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Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

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Reference: Report RCM LAC 2011

Date: 29-09-2011

UNEP Regional Consultation Meeting (RCM) for Latin America and the Caribbean, in preparation for UNEP 13th Session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-13) and 12th Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GCSS.XII/GMEF)

5 September 2011, Santiago (Chile)

Report of the Regional Consultation Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean



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A. Background

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has maintained close ties with civil society, and has worked with it in a coordinated and joint manner with a view to encouraging the participation of citizens and governments in conserving the environment and promoting sustainable development.

In 1999, UNEP promoted the creation of a network comprised of non-government organizations and civil society, in the Environmental Governance Branch, to offer an opportunity for broader participation in decision-making.

In 2004, the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch was created, with the major groups being classified into nine categories: women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community and farmers.

Each year since 2000, UNEP has organized the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF) and their participation in the meetings of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF). In the past seven years, the consultation cycle of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum has become the main entry point for participation in UNEP, in the framework of environmental governance.

The Global Forum is built through six regional consultation meetings, in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and Western Asia.

Each region becomes involved in a substantive dialogue on the issues to be discussed at the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF) and at the meeting of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.

B. Objectives of the Major Groups and Stakeholders' Consultation Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2011

To provide a platform for exchanging opinions on relevant environmental issues. The conclusions of this regional meeting will contribute to enriching the discussions of the 13th Session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and of the 12th Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMGSF-13 and GCSS.XII/GMEF), as well as the preparatory process for Rio 2012. The most significant topics addressed include



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the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, the institutional framework for sustainable development, the development process of the GEO 5, among others.

C. Conduct of business

Opening session

At the opening session, Carlos Gómez, president of Mundo Sustentable A.C., in his capacity as outgoing chair of the Regional Consultation Meeting, welcomed the participants. In his brief address, he stressed the progress made since the establishment of the Network of Major Civil Society Groups and encouraged participants to take the opportunity for interaction provided by UNEP so as to arrive at intelligent agreements.

Carlos Gómez gave the floor to Javier García Monje, Coordinator of International Affairs of the Ministry of the Environment of Chile, who stressed the important opportunity being created for the discussion on Rio+20. Javier García referred to the planet's global challenges and to how his country is facing them. He explained that Chile has ambitious objectives, such as 6 per cent sustained economic growth, poverty reduction, protection of 10 per cent of all major ecosystems, a 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, as well as the commitment to cease using chemicals that damage the ozone layer. The representative of Chile's Ministry of the Environment stressed the importance of having greater coordination between government and civil society.

Next to speak was Mara Murillo, Deputy Regional Director, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP/ROLAC). After welcoming the attendees and indicating the objectives of the meeting, Ms. Murillo invited the representatives of the Major Groups to play an active role so as to allow a consensus to be reached on the Region's recommendations for the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum.

Carlos Gómez, taking the floor once again, invited the participants to introduce themselves to the rest of the Forum (the list of all attendees can be found in Annex I). He next proposed that the debate on the election of the new Chair of the Regional Consultation Meeting begin.

Liliana Núñez thanked UNEP for the greater role played by the Major Groups and the regions in this meeting and then proposed that Calvin James chair the meeting. Calvin James was



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chosen by a unanimous vote and he thanked the remaining participants for the trust they had placed in him and expressed his desire to achieve the expected objectives. Mr. James submitted the agenda to the consideration of the meeting, and it was approved by consensus.

Session 2: Regional Perspective of the Rio+20 Conference and UNEP's Vision

Mara Murillo gave a presentation examining the current situation in the world, and especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, compared with 1992. She said that environmental degradation has not been halted and the Region has the highest inequality in the world.

The Assistant Regional Director of UNEP commented on the importance of the topics of Rio+20 for the Region, and stressed the call made by GEO-LAC to reconsider the development model so as to allow the Region to face its challenges, in particular eradicating poverty, restoring ecosystems and recovering ecosystem services as well as achieving an increase in well-being and equity. She also invited the participants to look at the 15 posters exhibited outside the conference room showing cases of green economy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

She spoke of the importance of strengthening the environmental pillar, which was not yet sufficiently present and has not been made a cross-cutting component of development and sectoral policies; she underlined the need for the three pillars of sustainable development — the economic, social and environmental— to be integrated so as to promote the consistency and integration of policies, ensuring that all of the pillars are mutually dependent and mutually supportive and exist in a dynamic relationship.

Mara Murillo then spoke at greater length on the road to Rio+20 and the work that UNEP is carrying out by supporting various preparatory processes in the Region.

The floor was then opened up for discussion among the participants and numerous topics were touched upon. One of the first messages was that the social movement, in the run-up to Rio+20, was not sufficiently strong. Several participants stated that their governments were not making the necessary effort for sustainable development or regarding the preparatory process for Rio+20.

The representative of the academic area pointed out the need for an evaluation of the international agreements signed in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. He said it was crucial for the issue



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under discussion to know how we were in legal terms as well as in the application and implementation of the agreements, because they are international obligations for the States.

Some representatives agreed on the need to strengthen the pillars of sustainable development, in particular the environment and the social pillars, and there were differences on which pillar has been neglected the most. One participant expressed concern that the concept of green economy could be placing greater emphasis on the environmental and economic pillars.

Session 3: Green economy and sustainable development: Regional perspective

After a short break, Calvin James gave the floor to Paulo Itacarambi, who began a presentation on green economy from the perspective of the Instituto Ethos de Empresas e Responsabilidade Social, of which he is the executive director.

