



### Inter-American Judicial Capacity Building Program on Environment and Natural Resources

Ministers and High Level Authorities of Sustainable Development of the hemisphere, through the Declaration of Santo Domingo for the Sustainable Development of the Americas (2010) committed to promote the strengthening and effective application and enforcement of national environmental laws, taking into account international law and our sustainable development priorities. In this regard, the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (2010-2014) directs the OAS to work towards the development and strengthening of environmental law, in support of sustainable development priorities established by the member states.

**“members of the judiciary are crucial partners for promoting compliance with, and the implementation and enforcement of, national and international environmental law”** *Rio+20 Declaration on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability*

The Rio+20 Declaration on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability underscores the need to build and support the capacity of courts and tribunals to implement environmental law, and to facilitate exchanges of best practices in order to achieve environmental sustainability by encouraging relevant institutions, such as judicial institutes, to provide continued education.

In this context, the Department of Sustainable Development of the Organization of American States (“OAS”), in collaboration with the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice (“Vance Center”) and other partners is developing an Inter-American Judicial Capacity Building Program to advance the expertise of the Inter-American judiciary in environmental cases. The program will sensitize participating judges to the environmental challenges faced by today’s society ,providing them with the basic understanding of the principles of environmental law - including ecological

responsibility and the rule of law - that are necessary for the judicial decision making process.

- Program main objectives:**
- **Increase the judiciary’s awareness of the importance of environmental protection and of their roles in the fulfillment of environmental and natural resources laws**
  - **Advance the judiciary’s understanding of national and international law regarding environmental protection; improve their understanding of the relationship between environmental law and socio-economic issues as well as science and technology.**
  - **Offer the tools that can enable judges to continue their learning and that can serve as reference material after the training is completed.**
  - **Foster and encourage a network of jurists, legal practitioners, and scholars that can further these objectives through the exchange of information and experiences beyond the training course.**

Upon completion of the proposed curriculum, participating judges shall be able to play a more informed and effective role in enforcing the environmental laws of their respective jurisdictions, assessing and managing the linkages among environmental, social, and economic issues.

The program will cover substantive issues and courtroom procedures arising in environmental law and practice. These topics will be identified through a literature review and a consultative process with active judges and environmental law experts, academia and non-governmental organizations (Phase 1). Further to identification of curriculum topics, a handbook for delivery and implementation of the curriculum in modules will be developed (Phase 2) and tested in a regional pilot training session (Phase 3) that will give judges the opportunity to share experiences and best practices with each another.

Partners:

