



EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE FORUM OF MINISTERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN 31 JANUARY–3 FEBRUARY 2012

The 18th Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment (FME18) of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) was held in Quito, Ecuador, 2-3 February 2012, following a Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts on 31 January-1 February.

The Ministerial Forum was also briefly suspended on 3 February 2012, to allow the Ministers to convene as the First Meeting of Environment Ministers of the newly constituted Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

The three meetings were attended by top environment officials from 31 of the 33 LAC countries, as well as representatives of United Nations bodies, regional and sub-regional intergovernmental bodies, multilateral environment agreements, development banks and civil society.

Based on recommendations and drafts provided by the Meeting of High-Level Experts, FME18 discussed, *inter alia*: implementation of the decisions taken at FME17; review of its instruments, including the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC); possible elements for a regional framework convention on atmospheric pollution; an integrated strategy to increase the flow of funds to fight desertification and land degradation in LAC; ILAC work on common environmental indicators; and preparations and proposals for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012.

The Forum adopted the Quito Declaration, which commits to formulating a regional environmental agenda and sends key messages to Rio+20; and ten decisions related to governance; sustainable consumption and production (SCP); environmental indicators; a Regional Financial Strategy (EFIR); air pollution; chemicals, and hazardous and other wastes; landlocked countries; Small Island Developing States; environmental education; and the Central American and Caribbean countries.

The First Meeting of CELAC Environment Ministers, meanwhile, agreed to form a working group to define a regional environment strategy.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LAC FORUM OF ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS

The Forum began in 1982 as annual intergovernmental consultations among the highest environmental authorities in LAC countries, hosted by a different country each time. In 1985, the meetings formally became the Forum of Ministers



A view of the room during the opening of the meeting

of the Environment (FME) and the frequency was switched to every two years. From the beginning, Secretariat services for the Forum were performed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (ROLAC).

Since 2002, the Forum's work has been guided by the Latin American Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC), adopted on 31 August 2002 by an extraordinary meeting of the LAC Environment Ministers, held during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. ILAC was explicitly included in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), one of the key outcomes of the WSSD.

ILAC features 38 reference indicators in six thematic areas: biological diversity; water resource management; vulnerability, human settlements and sustainable cities; social issues (including health, inequity and poverty); economic aspects

IN THIS ISSUE

Brief History of the LAC Forum of Environment Ministers	1
Summary of the Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts	2
Summary of the Ministerial Segment	6
Summary of the First Meeting of CELAC Environment Ministers	15
Upcoming Meetings	15
Glossary	16

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Mercy Borbor, Vice-Minister of the Environment, Ecuador, Chair of the Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts (middle)

(including trade, production and consumption patterns); and institutional issues. ILAC is implemented by the activities of respective governments, through:

- the Regional Action Plan (RAP), a biennial-cycle matrix primarily based on ILAC priorities, which establishes regional priorities, strategies, lines of action, projects, agencies involved and resources, among other elements; and
- working groups composed of member countries, which meet under the coordination of a country so as to delineate certain facets of the RAP.

Since the adoption of ILAC, the FME's work has been assisted by an Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC), which is coordinated by UNEP and includes the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the World Bank. The ITC's two main functions are to offer technical and operational guidance, and to mobilize funding for the implementation of the Forum's regional agenda.

At its 17th session held in Panama City, Panama, from 26-30 April 2010, the Forum decided to assess the lessons learned and the challenges posed by implementing the RAP, and to prepare, during the inter-sessional period, a conceptual review of the Plan's structure and modalities of execution. The stated aim of the review was to evaluate the possibility of establishing joint programmes with ITC agencies, without prejudice to activities carried out by the agencies individually.

SUMMARY OF THE PREPARATORY MEETING OF HIGH-LEVEL EXPERTS

OPENING OF THE MEETING

Representing the Chair of the 17th Session of the Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean (FME17), Aziza Ladrón de Guevara, Panama, noted the intersessional work undertaken since FME17, and stressed that FME experiences and lessons learned must be analyzed in order to improve regional coordination on sustainable development issues. Following Forum custom, she proposed that Ecuador assume the chair of the 18th Session. The motion passed without objection.

Marcela Aguiñaga, Environment Minister, accepted the chair of the Forum on behalf of Ecuador. She urged Ministers to speak with a single voice at Rio+20, and present a joint regional vision.

Margarita Astrálega, UNEP Regional Director for LAC,

observed that the moment was ripe to reflect on lessons learned and consider ways to improve and modernize the FME to face the challenges of the 21st century.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Mercy Borbor, Vice-Minister of the Environment, Ecuador, assumed the chair of the Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts. She proposed, and delegates accepted, *mutatis mutandi*, the rules of procedure of the UNEP Governing Council to govern the meeting. The meeting then elected Peru as Rapporteur, and Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico and Uruguay as Vice-Chairs.

The Secretariat introduced the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVIII/2/Rev.1). Many delegations expressed concern that the agenda did not allow sufficient time to discuss the draft Quito Declaration, before passing it on to Ministers. After some debate, it was agreed to allocate additional time for subgroups to formulate proposals for inclusion in the draft Declaration, and for discussion by the meeting.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE FORUM OF MINISTERS OF ENVIRONMENT OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Introducing this agenda item on Tuesday morning, the Secretariat noted that only nine countries in the region had offered responses to a questionnaire regarding progress in implementing the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC). She summarized the decisions taken at FME17 (UNEP/LAC-IG.XVII/6).

The Secretariat also presented a report evaluating the Environmental Training Network (ETN) for LAC (UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVIII/8). She described activities such as mainstreaming environmental issues and sustainability in English-speaking Caribbean Universities, and the proposal for UNEP's Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability. She highlighted proposals for 2012-2013, including building alliances with sub-regional organizations; seeking to extend the ETN trust fund; and establishing focal points.

Following a request by Ministers at FME17 to further develop a proposal for a Regional Financial Strategy (EFIR) to increase the flow of funds to fight desertification and land degradation in LAC, Alejandro Jacques from the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD presented on the operational aspects of EFIR (UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVIII/9). He discussed a mechanism to manage the strategy and a work plan to ensure its



Marcela Aguiñaga, Environment Minister, Ecuador (middle)

implementation; and a multi-agency pre-investment fund with the aim of triggering US\$500 million in five years.

Colombia and Venezuela expressed concern regarding the low level of response from countries on progress made in implementing ILAC.

On the ETN, Colombia requested more details regarding implications of expanding the trust fund. Jamaica called for increasing support to English-speaking Caribbean universities. Brazil requested use of Portuguese in environmental education. Bolivia supported developing policies related to multiculturalism.

Nicaragua highlighted work at the national level to raise awareness on the problem of climate change among communities, and called for sustainable development based on human development and a better analysis of environmental costs. Ecuador spoke of the need for environmental ethics.

Colombia called for synergies with efforts made in other fora, and requested more information on funding sources. Argentina said activities related to combating desertification must be carried out under the UNCCD, and said that the EFIR document did not address national policies that must be undertaken to make food accessible to the poorest. Bolivia expressed concern regarding funding sources related to the carbon market.

ELEMENTS OF A FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: On Tuesday morning, the Secretariat introduced the Report of the Intergovernmental Network on Atmospheric Pollution (UNEP/LAC-IGWG. XVIII/Ref.4) and a document on Elements for a Framework Agreement on Atmospheric Pollution (UNEP/LAC-IGWG. XVIII/7.Rev.1). She called on governments that have not yet done so to designate focal points for the Network.

Many delegations voiced support for strengthening the Network. Chile supported the idea of a regional action plan on atmospheric pollution with clearly defined actions, and an emphasis on air quality information at the regional level. Brazil stressed that any regional agreement should not duplicate work in other fora. Argentina opposed a regional convention, noting the existence of other related agreements.

Mexico supported a regional agreement addressing “short-lived climate forcers” (pollutants such as black carbon and methane, which have an impact on climate change, but are short-lived). Colombia emphasized the need to consider national circumstances, and cautioned against region-wide

urban air quality standards.

Paraguay proposed a regional programme linked to global efforts on climate change, ozone-depleting substances and persistent organic pollutants. Venezuela called for an analysis of the possible impact of a regional agreement on global processes. Bolivia said any regional agreement must be tied to financing, and should include comprehensive management of the forest sector and the promotion of exchanges of experiences.

