

**EUROPEAN UNION -LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN MINISTERIAL**

**CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

**BRUSSELS, 4 MARCH 2008**

**OUTCOME DOCUMENT BY**

**CO-PRESIDENCIES**

The first European Union (EU) and Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Ministerial Conference on the Environment was held on 4 March 2008 in Brussels. It was held according to the mandate of the LAC-EU Heads of State and Government, as expressed in the 4<sup>th</sup> EU-LAC Summit (May 2006) in Vienna which agreed to launch a dialogue at a political level to exchange views on environmental issues of mutual interest.

For both Europe and Latin America/Caribbean long term prosperity and economic growth depend on ensuring sustainable development, including poverty reduction, protection of the environment and sound management of natural resources.

The Ministerial Conference brought together Environment Ministers and high officials from the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean, and provided a unique opportunity to exchange views between the two regions on areas of common interest for possible future joint action.

These have been identified by the Ministerial Conference in the following three main thematic clusters, which Ministers discussed without prejudice to consideration of other future themes for possible joint action. They are proposed as an input for the 5<sup>th</sup> EU-LAC Lima Summit that is seen as a key opportunity to foster the bi-regional dialogue and cooperation on these themes.

1. Climate change: adaptation/mitigation.
2. Climate change: Sustainable energy/energy technologies.
3. Biodiversity / deforestation.

Promising experiences and ongoing actions in these areas were presented at the Conference and allowed constructive exchanges and interactions between EU and LAC participants.

### ***Climate change: mitigation and adaptation***

Ministers acknowledged that it is urgent to address climate change and that deep cuts in global emissions will be required to achieve the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Climate Change Convention. The Ministerial meeting emphasized that Latin American and Caribbean countries are regarded by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as among those suffering most from climate change impacts over the next decades. Moreover, although some countries have made efforts to adapt, the effectiveness of these efforts is outweighed inter alia by: lack of basic information, observation and monitoring systems; lack of capacity building and appropriate political, institutional and technological frameworks; low income; settlements in vulnerable areas. Furthermore, it stressed that for any effort to be effective it has to be encompassed by a multilateral concerted action that effectively ensures efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

The Meeting welcomed the outcome of the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP13) and the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP3) held in Bali in December 2007. It reiterated the determination of countries of both regions to reach a global agreement by the end of 2009 on the basis of the Bali Roadmap. The meeting emphasized that a key element of such an agreement must be binding commitments to ambitious absolute emission reductions by all developed countries and appropriate mitigation actions by developing countries.

Ministers also welcomed the EU recent ambitious and progressive commitments to tackle climate change and promote renewable energies.

Ministers stressed the importance of the EU decision to establish a Global Climate Change Alliance with poor developing countries most vulnerable to climate change, in particular Least Developed Countries (LDC) and Small Islands Developing States (SIDS). This sets a political framework for joint action to integrate climate change into poverty reduction strategies.

Ministers underlined the need to promote practical adaptation actions in the LAC countries aimed at increasing their adaptive capacity to face the negative consequences of climate change including a more effective disaster risk prevention and management. In the same context, the Meeting reiterated the need for building disaster preparedness and reinforcing early warning systems to reduce risks.

On the mitigation side and in the context of sustainable development, it underlined the common interest of both regions to reduce energy and carbon intensity of the respective economies. The synergies between climate change mitigation and adaptation and biodiversity were highlighted. The Meeting also underlined the need to strengthen cooperation in the area of sustainable and cleaner energy technologies, technology transfer and adaptation.

The Meeting also highlighted the importance of enhancing actions on technology development and transfer as well as on the provision of financial resources and investment to support actions on mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

The following recommendations emerged from the discussions on this thematic cluster:

- To enhance cooperation between both regions in the framework of UNFCCC negotiations to build a strong coalition to achieve a global agreement at Copenhagen in 2009, while respecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.
- To give priority to climate change adaptation and mitigation in development cooperation.
- To raise awareness of the cost of inaction with regard to climate change by supporting further national and regional studies on the economic effects of the climate change.
- To consider policy approaches and positive incentives on issues relating to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
- Further look into avoided deforestation and sectoral approaches with a view to reduce emissions.

- To reinforce cooperation in relation to the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).
- To improve deployment, transfer and appropriate use of technologies and to develop innovative financial mechanisms.
- To jointly investigate climate change mitigation and adaptation at regional level.
- Consider further ways to improve early warning systems and to increase the level of preparedness for climate related disasters.
- To take into consideration that climate change is not only an environmental concern but also raises ethical, cultural and security issues.

