

DECLARATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY**General Declaration of Consensus**

Caracas, Venezuela, 30th October. 2005

I. Considering that:

1. Principle 10 of the United Nations Conference for the Environment and Development establishes the participation of diverse groups of civil society in order to build processes of sustainability, which was ratified in the Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.
2. In 2002, the governments decided to continue the UNEP practice of organizing the World Forum of Civil Society, together with the UNEP Governing Council/World Environment Forum at a Ministerial level, with the adoption of decision SSVII.5, which requires that *“The Executive Director will continue the current practice of calling civil society to a regionally objective and representative forum, adjacent to the Governing Council/World Environment Forum at a Ministerial level, with close consultation with civil society.”*
3. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the American Convention of Rights of the OAS is an obligation of the States to ensure direct public participation in public and government affairs for the full exercise of political and civil rights.
4. The direct, full, representative and inclusive participation is a condition for sustainable development to ensure the construction of public environment and sustainable development projects, in addition to attesting to a growing interest in participation by civil society organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean.
5. It is important to acknowledge the experiences of meetings between civil society and the UNEP, and considering that this is the time to strengthen sustainable development goals that promote policies and mechanisms in support of the work done by UNEP and its member governments.
6. The premises upon which discussion is based and from which dialogue emerged, in the search for complementariness and the forging of consensus among the civil society organizations derived from the consensus of interest of the UNEP and the Civil Society Forum to harmonize the Agenda for development and the environment and.
7. Acknowledging the importance of these processes, the civil society gathered on the 29th and 30th of October, 2005 in Caracas, Venezuela, in the Second Regional Forum of Latin American and the Caribbean declares the following:

II. Strengthen the participation and organization of civil society of Latin America and the Caribbean:

1. The declaratory points I and II of the Declaration of Civil Society of 2004 are still valid; consequently, the civil society organizations gathered will make the pertinent efforts from their countries to implement the agreements with the support of the Subregion Coordinators.
2. The LAC Civil Society Fora gathered in Caracas, Venezuela coincides in the creation of an Executive Secretariat of the Regional Coordination and it will be the coordinators who develop the operation proposal of the secretariat. Bearing in mind the objectives proposed in the last session of the Civil Society Forum held in Panama City, Panama in 2004, the objectives are as follows:
 - a) Constitution of a permanent discourse mechanism of civil society for interlocution with UNEP and its Governing Council and the international environment and sustainability meetings.
 - b) Prior, preparatory regional and subregional meetings to discuss documents, proposals, plans and programmes, which may be virtual.
 - c) Dissemination of official documents for subregional review that permit the formulation of proposals and analysis prior to the meetings between the UNEP and civil society.
 - d) Effective communication strategy between the UNEP and the articulation mechanism created by civil society in order to facilitate the dissemination of information and direct participation in the drafting of proposals and in making decisions.

These Subregional Coordination bodies will direct their efforts to the following tasks:

- a) Internal operation and functioning mechanisms.
- b) Communication and dissemination instruments: electronic forum and four virtual meetings.
- c) Formation of national teams and representations, with support from the National Consultation Councils for sustainable development and mixed joint-planning bodies because this has been a mandate since the Rio Summit, manifested in both the declaratory statement and in Agenda 21 and ratified in the Johannesburg Summit.
- d) Coordinate with the UNEP in the construction of Indicators to Monitor the Latin American and Caribbean Sustainable Development Initiative, the Millennium Objectives and Programme 21, while identifying priority issues.
- e) Establish a strategy to attend to environment conventions.

3. In 2006, Venezuela will host the World Social Forum, which is an opportunity for the member organizations of the Civil Society Coordination of Latin America and the Caribbean for the Environment and Development to meet to continue reflecting on and developing alliances by integrating the environment dimension in the Social Forum agenda. This will be the right moment to improve the organizational work and it will furnish us with the tools to strengthen the collective maturity necessary and our policy visibility as the Civil Society Coordination of Latin America and the Caribbean.

III. Contributions and consensus concerning the issues of Chemicals Management, Energy and the Environment and Shared Environment Management.

III.1 Chemicals Management:

In order to reach the 2020 goal: “chemicals should be used and manufactured in ways that significantly help minimize the adverse effects on human health and the environment”, we ask our Minister of the Environment to:

At an international level and with urgency to instruct their government representatives attending the I International Conference on Chemicals Management (Dubai, 4-6 February, 2006) to finalize the construction process of the Strategic Approach for International Chemical Management (SAICM), that defends and guarantees the following points:

- SAICM represents a political, moral and ethical commitment to reaching the goal 2020.
- Demand new, substantial funds, as well as fiscal instruments to maintain additional funds for the implementation of the SAICM.
- Include measures to eliminate, require safer substitutes and provide solutions when a chemical poses an unmanageable threat to health or the environment under conditions of ordinary use in a country.
- Incorporate the principles and approaches of Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration and other relevant international agreements, including the principle of precaution, liability and compensation, public participation, development of laws that guarantee the right to information and implement the principle of the polluter pays.
- Further the participatory, multi-sector process and with all the interested parties, based on the practices of the International Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS), while allocating more authority and improving its integration within the United Nations system and creating a secretariat.