ACTION AGENDA AND OPERATION OF THE WORKING GROUP ON ILAC INDICATORS: NEXT

STEPS: On Tuesday morning, the Secretariat made a presentation on behalf of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators (WGEI) (UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVIII/5.Rev.1), noting that the group has agreed on 33 out of 49 indicators in the last two years. She outlined a proposed work plan for 2012-2013, including promoting the participation of Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the working group. She also recommended, among other things, using the indicators as a contribution to Rio+20.

Many participants welcomed the recommendations of the WGEI. Uruguay said funding methods must be considered to continue work on indicators. The Dominican Republic urged strengthening the primary data capturing systems that will feed these indicators, saying that strengthening indicators should be a priority for the FME. Colombia urged harmonization of action plans on indicators, and said he hoped his country’s proposal on sustainable development goals (SDGs) would be received favorably by the FME.

Bolivia advocated for more concrete proposals on indicators that address land equity and poverty eradication. She emphasized the different levels of development among countries, and hence the need for differentiation in the application of indicators. She said countries that had recently joined the initiative required a further understanding of the indicators. Paraguay highlighted linkages with universities and centers of excellence, and the need to take indigenous and traditional knowledge into account.

While Saint Lucia called on more Caribbean countries to get involved in the process, Argentina asked to rejoin the WGEI. Ecuador highlighted the need for South-South exchange, and for taking ecological footprints and carrying capacity into account. Brazil highlighted the needs of countries with sensitive areas, and the need for a regional approach to work with bioregions such as the Amazon and the Andes.



Carlos de Miguel, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (right)

REPORT OF THE SIXTH REGIONAL MEETING OF THE NETWORK OF GOVERNMENT EXPERTS ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION OF THE FME AND THE OPERATION OF THE NETWORK: On Tuesday morning, the Secretariat presented the report of the Sixth Regional Meeting of the Network of Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) (UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVIII/6).

The Dominican Republic noted the region's progress on SCP. Colombia emphasized his country's leadership on SCP within the region. Ecuador said the issue of international technical standards that could affect trade should be on the agenda of the Network. Mexico stressed a life cycle approach, and the need to accelerate research and innovation on SCP.

Brazil indicated it had many experiences to share in SCP, particularly regarding waste. Argentina discussed the efforts of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) on SCP.

Chile supported seeking a strong Rio+20 decision on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on SCP, with clear goals and associated funding. Paraguay called for including SCP in the Rio+20 green economy discussions. Venezuela, supported by Bolivia and Ecuador, called for an integrated vision that seeks harmony with nature and respects indigenous culture.

EVALUATION, STRENGTHENING AND GOVERNANCE OF THE FORUM OF MINISTERS OF ENVIRONMENT OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: The Secretariat discussed how to increase the strategic value of the FME, highlighting, *inter alia*: incorporating different priorities determined in various sub-regional fora; using the FME to strengthen South-South cooperation; the need for predictable resources, and monitoring and reporting; and identifying links between ILAC and, among others, the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS (BPA).

Chile, as President *pro tempore* of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), stressed the importance of the FME, pointing to the CELAC's December 2011 Caracas Declaration, and said CELAC agreements will contribute to the environmental agenda.

Jamaica agreed that ILAC and the BPA must converge and work together. Colombia stressed regional integration. Argentina asked how the FME and CELAC could work together and avoid duplicating efforts, noting that the work of CELAC goes beyond environmental topics, and is political in nature. Brazil urged better performance of the FME and a space for political dialogue.

Ecuador, supported by Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and others, proposed that the first meeting of environment ministers

of CELAC take place within FME18. Supporting this proposal, Argentina, Cuba and Venezuela said, however, that any decision on linking FME with CELAC should be left to the Ministers.

Jamaica said several Caribbean SIDS needed more information about CELAC before discussing it in plenary, so that the SIDS perspective is fully considered. Peru said that whether this Forum is called FME18 or the first meeting of CELAC environment ministers was a political decision, and should not detract from discussions on strengthening the Forum.

ECLAC and UNDP stressed that they will continue to support LAC countries whichever forum or process they chose.

Chair Borbor proposed a contact group to analyze options to strengthen the Forum and address the CELAC issue, and to propose recommendations to the Ministerial Segment. It was agreed that Peru and Mexico would act as co-facilitators.

PERSPECTIVES OF THE FORUM TOWARDS RIO+20

CURRENT SITUATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LAC: Carlos de Miguel presented ECLAC's analysis of the state of sustainable development in LAC, underscoring notable progress since the 1992 Rio Summit, for example, in reducing debt, improving macroeconomic growth, reducing poverty, improving general human development levels, and improving the institutional framework of the environmental pillar. He noted that many challenges still remain, such as eradicating poverty, addressing income inequality, improving the energy matrix, and generating the information needed for well-founded decision-making.

de Miguel offered several reflections on progressing sustainable development, including: promoting SCP patterns through public actions; taking advantage of synergies and co-benefits in other policy areas, such as health; improving governance of natural resources to benefit society; internalizing externalities in products and processes; effectively implementing Rio Principle 10 on access to information, participation and justice; and investing in human capital.

At the request of Chair Borbor, de Miguel summarized the points of discussion, conclusions and recommendations from the September 2011 LAC regional preparatory meeting for Rio+20, hosted by ECLAC.

REGIONAL VISION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Chair Borbor solicited input, based on regional and national consultations, on a common regional vision for Rio+20 to be forwarded to the Ministerial Segment.

Argentina, as MERCOSUR President *pro tempore*, noted the November 2011 agreement endorsed by the environment ministers of MERCOSUR and Chile, and offered it as basis for discussion. Colombia offered its proposal on SDGs, prepared



Participants during the meeting

jointly with Guatemala and Peru, as a possible input, saying it would be better to take the proposal to Rio+20 with the support of the region, rather than just a few countries. Paraguay suggested that the MERCOSUR and the SDG proposals were complementary, and could be used to forge a single submission to Rio+20.

Paraguay also expressed concern over the inclusion of the green economy concept. Bolivia agreed, saying the green economy proposals currently in the Rio+20 “zero draft” were unacceptable.

Bolivia also indicated that it would make a new proposal on environmental indicators, which would include a call for a workshop prior to Rio+20 where countries can present and discuss their views and proposals on sustainable development for Rio+20. Venezuela voiced support for the Bolivian proposal.

CONCLUSIONS

Rapporteur Mariano Castro, Peru, summed up the first day’s discussions. Regarding follow up on FME17, he said, *inter alia*, that participants highlighted the need for the Forum to address desertification and climate change adaptation. On education, he highlighted recommendations to broaden the use of Portuguese, and promote non-formal education and multiculturalism. On the proposed regional financial strategy, he said synergies were sought at the national level to achieve better channeling.

On a framework agreement on atmospheric pollution, Castro summarized recommendations related to synergies with activities related to climate change, improved monitoring systems for air quality, financing for implementation at the national and regional levels, lessons learned in the region, and improving transportation systems.

On ILAC indicators, he highlighted recommendations to: strengthen national capacity for data collection; harmonize indicator systems; mobilize technical and financial resources; take into account local and/or indigenous knowledge; and link environmental indicators with knowledge management.

Bolivia said further clarity was needed on the indicators, and proposed that they should be taken into account during the SDG discussions related to Rio+20. He noted the absence of the concept of risk management. Venezuela said the strengthening of ILAC indicators could contribute to global indicators. Brazil reiterated its proposal for focal points for specific indicators.

Rapporteur Castro also highlighted recommendations on seeking a strong 10YFP on SCP at Rio+20, and a new development paradigm that values nature and culture.

On strengthening the FME, he noted that whereas some countries had proposed that FME18 could also constitute the first meeting of environmental ministers of CELAC, others felt

this proposal should be discussed at the ministerial level.

Nicaragua supported Bolivia’s proposal to include a paragraph on the values and rights of nature, and the intergenerational aspect. Mexico said that when the Regional Action Plan is renewed, it should contemplate elaborating SDGs for application after 2015. Paraguay said its recommendation ensuring special treatment for Caribbean SIDS was not included. Brazil asked that its suggestions regarding indicators and national focal points be noted.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT MEETING REPORT

On Wednesday morning, Rapporteur Castro presented the draft meeting report for paragraph-by-paragraph discussion.

