

Statement from The Access Initiative on the Latin American and Caribbean Principle 10 Declaration

By Daniel Barragan, Ecuadorian Center for Environmental Law
Danielle Andrade, Jamaica Environment Trust

Thank you Mr. Chair. My name is Daniel Barragan from the Ecuadorian Center for Environmental Law. I will be sharing the floor with Danielle Andrade from the Jamaica Environment Trust. Both members of The Access Initiative.

The LAC P10 Declaration and process adopted since 2012 for its implementation is like a seed springing forth from fertile soil with the potential to become a beautiful tree, an opportunity to spread environmental democracy to other regions of the world. Emerging from “the Future we want” document recognized at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 process, a specific Declaration was made by 10 LAC countries to launch a process to explore the feasibility of adopting a regional instrument, ranging from guidelines, workshops and best practices to a regional convention open to all countries in the region and with the meaningful participation of all concerned citizens.

As outlined in the presentation by the Government of Chile, Civil society believes the process has legs, strong legs. The Aarhus Convention has proven to be a beacon for countries around the world on the possibility of building trust between citizens and their governments and setting high standards for transparency, public engagement and access to justice in environmental decision-making. It is a coming of age of the LAC region to have adopted this Declaration, an Action Plan and a Vision for this process and we continue to look to Aarhus as a model.

We want to embrace what is the best of Aarhus; an approach that supports the engagement of civil society with their governments; technical work of working group on critical issues; capacity building of civil society and government institutions. It is critical that we learn from each other if we believe environmental democracy is essential for promoting sustainable development, democracy and a healthy environment around the world. The Governments of Jamaica and Colombia in the Working Group on capacity building note the following areas of priorities which we believe are critical or ripe for support by the Aarhus parties and the Secretariat.

Training on

- implementation mechanisms for the development of systematic environmental statistics and data that can be utilized by the public and policy makers to help decision making processes including development of electronic infrastructure or platforms to access environmental information and for the treatment and management of information requests.
- Knowledge exchange on public participation at the policies, plans and programmes level and in the implementation of investment projects (before, during and after their development) including the implementation of specific procedures to engage vulnerable communities

- Training and awareness of judges, judicial officers and administrative courts on the expeditious delivery of fair and impartial justice in environmental issues and exchange of cases and successful experiences on access to justice in environmental matters
- Exchanges on the development and implementation of Pollutant Release Registers for the region.

We ask the Parties and the Aarhus Secretariat to support the LAC P10 process with such financial and technical support, building a bridge between the two regions.

Thank you.

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