmental management actions of the countries of the Region.

DECISION 12

ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES AND BENEFIT SHARING AND THE PARTICIPATION OF THE REGION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS OF AN INTERNATIONAL LEGAL REGIME

Considering the principles of the Rio Declaration, particularly the sovereign right of the States to their natural resources, including genetic resources, decision 8 of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean (Panama, 2005), which confirms the strategic importance for the Region, as owner of the greatest biodiversity of the planet, of ongoing negotiation of the International Regime on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Benefit Sharing under the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);

Reaffirming that Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Benefit Sharing is an issue of crucial importance for the countries of the Region and that the status of the ongoing multilateral negotiations, mainly within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, require greater attention and participation of these countries, so that the regional needs and interests are presented, protected and respected;

Recalling that through decision 8 it was resolved to create a working group on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing as a regional discussion opportunity for the negotiations of the International Regime, as well as the promotion of regional and sub-regional activities, including the organization of meetings, Workshops and other means directed towards furthering knowledge and information exchange on the issue of access to genetic resources, benefit sharing and traditional knowledge, in identifying the priorities and demands of the Region and place it in a better position in the negotiation process of the International Regime;

Taking into consideration the meeting of the Working Group (Paipa, Colombia, 20 and 21 September 2007) supported and called upon by UNEP with the main purpose of addressing the topics on the agenda of the Fifth and Sixth Meetings of the Ad-hoc Open-ended Working Group on this issue established within the scope of the Convention on Biological Diversity, enabling information exchange, perspectives and points of view to be considered at said international processes;

Realizing the importance of the results and recommendations arising from the meeting of the Working Group in Paipa and the proposal to the Sixth Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing of the CBD in Geneva, as an important contribution for the participation of the countries of the Region in the multilateral negotiations on Access and Benefit Sharing;

Taking into consideration that the Convention on Biological Diversity acknowledges the value of traditional knowledge of indigenous people and local communities for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and promotes the fair and equitable benefit sharing;

Observing that the complex technical nature of this issue justify that the group may continue its work so as to continue the contribution of specific knowledge on the issues, specifically taking into consideration the accelerated pace of the multilateral negotiations of the international regime;

Taking note of the recent developments in the International negotiation on this issue, specifically the results of the Fifth and Sixth Meetings of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

Considering that the Draft Recommendation to the Sixth Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Working Group, recognizes the role of UNEP in the future contributions towards capacity development;

Particularly noting with that the decision of the Sixth Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Working Group on ABS of CBD inviting UNEP in consultation with the CBD Secretariat, to continue supporting and facilitating regional consultations and actions to enable a better preparation on access and benefit sharing;

Considering the actions to be carried out in preparation for the Ninth Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity must be performed to strengthen the regional position of GRULAC on on the issue of Access and Benefit Sharing;

Concerned about the restrictions regarding the provision of international financing for the attendance of delegations from developing countries to multilateral negotiations, in particular to the meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

DECIDE:

1. To adopt the recommendations of the Meeting of the Working Group held in Paipa, Colombia, on 20 and 21 September 2007.

2. To take into account the regional positions presented by the GRULAC at the Sixth Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Working Group on ABS of the CBD, held in Geneva, from 21 to 25 January 2008.

3. To ratify the need that appropriate measures are taken to ensure that developing countries participate in multilateral negotiations, thus not undermining the representation, transparency and legitimacy of proposals and agreements consolidated at said meetings.

4. To reaffirm that the documents "Annex to decision VIII/4A on the International Regime on Access and Benefit Sharing"⁽⁸⁾, the GRULAC proposal made at the Sixth Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group, and the Annex of the Draft Resolution adopted in the above-mentioned meetings constitute the texts for the negotiations of the Ad-hoc Open-ended Working Group on ABS of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

5. To continue with the activities of the Working Group, with the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and to request for UNEP to provide the greatest amount of support possible to such effects and likewise, to

⁽⁸⁾ See document **UNEP/CBD/WG-ABS/5/2**.

evaluate the options to enable the optimization of the resources that may be used, through the use of communication tools which will include electronic dialogue and debate.

6. To promote the organization of a meeting of the Working Group in the context of the ILAC of this Forum prior to the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, to which effect entrust UNEP with taking measures to obtain financing.

7. To communicate this Decision to the representatives of their respective country in the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), and entrust UNEP with informing this to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

DECISION 13

STRENGTHENING THE PARTICIPATION OF MAJOR GROUPS OF THE AGENDA 21

Reaffirming the validity and importance of decision 6 on the Participation of Civil Society, which emerged from the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean;

Recalling that, in the context of Agenda 21, UNEP recognizes nine major groups; namely: indigenous peoples and their communities; women; youth and children; workers and unions; farmers; the scientific and technological community; enterprises and industry; non governmental organizations; and local authorities; whose mutual cooperation and articulation becomes absolutely necessary;

Considering that the report on the implementation of the decisions of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean shows significant progress with regard to the involvement of civil society, but at the same time recognizing that the efforts can and should be strengthened towards broadening and deepening consultation and participation processes into major groups;

Considering the Declaration of the UNEP Regional Forum for Civil Society in Latin America and the Caribbean held in Monterrey, Mexico, on 12-14 October 2007;

Recognizing that the Declaration offers viable proposals that are in the interest of the governments and citizens;

Considering the Guidelines for improving the participation of the main groups at UNEP governance level and recalling that they will be brought for consideration and approval by the XXIV session of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum;

DECIDE:

1. To promote the Principle 10 of the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* regarding social participation and access to information, according to each country's legislation and reality.

2. To consider the recommendations of the UNEP Regional Forum for Civil Society in Latin America and the Caribbean with respect to the *Guidelines for improving the participation of major groups at UNEP governance*.

3. To promote the strengthening of the UNEP Regional Forums for Civil Society, encouraging the availability of the necessary resources for their implementation, as well as for the expansion, diversification and improved representation of the delegates to these fora from the nine major groups, particularly the effective participation of indigenous people, requesting for this the support of the ITC.

4. To support the realization of national and regional consultation processes prior to the Regional Forum for Civil Society and to encourage the participation of representatives from all major groups, according with the financial capacity, reality and legislation of each country.

5. To promote education, participatory communication, formation and development of capacity in terms of prevention, mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the Region, with the support of UNEP, the ITC and the major groups.

6. To promote the establishment of a mechanism for the exchange of information and experiences, to be managed by UNEP with the support of the ITC and the major groups, in order to facilitate the communication, cooperation and the establishment of synergistic partnerships between civil society and governments from the Region.

7. To facilitate the realization of Sub regional Forums on Climate Change, with broad participation by the major groups and international agencies from the ITC.

8. To continue strengthening regional, sub-regional and national youth networks under the TUNZA Strategies and GEO Youth, trying to maintain and expand the participation, as much as the effectiveness, of youth leaders in defining environmental policies and strategies, including meetings of the UNEP Governing Council.

9. To give continuity to the Global Environmental Citizenship Project incorporating other countries and national networks, as well as local civil society, seeking greater and better participation of the most representative organizations in each country, and consultative instances.

10. To encourage UNEP and the ITC to undertake actions to mobilize the necessary resources, in order to implement the commitments made in this forum.