On the elements of a framework agreement on atmospheric pollution, Venezuela asked to be added to the list of countries expressing concern over a new agreement. Argentina said it expressed opposition to such an agreement, not just concern, and Paraguay asked for removal of references to nitrous oxide and methane. Trinidad and Tobago said that it did not express concern about the proposed agreement so much as urge coordination between this agreement and relevant global agreements, and proposed draft language to that effect.

On environmental indicators, Argentina requested language on a formal petition to rejoin the WGIEI. Bolivia asked for inclusion of their proposal to analyze and improve the matrix of indicators. The Dominican Republic asked for inclusion of their proposal reinforcing the collection of primary information to feed indicators, and supporting capacity to build national indicators linked to ILAC. He also expressed his country’s interest in joining the WGIEI.

On SCP, Argentina, Colombia and the Dominican Republic asked for references to their national implementation of SCP.

On governance, Chile, as President *pro tempore* of CELAC, stated that the purpose of suggesting that the FME be converted to the First Meeting of Environment Ministers of CELAC was to better administer resources. The Dominican Republic advocated that decisions taken by the FME should be included in national plans and programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

On Wednesday afternoon in plenary, Chair Borbor noted proposed draft decisions on: environmental indicators; a regional financial strategy to combat desertification and land degradation; atmospheric pollution; climate change; environmental education; SCP; access and benefit sharing of genetic resources (ABS); and chemicals, hazardous wastes and other wastes.



Delegates consulting before the meeting

Brazil, supported by Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay, said proposals for issues that are also discussed in other fora should not be too specific, but focus instead on the political context for the Ministerial Segment, given the limited time left for discussions. Contact groups were established to review the draft decisions.

Following the contact group meetings and additional consultations, it was reported that draft decisions on climate change and ABS were withdrawn due to lack of consensus.

On Wednesday, delegates also discussed the proposed text on governance of the FME, forwarded by the contact group.

Chile, as President *pro tempore* of CELAC, repeated the proposal that FME18 could also serve as the first meeting of environment ministers of CELAC. Ecuador said the proposal was made so that FME decisions would be elevated to a higher authority.

Uruguay said if this proposal is accepted, the meeting would need to follow up on all the topics listed in the Caracas Declaration (as mandated in the Declaration itself), and that there was not enough time to address these issues. Nicaragua urged immediate coordination to avoid two parallel forums, and suggested addressing initiatives stemming from CELAC.

Argentina proposed deleting reference to “harmonization” in a paragraph in the proposed text on FME governance, providing for the creation of a working group to strengthen cooperation and promote coordination, harmonization and complementarity of environmental policies. Regarding language on this working group undertaking its work in consultation with the countries of the CELAC *troika* (Cuba, Chile and Venezuela), Chile suggested “coordination” rather than in “consultation.” Bolivia and Nicaragua said the working group should coordinate with other countries as well. Argentina suggested that the country that holds the Presidency *pro tempore* should facilitate consultations among all countries in the region, and said the working group should build bridges between the FME and the CELAC forum.

Argentina opposed language on strengthening the FME’s capacity to influence global environmental negotiations. However, Colombia felt that the language was important in framing the following paragraph, which proposed measures to strengthen the Forum. Chair Borbor proposed “strengthening the effective presence [of the FME] in political and environmental global processes.” The Dominican Republic suggested strengthening the traditional role of the FME in providing a coordination space to prepare for international processes. Suriname felt the Forum should influence the international agenda for the benefit of the region. She offered alternative text regarding increasing the influence of the FME at the international level, including in order to address the specific challenges of the SIDS in achieving sustainable development.

Haiti pointed out that the same Ministers will participate in

the FME and the CELAC, and urged considering the transition between the two.

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT OF THE QUITO DECLARATION

On Wednesday afternoon, participants began discussions on the draft Quito Declaration. Chair Borbor introduced a draft put forward by the Government of Ecuador, and text put forward by MERCOSUR and Chile regarding Rio+20, for consideration by Ministers for inclusion in the Declaration.

The Bahamas felt the draft lacked the necessary force, but said it was a good basis for consideration. He suggested that the President of the Forum communicate the Quito Declaration to Rio+20.

Peru urged considering the MERCOSUR document.

Noting that its proposal for SDGs is already part of the Rio+20 zero draft, Colombia, supported by Chile, called for strong support from the LAC region and a clear political message regarding this issue in the Quito Declaration. Cuba, supported by Nicaragua and Venezuela, agreed on the need for a strong political message but felt it was not appropriate to discuss concrete proposals for Rio+20 in the Declaration. Chair Borbor suggested working on forceful political statements rather than specific elements.

Bolivia and Paraguay asked for inclusion of language on the special circumstances of landlocked countries. Chile, with Jamaica and Brazil, supported mentioning Rio Principle 10 (access to information, participation and access to justice).

Bolivia identified the following issues for inclusion in the Declaration: provision of financial resources from developed countries; articulating the rights of Mother Earth and nature, the right to come out of poverty, and the rights of culture; the need to diminish the growing gap between rich and poor; reference to natural resource depletion due to living beyond carrying capacity; and establishing a framework for a new economic order based on equity, with rigorous criteria and mechanisms.

Ecuador proposed a move towards a new financial architecture, expressed concern over the references to green economy, and called for a strong Declaration and a roadmap to elaborate other issues in future. Venezuela supported inclusion of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, emphasized that the commercialization of nature contributes to an increase in poverty, and opposed externalization of social and environmental costs.

Chair Borbor proposed that a contact group, facilitated by the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, work on the draft declaration. The contact group met late into Wednesday night, and continued its work during the Ministerial Segment.

The plenary of the Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts did not reconvene.

SUMMARY OF THE THE MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

OPENING OF THE MEETING

Opening the Ministerial Segment on Thursday morning, Marcela Aguiñaga, Environment Minister, Ecuador, said that while LAC countries may have different perspectives on the same problems, it is possible to reach a single vision for Rio+20. She outlined three main goals for FME18: an assessment of the Forum and its instruments; an exchange of experiences regarding implementation of agreements from the 1992 Rio Summit; and a discussion on emerging problems with a view to communicating them to Rio+20. She suggested that working with CELAC would help strengthen the Forum’s work.



Ministers and heads of delegations during the opening session of the Ministerial Segment

Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP, observed that the Forum was meeting on the eve of the UNEP Governing Council, and just five months before Rio+20, which UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon has described as a “once-in-a-generation opportunity.” He stressed that green economy is about finding a way to grow economies, lift people out of poverty and generate quality jobs, and not about monetizing nature or disguising protectionism. He said UNEP’s view is that green economy is not an alternative to sustainable development, but rather a means to implement it. He underscored that Rio+20 should be a moment of reflection rather than finger-pointing, and the beginning of a paradigm shift for sustainable development in the 21st century from which all of humanity benefits.

María Fernanda Espinosa, Minister of National Patrimony, Ecuador, called on Ministers to take advantage of the historic opportunity to begin developing the institutional framework of environment work under CELAC, so that the region’s integration process has a common action platform to address sustainable development. She also cited three essential tasks for the meeting: articulate ways for LAC governments to address sustainable development, while ensuring that the multilateral system responds efficiently to LAC concerns, with UNEP playing an essential role; renew the regional agenda, but add new metrics; and build a common LAC platform for Rio+20.

Ricardo Patiño, Foreign Minister, Ecuador, told Ministers that they were making history by also serving as the first meeting of CELAC environment ministers. He stressed that coordination at the regional level in the South was even more important given the crisis of multilateralism reflected in the recent Durban climate talks and the current discussions on the Rio+20 zero draft.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Silvano Vergara Vasquez, Panama, Chair of FME17, said a new economic paradigm is necessary to enable a regional strategy based on democracy. He then invited Marcela Aguiñaga to take over as Chair of FME18. Delegates accepted, *mutatis mutandi*, the rules of procedure of the UNEP GC to govern the procedures of the meeting. The meeting elected Peru as Rapporteur, and Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico and Uruguay as Vice-Chairs.

