



**Organization of
American States**



**Hemispheric Roundtable with Representatives of Civil Society and Social Actors
“Toward Sustainable Development in the Americas”**

Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities on Sustainable Development

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
November 17, 2010**

More than 30 representatives of civil society and the private sector met on November 17, 2010 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic for the Hemispheric Roundtable “Toward Sustainable Development in the Americas” that took place in the framework of the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities on Sustainable Development. The objective of this meeting, organized by the OAS Department of Sustainable Development and Department of International Affairs, was to consider the results of the subregional consultations with civil society, the consultation with the private sector, and the virtual hemispheric forum that were carried out as part of the preparatory process of the ministerial meeting.

During the Roundtable, the participants shared experiences regarding the challenges of sustainable development in the OAS Member States and complemented the recommendations generated by civil society organizations and social actors in the subregional consultations to strengthen national and regional capacity in addressing the challenges faced in the hemisphere. Moreover, the details were finalized for the participation of civil society and social actors in the ministerial dialogue on November 18, 2010.

The Minister of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Juan Temistocles Montas, initiated the meeting by welcoming the civil society representatives to the Dominican Republic and to the development process of the Declaration of Santo Domingo in the framework of the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities on Sustainable Development. The Minister emphasized that Principle 10 of the Declaration of Rio on Environment and Development establishes that the best way to develop a sustainable development framework is with the participation of all citizens, which permits them to offer real contributions in the decision-making process in environmental matters, especially in the use of natural resources.

The Minister affirmed that the Roundtable is an expression of this principle given that the distinct preparatory consultations with civil society and other social actors provided the Ministers with the opportunity to take into consideration the vision of the citizens in the mandates of the ministerial meeting. These mandates served to strengthen the national and regional capacity and to design an effective hemispheric policy for the control, reduction, and mitigation of the diverse impacts on the environment and, as a result, improve the quality of life of the entire population in the region.

The Director of the OAS Department of International Affairs, Dr. Irene Klinger, welcomed the civil society representatives on behalf of the OAS Secretary General, Jose Miguel Insulza, and expressed her gratitude to the coordinators of the Roundtable for their commitment to involve civil society in the preparatory process and in the ministerial meeting. Dr. Klinger stressed the significant role civil society

plays in contributing to the design and execution of regional programs, highlighting that the concern of the OAS Member States for the issue of sustainable development is not new and it remains part of the inter-American agenda. In this regard, she gave examples of the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities on Sustainable Development in 2006, the OAS General Assembly “Energy for Sustainable Development” that took place in Panama in 2007, and the V Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago in 2009, where the Member States centered their discussions on this topic and arrived at a consensus on the interrelation between sustainable development and economic, social, and environmental matters.

Dr. Klinger reiterated that civil society organizations and networks fulfill an essential function for the protection of the environment and the promotion of a democratic culture. She reaffirmed that the development, implementation, and follow-up of regional sustainable development policies are not only the responsibility of governments, but also of civil society and all social actors. The OAS Director of International Affairs stated that the meeting is a significant step toward strengthening the ties of cooperation between governments and civil society organizations and improving sustainable development conditions and the protection of the environment, which will, in turn, achieve safer, more democratic, and more inclusive societies in the Americas.

Following Dr. Klinger’s opening remarks, the participants discussed the expected results and the working methodology of the Roundtable, which would consist of four plenary sessions to present the results and recommendations of the subregional consultations that were held in the Caribbean, Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic, and South America, the Hemispheric Virtual Forum Consultation, the Consultation with the Private Sector, and a final session to coordinate the final details for the presentation of civil society and social actors’ recommendations in the ministerial dialogue.