### ***Climate change: sustainable energy/ energy technologies***

Ministers highlighted the need to diversify energy sources, enhance energy efficiency, promote renewable and low-carbon energy sources and improve access to more sustainable sources of energy for the greatest number of citizens. Cooperation is needed in these areas. Regional and national specific circumstances should be taken into account.

The intensification of cooperation and joint research efforts including the diffusion and transfer of eco-technologies between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean is of paramount importance.

Ministers discussed the need to widen international carbon market, including by improving and strengthening the use of the Clean Development Mechanism.

The following recommendations emerged from the discussions on this thematic cluster:

- To enhance mutual cooperation to promote the diversification of the energy mix, in particular the development of sustainable energy production including renewable energy.
- To foster sustainable production processes and trade in goods and services, with special attention to energy efficiency.

- To increase opportunities for the use of flexible mechanisms by both regions should be enhanced and expanded.
- To undertake joint research activities in the field of eco-technology.
- To stimulate transfer of technology and a friendly environment to attract private investments in sustainable energy sector.
- To improve access to energy and explore opportunities for interconnection of the grids.

### ***Biodiversity/Deforestation***

The EU, Latin America and the Caribbean Ministers also acknowledged that it is equally important to cooperate with a view to substantially slowing the rate of loss of biodiversity at global, national and regional level. They acknowledged the need to seek a more sustainable balance between socio-economic development and the conservation and sustainable use of nature.

Ministers reiterated their firm commitment to support the ongoing work under the Convention on Biological Diversity, which is the key instrument for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity as well as access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use.

Ministers took due note that at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 the international community committed itself to a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010. They confirmed that the pace and extent of biodiversity loss remain alarming and unacceptable and that the 2010 target continues to be a shared priority for Latin America and the Caribbean and the EU and that decisive progress globally on a sustainable use of biological diversity is essential to sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Ministers reiterated the need to finalise by 2010 the elaboration and negotiation of an international regime on access to genetic resources and a fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the use of these resources.

Ministers noted the importance of the 9th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in May in Bonn, Germany, as an important milestone towards achieving the 2010 biodiversity target.

Ministers recognized the interdependence between biodiversity and climate change and stressed the need to enhance synergies and cooperation between policies and actions aimed at reducing the loss of biodiversity on the one hand and at climate change mitigation and adaptation on the other. In this context, they recognized the importance of promoting sustainable forests management, and enhancing measures to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

The following recommendations emerged from the discussions on this thematic cluster:

- To strengthen cooperation towards enhanced capacity building, the transfer of technology, the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, the development of simplified mechanisms for delivering resources, to enhance education and building awareness and to enhance the livelihoods of indigenous and local communities.
- To enhance efforts to promote sustainable forest management, to reduce deforestation and forest degradation.
- To enhance synergies and cooperation between biodiversity and climate change policies and measures.
- To enhance the involvement of indigenous and local communities, in national implementation of biodiversity-related policies.
- To recognize the economic value of biodiversity and in this respect to increase cooperation with the private sector and the business community and promoting biodiversity offsets and payments for ecosystem services.
- To achieve ambitious outcomes at CBD COP9, including significant progress in the elaboration and negotiation of an international regime on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the use of those resources, fostering the establishment of networks of protected areas, including through the adoption of ecological criteria for identifying vulnerable areas in need

of protection, in conserving and sustainably using forest and agricultural biodiversity, in strengthening co-benefits and synergies between biodiversity policies and climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, and in mobilizing financial resources, including through participation in the Life Web Initiative.

- To enhance cooperation for the conservation and sustainable management of forests, monitoring and control.
- To enhance cooperation for the establishment and maintenance of protected areas.

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Given the challenges identified at the Ministerial meeting, EU and LAC ministers agreed to identify together a number of co-ordinated actions which could advance the common agenda as discussed at this meeting. The aim will be to pinpoint areas of practical co-operation which will maximise synergies and advance common agenda for action on climate change, renewable energies and biodiversity as well as other environmental issues of mutual interest.

Furthermore, the LAC-EU Ministerial Meeting noted with satisfaction the decision taken in the preparation of the V LAC-EU Summit to have as one of its two agenda items: “Sustainable development: Environment; climate change; energy”. The outcome of that Summit meeting should provide a major input for bi-regional partnership and cooperation on these issues.