



Note in preparation for the sixth meeting of the negotiating committee from the Governments of Chile and Costa Rica, in their capacity as co-chairs of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, and from the Government of Brazil, in its capacity as host country of the sixth meeting

The present note describes the plans and expectations of the Governments of Brazil, Chile and Costa Rica for the sixth meeting of the negotiating committee of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held from 20 to 24 March 2017 in Brasilia, Brazil.

At the fifth meeting of the Committee (Santiago, November 2016), we made significant strides by concluding the review of articles 7 and 8 and beginning the review of article 9 of the negotiation text. We also agreed to resume the negotiations on articles 9 to 25 at the sixth meeting, using the fifth version of the compilation text, and requested the Presiding Officers to set out flexible working modalities, including the establishment of working groups open to public participation, in order to facilitate the review of outstanding issues.

The Presiding Officers created the following contact groups:

- Group 1 on articles 6 and 7 (access to information), led by Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago;
- Group 2 on article 8 (public participation), led by Argentina and Peru;
- Group 3 on article 9 (access to justice), led by Brazil and Chile; and,
- Group 4 on article 10 (capacity-building), led by Costa Rica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The contact groups on articles 6, 7 and 8 began their work before Brasilia and their coordinators have been reviewing the outstanding matters, reaching out to countries and the public and favouring a first attempt to converge views. The contact groups on articles 9 and 10 steer the intersessional meetings with the aim of presenting the essential content of such articles and favouring a space for dialogue with the countries, experts and the public.

To honour the aforementioned commitments, the meeting in Brazil has adopted a different approach with the aim of moving forward in the negotiation of the text not reviewed in the meeting room and reach agreements on the outstanding matters. The morning of 20 March, contact groups 1 and 2 will meet in parallel to review the outstanding matters of articles 6 to 8. In the afternoon, a general overview of article 9 will be presented. On 21 March, the negotiation of article 9 will be resumed. On 22 March, there will be a general overview of article 10 and such article will then be negotiated. The negotiation in plenary of the outstanding matters of articles 6, 7 and 8 will take place on 23 March. Articles 11 to 25 will be presented in the afternoon of 22 March and will be negotiated on 24 March.

As agreed in Santiago, we have the expectation of concluding the process by December 2017. It is fundamental that the negotiations in Brasilia move forward as effectively and ambitiously as possible so as to reach this objective. We are certain that the dynamics and spirit of cooperation, good will and transparency, jointly with the significant contribution of the interested public that has presided over the process so far, will allow us to continue moving forward in the negotiation.

It is crucial that the discussions focus on those aspects that we consider absolutely essential so that we can learn about and solve the different positions and views of each country. As we have seen in past meetings, positions backed by more than one country favour progress in the negotiations and allow us to reach agreements more easily. Furthermore, it is essential that oral interventions be brief, specific and precise. We also have to be flexible and creative in our proposals. It is likewise recommendable that new or alternative wording proposals be circulated in advance in order to be duly considered and be more efficient in their analysis and discussion. All delegations are encouraged to use the specific webpage created for the meeting (<http://negociacionp10.cepal.org/6/en>) and the section for contributions and statements in which inputs submitted in writing before and during the meeting will be uploaded.

We reiterate our call for not losing our ambition and reaching a robust agreement with solid environmental democracy standards. The agreement shall give response to our demands and singularities as a region but at the same time build upon and go beyond our individual national contexts. During these past five years, we have seen that there is the will and maturity in our region to attain our goal. The regional agreement will necessarily reflect our will of making progress in the implementation of access rights and must live up to the expectations that the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean have placed in us.

We count on all of you –countries, the public and experts– to make the Brasilia meeting a success.

We look forward to seeing you very soon.