DECISION 14

RENEWABLE AND/OR ALTERNATIVE ENERGIES

Considering the sovereign right of the Latin American and Caribbean countries to develop all the renewable and/or alternative energy sources according to their possibilities and interest;

Taking into account Decision 15 of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean that establishes the goal of at least 10% of the energy matrix be renewable in the year 2010;

Recognizing the potential for renewable and/or alternative energies in the Region and the need to further develop the maximum of their possibilities;

Emphasizing the need of the countries of the Region to improve their energy performance;

Considering that access to renewable and/or alternative energy is essential for environmental protection;

Considering that clean energy services contribute to the reduction of the environmental impacts;

Acknowledging the important role that renewable and/or alternative energies may play in the supply of energy, in the case they are developed on a sustainable manner, and without imposing risks to food security in the Region.

DECIDE:

1. To support, under the framework of the ILAC, the organization of meetings and development of studies and analysis of the situation of the energetic matrixes of the countries of the Region, considering the inclusion of practical recommendations to increase the proportion of renewable and/or alternative energies in such matrixes, requesting support of the ITC for this.

2. To promote through South-South Cooperation the development and improvement of technologies and the programs of renewable and/or alternative energies, and the mechanism for this cooperation.

3. To promote the study and identification of the environmental impacts of renewable and/or alternative energies in the Region, as well as the identification of strategies to minimize these impacts.

4. To encourage the development of strategies towards the incorporation of environmental and social criteria in the production and generation of renewable and/or alternative energies, and to provide assistance, technical or of other types, when necessary.

DECISION 15

STRENGTHENING THE PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Considering the meaningful diversity of peoples and cultures that inhabit and are a substantial part of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean;

Taking into account that indigenous peoples possess ancestral knowledge, linked to a sustainable management of natural resources and the environment;

Bearing in mind the recognition of the rights of the indigenous peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean for an active and full participation in topics of their interest;

Recognizing the sovereign right of Latin America and Caribbean countries to establish their own legislation to safeguard the rights of indigenous people. Consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

Recognizing the right of indigenous peoples to participate in the decision-making processes that may affect their livelihoods or their organizational forms, customs and cultural traditions, according to each country's legislation;

Considering that the United Nations have adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, facilitating the development of legislation in those countries where these rights are not contemplated.

DECIDE:

1. To encourage the participation of indigenous peoples in the various plans and programmes of regional, subregional and national activities, with UNEP and other agencies members of the ITC for the implementation of LACISD.

2. To promote capacity building of indigenous peoples for an effective and active participation in the various plans and environmental programs implemented by UNEP and LACISD, and which interest them.

3. Recognize and promote the recovery of expertise and traditional and environmental knowledge that remains with the indigenous peoples of our continent.

4. To respect the diversity, internal and local organizational forms, customs and traditions of indigenous peoples, as fundamental aspects of their participation in environmental according to the legislation of each country.

DECISION 16

SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

Considering that desertification, land degradation and drought gravely affect the lands of LAC, beyond any particular climatic condition, and intern ecosystems biodiversity and agricultural production systems sustain by those lands, as well as affecting the communities settled in those areas by increasing the vulnerability to climatic variations and climate change;

Taking into account that decision 10 of the Thirteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers (Brazil, 2001) highlighted that all countries of the Region had ratified the UNCCD and acknowledging that the concentration the poverty in the Region coincides with ecosystems threaten by land degradation, and stressed the importance of implementing the UNCCD in an effective and opportunity manner so as to alleviate the poverty associated by land degradation;

Recalling that in light of previous deliberations, the Forum encouraged to consider the UNCCD as one of the Conventions dealing with sustainable development and as a tool for poverty alleviation in LAC and in other parts of the world, and making a call to donor countries to contribute with adequate financial resources for an effective implementation of the Convention;

Recalling that in the framework of decision 18 of the Fifteenth Meeting of the Forum (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 2005), the Ministers and Environmental Authorities present there agreed to request to those funding agencies that are part of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee, and as well other international agencies to strengthen their support to the implementation of the priorities identified in the

National Action Programs to Combat Desertification and Drought as well as to strengthen the synergies between the UNCCD and other Conventions;

Considering that the Ministers and Authorities of the Environment present in this Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum consider the need to address this issue again and promote a regional vision on combating desertification, land degradation and the mitigation of the effects of drought, emphasizing that sustainable land management is a key instrument to prevent or revert land degradation and to promote the implementation of sustainable agricultural, forestry and water management practices as well as to contribute to socioeconomic development, the fulfilment of targets for poverty reduction, food security and in general the achievement of the millennium development goals;

Bearing in mind that this regional vision should accompany the process for strengthening the implementation of the UNCCD within the framework of the ten-year strategy adopted in September 2007, during the Eight Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP8), and contribute to the development of a proposal on mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination for the implementation of the convention in line with the decisions adopted by COP8;

Recognizing that in line with the above, and in spite of previous appeals the Ministers of the Environment and/or Environmental Authorities present in this Forum, are concerned with the low profile given to sustainable land management by international donor agencies, in the financing priorities of national programmes;

Taking into account that, notwithstanding the above, the significant efforts of some subregional groups are recognize such as the Regional Agroenvironmental Strategy for Central America which considers the Sustainable Land Management as one of the strategic axis, and the Mercosur Strategy to combat desertification, land degradation and the effects of drought, which was endorsed by the meeting of the Mercosur Ministers of the Environment thru an agreement signed in June 2007;

Considering that, it is necessary to work in a synergistic and systematic manner for the implementation of regional actions towards sustainable development, highlighting the importance of harmonizing efforts and the mobilization of technical and financial resources;

DECIDE:

1. To strengthen and ensure, within the realm of the competences of each Ministry and relevant Authority of the Environment, the acknowledgement of the importance of implementing effective actions to combat desertification, land degradation and the effects of drought in the Region, assigning proper priority to sustainable land management as a contribution to sustainable development ensuring that the design and/or strengthening financing programs addressing explicitly the issues concerned.

2. To encourage under the framework of the UNCCD ten-years strategy, the development and implementation of regional strategies aimed at facilitating the convergence and integration of national, subregional and regional Action Programs to Combat Desertification and the Effects of Drought with national, subregional and regional food security and poverty alleviation strategies, as well as with national,

subregional and regional Plans related to Climate Change Adaptation, Biodiversity Conservation, Management of Water Resources and Sustainable Forest Management.

3. To request the Inter-Agency Technical Committee and the Secretariat of the Forum to prepare, in coordination with the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, a regional proposal, including specific actions and modalities to facilitate and increase the flow of financial resources for UNCCD implementation at national, subregional and regional levels, consistent with the UNCCD's 10-years Strategy.

4. To request the Inter-Agency Technical Committee and the Secretariat of the Forum, in coordination with the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, to strengthen the interaction with other international cooperation agencies, particularly multilateral development banks, international financial facilities, including the GEF, for the establishment of programs and budgetary provisions for supporting actions to combat desertification and sustainable land management, in order to include these issues into their corporate priorities by creating and/or strengthening technical and financial cooperation, and assigning appropriate priority to the Latin American and the Caribbean Region.

5. To develop linkages with other key sectors particularly agricultural and social-development, as a national priority and to ensure harmonization of public policies for land management.

6. To request the members of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC) to inform to the Forum on these issues as relevant to its competences, and to Secretariat of the Forum, in coordination with the GM of the UNCCD, to establish the necessary mechanisms for following-up and assessing the actions undertaken to implement this decision and to report to the Seventeenth Meeting of the Forum.

DECISION 17

CLIMATE CHANGE

Remembering decision 14 of the Fifteenth Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, 2005);

Agreeing that we, the developing countries, are the most vulnerable to the negative impact of climate change, and that the poor and marginalized communities are even more vulnerable to these impacts, and that in our countries extreme climatic events have already been recorded with loss of lives and serious material damages that increase the level of poverty and make the economic growth of our nations more pressing;

Recognizing the need to increase the scale of global response to climate change promoting more participation of all countries according to their own capacities and national circumstances;

Concerned by the lack of concrete actions by developed countries that will fulfil their commitments, referring to technology transfer and financial support to address climate change and to give continuity, strengthen and increase the actions that as countries we have been taken to mitigate climate change;

Emphasizing, likewise, that it is in the global interest to adopt policies and measures for adapting to climate change in order to contribute to social development, economic growth and environmental protection, to which the matter must receive quick and sufficient attention related to financial support and technology transfer; and convinced that the Nairobi Action Plan on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change is an instrument that will facilitate the understanding and assessments of impacts related to climate change vulnerability and adaptation;

Taken note of the usefulness preparatory meetings for climate change negotiators of Latin America (Panama, Panama, October 20-21 2007) and the Alliance of Small Island States (Saint Kitts and Nevis, November 13-14, 2007) in the interest of the Region within the process of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change; jointly organized by UNEP and the Secretariat of the Convention and recognizing with satisfaction that several key positions of the Region were included in the Bali agreements;

Emphasizing the importance of our active participation to achieve the goals set in the Bali Action Plan whose agenda includes the key subjects to be negotiated and which will be concluded in 2009, in order to establish directions on the commitments to be taken on from 2013 when the first commitment period reaches termination, in regards to the pillars of mitigation, adaptation, financing and technology;

Welcoming the dialogue on climate change in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, called for by its Secretary General in September 2007, in which participated more than sixty Heads of State and Governments, many of them of our region;

Welcoming also the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) which recognizes the need to urgently address climate change through enhanced mitigation and adaptation, and congratulate the IPCC for the Peace Nobel Prize in 2007.

DECIDE:

1. Strengthen and ensure that within each country, due importance is placed to the implementation of effective policies and actions to develop effective mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change in development sectors of by all ILAC country members, as well as that successful programmes, national, subregional and regional plans on adaptation to climate change are dully shared.

2. To urge developed countries which by virtue of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities continue and increase their actions and adopt responsible policies to support adaptation in the countries of the Region and comply with their global commitments to mitigate their emissions of greenhouse gases.

3. To promote opportunities within the Kyoto Protocol, support initiatives which are presented in the framework of the Convention as it is the subject of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD), as reported in the Bali Action Plan and the need to take actions increasingly ambitious in the light of recent scientific knowledge.

4. To internalize the outcome of the Thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Third Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Bali in December 2007, in particular its Bali Action Plan, which has initiated a process of a two-year negotiation, to multilaterally agree on a framework to respond to climate change after 2012, this process which will conclude in 2009, is based on four building blocks: mitigation, adaptation, technology and financing.

5. To endorse the other key results of the Bali Conference, such as promoting the work of the Ad-Hoc Working Group to get greater parties commitments to Annex I to the Kyoto Protocol, and the launching of the Fund for Adaptation.

6. Integrate measures into development policies, taking into account the social, economic and environmental vulnerability of the Region, particularly of the low-lying coastal and small island developing States with regard to the effects of climate change and to adapt to these effects.

7. Recognize the need to promote at the global level innovative financing mechanism that enable building capacities and facilitate the transfer of technology to undertake actions related to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

8. Request to UNEP, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other relevant international organizations, to continue this practice to strengthen regional capacity to participate actively in the process of implementing the Convention through cooperation activities in the long term.

9. To promote the negotiation process initiated by the Bali Action Plan and where feasible, to coordinate regional positions before and during the negotiating sessions.

10. Recognize the progress made by Latin America and the Caribbean in the submission of projects under the Clean Development Mechanism and encourage the exchange of experiences, tools and methodologies among countries in the Region and work with the Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism and the Convention for a better regional distribution of these projects, particularly in small island developing countries in the Region.

11. To promote practical adaptation actions in the countries of the Region aimed at increasing their adaptative capacity to face the negative consequences of climate change, including a more effective disaster risk prevention and management; and to urge the working group on climate change resulting from this forum, the UNEP-regional office, the ITC, and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system and international financial organizations to work towards this end.

12. Encourage and support regional, subregional and national initiatives to conduct vulnerability assessments, improve data collection and implement measures of adaptation, as well as promoting dialogue on issues of common interest relating to the international negotiations, while promoting synergies among these initiatives at the regional level.

13. To promote education, public sensibilization and capacity building in relation to prevention and reduction of vulnerability, mitigation, and adaptation to climate change in the Region, as well as to share information and meaningful experiences

to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and the establishment of synergetic alliances among civil society and the governments.

DECISIÓN 18

CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES

Recognizing the importance of the environmentally sound management of Chemicals and hazardous wastes including electronic wastes;

Taking into account the impact of poor handling and disposal of chemical on human health and the Environment;

Acknowledging the limited capacity of countries in the Region in Particular Small Island Developing States in this regard;

Noting however, that through the development of National Implementation Plans (NIPs) on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), some countries have developed some inventories of chemicals and that even now new chemicals are being considered for description as POPs under the Stockholm Convention;

Recognizing that at the Global level much attention is being given to chemicals and hazardous waste management in the United Nations system through the Strategic Approach to the International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and its Quick Start Programme, inter-linkages between the Chemicals conventions of Basel, Stockholm and Rotterdam for cooperation and collaboration on improved management of chemical products for protecting human health, the environment and natural resources.

DECIDE:

1. Urge the ITC and UNEP to continue to provide technical assistance to countries to carry out inventories of hazardous chemicals and wastes; to develop policies for the management of hazardous chemicals and wastes and address their storage and disposal.

2. Encourage countries in the Region to share best practices in management of chemicals and hazardous wastes including the implementation of public awareness programs.

DECISIÓN 19

SUSTAINABLE SETTLEMENTS/CONSTRUCTION

Recognizing that building sustainable housing is an essential tool for improving the quality of life of citizens of the Region and that properly planned developments incorporating the principles of "green structures" can contribute to better environmental quality and conservation of natural resources;

Aware of the structural housing deficit, the lack of land-use planning, and the urbanization processes in the Region leading to environmental risks and pressure on relevant ecosystems and, in order to address it, it is required to advance in the development of public policies regarding land-use planning and the construction of

sustainable housing, that is, housing that ensures an efficient use of energy and water, and adequate sanitation;

Recognizing the need for strategic environmental assessments, sustainability criteria and the development of green building guidelines and codes of good practices as well as the need for the application of modernized planning principles and urban management.