At a regional level to:

- Develop policies and strategies that promote: education, participation, right to information, transparency, development of capacities and implementation of international agreements.
- Implement, with the full participation of civil society, the Stockholm Convention on COPs and its agreements, starting with its ratification and implementation plans. Additionally, to consider the inclusion of new substances to the list of COPs, such as methyl mercury and lindane.

III.2 Energy and Environment

Considering:

That the current development model is based on unsustainable production and consumption patterns that indefinitely promote the use of fossil fuels and mega hydroelectric power stations with a high environment, social and cultural impact, which do not correspond to the real needs of the communities and peoples of the Latin American region.

That the energy-intensive activities of the region are responsible for the generation of greenhouse effect gases, which contributes to the phenomenon of Climate Change.

That the demand for energy and energy intensity increase at a faster rate than the economic growth of the countries of the region.

We call on the governments of the region to:

1. Reposition and redefine in Latin America and the Caribbean the goal proposed in the Johannesburg World Summit concerning the incorporation of at least 10% of renewable energy in national energy matrixes, exclusively considering those non-conventional and sustainable energy sources, such as wind, solar, biomass, tidal, geothermic and small hydroelectric power stations.
2. That within a maximum period of 5 years, energy demand and energy intensity must be disassociated from macroeconomic growth in the region's countries through medium- and long-term sustained energy efficiency initiatives.
3. Remove the obstacles to the development of energy efficiency and renewable, non-conventional and sustainable energies in the region through:
 - regulatory frameworks that favour the participation of sustainable, renewable energies, particularly in electric power interconnection systems;
 - appropriate institutional mechanisms to promote renewable energies and energy efficiency in the region's countries;
 - promotion and incentive mechanisms for energy efficiency and the use of renewable, non-conventional energy sources.

4. Foster research, the regional and local exchange of energy-efficient technologies and the use on renewable, non-conventional and sustainable energy sources at a national, local and regional level.
5. Promote training and development processes that are conducive to the development of a culture of energy-efficiency.
6. Develop participatory mechanisms in decision making for the strategic assessment of energy projects at a national, regional and local level that consider:
 - environment, cultural, social and economic impact of such projects;
 - respond to national legislations and the international Conventions and Agreements on the environment subscribed by their governments;
 - consider the rights of rural and indigenous communities.
7. Stimulate alternative communication mechanisms that help clarify information about national and regional energy policies.
8. Establish national goals to revert and avoid deforestation, pollution and altering of water basins, with an emphasis on urban expansion, uncertified forestry production, intensive agri-business and mining activities.
9. Recognize forest areas, especially Amazonia, as priority conservation areas, guaranteeing the protection of biodiversity, the permanence of communities and the defence of natural and cultural heritage.

III.3 Tourism and the Environment:

1. We denounce the negative impact of tourism on the environment (such as the excessive use of energy, pressure on water resources and the destruction of important ecosystems) and local cultures that lead to real estate speculation, the expulsion of traditional populations and the concentration of profits. The most affected are women, teenagers (as a result of sex tourism), people of African descent, indigenous groups and other victims of racism. We denounce government policies and multilateral bank financing mechanisms guided by a market-oriented vision, worsened by the tourism sector deregulation negotiations within the World Trade Organization (WTO).
2. We understand sustainable tourism as being ethically, socially and environmentally sustainable tourism that is economically viable, with an integrated approach. The local and indigenous populations should benefit the most and play a leading role in both the planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation process of the tourism activity.
3. As necessary elements for the implementation of sustainable tourism we recommend: I. Decentralization of tourism planning to a local and municipal

level; II. Democratization of and greater transparency in decision-making spaces with the effective participation of the civil society; III. Compliance with the oversight of environment and tourism legislation. IV. The effective implementation of territory organization, planning and environment assessment policies and the regularization of lands for traditional and indigenous communities. V. A clear policy of social responsibility. VI. The opportunity to access investment capital for micro-companies, with the promotion of technical and administrative training for small businesses. VII. The development of ecosystem and local culture conservation programmes. VIII. The promotion of environment education programmes for local, indigenous and tourist communities.

III.4 Shared Environment Management:

1. We are in favour of a shared environment management model based on the principles of co-responsibility, joint management, by which it is possible to guarantee adequate information, consultation and direct citizen participation spaces in decision making in public affairs concerning the environment.
2. We ask the ministers to ratify and implement the agreements and commitments contained in the:
 - a) Third section of Agenda 21.
 - b) Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration.
 - c) Johannesburg action plan.
 - d) Inter-American strategy for the Promotion of Public Participation in Decision Making on Sustainable Development of the OAS.
 - e) In addition to the recent ministerial announcements in favour of better Civil Society mechanisms.
3. We exhort the ministerial meeting to give its support to the civil society initiatives to form a work commission with the following objectives.
 - a) Commence a review and examination of the experiences and mechanisms of direct participation in decision-making in all public affairs concerning sustainable development at the different levels of local, state and national legislation.
 - b) Propose concrete mechanisms for Civil Society in making decisions on environment management.

As a result of the subject feedback tables, documents were obtained that expanded on, explained and justified these declaratory points, which will be included in the general report.