

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 4, 2016

## PRESS RELEASE

### Full Steam Ahead:

### Advancing Environmental Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean



*Photo from the 2nd Negotiating Meeting in Panama, October 2015*

In less than 24 hours negotiators from 20 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) will gather in Montevideo, Uruguay for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Negotiating Committee of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in the LAC Region. This process seeks to set higher standards in the region regarding environmental governance by including everyone, especially those who are most affected, in the environmental decision making process and can in so doing alleviate conflicts

between the state and citizens.

Apart from the negotiators, civil society is expected to play a critical role in the negotiations. This is primarily because since its inception, this process has ensured that civil society is included in the negotiation of the instrument which is expected to be concluded by December 2016. Considering this, one of the Main Elected Representatives of the Public on the process, Andrea Sanhueza from Chile said, “It is key that governments get to the negotiations better prepared so it can move ahead at a much faster pace than the last meeting. Latin America and the Caribbean needs a strong convention on access rights”.

Of the twenty signatories only five are Caribbean countries, as such Karetta Crooks Charles of the Saint Lucia National Trust and an Alternate Elected Representative of the Public said, “More Caribbean countries should take the bold step and be a part of the process to positively shape the agreement during the negotiation phase. Despite the Caribbean’s challenges, work has been done in some countries relating to access rights, whether it is through Freedom of Information laws or provisions to ensure public participation”. Additionally, she added that, “Many Caribbean countries are already signatories to international agreements and processes like the Post 2015 Development Agenda and this regional process should not be seen as unrelated in the region’s efforts to achieve a healthier and sustainable environment for present and future generations”.

For the first time the negotiations will be held over four days. This is to provide ample time for negotiators to agree on the Modalities for Public Participation in the negotiation process and to review the second version of the revised text for the regional agreement based on proposals and comments received on the first draft.

Persons interested in receiving more information on the process should join the Regional Public Mechanism at <http://www.cepal.org/en/regional-public-mechanism>. Thanks to the Technical Secretariat for this process, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean all the relevant documents and information on this process and a link to view the live stream of the negotiations from April 5-8, 2016 can be accessed at <http://negociacionp10.cepal.org/3/en>.

For information on civil society's role in the regional process please contact:

Danielle Andrade Goffe (Jamaica)  
Main Elected Representative of the Pubic (LAC P10)  
[dandrade.law@gmail.com](mailto:dandrade.law@gmail.com)

Andrea Sanhueza (Chile)  
Main Elected Representative of the Pubic (LAC P10)  
[andreasanheuzae@gmail.com](mailto:andreasanheuzae@gmail.com)