CONSULTATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY FROM CENTRAL AMERICA, MEXICO AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
“TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAS”
National Center for High Technology (CENAT)
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RECOMMENDATIONS
Follow-up to the Declaration of Santa Cruz +10 and the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (PIDS) 2006 – 2009

- Strengthen environmental groups and associations and promote alliances with environmental NGOs and technical governmental agencies.

- Include recognition of environmental groups or associations in legislation.

- Raise awareness and training in integrated resource management, particularly integrated water resources management (IWRM), exchanging experiences and developing regional partnerships.

- It is necessary to strengthen community capacity to participate, influence, and decide on the use of resources.

- Create and/or strengthen national institutions for better management of assets.

- Encourage mechanisms that can enable the efficiency of natural resource management programs – the decentralization of local programs.

- Give attention to the aspects related to accountability, as well as the evaluations of natural resource management plans.

- Promote the empowerment of society and its communities. Youth must be a player in this process.

- Encourage the cooperation of international institutions, as well as developed countries, in each of the themes of environmental conservation; this in order to have interoperability and make good use of best practices.

- Strengthen legislation in countries to ensure access to water and natural resources in an institutional manner, so as to broadly ensure the thoughts and input from civil society in the agendas of the decision makers of Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico.

- In terms of governance, it is necessary to have open spaces for young people and different sectors of society to take part in the decision-making process.

- Establish clear links between the government and civil society with the goal of generating intelligent negotiations, taking into account conservation priorities and resource management.

- Take into consideration the mandates of the Summit of Rio and the Summit of Santa Cruz, where it was emphasized that environmental management should be done through social participation. To advance in the proposal of citizen participation.

- Promote legislation that considers economic incentives for the protection and preservation of the environment, such as taxes, high interest and credit rates, and administrative management where the environment is seen as highly vulnerable.

- Encourage an awareness and valuing of natural resources.
• Diminish the polarization of political and economic interests within environmental decision-making.

**Vulnerability in the Context of Sustainable Development**

• Ensure that institutions act as compact organs that are so interconnected in each of their action areas that form a set of layers that is highly resilient to phenomena that generate risk in our countries.

• It is necessary to initiate a quantification of vulnerability to be able to measure the effects and materialize these as tangible in the long term, therefore, we must move from the qualitative to the quantitative.

• Give more support to governmental risk management institutions, since it is evident that their budgets do not increase on the same scale as disasters or countries’ level of exposure to risk.

• It is necessary that the interactions between different actors in society have a comprehensive approach to sustainable development and particularly in the case of Latin American and Caribbean civil society where there exist great challenges in their relationships with OAS Member States.

• The comprehensive land management for the reduction of vulnerability must be sustainable. This will increase security and quality of life. It implies concerted development planning and land use, the sustainable management of natural resources, and the utilization of opportunities for local economic development.

• It is imperative to establish action plans that incorporate the relationship between water resources and fluvial dynamics in relation to climate change. The river network is a basic element of the natural environment.

• Aim for decision makers to be informed on the vulnerability of their territories during decision-making, with the purpose of preventing urbanization in areas that increase future vulnerability.

• Give attention to the importance of disaster recovery, close the gap between immediate disaster response and recovery, this to reduce and/or prevent losses.

• Invite government to continue guaranteeing public policies focused on social spending, principally health, education, and basic sanitation. Climate change makes societies more vulnerable in social areas.

• The government must help the mobilization of highly vulnerable populations to prevent disasters such as the ones that have occurred in the region throughout the years. This is termed “territorial security” which is composed of environmental, social, economic, judicial, institutional, and food security.

• Promote land use management in countries of the region as a fundamental component to reduce vulnerability of the population in the face of climate change.
• Increase the resilience of ecosystems to carry and confront constant changes generated by nature.

• Promote the development of renewable energies and secure that these practices are environmentally sustainable.

• Emphasize the need for national mechanisms to confront vulnerability and climate change adaptation.

Risk Management and Planning

• Encourage countries to decree strategic plans for risk management by law through environmental authorities of the Americas.

• Follow-up on existing development plans, which call for the institutionalization of land use and risk management.

• Promote the linearity between local, regional, and national risk management plans with national development plans as a whole.

• Before predicted threats, make governments of the Americas note that systems, mechanisms, indicators, reasoning, and programs are required for risk management.

• Establish information bridges and dialogue between risk specialists and the government and business decision-makers.

• Address the national need at the country level to work in a cross-cutting way, taking gender into account. Also, we must work in a uniform way at the economic, social, and environmental level. The challenges at the gender level are many.

• Call upon the governments of the Americas to implement public awareness campaigns on the subject of prevention and reduction of risk management vulnerability.

• National environmental agencies should consider the role of gender in mechanisms to combat climate change, involve them in elements of prevention, mitigation, and adaptation.

• Respect, accept, and take into account the thousand-year-old environmental management mechanisms, as used by indigenous populations and Afro-descendants since ancient times.

Institutional Aspects and Governance in Climate Change Adaptation

• Strengthen instances of planning, national, regional, and local coordination so as to allow for the unification of action strategies against climate change.

• Strategies that guarantee interoperability and cooperation between the different institutions at the local, regional, national, and international levels are needed. These strategies should seek to reduce the social, environmental, and economic impacts, as well as take advantage of opportunities.
• Promote the formulation and implementation of climate-change strategies with the participation of civil society and incorporate these strategies into national development plans.

• Encourage governments and environmental authorities to exert pressure on large industries that affect the environment.

• There is a need for informational mechanisms in society and its varying levels to make the decision-making process more efficient and with more lasting effects. The systemization and the analysis of information the adequate decision-making is fundamental to the process of building resistance.

• Ensure that the governments of the region include clear incentives for the reduction of emissions that affect the environment in their climate change legislation.

• Promote conservation plans in a collective, as opposed to an individualist, manner.

• Create and/or support integral information systems for decision-making in terms of climate change; take into account community and local government needs.

• To achieve human sustainable development and adaptation to climate change, the existence of new institutionality and good governance is required, for which the following will be important: a rereading of the territory (regional, national, local) and of institutionality; active participation of civil society and its organizations; the capacity of the community and civil society organizations to achieve a relatively stable balance among political, economic, social, culture, etc. systems (participation, inclusion, and equity).

• New institutional policies are needed to regulate and mitigate the effects of climate change. It is necessary to improve the distribution, analysis, and creation of environmental information systems to strengthen the pillars of new decisions that will rule new governmental practices.

• It is necessary that the measures and actions taken to reduce the vulnerability and adaptability to climate change allow for public matters to be conducted in a transparent and quality way, as well as in a fair, harmonious, effective and efficient way so as to benefit the well-being of all.