DECIDE:

- 1. Collaborate** on the development of a long term regional strategy on sustainable housing involving academic institutions and the private sector which could promote inter alia guidelines and building codes for environmentally sound construction which could be adapted at the national level, taking into account the particular legal, climatic, economic and social conditions of the country.
- 2. Encourage** in the Region the development of public awareness programmes for purchasers of new houses and real estate dealers on the economic and environmental advantages of green construction.
- 3. Promote** studies on the cost benefit analysis of sustainable housing bearing in mind that the initial costs of such housing might be higher.
- 4. Increase** regional cooperation to encourage carbon neutral or carbon zero construction.
- 5. Promote** the identification of incentives to encourage the construction sector to become involved in sustainable housing.
- 6. Encourage** sharing of information on new building materials that can contribute to energy saving and resistance to disasters.
- 7. Assess** the vulnerability index of existing housing settlements particularly those located in disaster prone areas with a view to taking appropriate mitigating measures thereby minimising risks to life and property.

DECISION 20

**GRATITUDE TO THE PEOPLE AND GOVERNMENT
OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

DECIDE:

To express the deep gratitude of the Sixteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean held in Santo Domingo, from 27th January 2008 to Friday 1st February 2008, to the People and Government of the Dominican Republic for the generous hospitality shown during this Meeting.

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Appendix 1 to Annex II Proposed Structure for the Regional Action Plan 2008-2009

1. CLIMATE CHANGE

ILAC Area	Objective	Aim	Results Indicators	Specific Activities
It is linked to all ILAC areas	To support Region countries' efforts to implement the commitments arising from international agreements and meet the challenges of adaptation to and mitigation of climate change impacts	<p>To support the countries' efforts toward the development of technologies and capabilities for programs and studies on climate change issues</p> <p>To support countries at the stage of analysis of options and measures for the gradual elimination of GHG and CFCs, methyl bromide and other substances.</p> <p>To increase access to information technologies, options and opportunities for funding programs and projects for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.</p> <p>To support integrated and sectorial initiatives of the countries in the Region to combat climate change, including the promotion of energy efficiency, use of renewables and the sustainable management of natural resources, among others.</p>	<p>Latin American and Caribbean countries have national /sub-regional strategies and plans on climate action, emissions inventories and other reports and studies required by the UNFCCC.</p> <p>All Latin American and Caribbean countries in compliance with the provisions of the Montreal Protocol.</p> <p>Latin American and Caribbean countries with proposals for national programs reduction or elimination of GHGs in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol scope, the Bali Action Plan, and so on.</p> <p>Program to achieve 5-10% improvement in energy efficiency indicators in each of the Latin American and Caribbean countries.</p> <p>10% use of renewables</p>	

2. BIODIVERSITY

ILAC Area	Objective	Aim	Results Indicators	Specific Activities
Biodiversity	To promote the Region countries' strengthening and development of the capacities to participate in the negotiation and implementation of the international regime on access and fair and equitable sharing of benefits.	Supporting development of institutional and legal in the countries of the Region in terms of access and fair and equitable sharing of benefits. Active participation of Latin America and the Caribbean in the negotiation of an international regime on ABS in the context of the Convention on Biodiversity	Promoted and adopted national laws or regulations on access and fair and equitable sharing of benefits, to implement the international regime adopted in the Convention on Biological Diversity framework, and to systematize in 2008 the inventory of legislation or regulation in the field with electronic consultation and update systems to facilitate their comparison and use by all countries. National plans and measurable progress in each country to reverse the loss of biodiversity in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on Biodiversity.	
	To promote an increase and restoration of the forest area in the Region.	Development of national and sub-regional programs, initiatives and campaigns to encourage the preservation, restoration and growth of native forests To strengthen the exchange of information, technologies and experience in the field.	Verifiable reversal in the deforestation trend in Latin American and Caribbean countries.	

3. WATER RESOURCES

ILAC Area	Objective	Aim	Results Indicators	Specific Activities
Water Resource Management	To improve and strengthen the institutional framework for the integrated management of watersheds and aquifers.	To promote and support projects and to expand capacity, institutional development and shared management tools.	All countries in the Region have completed and implemented the strategy of integrated water resource management with an emphasis on shared watersheds.	
Marine and Coastal Management and its Resources	To increase the capacity to manage marine and coastal areas	Development of assessments, inventories and Resource management capabilities	<p>All countries in the Region have made or completed 80% of management plans for marine and coastal areas.</p> <p>At least 50% of countries in the Region have environmental quality indicators of the marine and coastal waters for the preservation of their resources in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Convention on Biodiversity (marine and coastal biodiversity).</p> <p>Implementation of regular training programs on marine and coastal management in at least 50% of the countries in the Region.</p>	

4. HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, VULNERABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES

ILAC AREA	Objective	Aims	Result Indicators	Specific activities
Vulnerability, Human Settlements and Sustainable Cities	To reduce vulnerability and increase risk management capacity	<p>To support and national sub-regional policies and programs aimed at addressing environmental vulnerabilities risks mainly in urban settlements.</p> <p>To develop skills and appropriate technologies, inventories, databases, legislation and experiences for the management of solid waste.</p>	<p>Inventory strategies for disaster prevention systematized until 2009 with electronic consultation and update systems in order to facilitate its comparison and use by all countries.</p> <p>Strategies for disaster prevention completed in each of the Latin American and Caribbean countries.</p> <p>Joint Program with UNEP / OCHA to produce assessments that contribute to disaster prevention.</p> <p>Management tools, best practices manuals and other tools available for strengthening initiatives as well as national and sub-regional programs.</p>	

5. SOCIAL ISSUES, HEALTH, POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

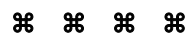
ILAC AREA	Objective	Aims	Results Indicators	Specific activities
Social Issues, Health, Inequality and Poverty	To advance integrated health and environment programs for combating inequality, poverty and for improving quality of life standards	To promote and support projects and to expand individual and institutional capacities for an adequate management of chemicals and to reduce water, air and soil pollution	Countries in the Region have pollution management strategies and plans, including the phase out of chemical substances	

6. SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

ILAC AREA	Objective	Aims	Results Indicators	Specific activities
Sustainable Production and Consumption	Capabilities of Latin American and Caribbean countries strengthened through regional networks of experts, training programs and activities to increase sustainable consumption and production patterns in the Region, in line with its priorities for international trade and competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training programs for the production and consumption of sustainable goods and services • Establishment of tables for national dialogue • Strengthening of SMEs capabilities for the adoption of Sustainable Consumption and Production • Promoting the adoption of sustainable public procurement systems • Promoting the development of national policies, strategies and information networks for Sustainable Production and Consumption; adjusting cleaner production, consumption, micro, small and medium enterprises, public procurement. 	<p>Each subregion has at least one table of dialogue on CPS</p> <p>Increased number of SMEs that adopt CPS practices in the region</p> <p>An information network on SPC for LAC</p> <p>Countries have capabilities, plans and legislation on sustainable public procurement</p>	

7. INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

ILAC Area	Objective	Aim	Results Indicators	Specific Activities
Environmental Assessment and Indicators	To consolidate existing and emerging efforts to monitor sustainable development	<p>To promote the systematization and institutionalization of ILAC monitoring indicators</p> <p>To strengthen institutional capacity for the generation, exchange and use of geo-spatial information on the environment</p> <p>To improve coordination among the national environmental authority, the national statistics office, and the geo-spatial information technical entity.</p> <p>To develop horizontal cooperation tools and activities for the harmonized monitoring of sustainable development.</p> <p>To develop a mechanism for the mobilization of resources to continue the regional dialogue and cooperation.</p>	<p>X% of approved ILAC indicators have their methodology sheet consensual and completed in July 2009.</p> <p>X% countries in each subregion have their ILAC report in December 2009.</p> <p>X% countries of the Forum's Environmental Indicators Working Group have an active and institutionalized mechanism to coordinate environmental assessment and monitoring.</p> <p>Mobilized Amount (in US\$) to develop horizontal cooperation tools and activities for the harmonized monitoring of sustainable development.</p>	
Environmental Education	To promote the development of the Latin American and Caribbean Program for Environmental Education (PLACEA)	<p>Implementation of the training courses and workshops on selected topics.</p> <p>Publishing program and materials development.</p>	<p>X training projects in environmental education per subregion</p> <p>Prepared and available training publications and materials</p>	



Appendix 2 to Annex II Decision 4 – Working Groups

A. WORKING GROUP OF ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS

To continue with the activities of the Working Group on the Forum's Environmental Indicators, coordinated by Costa Rica, in order to strengthen and consolidate activities on environmental indicators and geospatial information, as well as Earth observation systems, addressing existing and new relevant initiatives, such as that of the Interest Group of the Executive Committee of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA), with the participation of the ITC agencies, and other regional and subregional organizations. Likewise, it would request Panama to continue to coordinate the Technical Advisory Committee on Geospatial Information and Earth Observation Systems, as approved in Decision 11 of the Fifteenth Meeting Forum of Ministers held in Caracas in 2005.

This group will prioritize its work for the period 2008-2009 in the following areas:

Activity	Expected results	Timeline	Country, focal point, participating agencies	Source of cooperation or resource
To continue with the development of the methodological sheets for ILAC indicators identified and approved by the Forum	50% ILAC indicators will have methodological sheets on which the Working Group has reached a consensus	June 2009	Costa Rica/UCR and Panama/CATHALAC UNEP and ECLAC	UNEP ECLAC CATHALAC UCR Countries
To finish harmonizing ILAC indicators with those of MDG	Harmonized methodological sheets	June 2009		
To participate in and support the Initiative Group of the Statistical Conference of Statistics of the Americas (SCA)	A common strategy of work for the strengthening of national capacities in the generation of environmental statistics	September 2009		
To facilitate a link between the initiative of this Forum to the Statistical Conference of Statistics of the Americas (SCA)	Active participation of representatives from national statistics offices in the activities proposed herein, together with national environmental ministries and authorities.	September 2009		
To promote the development of ILAC national reports	More than 50% of the countries in each subregion will have their ILAC national reports ready	December 2009		

Activity	Expected results	Timeline	Country, focal point, participating agencies	Source of cooperation or resource
To reactivate the proposal of the Regional System of Environmental Statistics of Latin America and the Caribbean (SIREA) and formulate a strategic plan for their implementation and capacity building at the national level for generating, processing and disseminating statistics and indicators, including the development of national information systems and particularly focusing on the needs of the Caribbean island countries.	Proposal drafted and agreed to be presented to international cooperation agencies	November 2008		
To undertake exchanges to identify options in order to make headway in the implementation of National Accounts, with a vision that incorporates environmental and natural resources management	National account methodology on water resources applied in at least four countries in the Region.	December 2009		
To promote the use of geospatial and geo-referenced information to support ILAC indicators.	Implementation of the Work Plan of the Technical Advisory Committee on Geo-spatial Information and Herat Observation Systems of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators	December 2009		
To develop regional and national plans to strengthen Caribbean SIDS capacities to monitor, assess, and make decisions about the environment.	Guidelines on the collection of environmental data with appropriate resources	December 2009		
Through South-South Cooperation, to provide support to the development of a policy on institutionalization of environmental data collection as part of national statistics programme	Institutionalization of data collection within the data national statistical process	December 2009		

B. WORKING GROUP ON RISK MANAGEMENT

Relevance	Expected product	Country, focal point, participating agencies	Sources of cooperation and/or resources
<p>The terms vulnerability and risks are part of one of the priority items of ILAC.</p> <p>The report of Working Group II of governmental experts on climate change, which focused its analysis on the theme: Climate change 2007, impact, adaptation and vulnerability, makes an analysis with accurate assessments on the risks that climate change can generate on the environment and natural resources.</p> <p>In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water resource • Ecosystems • Pollution • Water networks • Forest and food products • Coastal and low-lying areas • Industry • Society and health <p>There are few tools developed by our countries to adapt to these changes by prevention</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guide to assess the environmental risk for public investments 2. Technical procedures for the evaluation of environmental damage 3. To achieve these products, Nicaragua will circulate among group members a proposal on both instruments that must be examined enriched and improved with input from countries 	<p>Focal Point: Nicaragua</p> <p>Agencies: World Bank for Central America: CEPRENAD CCAD</p> <p>Countries:</p>	<p>World Bank</p>

C. WORKING GROUP ON ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES

To continue the activities of the Working Group on Access to Genetic Resources coordinated by Ecuador, for the purpose of consolidating regional activities geared at protecting genetic resources and to facilitate the exchange of information, perspectives and strengthening of the position of the countries in the Region during the negotiation of the international regime.

Relevance	Expected results	Coordinating country participating agencies	Cooperation and resources
<p>ILAC includes access and fair and equitable Benefit sharing of genetic resources as a priority in the area of Biological Diversity.</p> <p>The RAP 2008-2009 includes this issue as a apriority, due to the importance that the negotiation o fan international legal regimen under the framework of CBD represents for the region</p> <p>These negotiations will finalize in 2010, and active participation of LAC countries is essential to pursue their interests and priorities.</p> <p>This regional instance already in place is contributing to such objective (meeting of Paipa, Colombia, September de 2007) and it is pursued its consolidation until the conclusion of the multilateral negotiation process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * National Capacities to participate in the negotiation of the international regime are strengthened. * Consolidation of a platform to discuss and promote of common positions among LAC countries in international fora. * Through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting of LAC negotiators in preparation for CBD COP9 (April 2008) - Electronic forum for information exchange (from May/June 2008) - Development of a programme for capacity building on ABS in countries of the Region including traditional knowledge (from April 2008) - Database of national regulations on ABS and identification of needs for assistance in its further development and/or implementation (from Many/juen 2008) 	<p>Ecuador</p> <p>UNEP</p>	<p>UNEP</p>

D. WORKING GROUP ON CLIMATE CHANGE

To continue the activities of the Working Group on Climate Change coordinated by Panama for the purpose of facilitating initiatives on joint activities at the regional level so that Latin American and Caribbean countries carry out more actions regarding the adaptation to and fight against climate change, taking into account their vulnerabilities.