The Secretariat introduced the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/LAC IG.XVIII/2/Rev.1). Venezuela requested an agenda item on the follow up to the Caracas Agreement coming from the first CELAC Summit, including the mandate to convene a meeting of environment ministers before Rio+20.

MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MAIN CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS

Cecilia Iglesias, on behalf of civil society groups, presented

a message from regional civil society consultations, which were convened in Mexico in 2010 and Chile in 2011. She hoped the voice of civil society could be heard in the discussions at this meeting, and said the forum should be a space to reach consensus in the LAC region. She underscored the flow of information, said political consensus and concrete actions were necessary, and emphasized that the forum should not be isolated from global processes.

She called for promoting national and regional consultations prior to the convening of civil society forums, and for broad and representative participation, underscoring diversity within the region. She called for strengthening the environmental aspects of sustainable development at all levels, strengthening UNEP and the need for additional financial resources. She noted some civil society resistance to green economy, said alternative economic mechanisms should be analyzed, and emphasized environmental education as key for sustainable societies.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE SEVENTEENTH MEETING OF THE FORUM OF MINISTERS OF ENVIRONMENT OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

On Thursday morning, the Secretariat introduced the document on modalities for dialogue and implementation of the FME (UNEP/LAC-IGWG.XVIII/4), stressing the importance of renewing links with global processes. She asked how the FME can position itself more effectively for dialogue and cooperation in the region, and how FME commitments can be reflected in national programmes. She noted the importance of, *inter alia*, sharing decisions with other ministries, seeking political dialogue with sub-regional organizations, and adapting ILAC to decisions that will be taken at Rio+20.

On the document introduced by the Secretariat, Bolivia expressed concern over the recommendation that the FME’s Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC) identify sustainable development priorities. Brazil supported strengthening the



Cecilia Iglesias intervening on behalf of civil society

role of the Forum at the international and national levels, and stressed ITC participation. He proposed a working group to review the functioning and procedures of the Forum.

Chile, as the President *pro tempore* of CELAC, noted CELAC's role as a dialogue and consultation forum, and thanked Ecuador for its efforts toward deepening the integration process between the FME and CELAC. He emphasized the aim of rationalizing the use of resources, such as using FME18 as the first meeting of CELAC environment ministers, and associating environmental topics with the development topics of CELAC so that decisions taken at the FME can be adopted at a higher political level. Venezuela said the environmental declaration in the Caracas Plan of Action should be debated and brought to the heart of the Quito Declaration, which would also be the first declaration of CELAC Environment Ministers.

Bolivia stressed the importance of the Caracas Declaration, and promoting FME18 as the first meeting of CELAC Environment Ministers.

The Bahamas said while he did not oppose working with CELAC, he did not have a mandate from his government to address CELAC at FME18. Colombia noted he had been invited to FME18, not the first meeting of the CELAC environment ministers. While acknowledging that CELAC has a valid environment mandate that Colombia shares, he suggested that the best way forward might be to establish a working group to work with the CELAC *troika*, to coordinate environment work beyond Rio+20.

Peru underscored the opportunity to work with CELAC, an organization with more political clout. Ecuador urged all countries to recognize the significant opportunity presented by CELAC and to identify the region's priorities and commonalities, so that LAC could present a strong and powerful voice at Rio+20.

Argentina, supported by Panama and Paraguay, highlighted the environment mandate from heads of state at CELAC's Caracas Summit. Nicaragua said meeting as the first CELAC environment ministerial shows the maturity of LAC governments. He also stressed the importance of working in solidarity with local governments in developing environmental agendas.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PREPARATORY MEETING OF HIGH-LEVEL EXPERTS

Rapporteur Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Peru, introduced decisions forwarded by the Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts on governance, environmental education, regional financial strategy, atmospheric pollution, environmental indicators, SCP, and chemicals and hazardous wastes. These decisions were then

adopted by the Ministerial Segment without further discussions. Preparatory Meeting Chair Borbor noted draft decisions on ABS and climate change had been withdrawn, as no consensus was reached, but that proposals on these issues were under consideration for inclusion in the Quito Declaration.

The Forum also considered two additional proposals on SIDS, and landlocked countries. Pointing to the high vulnerability of Central American Integration System (SICA) countries, El Salvador said the problems faced by small countries other than SIDS should also be considered. He noted SICA countries were being affected by climate change, and called for broader discussion on this issue. He said the region has not discussed climate change in a comprehensive way, weakening its role in the international negotiations.

A contact group was established to discuss the SIDS proposal, and the concerns raised by El Salvador. Following consultations, the Central American and Caribbean countries put forward a new proposal. Noting its support for this proposal, the Bahamas said it calls for collaboration between the sub-regions and acknowledges shared interests. El Salvador emphasized that the SICA and Caribbean Community (CARICOM) heads of state had called for collaboration, and welcomed the proposal, which advances a common voice for Central America and the Caribbean.

Panama, with Nicaragua and El Salvador, underscored the importance of overcoming divisions and coming together to achieve a successful result. Dominica welcomed the initiative, while pointing to concerns specific to the Caribbean SIDS. Bolivia proposed amendments to the text relating to green economy in the proposal, stating that an analysis, rather than a common position, should be promoted. This amendment was taken on board, and the two decisions on SIDS, and the Central American and Caribbean Countries were adopted.

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20)

CURRENT STATUS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:

On Thursday afternoon, Carlos de Miguel, ECLAC, updated the Ministers on the status of sustainable development in LAC, based on the presentation he gave to the preceding High-Level Preparatory Meeting.

REGIONAL VISION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

María Fernanda Espinosa, Minister of Patrimony, Ecuador, proposed a new economic matrix that transforms the economy to make it redistributive and takes into account social, environmental and cultural aspects. She outlined Ecuador's proposed international roadmap for the next 10 years based on the three pillars of sustainable development, the principle of good living, and the rights of nature.

Espinosa outlined five proposals for Rio+20: a Universal Declaration of the Rights of Nature; a new international economic order; an International Framework on Sustainable Development (IFSD) that includes a financial mechanism consistent with a vision of a new international and regional financial architecture for sustainable development; actions for ensuring financing, promoting capacities and eliminating barriers for technology transfer; and a new metric for sustainable development.

She also suggested a list of urgent themes that should be addressed, including, *inter alia*: sustainability of urban areas; integrated waste management; food security; and the situation of women and indigenous people. She urged LAC to show the world innovative proposals.

Bolivia noted the differences between UNEP's technical



Paul Oquist Kelley, Nicaragua, Philip Weech, the Bahamas, and Artie Dubrie, UNEP ROLAC

document on green economy, and the green economy text in the zero draft for Rio+20. He called for frank discussions on the meaning of “sustainable development” and urged working towards a new international economic order, as articulated by Ecuador. He stressed the challenge of food sovereignty, which involves not only access to food, but also access to food resources, such as water.

Argentina agreed that green economy needs to be better defined, in order to determine if it is meant to replicate eco-friendly practices or is only about international trade. She also referenced the MERCOSUR Environment Ministers’ conclusions regarding discussion of green economy at Rio+20.

Brazil, as host of Rio+20, said the Forum provided a unique opportunity for the region to unify itself as a group. She emphasized, *inter alia*: that achieving food security requires understanding the threats of climate change; political momentum at the global level to discuss sustainable development and IFSD, including international environmental governance (IEG) and the role of UNEP; and an inclusive approach for sustainable development. She highlighted SDGs as an outcome in Rio, but emphasized the need to understand different approaches to address this issue.

Colombia asked that the SDG proposal be accepted and taken on by the Forum to bring to Rio+20 as a group. He said the SDGs would: be universally applicable and implemented nationwide, respecting each countries’ institutions; have economic, social and environmental components; and have the primary aim of reducing poverty. He proposed selecting comprehensive topics, mentioning, as examples, food security, water, energy, oceans, sustainable cities, health and employment. He stressed that the SDGs would not threaten the MDGs, noting they would only replace the MDGs after 2015, when the MDGs are set to expire.

Costa Rica said development and the transition to a low carbon economy could only be achieved through alliances with the private sector. She observed that environmental ministries are often not considered when formulating development strategies, a challenge that must be overcome. She hoped that after Rio+20, environment ministries and the environmental pillar would be better integrated into development.

Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, said the Rio+20 zero draft aimed to reflect the diversity of issues raised by the submissions. He discussed IEG and the broader IFSD, noting fragmentation and lack of coherence. On IFSD, he said the options of changing the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) mandate and of transforming the CSD into a

Council on Sustainable Development were both still on the table, but the Council option seemed to have more support. On IEG, he discussed the options of an incremental process to strengthen IEG, with more funding and universal membership, or upgrading UNEP in a more transformative manner, noting the latter was the preferred option. He supported an IEG where policies can be agreed and given legal status, and implementation can be addressed, including through financing.

On green economy, he said natural resources and the environment are being assessed in terms of their economic value, but only the extractive side is being valued. Emphasizing the need to value natural wealth, he called for challenging economic assumptions that guide decisions, and said green economy is not a political ideology.

REGIONAL VISION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PILLAR ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCES: Fander Falconí, National Secretary of Planning and Development, Ecuador, said addressing the green economy calls for a paradigm shift where the economy is seen as part of a greater, very complex system, which has physical limits to growth. He said he preferred talking in terms of ecological economy, instead of green economy, which recognizes the planet’s biophysical limits and the rights of nature, as laid out in Ecuador’s constitution. He noted examples of Ecuadorian policies moving toward “true” green economy, such as the Correa tax on oil exports to compensate for carbon dioxide emissions. He said the move to green economy requires new measurements, tools and indicators, such as the ecological footprint.

Responding to the remarks by Steiner, Bolivia felt the Rio+20 zero draft was not sufficiently balanced in its summary of national inputs on green economy. He called for a focus on, *inter alia*, eradicating poverty rather than increasing wealth; and recognizing the rights of Mother Earth, of states to develop, and of the poor to escape poverty. He expressed reservations about the zero draft’s proposal on monitoring countries to see if they execute measures, which he felt threatened sovereignty.

Ecuador said promoting a green economy without modifying production and consumption patterns is a form of protectionism, and suggested that the zero draft discussions should focus on limiting consumption, rather than expanding green economy. Regarding IFSD, he said specialized agencies should serve the priorities set by governments, not vice-versa.

Chile said Rio+20 should respect the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and promote regional agreements.



The Bolivian delegation with Paraguay

BRIEFING BY BRAZIL ON RIO+20 PREPARATIONS:

On Friday morning, Isabella Teixeira, Environment Minister, Brazil, presented on the preparations and expected outcomes for Rio+20. She explained that the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) will meet from 13-15 June, while 16-19 June will be devoted to dialogues with civil society on thematic subjects, the results of which will be reported to the High-Level Segment to be held from 20-22 June. She underscored that Rio+20 is a summit, not just a high-level meeting. She outlined the expected outcomes, namely: a final declaration endorsing SDGs; civil society recommendations; and a “commitment platform” – a registry of sustainable development commitments by governments, organizations and other relevant actors.

In conclusion, she said Rio+20 is taking place at a time when developed countries are facing a deep economic crisis, which highlights that past choices have exhausted the world’s capacity to tackle the challenges of development. She said Rio+20 will be an opportunity to discuss new development models, where developing countries can take on a new and significant role.

EMERGING ISSUES: The Secretariat introduced the report on possible emerging topics (UNEP/LAC-IG.XVIII/5), outlining five thematic categories: crosscutting issues; food, land and biodiversity; freshwater and marine issues; climate change; and energy, technology and wastes. Chair Aguiñaga suggested that the important challenges identified require cooperation among countries, and innovative approaches to solve them.

The Bahamas urged consideration of invasive marine species as an emerging issue, specifically lionfish. Noting this is one of the greatest threats to coastal communities, he said this top predator has the potential to cause the collapse of the total food chain in the Caribbean.

Colombia reiterated its call for the region to support SDGs with one voice, noting they are linked to emerging issues. Bolivia called for reference to, *inter alia*, forests, poverty reduction, and the right of States to define their own development models.

Ecuador urged transforming the development regime to one that is in harmony with nature, noting that the rights of nature are critical to achieving sustainable development. She also said “bio-knowledge” and sustainable and rural habitats should be considered emerging issues.

Haiti stressed natural disasters as a critical emerging issue, noting that a single event can destroy a significant portion of a country’s GDP, even if progress is made on sustainable development. El Salvador emphasized that environment ministries are not at the core of decision making, but that disasters might be one area where integration is possible, pointing, for example, to loss and damage as an environmental issue that has become an economic one. He urged further identification of these types of linkages.

Panama proposed resolving a single crosscutting issue rather than introducing new ones. Argentina supported addressing the struggle against poverty, within the context of development and human rights, and forests. Peru urged revising principles, such as common but differentiated principles and the precautionary principle, and incorporating new executable elements. He also stressed the science and policy link.

Paraguay stressed the importance of including sustainable urban development as an emerging issue, expressed concern over the lack of debate and a clear position on green economy, and urged reaching a common regional position on green economy.

UNEP Executive Director Steiner remarked that the



Chair Aguiñaga consults with delegates from Bolivia, Haiti and the Bahamas

UNEP report on emerging issues is simply a snapshot of a particular moment as viewed by hundreds of informed people, and acknowledged that scientists and politicians often have different perspectives. He stressed that the document is science-based, takes a global perspective, and is not prescriptive. He underscored that it is up to the region to decide what issues are most important to them and to act accordingly.

12TH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM OF UNEP

UNEP Executive Director Steiner introduced discussion on this item by characterizing the GC/GMEF as the last moment all environment ministers can speak collectively before Rio+20. He urged LAC environment ministers to discuss Rio+20 with their peers from other regions in order to seek common ground, principles and ideas. He asked them to approach Rio+20 not as an opportunity to talk about how bad things are, but rather how their ministries hold the key to making things better. He suggested that Ministers should think about linkages with other issues, such as feeding the growing population, eradicating poverty, equity, and the tragedy of the commons in the world’s oceans.

Uruguay lamented that LAC does not speak as a bloc within global meetings, or even within the G-77/China. He suggested that SCP needs to be better defined, to spell out what is, and what is not, a sustainable practice.

Mexico viewed green economy as a way to influence the economic community. He said the focus at Rio+20 should be on showcasing available instruments and letting countries select those that most suit their circumstances.

Paraguay listed governance and multilateralism as topics for GC/GMEF. He also expressed interest in discussing green economy and SCP as a way to move away from the current “casino-like” global economy. El Salvador said the GC/GMEF and Rio+20 should discuss common but differentiated responsibilities and equity, which he characterized as the elephant in the room. He also stated the GC/GMEF should discuss the Durban outcome, and lamented its absence on the FME18 agenda. Argentina agreed that the FME had not given adequate time to address climate change.

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT FINAL REPORT OF THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING

On Friday afternoon Rapporteur Pulgar-Vidal summarized the draft meeting report covering the first day’s proceedings,

with delegations intervening to offer clarifications or request amendments.

Bolivia and Ecuador felt that their remarks about green economy and on the zero draft were not accurately reflected. Argentina suggested that the full November 2011 statement by the Environment Ministers of MERCOSUR and Chile on green economy be included in the report. The draft report was then approved.

APPROVAL OF THE QUITO DECLARATION

DISCUSSION: The contact group on the Quito Declaration, first convened by the Preparatory Meeting of High-Level Experts, continued working in the background of the Ministerial Segment, amending the draft declaration text provided by the Government of Ecuador. The Ministerial Segment began a paragraph-by-paragraph review of the resulting draft text on Friday afternoon.

The main issues of debate were on paragraphs related to, *inter alia*: the relationship between the FME and CELAC; the rights of Mother Earth; references to the new international economic order; and climate change.

In response to concerns raised by the Bahamas and Costa Rica, the chapeau clause was slightly amended to clearly reflect that the FME18 and First Meeting of CELAC Environment Ministers were two separate meetings.

In a preambular paragraph on stating why the CELAC meeting was convened, the text was amended to reflect that it was done so at the specific request of the President *pro tempore* of CELAC, rather than in direct response to the Caracas Plan of Action.

