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PRESS RELEASE

The Countdown Begins for the 5th Negotiations for a Regional Agreement on Access Rights on Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean

From November 21st to 25th, government representatives from 22 countries and members of civil society will participate in the fifth Meeting of the Negotiating Committee for the "**Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Environmental Justice for Latin America and the Caribbean**". This agreement, which civil society organizations hope will be legally binding, will be deliberated by the States that signed the declaration for the implementation of "Principle 10" of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which encourages countries to promote citizen participation and the accessibility of information regarding environmental matters.

The objective of this meeting is to continue the negotiation that began in 2015 on the articles relating to Access to Environmental Information; Public Participation in environmental management (article 8); Access to Justice (article 9) and Strengthen Capacity Building (article 10).

This will be done on the basis of a document compiled with the text proposals of the 22 countries. Nonetheless, participating civil society members, representatives of NGOs and social organizations will present their own proposals on these articles in order to contribute to the deliberations of the Governments.

"It is very important that we achieve a robust and binding agreement to face current and future environmental challenges, to guarantee access rights in our region, strengthen public participation in the decisions that affect them and have better tools to protect environmental defenders in our countries", said Andrea Sanhueza, Elected Representative of the Public (Chile).

Danielle Andrade, Elected Representative of the Public (Jamaica) indicated that, "We hope that just as St. Kitts and Nevis joined the Declaration during the negotiation in the Dominican Republic last August, more Caribbean countries will join in this 5th Negotiation and will participate actively in this process aimed at raising our standards regarding access rights in environmental issues".



The 5th Negotiating Meeting will take place at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago. Initially, the goal was to conclude the negotiations in December 2016, however, since there are issues not yet settled, it is expected to be extended to the end of 2017.

The signatory countries of the Declaration agreed to establish a Regional Public Mechanism (RPM) in which interested members of the public could register thereby receiving timely information about the process. The main objectives of this Mechanism are to keep the public informed of the process and facilitate their involvement, to coordinate public participation in international meetings and to contribute to the transparency of the process. Currently, 5,000 people are registered in the Regional Public Mechanism.

Those interested in attending future negotiations and being part of this important process should register on the ECLAC's website: <http://www.cepal.org/en/regional-public-mechanism>. Additionally, the live stream of the negotiations can be followed at <http://negociacionp10.cepal.org/5/en>.

For more information, please visit our website: www.lacp10.org and follow us on our social media networks:

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