Relevance	Expected Results	Country focal point, participating agencies	Cooperation sources or resources
<p>Climate Change is a priority in RAP 2008-2009 Decision 14 of the Fifteenth Forum of Ministers stated:</p> <p>Recognize the need to ensure the continuity of the international regime to combat climate change.</p> <p>Promote the consolidation and strengthening of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol</p> <p>To promote the advancement of a constructive debate on the future regime on climate change in the framework of UNFCCC integrating the adaptation and mitigation to adverse effects of climate change.</p> <p>Urge the ITC to intensify its contributions to countries in the Region on climate change to help the work of observation networks, early warning systems, education, research and capacity building.</p> <p>The important to actively work in the achievement of the Bali roadmap milestones, including the key issues that will be negotiated and concluded in 2009.</p>	<p>To strengthen adaptation and mitigation capacities to climate change.</p> <p>To improve the indicators of energy efficiency in the countries.</p> <p>To support the preparation of national and sub regional strategies on Climate Change.</p> <p>To support education systems, capacity building and public awareness on Climate Change.</p>	<p>Panama UNEP Cuba</p>	<p>UNEP UNDP IDB WORLD BANK ECLAC</p>

E. WORKING GROUP ON MANAGEMENT OF MARINE AND COASTAL AREAS AND THEIR RESOURCES

Relevance	Expected results	Participating country, focal point, agencies	Cooperation sources and/or resources
The topic on Management of Marine and Coastal Areas and their Resources is part of the priorities established by ILAC in the Report on the Fulfilment of Decisions of the Fourteenth Meeting of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diagnosis of natural resources and their usufruct over the marine and island shelf. 2. Economic assessments of coastal marine resources (biomass productivity among others). 4. To develop food policies and strategies that include sea products. 5. Preparation of comprehensive management programs (monitoring, control of marine coastal zones, establishment of micro-enterprises for different uses: alternative tourism, crafts), commercialization of and manufacture sea products, social programs and production alternative to fishing 	<p>Focal point: Dominican Republic</p> <p>Countries: Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica, Cuba, Panama, Peru, Ecuador</p>	<p>World Bank</p> <p>UNDP</p> <p>UNEP</p> <p>Swedish cooperation</p> <p>AECI</p> <p>TNC</p> <p>UNEP/CAR/RCU</p> <p>UNESCO</p>

F. WORKING GROUP ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Follow-up and supervise the decisions of the Environmental Training Network, the activities on environmental education and the functioning of PLACEA.

Relevance	Expected results	Participating country, Focal point, Agencies	Cooperation sources and/or resources
1. Development of sub-regional programmes and plans on environmental education within PLACEA, as well as the preparation of projects to be developed under these programmes.	Establish and launch two sub-regional programmes associated to PLACEA; develop at least 6 cooperation projects among countries; web-page; exchange of successful experiences; EE projects in priority themes.	Brazil; ETN National Focal Points	UNEP; ITC; Governments; agencies for sub-regional cooperation.
2. Follow-up to the activities of the Center of Socio-environmental Knowledge and Care of the Plata Basin, and promote similar projects in other basins of the Region.	Delivery of the education and training programme of the Center of Socio-environmental Knowledge 2008-2009 and establishing at least one new pilot project in another basin in the Region.	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay; ETN National Focal Points.	Itaipu Binacional; UNEP; Governments of the Plata basin; Governments or other shared basins

Relevance	Expected results	Participating country. Focal point. Agencies	Cooperation sources and/or resources
<p>3. Supervise the implementation of the del General Programme of the Environmental Training Network, fostering in particular the following actions:</p> <p>a) Fulfil the pending and the annual contributions to the ETN.</p> <p>b) Strengthening of the units of environmental education on the Ministries of Environment.</p> <p>c) Establishing National policies and programmes on EE in the countries of the Region.</p> <p>d) Establishing and functioning of an alliance of universities and an association of postgraduate studies on environment and sustainable development.</p> <p>e) Development of projects on community training for sustainable development in the countries of the Region.</p> <p>f) Organization of the VI Ibero-American Congress on Environmental Education to be held in Argentina in 2009.</p> <p>g) Bring support to the preparation of the Infant-Youth International Conference on Environment to be held in Brazil in 2010.</p>	<p>Strengthen the ETN Trust Fund.</p> <p>Institutional strengthening</p> <p>National policies and programmes on EE in 8 countries of the Region.</p> <p>Strengthen the cooperation among universities of the region</p> <p>Development of two pilot projects at the national or sub-regional level.</p> <p>Holding the VI Congress.</p> <p>Organize 8 National Conferences</p>	<p>Offices of International Affaires, Ministries of Environment</p> <p>Ministries of Environment.</p> <p>Ministries of Environment</p> <p>Colombia, Universities of the region; ETN National Focal Points.</p> <p>Ministries of environment</p> <p>Argentina; ETN National Focal Points</p> <p>Brazil; ETN National Focal Points.</p>	<p>Governments of the region</p> <p>Universities of the region</p> <p>Governments; International Agencies</p> <p>UNEP; UNESCO; UNDP; other agencies and enterprises.</p> <p>Fundación para el Progreso de la Humanidad.</p>



Annex III

UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2010-2013 10th Special Session of the GC/GMEF

Background

1. **GC/GMEF decision 24/9/(OP)13** requested the Executive Director to *“prepare, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives a medium term strategy for 2010-2013 with a clearly defined vision, objectives, priorities, impact measures and a robust mechanism for review for review by Governments, for approval by the Governing Council at its twenty-fifth session”*.
2. In accordance with the GC/GMEF decision, the MTS has been **developed in full consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**.
3. The Executive Director worked with the CPR Joint Subcommittees I and II to:
 - a) Develop a proposed ‘road map’ for developing the MTS;
 - b) Establish its modalities for working alongside the UNEP Secretariat in the development of the MTS – through a CPR Working Group of the Joint Subcommittees I and II; and
 - c) Establish a timetable for its meetings with the UNEP Secretariat that could be incorporated within the ‘roadmap’.
4. The road map was formally approved by the CPR at its 99th meeting on June 27, 2007.
5. Four formal meetings and one informal CPR Working Group meeting were held between August and November 2007.
6. The CPR Working Group agreed at its third meeting on 25 October that (given the rationale presented below) the MTS could be presented to the GC/GMEF in Monaco for consideration for approval. The CPR Working Group re-confirmed this decision at its final meeting on 20 November.
7. In agreement with the CPR, consultations also took place with UNEP administered MEA Secretariats and with civil society and the private sector.
8. Regional briefings on the MTS have been held for all regional meetings of major groups in preparation for the 10th Special Session of the GC/GMEF.

Content

9. The MTS sets out the next phase in the evolution of UNEP as it becomes a more effective, efficient and results-focused entity meeting the expectations of governments and its stakeholders in responding to global environmental challenges and opportunities.