Mexico, Chile and Costa Rica said they could not support inclusion of some of the rights listed in a preambular paragraph, since they are not commonly found in LAC national constitutions. They expressed particular concern about the phrase “rights of Mother Earth,” noting it is a right currently only recognized in Ecuador’s constitution. Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Nicaragua supported keeping the reference to Mother Earth. Haiti asked that “and local communities” be added to the reference to rights of indigenous peoples. A compromise was finally reached based on a proposal by Peru that refers to “rights of life in harmony with nature” instead of Mother Earth, and includes Haiti’s request.

Regarding a preambular paragraph on technological innovation, Haiti added language on the need to remove barriers.

On a preambular paragraph on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its principles, Guyana requested adding language urging full support for a viable and early successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol. Colombia, Uruguay and Brazil opposed the inclusion of topics still being negotiated under the UNFCCC. Some countries proposed deleting reference to common but differentiated responsibilities on the basis that it is included in an earlier paragraph, while others, including Bolivia and Ecuador said noting the principle is critical within the UNFCCC context. Bolivia, supported by Venezuela, proposed maintaining the original formulation, which was agreed.

Peru proposed, and the Forum accepted, with various modifications by other delegations, a new paragraph reaffirming the importance of multilateral environmental agreements, especially those related to climate change, biodiversity, and desertification and drought.

Regarding a paragraph taking into account the necessity of adaptation by LAC countries and their particular vulnerability to climate change, Cuba, supported by Haiti, Bahamas,

Argentina, Mexico and others, proposed language on the special needs of SIDS. Honduras proposed reference to Central American countries and Paraguay proposed reference to landlocked countries. Haiti pointed to a clear difference between SIDS and mainland countries. Delegates debated at length whether to specify groups within this paragraph, and in the end, agreed to go back to the original formulation.

Peru proposed that text demanding that developed countries comply with their commitments be moved to the operative section of the Declaration. Colombia opposed use of the term “demand” and proposed language urging developed countries to increase their compliance, while noting that some developed countries are complying. The proposed change was agreed.

A preambular paragraph regarding the need for new, additional and sufficient financial resources for climate-related issues was the source of considerable disagreement and long negotiations. Issues debated included whether the paragraph should: remain in the preamble and/or be shifted to the operative section; reference both mitigation and adaptation; reference “unconditional” financial resources; mention “damages and losses”; specifically reference the Green Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility and the Adaptation Fund; and include reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. In the end, a compromise was reached to leave it in the preamble; add references to adaptation, unconditional financing, common but differentiated responsibilities, and damages and losses; and delete reference to specific funds.

Two operative paragraphs were debated regarding the results of FME18 and the First Meeting of CELAC Environment Ministers, serving as the basis for a regional vision and for negotiation toward Rio+20. The Bahamas proposed deleting language on a central platform for negotiation toward Rio+20. Ecuador, supported by Venezuela, proposed an additional sentence stating that the CELAC meeting represented a mechanism of political consultation that must be strengthened, so the region can construct a vision of integration toward sustainable development. After discussion, the Bahamas withdrew its proposal and the Ecuadorian proposal on CELAC was approved.

New paragraphs proposed from the floor on developed country mitigation commitments and financial commitments regarding climate issues were debated in tandem. Delegates agreed to create separate paragraphs on developed country commitments regarding: channeling 0.7% of their GDP towards official development assistance (ODA); increasing financing commitments for mitigation and adaptation with new, additional, sufficient and unconditional funds; and meeting



María Fernanda Espinosa, Minister of National Patrimony, Ecuador, **Ricardo Patiño**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ecuador, and **Marcela Aguiñaga**, Minister of Environment, Ecuador



UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner, Rodrigo Benitz, Vice-Minister for the Environment, Chile, and *pro tempore* President of CELAC, and FME18 Chair Marcela Aguiñaga, Minister of Environment, Ecuador

and increasing commitments regarding adaptation, capacity building and technology transfer.

Peru proposed and the Forum approved, after some modifications by other delegates, paragraphs urging developed countries to: meet and increase their commitments for adaptation, capacity building and technology transfer; comply with their mitigation commitments under the Kyoto Protocol; and define and comply with new and ambitious goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

To a paragraph on the transition toward sustainable development, Argentina proposed the addition of the need to develop strategies to reduce hidden trade restrictions, which was accepted.

Regarding a paragraph on rights, Mexico and Uruguay opposed reference to the “rights of nature.” Delegates proposed language on: promoting a harmonious relationship with nature and recognizing the limits of nature (Peru); and nature’s importance for life (Bolivia). Ecuador supported references to “all” human and “collective” rights. With these modifications, the paragraph was accepted.

To a paragraph on access to information, participation and environmental justice as stated in Principle 10, Argentina added language acknowledging these rights as indispensable prerequisites for the construction of a committed citizenry for sustainable development, which was agreed.

Argentina proposed and the Forum accepted, with modifications from other delegates, a new paragraph urging developed countries to end volatility of commodity prices and stop financial speculation.

An operative paragraph declaring that Rio+20 should agree on a renewed vision of sustainable development that includes the construction of a fair, equitable and inclusive international economic order was the focus of long discussion over a proposal by Cuba, supported by Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela, to add “new” before international economic order. Chile was opposed, while Mexico and Peru expressed concern about the proposal. In the end, the Cuban proposal was agreed.

Participants debated on how to reflect the working group created by the First Meeting of CELAC Environment Ministers in the Declaration, and the relationship between the FME and the CELAC in this regard. In the end, they agreed on text stating that the FME adopts the working group established at the first CELAC meeting in response to the decision on FME governance, approved at FME18, and modifying its composition. This was approved.

The Forum adopted the Quito Declaration at 10:35 pm by

acclamation, and Chair Aguiñaga asked delegates to place their signatures on the document.

QUITO DECLARATION: The Quito Declaration recognizes the need to develop a regional proposal to strengthen the governance and institutional framework of the FME, and also for strengthening the Meeting of CELAC Environment Ministers. It states, *inter alia*, that the results achieved by FME18 and the First Meeting of CELAC Environment Ministers should serve to create a regional vision and strengthen its unity, with a view to constituting one of the central bases and platforms for Rio+20 negotiations.

The Declaration emphasizes the rights of people and States to development, and calls for appropriate regional financial mechanisms and structures to be strengthened and/or created to guarantee the provision of resources to help LAC countries implement sustainable development activities.

The Declaration urges developed countries to:

- comply with the commitment to provide 0.7% of GDP to ODA;
- increase their commitments to finance LAC countries for climate change mitigation and adaptation with new, additional, sufficient and unconditional funds, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities;
- comply with their commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, and define and comply with more ambitious goals for reduction of greenhouse gases, with clear commitment periods and enforcement mechanisms; and
- comply and increase their commitments favoring LAC countries for adaptation, capacity building and technology transfer.

The Declaration calls, among other things, for Rio+20 to:

- define a process for formulating SDGs;
- consider a universal declaration of the rights of nature as an instrument for good living;
- agree on a renewed vision and commitment to sustainable development for poverty eradication, and promote social inclusion and equity;
- consider, in the context of food security and agricultural development, the excessive volatility of food prices and market speculation in basic products as an emerging issue that threatens the achievement of poverty eradication goals in developing countries; and
- orient efforts toward constructing a more just, equitable and inclusive new international economic order.

It recognizes the importance of implementing Rio Principle 10, and adopting a common position on creating mechanisms for technology transfer and capacity building that enable a greater diffusion of those technologies adaptable to national realities.

With regard to a future IFSD, the Declaration states that the roles and mandates of UN bodies should be reviewed to make them efficient and act in a coherent, coordinated and cooperative manner. It calls for the environmental pillar of sustainable development to be strengthened through an institutional framework that guarantees universal membership, and sufficient technical, scientific and financial capacity.

The Declaration calls for continued strengthening and enriching of ILAC’s work on sustainable development indicators, as a complement to SDGs.

DECISIONS OF FME18

The following decisions, adopted by the Ministerial Segment, will be annexed to the final report of the meeting.

