

Saint Lucia's Statement

At the VII meeting of the negotiating committee of the regional agreement on Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean

Chair, delegates of the 7th meeting of the Negotiating Committee of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. On behalf of my country Saint Lucia, I thank the government and people of Argentina, and you, for the opportunity to address this gathering.

As a Small Island Developing State, with much social, economic and environmental vulnerability, Saint Lucia recognizes the importance of access to information, participation and justice in environmental issues. It is for this reason that on March 14 this year, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the signing by Saint Lucia of the P10 Declaration on Access to Information.

This marks the beginning of another important step in this process, as we now commit to working towards building the capacity of our national institutions and enhancing our legislative framework at the national level, to effectively implement this regional instrument and to facilitate progress on access rights.

The outcome of the consultative process undertaken to achieve this milestone, has signalled to us, that the public has grown more aware of their rights to hold government accountable for actions taken in relation to the environment. This process is also well aligned to the vision of the Department of Sustainable Development, as articulated in its strategic plan, "to promote a participatory approach to governance in order to ensure that the socio-cultural, economic and environmental goals are realised and contribute to continuous improvement in the quality of life for all Saint Lucians".

The Government's decision to formally join the process of developing a regional agreement on the application of Principle 10, is a strong signal of its commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically Goal 16 on promoting peace, justice and effective, accountable

and inclusive institutions. This decision also provides an opportunity for its active participation in the development of a regional instrument reflective of national policies, priorities and concerns.

The Department of Sustainable Development applauds the sterling efforts of the Saint Lucia National Trust, who has consistently been represented at this forum and is in our midst today, in the person of Mrs. Karetta Crooks-Charles. The Trust remains very instrumental in this process and the Government looks forward to continued collaboration with them, as well as other government agencies and the Saint Lucian public in general, as we remain cognizant that this is only the beginning.

I thank you.