Plenary Session 1: Presentation of the recommendations from the subregional consultations with civil society

Panelists:

- Recommendations from the Consultation with Civil Society from the Caribbean
 - Nicholas Fields, The Caribsave Partnership, Barbados
- Recommendations from the Consultation with Civil Society from Central America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic
 - Mario Molina, Red Nacional de Organizaciones de Jóvenes Mayas (RENOJ), Guatemala
- Recommendations from the Consultation with Civil Society from South America
 - Maria del Mar Zavala, Instituto de Derecho y Economía Ambiental (IDEA), Paraguay

Mr. Nicholas Fields of The CaribSave Partnership presented the results of the Consultation with Civil Society from the Caribbean that took place in Castries, Saint Lucia on July 5, 2010. Mr. Fields commented that the Caribbean Consultation saw the participation of 10 civil society representatives from seven countries of the Caribbean and three representatives of the Government of Saint Lucia.

Mr. Fields reviewed the recommendations formulated in the Subregional Consultation, which focused on topics related to sustainable development, the relevance and follow-up of the Declaration of Santa Cruz +10 and the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (PIDS), biodiversity, climate change, and disaster and risk management. He emphasized the need to close the gender gap in these areas, and insisted on strengthening communication between the State and civil society in all aspects that affect the wellbeing of the citizens of the Americas.

Mr. Mario Molina Itzep of the Red Nacional de Organizaciones de Jóvenes Mayas (RENOJ) presented the recommendations of the Subregional Consultation with Civil Society of Central America, Mexico and the Dominican Republic that took place on August 19, 2010 in San Jose, Costa Rica and saw the participation of 24 representatives of civil society organizations. Mr. Molina expressed that the discussions of the Consultation focused on global statistics about the social, cultural and economic impacts of climate change.

Mr. Molina shared the recommendations formulated during that meeting in relation to the themes of the ministerial meeting, underlining four key proposals in the region: the implementation of integral public policies and resource management with civil society participation in terms of sustainable development and climate change; vulnerability of women in the face of climate change and their role in sustainable development; the misconception of the State and models of attention of indigenous peoples that should be recognized and that should be implicit in the Declaration of Santo Domingo; and the importance of building awareness among society and governments that climate change is a problem and a responsibility for all.

Ms. Maria del Mar Zavala of the Instituto de Derecho y Economía Ambiental (IDEA), in representation of the 39 civil society representatives that participated in the Subregional Consultation with Civil Society of South America on August 19, 2010 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, spoke about the priorities of the Americas with respect to sustainable development and presented the results of the aforementioned Consultation.

Among the multiple recommendations developed by the participants in the South American Consultation, Ms. Zavala highlighted the recognition of climate change as a cross-cutting element, as well as the consolidation of national systems of protected areas and biological corridors for environmental protection and private conservation. Ms. Zavala also emphasized the need to adopt an inclusive system, to take into account the interests of civil society, and to adopt the principle of non-regression. She stressed that communication between the authorities and civil society is key to the discussion of sustainable development.

Following the interventions of the three panelists, the floor was offered to the participants for their comments and recommendations. Mr. Jose Roberto Guedes de Oliveira of the Instituto Brasileiro de Fluencia underscored the importance of elaborating transnational legislation in regards to aquifer management; giving the example of the most important aquifer in Brazil, Guarani, which also covers parts of the territory of Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, but is only covered by Brazilian laws. In conjunction with this, the problem of drying of the region's rivers and transnational contamination of water sources exists as well. Mr. Guedes de Oliveira also recommended developing and improving public policies that facilitate local communities' ability to be self-sufficient. Likewise, he argued that the problem of racism in public policies in schools, work, and home must be taken into consideration.

Mr. Cesar Murillo Juarez, representative of the Iniciativa para el Desarrollo Ambiental y Sustentable of Mexico, underlined the importance of designing a way to measure the results of the mandates of the ministerial meeting, indicating that "that which is not measurable can not be improved." Mr. Murillo explained the need to seek short, measurable, and verifiable objectives, since this will give greater credibility to national institutions that, as in Mexico, are in a crisis in the region.

Furthermore, Mr. Murillo stressed the importance that decision makers in the countries of the region be informed about international environmental commitments adopted in their countries, since the

implementation of these commitments could contribute to the achievement of the national and regional environmental objectives. Finally, Mr. Murillo expressed the relevance of adapting to a new global trade regimen that establishes taxes for carbon footprints and offers financial incentives for the transformation of industries.