10. UNEP has identified six thematic cross-cutting priorities. The priorities are based upon extensive consultation within the Secretariat and consultations with the CPR Working Group. The thematic priorities emerged from a review of:

- a) Where UNEP has a clear, existing mandate and comparative advantage;
- b) Where UNEP's attention is required based upon the scientific evidence such as the GEO process, IPCC reports and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.
- c) Priorities emerging from global and regional fora where UNEP can make a transformative difference.

11. The six cross-cutting thematic priorities are, in alphabetical order:

- a) Climate change.
- b) Disasters and conflicts.
- c) Ecosystem management.
- d) Environmental governance.
- e) Harmful substances and hazardous waste.
- f) Resource efficiency – sustainable consumption and production.

12. Delivering tangible results against each of the priorities will be the focus of UNEP efforts for 2010-2013. The means UNEP will use to implement these priorities, and the institutional mechanisms that will need to be put in place to deliver results in an effective and efficient manner have also been specified, which have been informed by directional shifts affecting the United Nations system.

13. UNEP will deliver on the six thematic crosscutting priorities by utilizing the capacity and expertise of UNEP Divisions and Regional Offices and will actively reach out to governments, other United Nations entities, international institutions, MEA Secretariats, civil society, the private sector and other relevant partners to support delivery of the MTS.

14. The MTS places strong and renewed emphasis on UNEP operating to become a more effective, efficient and results-focused entity, through:

- a) Significantly enhancing its capacity to deliver on the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building;
- b) Further embracing its role as the environment programme of the United Nations;
- c) Ensuring its interventions are founded on sound science; and
- d) Fully implementing results-based management.

15. UNEP will move towards a strategic presence model, involving a significant strengthening of the UNEP Regional Offices. This model is based on UNEP engaging its staff and resources more effectively to respond to country needs in line with the Bali Strategic Plan and GC/GMEF decisions on strengthening the Regional Offices of UNEP.

16. The **vision of UNEP** for the medium term future is to be:

"The leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment."

Results focus

17. The MTS constitutes the high-level programmatic results framework against which the overall performance of UNEP will be judged.

18. The strategic direction contained in the MTS provides a clear, results-based focus for the UNEP Programmes of Work (PoWs). This focus will enable UNEP to better deliver on its mandate by building on its existing expertise and comparative advantage in a limited number of priority areas.

19. The MTS provides the vision and direction for all UNEP activities for the period 2010-2013, including results delivered through:

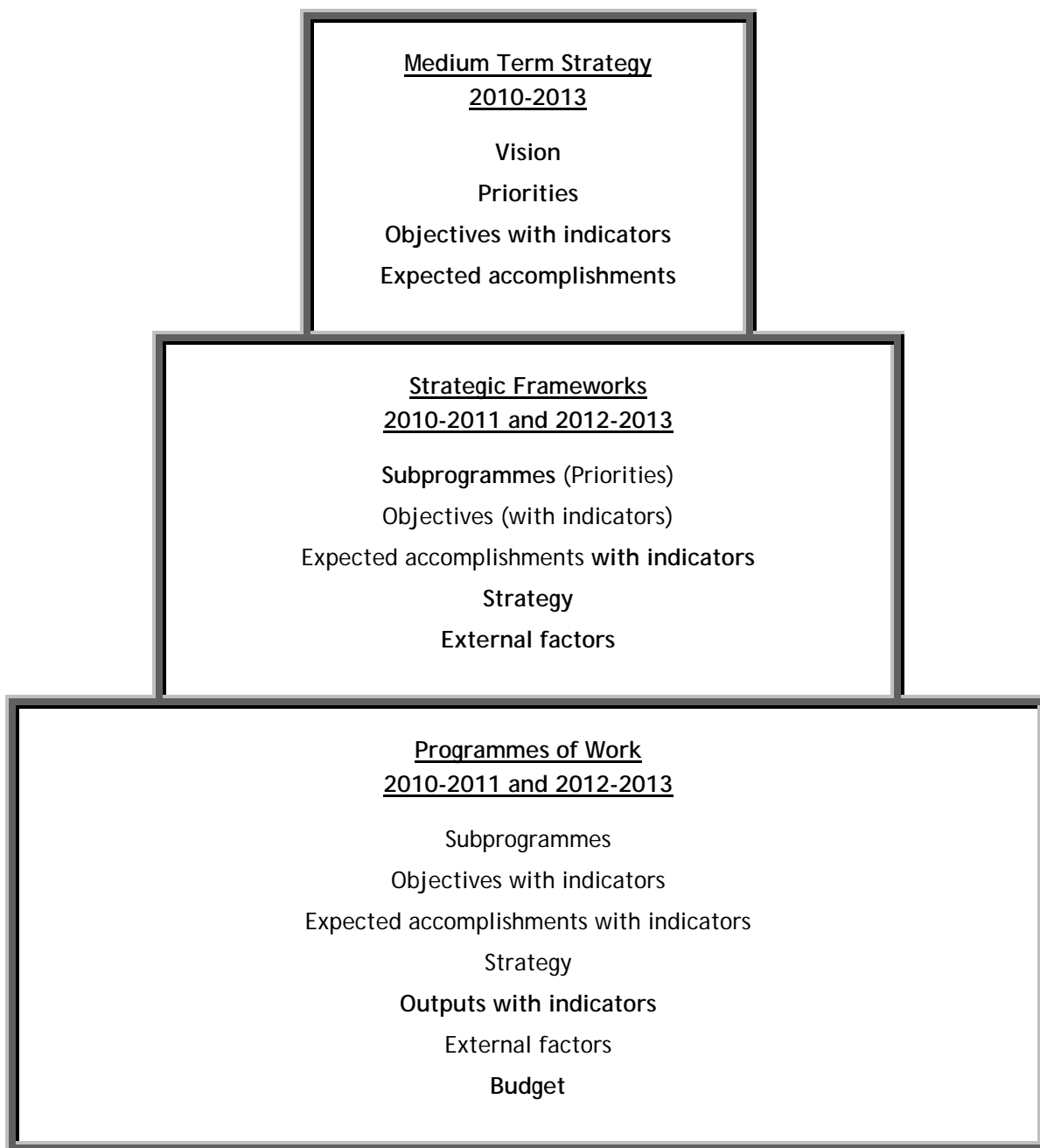
- a) UNEP biennial Programmes of Work (PoWs) for 2010-2011 and 2012-2013;
- b) The UNEP Global Environment Facility (GEF) V portfolio for 2010-2014, and
- c) UNEP earmarked contributions.

20. Each thematic cross-cutting priority includes an objective and expected accomplishments. In order to fully implement results-based management within UNEP, the Strategic Frameworks and subprogrammes within the UNEP PoWs for the duration of the MTS will be based on the six thematic crosscutting priorities.

21. The objectives and expected accomplishments in the MTS are drafted in accordance with the Instructions issued by the United Nations Secretariat allowing them to be directly inserted into the Strategic Framework for 2010-2011 and 2012-2013.

22. The Strategic Frameworks will include biennial indicators of achievement, and each UNEP PoW will include specific outputs as well as the budget. Outputs in the PoWs will provide further specific detail of what UNEP will do. Collectively, this will provide a logical hierarchy of mutually reinforcing results

23. The hierarchy of results is best illustrated through the 'wedding cake' table, which is copied below:



Additional detailed information if required

Relationship between the MTS and the Strategic Framework

24. The Strategic Framework (also called Biennial Programme Plan) is the principal policy directive of the United Nations, which is proposed by the Secretary General and approved by the General Assembly. It includes (i) the Secretary General's proposals on priorities; and (ii) Programme Plans of all entities within the UN Secretariat.

