

DECLARATION OF PANAMA  
ON GUIDELINES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PORT PROTECTION

THE SIXTH REGULAR MEETING OF THE INTER-AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON PORTS,

CONSIDERING:

That the peoples of the Hemisphere depend in great measure on the natural resources of the oceans, coasts, and inland waters for their survival and well-being; that port activities and the maritime industry play a significant role in coastal area economies; and that in many areas of the Hemisphere health, security, and economic sustainability depend on the resources available in those areas;

That the use of coastal zones is growing more intense; that an ever increasing proportion of the Hemisphere's population resides in these zones; and that port activities contribute to the increase of environmental pressures on ecosystems and on the health of the coastal populations;

That the environmental impact of a larger population and increased port activity on the coastal areas of the Hemisphere can, in part, be reduced by incorporating measures to protect the environment into planning processes for port development; that the member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) should consider these measures as a starting point for immediate action to establish innovative strategies to care for and preserve the marine environment and to combat marine environment and coastal zone pollution; and that this will contribute significantly to achievement of the sustainable development objectives established in Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 3–14, 1992), and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, August 26–September 4, 2002), as well as in other multilateral instruments on environmental protection applicable to ports and coastal protection in the Hemisphere;

That various countries of the Hemisphere have achieved significant progress in promoting institutional capacity and in developing legislative frameworks and sustainable environmental policies for coasts and port areas; and that, nevertheless, given existing differences, small island states and landlocked countries should receive different treatment in environmental cooperation matters;

That a key point for protection of the environment in the Hemisphere is the lack of capacity for disposal of the waste generated by vessels; and that existing port facilities for the reception of waste should be better identified in the online database of the Global Integrated Shipping Information Systems (GISIS), which is maintained by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and provides information on facilities for the reception of waste generated by vessels;

That many important environmental concerns are shared by various nations and are related to increased commerce in the Hemisphere. Among these concerns, it is important to emphasize:

- a. Increased air pollution from marine vessels and port activities;
- b. Pollution from port dredging operations;

- c. Ballast water discharge;
- d. Proliferation of invasive species through vessel hulls;
- e. Contamination from ship maintenance operations;
- f. Contamination from spills of hydrocarbons and other hazardous and toxic chemicals;
- g. Management of marine debris and shipwrecks; and
- h. Visual and sound pollution in port areas;

That the capacity of countries, their ports, and the maritime and transportation industries to address these issues can be increased through environmental cooperation and the development of training, which will facilitate the identification and implementation of best management practices; and

That the OAS Inter-American Committee on Ports (CIP), particularly through the Technical Advisory Groups on Navigation Safety and Environmental Protection, and subsequently Environmental Port Protection, has made a significant contribution in the collection and circulation of information for optimal decision- making aimed at implementing sustainable port development,

DECLARES:

1. To express its appreciation to the Inter-American Committee on Ports (CIP) of the Organization of American States (OAS) for its efforts in promoting sustainable port activities; and urges the Organization to increase its support for the application of methods that contribute to the environmental protection of port areas.

2. To recognize the need to intensify efforts to develop and implement action programs at regional, national, and local levels for environmental protection in port activities.

3. To reaffirm the relevance and importance of environmental protection measures in port activities and the need to incorporate these measures at all levels in public and private sectors related to port and maritime industries. Likewise, to recognize that protection of the environment is strengthened through intergovernmental organizations like the Organization of American States and the United Nations, as well as through multilateral environmental agreements ratified by the member states.

4. That it is necessary to further the development and application of comprehensive, long-term strategies for the sustainable management of port and related activities that contribute to improving protection of the environment as well as addressing social and economic concerns.

5. That it is necessary to improve monitoring and control systems as well as the environmental information gathered at all levels of public and private sectors, in order to identify pollution that affects the environment and public health, thus contributing to planning and implementing efficient measures to prevent, reduce, and limit the pollution in coastal zones with the cooperation of ports and maritime industries.

6. That it is necessary to strengthen, as appropriate, international legal frameworks that promote the protection and sustainable use of the environment in port areas through the creation and implementation of instruments on pollution caused by port and related maritime activities.

7. That it is necessary to coordinate with other regional and international organizations and processes in implementing international instruments such as conventions, protocols, and guidelines related to port activities, thus strengthening strategic partnerships to improve cooperation and coordination in the international exchange of knowledge, experiences, and technical advice, particularly for dredging activities.

8. That it is necessary that national, regional, and international organizations related to the port sector incorporate at the appropriate level the objectives of environmental port protection into their respective work plans, activities, policies, and programs; and to urge the strengthening of relations with all sectors of civil society as a decisive key to environmental protection efforts in port areas.

9. To give priority to promoting the environmental protection of port activities by:

- a. Strengthening consultations, dialogue, and broad collaboration with port administrations, maritime industries, and local communities interested in facilitating the integration of environmental protection plans, activities, policies, and programs applicable to the operation and development of ports;
- b. Generating and promoting clean technologies that combine efficient and sustainable environmental management with reasonable cost-effectiveness while preserving natural resources and the environment;
- c. Improving cooperation among port administrators in environmental matters and facilitating the exchange of experiences and application of environmental management systems that involve port and port-related activities;
- d. Promoting and establishing the regionalization of “Contingency Plans for Hydrocarbon Spills and other Substance Contamination” through applicable international legal frameworks, by means of a cooperative approach to sharing knowledge, information, personnel, equipment, and materials in previously identified regions, and seeking to share knowledge, information, monitoring practices, and environmental management systems relative to land-based sources of marine pollution, and applicable agreements of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) that address air quality issues; and
- e. Promoting the use, follow-up, and monitoring of environmental indicators as well as methodologies to quantify environmental factors in order to objectively measure progress in the environmental practices of hemispheric port activity regarding water, land, and air quality in the port vicinity.

10. To designate this declaration the “Declaration of Panama on Guidelines for Environmental Port Protection” in honor of the City of Panama, Republic of Panama, host of the First Hemispheric Conference on Environmental Port Protection of the Inter-American Committee on Ports.