Ms. Gia Gaspard, representative of the International Education and Resource Network Trinidad y Tobago (iEARNT&T), underscored the specific problems of the English-speaking Caribbean, such as the severe floods and other natural disasters the region has suffered this year. She indicated that such natural disasters have threatened food security in the region, which has been recognized as an essential tool in the eradication of poverty and sustainable development in the Caribbean. On this line, Ms. Gaspard commented that there should be a focus on agricultural development in the Caribbean, and on facilitating the interaction between the countries of the region that need aid and other countries of the hemisphere that could offer cooperation.

Ms. Irina Katchan of the Observatorio Climático del Centro Nacional de Alta Tecnología (CENAT) in Costa Rica said that it is important to include not only climate change, but also climatic variability, given that this forms an integral part of climate change and occurs with greater frequency and knowing about it is our obligation.

Mr. Pascal Girot, representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), affirmed that it is necessary to concentrate on the management of transnational watersheds and aquifers in the region, particularly on the Artibonito River between the Dominican Republic and Haiti (only transnational watershed in the region). In addition, he explained the significance of analyzing the relation between gender and climate change since the humanitarian balance of disasters reveals that there is a disproportionate weight on the loss of life of women, and climate change has caused a differential vulnerability. As such, Mr. Girot recommended incorporating a gender focus in the general recommendations of civil society.

Mr. Ricardo Saucedo Borenstein, representative of the Sociedad Boliviana de Derecho Ambiental, reiterated the significance of designing a compliance index. During his intervention, he proposed including other rubrics or sectors such as the industrial or construction sectors in environmental legislation because the theme of sustainable development should not only be of environmentalists. Moreover, Mr. Saucedo stressed the need to discuss what such development implies at the regional level.

Mr. Saucedo explained that last year, five organizations from five countries of the Amazon Watershed met and analyzed the environmental regulations and their shortcomings. These organizations concluded that the challenges are the same in all countries and a compilation of best practices in construction, agriculture and megaprojects is required. The sectors that move the economy are not talking about the issues of the environment and sustainable development that this Forum is addressing.

Plenary Session 2: Contributions from the OAS Virtual Community

Panelist:

- Presentation of the recommendations from the Hemispheric Virtual Consultation Forum
 - Francisco Burgos, Coordinator of the Virtual Forum, Department of Sustainable Development, OAS

The Hemispheric Virtual Consultation Forum was held on September 15 to October 15, 2010 and had the participation of 54 representatives of civil society, social actors and the OAS General Secretariat. The Virtual Forum had the objective to strengthen and ensure a broad participation by civil society and social actors in the preparatory process of the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities on Sustainable Development.

Mr. Francisco Burgos, Coordinator of the Virtual Forum and Specialist in the OAS Department of Sustainable Development, underscored that the conclusions of the Forum highlighted visceral points, including promoting environmental awareness in the region, strengthening communities and local initiatives as catalysts of change toward the implementation of sustainable practices by all sectors and social actors, strengthening the participation of women and children as actors to transform societies and respond to climate change problems, as well as the need to allocate resources to national and regional plans, programs, and initiatives that promote sustainable development.

After Mr. Burgos' presentation of the results of the Virtual Forum, the floor was offered to the participants for their comments and recommendations.

Mr. Cesar Murillo Juarez, Member of the Iniciativa para el Desarrollo Ambiental y Sustentable in Mexico, commented that the citizens of the region are not informed about the scope of the effects of climate change and that it is important that governments publish information on this matter, as well as the reasons why certain projects or developments that can have negative environmental impacts were authorized.

Ms. Susana Gonzalez of the Agencia de Noticias RENA, specializing in coverage of emergencies and disasters in Argentina, emphasized that the media should be incorporated into every stage of risk management planning in order to foster a culture of prevention through mass media. Moreover, she recommended the creation of spaces for debate to agree upon basic protocols of communications strategies with the support of the government and civil society, since people's lives are at stake in this topic.

Mr. Cesar Murillo Juarez expressed that civil society organizations must search for ways to be able to accompany countries in the implementation of the mandates of the Declaration of Santo Domingo.

Plenary Session 3: Contributions from the Private Sector

- Recommendations from the Consultation with the Private Sector
 - Roberto Herrera, Red Nacional de Apoyo Empresarial a la Protección Ambiental, Dominican Republic

The Panel of Consultation with the Private Sector was held on September 16, 2010 in Lima, Peru. Its goals was to formulate concrete recommendations by the private sector and representative associations, and to assess the successful experiences of businesses, trade unions and industries, among

others in relation to sustainable development, climate change, natural disaster risk management, and the strengthening of public-private partnerships for development in the hemisphere.

Mr. Roberto Herrera of the Red Nacional de Apoyo Empresarial a la Protección Ambiental, in representation of the private sector of the Americas, highlighted the conclusions of the meeting organized by the OAS on the challenges of sustainable development and climate change, the management of risks that the private sector faces, and cooperation in these areas with the public sector. Among these conclusions, Mr. Herrera emphasized: promoting the concept of climate change among entrepreneurs; promoting the design of strategies by business with governments in risk zones; fostering environmental consciousness and implementing environmental education programs; providing conditions to guarantee efficient environmental investments; and fomenting partnerships between the public and private sectors and increasing social corporate responsibility.

Plenary Session 4: Debate and finalization of Recommendations

- Moderator: Andrea Sanhueza, Corporación Participa, Chile

Ms. Andrea Sanhueza of Corporación Participa, who acted as Moderator of the Roundtable, summarized the ideas expressed by the panelists, as well as those expressed in the recommendations of the Subregional Consultations and the Virtual Forum that were not presented. She recognized the importance of a form of evaluation of the PIDS and the Declaration of Santa Cruz +10, in addition to the need to improve the normative framework that establishes obligations for the State and the private sector. Furthermore, Ms. Sanhueza stressed that ideas were shared that underlined the requirement to strengthen institutions and public policies (above all in land use) and that this must begin at the local and community levels.

Likewise, the Moderator emphasized that there should be an integral approach to risk management and that governments should offer public information to reduce the problem of corruption, the involvement of youth, and the media in order to achieve the goal of including all citizens in the hemisphere in decision-making. This would also help with the empowerment of local communities; an idea expressed especially in Central America and the Caribbean, where the importance of recuperating the knowledge of indigenous peoples and integrating them into the prevention and risk management plans was affirmed. Finally, Ms. Sanhueza highlighted the search for ways for civil society organizations to accompany the Declaration of Santo Domingo.

Mr. Luis Fernando Macias of the Instituto Colombiano de Derecho Ambiental commented that environmental issues, especially climate change, can affect hemispheric security since it can cause a rise in social and international conflicts over access to natural resources and food security. Furthermore, he emphasized that we should reflect on the instruments to reconcile economic development and trade with the environment, given that without economic development it would be difficult to emerge from poverty. This should also be accompanied by a reassessment of unsustainable consumption patterns with the goal of achieving sustainability in all sectors. Mr. Macias underlined the importance of using national environmental legislation because knowledge of this can facilitate the identification of organizations that allow contributions to sustainable development and can ensure citizen access to government documents and information.

Ms. Isabel Calle of the Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental suggested that the principle of non-regression should be kept in mind. In the countries of the region, environmental legislation is from the '90s and does not include this principle, which has caused, in some cases, the approval of

infrastructure development projects that imply the exploitation of natural resources even when they are harmful to sustainable development.

At the end of the Session, the civil society representatives designated representatives from each subregion to form a commission that would elaborate the final civil society recommendations and would elect a representative to present the recommendations to the Ministers of Sustainable Development during the ministerial dialogue on November 18, 2010.

