General Statement from the Public.

Read by Mrs. Zakiya Uzoma-Wadada. CANARI. Trinidad and Tobago.

Friday, April 8th. 1:30pm

The representatives of the public thank the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean for their commitment to the negotiation of this agreement. We also appreciate the efforts of the Government of Uruguay and UNECLAC for hosting this meeting. UNECLAC continues to demonstrate its full commitment to this process.

We also want to recognize the enthusiastic and committed support of our colleagues from outside the region and acknowledge that the world is looking on with interest at the implementation of this process. This agreement has the duty and potential to ensure the effective application of access rights to information, participation and justice to citizens of the region.

We have seen today an atmosphere that is more positive. We have made efforts to have our views more clearly articulated and provided to the delegations in advance. Yesterday we were disappointed that countries did not seem willing to consider or discuss the language proposal on the last version of Article 5 of the revised Modalities of Participation. We are happy however that we have moved on to the negotiation of the text of the Agreement and as we go forward we ask you to consider that before the discussion is closed the chair should seek to also confirm that there are no further submissions from the public.

With regard to the contents of the Agreement:

1. We the representatives of the public recognize that countries vary with respect to capacities, legislation and domestic practices.
2. We are concerned, however, that if the implementation of the agreement is limited to national conditions and or practices, such implementation may be very weak and ineffective depending on said circumstances.
3. In this regard we respectfully recommend that the concerns regarding capacities or general challenges to implementation be addressed in Article 10 on capacity building as we go forward.

Civil Society embarked upon these negotiations in good faith and we are encouraged by the belief that this instrument would be a viable tool for reducing environmental conflicts, protect environmental defenders, promote environmental democracy, the empowerment of vulnerable groups and ensuring a safe and healthy environment for the people of Latin America and the Caribbean in keeping with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. We envision an instrument that will put the region in a better position to cope with the environmental crisis since 1992.

We therefore, look forward to the continued negotiations in the spirit of cooperation, goodwill and sincere commitment by all. We really need to be assured of your political will for the adoption of a robust instrument that will secure the full implementation of access rights.
We are pleased that the next Negotiation Meeting will take place in the Caribbean and we see this as an excellent opportunity to fulfill one of the recommendations of this process which is to broaden Caribbean participation. We are prepared to work in collaboration with our current Signatory Countries, the Secretariat and all interested parties to achieve this goal.

Declaración general por parte del público.

Los representantes del público desean manifestar su agradecimiento a los gobiernos de América Latina y el Caribe por su compromiso con la negociación de este convenio que garantizará los derechos de acceso a la información, participación y justicia a la ciudadanía de la región.

En el desarrollo y la implementación de esta decisión le pedimos que se tenga en cuenta lo siguiente:
1. Las presentaciones verbales del público durante las discusiones plenarias serán debidamente tomadas en cuenta y será proyectada la pantalla.
2. Antes de que se cierre el debate el Presidente confirmará también que no existen otras presentaciones del público.

En relación con el contenido del Acuerdo:
1. Nosotros, los representantes del público reconocemos que los países varían respecto a sus capacidades, legislación y las prácticas nacionales.
2. Nos preocupa sin embargo que si la implementación del acuerdo se limita a las condiciones naturales y/o a las prácticas nacionales, entonces este ejercicio será muy débil e ineficaz si que depende de las circunstancias nacionales.
En este sentido, se recomienda que las preocupaciones sobre capacidades y posibles desafíos generales para la implementación sean abordados en el artículo 10.