Paulo Itacarambi began by explaining that the Instituto Ethos had added the ethical aspect to the economic, social and environmental aspects of the concept of green economy. In his opinion, to achieve authentic change in the business world, the interaction of three factors was needed: price, quality and sustainability.

He proposed working in three core areas:

- Involving enterprises in the vision of change—in competitiveness based on sustainability. He stressed the role that could be played by state and multinational enterprises.
- Secondly, enterprises should formulate specific proposals on public policies for governments.
- Lastly, society should present its proposals to governments without waiting for institutions to propose them.

Paulo Itacarambi stated that innovation for sustainability would be key for moving forward in the transition to a green economy. He underscored the importance of social inclusion as well as growth with wealth distribution and equitable access to opportunities. The system should be ethical and transparent, and he stressed the importance of changing the consumption patterns and the values of the mass consumption society, in order for change to be feasible.

He reported that the Instituto Ethos has developed a mobilization agenda in the run-up to Rio+20, which seeks to have governments commit to ensuring that the sustainable



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development goal results in social and ethical development of their populations and a decrease in resource consumption. This would lead to a green, inclusive and responsible economy.

The Institute is also promoting a commitment by institutions to create a context conducive to sustainable development, with national plans, emissions reduction, the establishment of minimum operating standards for state and multinational companies, a reduction in inequality and increased transparency.

The commitments being sought would also require fostering new consumption standards; developing the mixed economy with the synergy between public and private investments; and constructing an institutional architecture for sustainable development, with the agencies of the United Nations, the IMF, the World Bank, the OECD, etc.

Participation in the subsequent debate was very strong. The first remarks addressed the preparatory process for Rio+20 by small and micro enterprises in the Region as well as by workers organizations. One of the messages transmitted was that to be green, work must be decent. Another participant stressed that the green economy must not distance itself from the recognized rights of indigenous peoples and must be respectful of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

On this point, another participant stated that there was no consensus among civil society of the Region on the concept of green economy and she indicated her preference for making positive proposals on issues on which a consensus had been reached, such as sustainable development. The calls to carry out an authentic assessment of the degree of compliance of the commitments adopted twenty years ago were recurring. One of the meeting attendees asked that UNEP offer a presentation on the green economy, although the next participant stated that, in addition to the perspective of UNEP, it was positive to know other viewpoints on innovating. This participant stated that she was in favour of moving beyond the GDP and Human Development Index indicators —incomplete, in her opinion— and creating an indicator of sustainable development and green economy.

In response to the request of the attendees, Elisa Tonda gave a talk on different aspects of the green economy, with special emphasis on its coverage of the three pillars of sustainable development.

After the presentation, the next person to speak was Mara Murillo, who added some data on the economic, social, environmental and sustainable development implications of the



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degradation of ecosystems and ecosystem services. She also commented on the urgency of reconsidering the development model, bearing in mind that the world's population will rise from seven billion today to nine billion in 2050, with the enormous challenges that this population growth will imply in terms of food and basic services, among other issues.

The debate then resumed, focusing especially on the concept of green economy. One participant said that the use of the terms “economy” and “green” did not seem appropriate to her. Another said that green economy should remain within the context of Agenda 21.

One participant suggested a need to make progress on other issues and that one of the conclusions should note a lack of consensus on the concept of green economy. Another person questioned the need for new concepts on which there was no consensus, and noted concern that this appeared to be more than anything a concept tailored for business.

The indigenous peoples' representative said that green economy included some concepts for which indigenous peoples have fought.

The Deputy Regional Director of UNEP noted that the Region has clear examples of policies and mechanisms that aim to bring about a low-carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive economy. She thus stressed the importance of focusing on strengthening the environmental pillar in the economic and social fields.

The meeting chair, Calvin James, proposed that during lunch two work panels explore possible elements of consensus on both topics: green economy in the framework of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

Session 4: Governance for Sustainable Development.

Alida Spadafora, executive director of the Panamanian NGO ANCON, delivered a presentation on the topic in which she covered elements of the debate in which she recently participated during the global consultation on Rio+20 held in Bonn.

She said that the achievement of sustainable development internationally requires achieving coherence for the three pillars to be equally strong.



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Regarding International Environmental Governance, she noted that it is necessary to resolve certain structural weaknesses such as the fragmentation of the agenda, the lack of accountability and the need for a global authority to act as the “conductor” of the environmental pillar.

She raised the need to effectively strengthen UNEP in order to ensure a strong scientific foundation —task which, in her opinion, UNEP had been carrying out— and predictable and sufficient funding and to achieve coherence in the United Nations system and develop an authorized global voice.

She said that, at the international level, various options are being debated: strengthening UNEP with greater authority and funding, establishing a new umbrella organization for sustainable development, creating a specialized agency such as the World Environmental Organization, reforming the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development or improving institutional reforms and streamlining existing structures.

At the end of her presentation, Alida Spadafora commented on the importance of representatives of the Major Groups from developing countries playing a more prominent role at global meetings, rather than merely acting as observers. She thus invited the participants to review and comment on the document Guidelines for Participation of Major Groups and Stakeholders in Policy Design at UNEP.

In the debate, the participants stressed the need to promote greater and more effective participation of the Major Groups in the debates at international intergovernmental agencies, while they recognized that this depends on the decision of the governments, which are members of those agencies. Some representatives of the Major Groups noted that it is

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