25. The Strategic Framework developed by each UN Secretariat agency and programme follow set guidelines issued by the UN Secretariat each biennium. The time frames for preparing the strategic frameworks are also determined by the UN Secretariat.

26. The time set in the Instructions for the Strategic Framework 2010-2011 require it to be submitted by 30 November 2007. The MTS 2010-13 will set the overall strategic direction for UNEP's work in the period 2010-2013⁹, and this direction will be reflected in the Strategic Frameworks and Programmes of Work for 2010-2011 and 2012-2013.

27. As the finalization of the MTS is still ongoing, UNEP was granted a special timeline to allow it to accommodate discussions on the MTS at the Special Session of the GC/GMEF in Monaco. Accordingly, the time for UNEP to submit its final Strategic Framework for 2010-2011 has been extended to the end of February 2008, with a draft to be submitted in December 2007.

28. The **timetable** for developing the Strategic Framework is:

- a) A draft Strategic Framework will be submitted to the CPR and to the UN Controller on 20 December;
- b) Feedback from the UN Controller and from the CPR is expected between 1 January and 14 January 2008;
- c) The CPR will be asked to consider and approve the Strategic Framework, subject to GC/GMEF changes to MTS objectives and expected accomplishments, on 29 January 2008;
- d) The Special Session of the GC/GMEF, 20-22 February 2008, will be asked to review and adopt the MTS;
- e) Following the GC/GMEF the Strategic Framework will be amended to correspond to the MTS;
- f) On 28 February 2008 the final draft of the Strategic Framework will be submitted to the UN Controller.

Submitting for approval by tenth special session of the GC/GMEF in Monaco

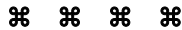
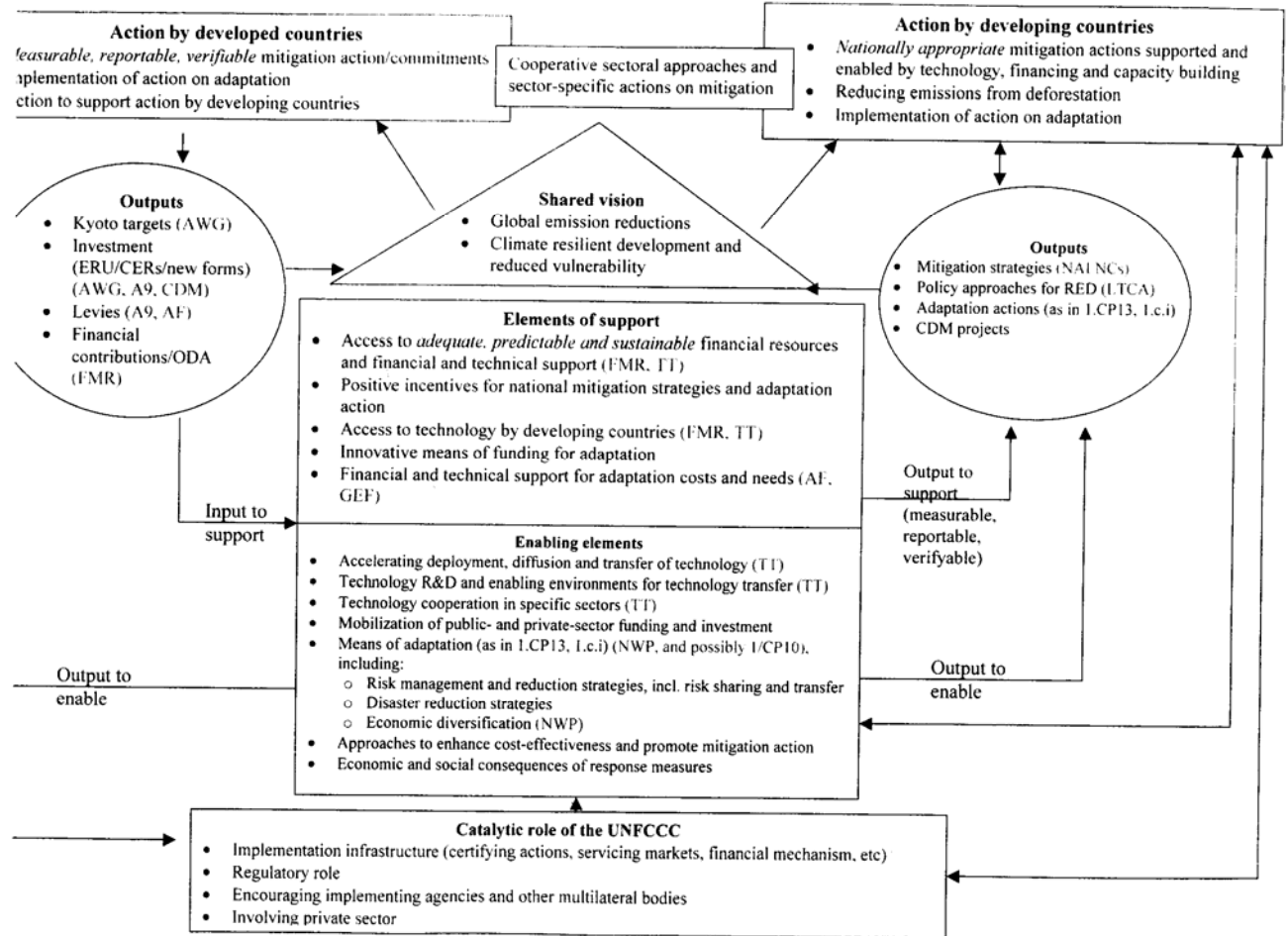
29. The Executive Director of UNEP originally agreed to present a 60% draft of the MTS for review by the GC/GMEF in Monaco. However, the Working Group agreed at its third meeting on 25 October that the full draft of the MTS could be presented to the GC/GMEF in Monaco for consideration for approval. The CPR Working Group re-confirmed this decision at its final meeting on 20 November.

30. The rationale for approving the MTS in 2008 as opposed to 2009 is:

- a) The MTS sets the overall direction for UNEP's Strategic Frameworks and Programmes of Work 2010-2011 and 2012-2013. In order to have a meaningful link between the MTS and the Strategic Framework-Programme of Work 2010-2011 it is essential to have the MTS 2010-2013 endorsed by Governments in February 2008.
- b) Adoption of the MTS in 2008 will allow UNEP to start preparing and realigning itself for delivery against the six thematic priorities while fully respecting the already agreed PoW 2008-2009;
- c) The MTS will, with its clear focus on the Bali Strategic Plan, results based management, and six thematic priorities, facilitate resource mobilization, including for delivery of the Bali Strategic Plan, and
- d) The draft has been prepared in close consultation with the CPR and is in a very advanced state, ready for consideration by the GC/GMEF.

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Annex V Bali "Road Map"



Annex V List of Participants

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