DECISION 1: GOVERNANCE OF THE FORUM OF ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: Under this decision, the FME notes the 2012 Caracas Action Plan of CELAC, and decides to:

- provide for the creation of a working group to strengthen cooperation, coordination and complementarity of environmental policies; and for the generation and implementation of common regional policies and plans in priority areas for sustainable development, in order to develop a process in close consultation with all countries of the region, and in close coordination with the CELAC *troika*;
- give priority to political dialogue and adopt necessary measures for the FME to strengthen its presence in global environmental policy processes;
- review the proposed measures as referred to in UNEP/LAC-GWG-XVIII/4, by the Intersessional Committee of the FME, in consultation with member countries;
- establish an additional mechanism that enables the use of communication technologies to facilitate virtual meetings; and

report to the environment ministers that FME18 is also the First Meeting of Minister of the Environment of CELAC.

DECISION 2: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Under this decision, the FME decides to continue and strengthen activities of the ETN under the following criteria, *inter alia*:

- foster environmental education through virtual and face-to-face means, in Spanish, English, French and Portuguese;
- build alliances with sub-regional organizations, the private sector and community organizations to promote local environmental policies;
- extend the financial trust fund of the ETN and pursue payment of contributions by countries; and
- embrace the proposal to establish a Consultative Committee of Focal Points, which would meet virtually.

It also decides to:

- request UNEP to continue its technical support to countries in their implementation of Latin American and Caribbean Programme for Environmental Education (PLACEA) and Andean Amazonian Communication and Environmental Education Plan (PANACEA);
- strengthen or create environmental education and citizen participation units of the Ministries of Environment; and
- request UNEP to prepare a report on activities undertaken and resources used in environmental education in the region over the past three years in the ETN framework, and on the level of resources in the trust fund.

DECISION 3: REGIONAL FINANCIAL STRATEGY (EFIR): This decision:

- requests the UNCCD to continue the implementation process of the EFIR, establish a Technical Management Secretariat for EFIR implementation, and seek financial contributions to implement the Multi-Agency Pre-investment Fund for the operation of the Secretariat;
- recommends that the UNCCD develop the Secretariat's work programme with special attention to LAC dry lands and conduct consultations with potential host institutions for the EFIR; and
- recommends that the UNCCD present the results of these processes, including the work programme, to FME19.

DECISION 4: ATMOSPHERIC CONTAMINATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL NETWORK: In this decision,

the FME decides to, *inter alia*:

- continue work on elaborating a regional action plan, which would provide orientation to the work of the Regional Intergovernmental Network;
- strengthen initiatives targeting the promotion of public transport and non-motorized transport, and the production and use of cleaner and more efficient vehicles and fuels;
- build regional capacity for generating air quality information for national decision making; and
- ensure coordination of initiatives promoted within the Regional Intergovernmental Network, with the activities developed in the context of other agreements and commitments on air pollution to which countries are a party.

DECISION 5: ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS: The FME decides to, *inter alia*:

- analyze, update, modify and reformulate the matrix of indicators;
- construct and implement these indicators, while respecting the sovereign vision of the development models and paradigms of LAC countries;
- urge governments to dedicate more financial and human resources to generating relevant information for developing policies to achieve environmental sustainability and create offices for environmental statistics;
- promote inter-institutional coordination, the systemization of monitoring ILAC indicators and capacity building between ministries and other relevant institutions, as well as strengthen the processes for establishing national indicators within the ILAC framework;
- take advantage of the WGEI experience in measuring sustainable development objectives in order to develop a regional position for Rio+20 and implement initiatives arising from it;
- promote the use of ILAC indicators to complement the MDGs to ensure proper measurement of environmental variables, and SDGs that could be approved at Rio+20;
- promote the organization of a workshop where countries can present and discuss their views and proposals for sustainable development toward Rio+20;



Delegates during the session



Vice-Chairs Jamaica and the Dominican Republic facilitated the contact group on the draft declaration

- continue supporting the development of integrated environmental assessments; and
- request the ITC and other regional and sub-regional organizations to cooperate with the WGEI for strengthening and consolidating environmental indicators, geospatial information and Earth observation systems.

DECISION 6: SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION: The FME decides to, *inter alia*:

- promote the adoption of the 10YFP on SCP at Rio+20;
- mainstream SCP objectives into the design and implementation of national policies;
- integrate actions that promote and strengthen SCP into national development plans;
- guarantee the allocation of national resources, in addition to external financial support, for SCP implementation;
- promote the life cycle approach to identify sustainability criteria; and
- recognize that SCP implementation contributes to the efficient use of natural resources.

DECISION 7: CHEMICALS, HAZARDOUS WASTES AND OTHER WASTES: Under this decision, the FME decides to, *inter alia*:

- maintain and strengthen participation of LAC countries in preparing a legally binding instrument on mercury;
- request UNEP and other agencies to continue providing technical support to the region regarding, among other things, the mercury negotiations;
- highlight the importance of the Quick Start Programme within the framework of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, as an alternative for accessing financial resources;
- increase efforts and establish regional mechanisms to prevent and control illegal-traffic of hazardous wastes, ozone-depleting substances and chemicals; and
- promote information exchange and cooperation between LAC countries to better manage chemicals and wastes.

DECISION 8: LANDLOCKED COUNTRIES: This decision:

- recognizes regions particularly vulnerable to environmental impacts, such as the Great American Chaco, Amazonia and coastal zones;
- invites countries in the region and international organizations to support the fight against climate change, desertification and deforestation; and
- recognizes that certain conditions, such as being landlocked, exacerbate the vulnerability of these countries.

DECISION 9: SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES: This decision:

- notes that since commencement of the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for 2010-2013, there is no specific focus on SIDS;

- takes into account new and emerging challenges for Caribbean SIDS;
- calls for the establishment of a SIDS-specific sub-programme within the current MTS and future strategies, urging timely action for effective implementation of, and follow-up to, the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the BPA;
- calls for urgent and full implementation of Decision 9 of FME17 on SIDS; and
- states that any framework evolving under the IFSD must provide a clear institutional mechanism to address sustainable development of the most vulnerable countries (SIDS and LDCs).

DECISION 10: CENTRAL AMERICAN AND

CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES: Under this decision, the FME decides to support the joint declaration of the 3rd Summit of SICA and CARICOM Heads of State and Government, held in San Salvador in August 2011 through:

- strengthening cooperation at the multilateral level within the Rio+20 preparatory process;
- fostering a mutually-agreed upon position on green economy, which includes the principles of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and
- establishing an efficient and effective institutional framework for both sub-regions.

CLOSE OF THE EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE FORUM OF MINISTERS OF ENVIRONMENT OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Colombia proposed a decision thanking the Government of Ecuador for hosting FME18, and UNEP for its work serving as the FME Secretariat, which was approved by acclamation. Nicaragua conveyed the greetings of President Daniel Ortega. Expressing disappointment on the current state of global climate talks and multilateralism, he called on Rio+20 to rescue multilateralism, and highlighted the role of LAC countries in environmental decision making at the global level. He said the region must take constructive proposals to Rio, present them with a high degree of consensus and coordination, and not accept any more “steamrolling” of multilateralism.

In closing, Chair Aguiñaga said the meeting had achieved something extraordinary, and that the region can now go to Rio+20 with a unified voice and common positions. She brought the meeting to a close at approximately 10:45 pm.

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST MEETING OF CELAC ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS

On Friday morning, the FME considered a proposal by Venezuela that FME 18 also serve as the First Meeting of Environment Ministers of CELAC, which would agree to create a working group as mandated by Presidents in the Caracas Plan of Action. Nicaragua, Chile, Ecuador, Argentina, Saint Lucia, Bolivia, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Haiti and others supported Venezuela's proposal. FME18 was then briefly suspended in order for the First Meeting of the Environment Ministers of CELAC to convene.

The CELAC meeting was presided over by Rodrigo Benitez, Vice-Minister for the Environment, Chile, in his capacity as President *pro tempore* of CELAC. Delegates agreed to use the rules of procedure of the UNEP GC, and that UNEP would act as the Secretariat of the meeting. Turning to the agenda item on the creation of a working group, as mandated by the Caracas Plan of Action, Benitez then invited countries that wished to be part of the working group to send, to the Secretariat, their focal point contact information.