Closing Remarks

- Cletus Springer, Director, Department of Sustainable Development, OAS

At the conclusion of the Hemispheric Roundtable, Mr. Cletus Springer, Director of the OAS Department of Sustainable Development, thanked all the participants for their participation, collaboration and perspectives regarding the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (PIDS). Mr. Springer explained that the following day, he would present a report in the ministerial meeting about the activities of the OAS Department of Sustainable Development in support of the implementation of the PIDS, including its programs in terms of aquifers, consumption and production, strengthening environmental legislation and the participation of civil society organizations in the decision-making process. Mr. Springer once again expressed his gratitude for the participants' contributions and indicated that their recommendations will be taken into account in the implementation of the PIDS during the next five years.

- Annex 1: Recommendations and input presented by the participants of civil society organizations and social actors in the Hemispheric Roundtable
- Annex 2: List of Participants

ANNEX 1



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**Recommendations and Input Presented by the Participants of
Civil Society Organizations and Social Actors in the Hemispheric Roundtable
in the Second Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities on Sustainable
Development**

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic – November 17, 2010

We thank you for the opportunity to share with you our recommendations and we urge you to consider and include in the Declaration of Santo Domingo the following:

First, it is crucial that governments design, fund, and implement concrete actions regarding the commitments you will now take under the Declaration of Santo Domingo.

We, the representatives of civil society organizations from the entire region, are willing and committed to collaborate with you in the implementation of this Declaration. With regards to climate change and disaster risk management, it is of utmost importance to work closely with local communities, indigenous communities, women, and youth.

For this purpose, it is fundamental to ensure citizen and public access to information, as well as participation in the decision-making process of the aforementioned topics.

The first phase would involve educational media campaigns to increase awareness among citizens, as well as related activities, particularly aimed at local communities. Indigenous knowledge on these topics should be included. Particular attention should also be placed on the relation between gender and climate change.

Governmental partnership with the media and civil society is required to ensure a massive outreach. We need people to be informed so they can assume the role of active stakeholders in climate change and disaster risk management.

We consider it important to highlight the situation of Haiti. It is necessary to implement an information, sensitization and education campaign for the Haitian people with regards to climate change, disasters and sanitation, particularly at the local and regional levels. At this critical time, we would like to express our solidarity with the people of Haiti.

We urge the governments to request the OAS to develop the Inter-American Sustainable Development Program 2010-2014 that incorporates the following elements:

1. Draft and approve legislation that promotes economic incentives for the care of natural resources; for example, payments for environmental services and clear incentives for the decrease in carbon emissions. It is also important to ensure the application of the principle of non-regression in environmental norms.
2. Implement and utilize strategic management tools, such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Land Use Planning. Develop and update land use plans that incorporate the need to maintain a balance between tourism development and agriculture, assuring the protection of archaeological, cultural, and environmental heritage.
3. Formulate and develop energy public policies with an emphasis on renewable energies, and with the participation of the different social sectors as a mechanism that contributes to the reduction in the impacts of climatic change and natural disasters.
4. Effectively apply Principle 16 of the Rio Declaration on the promotion of the internalization of environmental costs to production and trade, promoting change in the patterns of production and consumption and incorporate sustainability criteria in purchases and public contracts.
5. Strengthen planning, national, regional, and local coordination so that there is unification in the action strategies against climate change, with civil society participation. Promote dialogue on the impacts of the climatic change with a focus of national safety and incorporating the need to protect environmental refugees.
6. For risk management, it is essential to contain an integral definition that considers the natural disasters cycle, for which implementing regulatory frameworks that obligate the formulation of strategic plans for risk management is required.
7. Construct multidisciplinary systems for addressing risk management, prevention and information that permits an improved coordination among the highest-level governmental authorities in the region:
 - Establish national disaster management offices that work in coordination with the citizenry with the objective of establishing local emergency plans that should develop and strengthen training programs to improve capacities.
 - Translate technical and scientific information to an understandable language for authorities and communities, in order to effectively achieve the prevention of risks to natural disasters.

ANNEX 2



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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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