



Misión Permanente de Costa Rica ante las Naciones Unidas

211 E. 43rd Street, Room 1002, New York, NY 10017. Tel: (212) 986-6373

Establishing environmental rights for the most vulnerable Side event to the HLPF 2019

World Resources Institute, Costa Rica, CEPAL, Access Initiative, Namati, Civicus and DAR-Perú

H.E. Ambassador Rodrigo A. Carazo, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN

15 July 2019, 1.15-2.30 pm, CR B

5 minutes

Dear Mrs. Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean,

Mrs. Carole Excell, Acting Director, Environmental Democracy Practice, World Resources Institute

Distinguished colleagues, representatives of civil society,

Dear friends,

It is my great pleasure to be with you today in what is a very important day for the Escazu Agreement and for this High-Level Political Forum as well. Let me first thank the World Resources Institute, the Access Initiative, DAR, Namati, Justice for All, and all the organizations that integrate the NGO Escazu Campaign Coalition for the convening of this timely meeting. The attention you are giving to the advancement of this agreement has been critical for maintaining this momentum.

I would also like to thank you Mrs. Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC for your continuous and always enthusiastic engagement and support for the Escazu Agreement and its early entry into force. ECLAC's conviction and leadership strengthen the resolution of our countries.

This is a timely and special day because we are celebrating the signature of the treaty by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines last week, in what is the 17th signature of our region. Let's also recall that three months ago, on April 18, Guyana became the first State Party to this instrument. We warmly welcome and congratulate Saint Vincent and Guyana for this achievement and because the Caribbean is certainly showing us the pathway for Escazu's entry into force.



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The Escazu provisions and the centrality of access rights in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development could not be more relevant in the context of this High-Level Political Forum's theme, which is Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. Indeed, not only it is the first environmental treaty in the world to include a definition of persons or groups in a situation of vulnerability or the first to include guarantees for environmental human rights defenders, but its many provisions regarding environmental information, public participation in environmental matters and access to justice are crucial for developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels; ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making, and promoting and enforcing non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

As a matter of fact, it is argued that Escazu provisions are fundamental for at least 80 targets of the 2030 Agenda, distributed among several Sustainable Development Goals such as Goal number 3 on Healthy lives and Well-Being, Goal number 6 on availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation; SDG 7 on affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, SDG 10 on reducing inequalities or SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production patterns.

On the other hand, in approximately two months we will be celebrating the Climate Action Summit 2019, an ambitious and action-oriented meeting that is expected to enhance and accelerate our National Determined Contributions by 2020 and the implementation of the Paris Agreement and other Multilateral Environmental Agreements. In this critical juncture, the democratic principles embodied by the Escazu Agreement are at the center of these discussions, given the essential role they play for building capacities among and within countries, democratize public action and give legitimacy to drastic changes in patterns of production and consumption that will be required from us in the near future.

Several Multilateral Environmental Agreements have incorporated access rights in the core of their provisions. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification calls in its article 3 for the participation of populations and local communities in the design and implementation of programmes; article 17 of the Convention on Biological Diversity requests the exchange and



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publicity of all relevant sources on conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change calls for public participation in addressing climate change and developing adequate responses as well as for cooperation between countries in this regard; and last but not least, the Paris Agreement demands in its Preamble respect and promotion of all human rights obligations, reaffirms the importance of education, training, awareness, participation, access to public information and cooperation, and sets the obligation to provide national inventories of emissions and information on the effects of climate change.

All these elements fall under the umbrella of the Escazu Agreement, making it fundamental for the achievement of SDG 13 on acting to combat climate change and its impacts. None of our actions will have a long-standing impact if we do not support public engagement at all levels, and if we do not commit ourselves to those that are directly affected by climate action and decision-making.

Furthermore, the pillar of cooperation in articles 10, 11 and 12 of Escazu invites us to think public action in environmental matters as a global and common concern, just as SDG 17 on global partnership request improving exchanges, capacity-building, synergies and alliances between our countries and with all relevant stakeholders.

It seems pretty clear that the achievement of Escazu, along with other relevant instruments such as the Aarhus Convention, is essential to the realization of 2030 Agenda goals as well as an agreement on which all of environmental goals and expectations hinge.

Moreover, this agreement represents the most vivid contribution of Latin America and the region to the global environmental discussion, as an example of what can be done in the XXI century, through multilateral dialogue, consciousness and determination. Our region is called to play a crucial role in these negotiations, and what greater contribution than to be able to reach new standards of environmental participation, information and justice, in accordance with the expectations and desires of our peoples.



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Just as we gave an example to the world in advancing towards the construction of environmental democracy, now the world is attentive to what we can continue to build upon. The early entry into force of the Escazu Agreement will once again be the most resolute expression of our commitment to these principles.

In my capacity as Permanent Representative to the United Nations, I attest to the commitment of Costa Rica to the full and effective application of this landmark instrument. I respectfully and vigorously invite the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to continue our journey, consolidating the bridges we have built and the interests that unite us, for the benefit of people and the preservation of our wonderful and unique planet.