The Bahamas lamented the agenda for the meeting had not been circulated in advance, and, referencing an agenda item on assessing the creation of a multidisciplinary knowledge center, said it was his understanding that the meeting was only supposed to address the environment and Rio+20. He said this agenda item falls under the mandate of the working group, and should not be included as a separate agenda item. The item was subsequently deleted from the agenda.

The Dominican Republic proposed that CELAC ministers should find a space for daily discussions at Rio+20. Venezuela noted that the Caracas Plan of Action recommends: the creation of a working group to address regional environmental issues and prepare a regional environmental agenda; convening another meeting of environment ministers before Rio+20 to monitor agreement with this statement; and evaluating the creation of a multidisciplinary knowledge center. Uruguay noted a multiplicity of knowledge centers and cautioned against diluting them.

Argentina celebrated that LAC will have its own voice in the international context, and said the working group will have sufficient time to discuss priorities for every CELAC country.

Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, said whatever decisions are taken, UNEP is ready to assist in any way it can. However, he urged against having two parallel tracks.

The CELAC Ministers agreed to consider that the Quito Declaration, as finalized by negotiators, would also be considered as adopted by the Ministers of Environment of CELAC.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

12th Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme: The UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum will, at its 12th special session, focus on the UNCED-related themes of green economy and international environmental governance and emerging issues. **dates:** 20-22 February 2012 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Jamil Ahmad, UNEP **phone:** +254-20-762-3411 **fax:** +254-20 762-3929 **email:** sgc.sgb@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/gc/gcss-xii/>

Special High-level Meeting of ECOSOC with the Bretton Woods Institutions, WTO and UNCTAD: The Special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the Bretton Woods Institutions (International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will analyze issues of common concern, related to the global economy and sustainable development. **dates:** 13-14 March 2012 **location:** New York, US **contact:** UN Financing for Development Office **www:** <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/>

Global Transition Green Economy Dialogue: Organized by Global Transition 2012, this event will focus on the key themes of the UNCED zero draft document related to the green economy. **dates:** 17-18 March 2012 **location:** New York, US **contact:** Global Transition 2012 **email:** kirstys@stakeholderforum **www:** <http://globaltransition2012.org/dialogues/>

Meeting of ACTO Environment Ministers: The environment ministers of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) will meet to prepare for UNCED and agree on a common agenda for the sustainable development of the Amazon. **dates:** 19-20 March 2012 **location:** Lima, Peru **contact:** ACTO Secretariat **phone:** +55 61-3248 4119 **fax:** +55 61-3248 4238 **www:** <http://www.otca.info>

First "Informal Informal" Negotiations on the UNCED Draft Outcome Document: Based on the decision taken at the UNCED Bureau meeting on 22 December 2011, this meeting will be the first "informal informal" negotiations on the zero draft of the outcome document. **dates:** 19-23 March 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCED Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/meetings_informals.html

Third Intersessional Meeting for the UNCED: The third intersessional meeting of the UNCED Preparatory Committee will take place immediately following the informal negotiations. **dates:** 26-27 March 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCED Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

High-Level Meeting on Happiness and Well-being: This High-Level Meeting follows UN General Assembly Resolution 65/309, which calls for a "holistic approach to development" aimed at promoting sustainable happiness and wellbeing. **date:** 2 April 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** Claire Bulger, Special Assistant to Jeffrey Sachs **phone:** +1-347-439-2173 **email:** cbulger@ei.columbia.edu **www:** <http://world-happiness.org/>

UNCTAD XIII: The 13th Session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII) will be held in April 2012 on the theme, "Development-centered globalization: Towards inclusive and sustainable growth and development." **dates:** 21-26 April 2012 **location:** Doha, Qatar **contact:** UNCTAD Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-1234 **fax:** +41-22-917-0057 **email:** meetings@unctad.org **www:** <http://www.unctad.org>

Second "Informal Informal" Negotiations on the UNCED Outcome Document: This meeting is expected to continue to negotiate the draft Outcome Document for the UNCED. **dates:** 23 April - 4 May 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCED Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development: This Forum will provide a space for interdisciplinary scientific discussions, and dialogue between scientists, policy-makers, Major Groups and other stakeholders. Key messages and conclusions from the Forum will be reported to UNCSO. **dates:** 11-15 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Maureen Brennan **phone:** +33 (0) 1 4525 0677 **email:** Maureen.Brennan@icsu.org **www:** <http://www.icsu.org/rio20/science-and-technology-forum>

Third PrepCom for UNCSO: The third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the UNCSO will take place in Brazil just prior to Rio+20. **dates:** 13-15 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSO Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability: This event is expected to take place immediately prior to the UNCSO. It is organized by UNEP, and will seek to contribute to Rio+20 by promoting global consensus among relevant stakeholders such as those engaged in the development of law, Chief Justices and senior judges, Attorneys-General and Public Prosecutors involved in the interpretation and enforcement of law. **Tentative date:** June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** Jacob Duer **phone:** +254-20-7624-489 **fax:** +254-20-7621-234 **email:** Jacob.Duer@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/dec/worldcongress/>

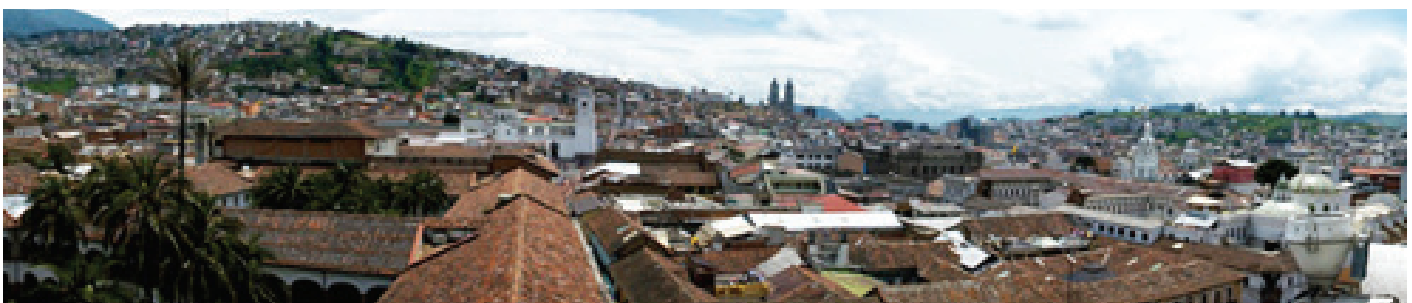
Solutions for a Sustainable Planet International Conference: The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) is working with partners in Brazil and with international networks and alliances, to organize a series of simultaneous meetings, presentations and discussions around five key "solutions for a sustainable planet" to generate commitment to act on key issues on the UNCSO agenda. **dates:** 16-17 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** IIED **phone:** +44 (0)20-3463-7399 **fax:** +44 (0)20-3514-9055 **email:** info@iied.org **www:** <http://www.solutionsforsustainableplanet.org>

Peoples' Summit at UNCSO: The Peoples' Summit is being organized by 150 organizations, entities and social movements from various countries, and is scheduled to take place in parallel to the UNCSO. The objective of the Summit is to request governments to give political power to the Conference. **dates:** 18-23 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **email:** contact@forums.rio20.net **www:** <http://rio20.net/en/>

UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSO or Rio+20): The UNCSO will mark the 20th anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. **dates:** 20-22 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSO Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

GLOSSARY

10YFP	10-Year Framework of Programmes
BPA	Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
ECLAC	UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ETN	Environmental Training Network
FME	Forum of Environment Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean
GMEF	Global Ministerial Environment Forum
IEG	International Environmental Governance
IFSD	Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development
ILAC	Latin American Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development
ITC	Inter-Agency Technical Committee
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MERCOSUR	Common Market of the South
MTS	Medium-Term Strategy
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PANACEA	Andean Amazonian Communication and Environmental Education Plan
PLACEA	Caribbean Programme for Environmental Education
RAP	Regional Action Plan
Rio+20	UN Conference on Sustainable Development
ROLAC	UNEP Regional Office on Latin America and the Caribbean
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SICA	Central American Integration System
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNCSO	UN Conference on Sustainable Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP GC	UNEP Governing Council
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WGEI	Working Group on Environmental Indicators



A view of Quito (photo courtesy of the Government of Ecuador)