



NINTH 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

San José, 28 February–4 March 2018

GENERAL INFORMATION



COSTA RICA
GOBIERNO DE LA REPÚBLICA

INTRODUCTION

The ninth 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 will be held in San José, from Wednesday, 28 February to Sunday, 4 March 2018.

This document is intended to provide delegations with useful information to facilitate their work at the meeting.

The meeting coordinators will be available to answer any questions concerning logistical or organizational matters that delegates may have before or during the event.

1. General information on Costa Rica

Costa Rica is located in the southern part of Central America, bordering to the north with Nicaragua, to the east with the Caribbean Sea, and to the south and east with the Pacific Ocean.

The uninhabited Cocos Island, which is covered by dense tropical forest, is located about 480 km south-west of the Osa peninsula in the Pacific Ocean and forms part of Costa Rican territory.

Costa Rica has a surface area of 51,100 km² and a population of 4,947,490.

Administratively, Costa Rica is divided into seven provinces: San José, Alajuela, Cartago, Guanacaste, Heredia, Limón and Puntarenas.

San José, Costa Rica's capital, is its largest and most populous city. It is located in the centre of the country and is a transit point with a daytime population of over 1 million people.

Language

The official language spoken in Costa Rica is Spanish. English is also spoken, especially in tourist areas.

Climate

Costa Rica has two seasons, the dry season from December to May and a rainy season from May to November. In the central valley, where San José is located, the average temperature is 21°C.

Official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship: <http://www.rree.go.cr/>.

Useful information

Local currency Colón	<p>The currency used in Costa Rica is the colón (plural: colones). At the current exchange rate, a United States dollar is equivalent to 566.40 colones. United States dollars, in cash or travellers' cheques, may be exchanged in almost all hotels and in banks. The exchange rate at hotels and banks is almost always the same, but it is recommended to change money at the hotel to avoid having to queue. All hotels can be paid in United States dollars or by credit card. In almost all transactions, change is given in local currency rather than dollars. Most restaurants accept credit cards. The most widely used are Visa, Mastercard and American Express. Although exchange facilities are readily available, visitors are advised to purchase some currency on arrival in Costa Rica.</p> <p>Credit cards may be used for cash withdrawals at some banks and automatic teller machines (ATMs) in San José. Visa and MasterCard are the most widely accepted for this purpose.</p>
Local time	UTC or GMT -6 hours.
Electricity	The voltage is 110 volts nationwide. All hotels have electricity. Plugs have two flat prongs.
Water	Tap water is drinkable in most of Costa Rica. Nevertheless, travellers are advised to buy bottled water for personal consumption.
Airport tax	At the airport, there is a departure tax of US\$ 29 per person, although several airlines include this in the ticket price. This should be confirmed with the airline. Visitors travelling on diplomatic passports are exempt from the departure tax.
Tipping	Accommodation fees include all taxes, but not tips. Visitors may give a tip for a service they consider especially good. In restaurants, a 10% tip is included in the total price. Therefore, before tipping visitors are advised to check the bill to see whether the tip has already been included. It is not customary to tip taxi drivers. The tip is not included for other services.
Taxis	San José has a good taxi service. Prices are controlled and metered (the meter is known as a maría). Cabs are red with a yellow triangle on their forward doors. Airport taxis are orange and very reliable. Visitors are advised not to use unauthorized taxi services. Hotel taxis have fixed rates by route; however, there is little difference between these fares and those of airport taxis.

2. Meeting venue

The ninth meeting of the negotiating committee of the regional agreement on access to information, public participation and justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean will be held in the Salón Real III of the Hotel Real Intercontinental San José.

Hotel Real Intercontinental San José

Address: Autopista Próspero Fernández
Opposite Centro Comercial Multiplaza, Escazú
San José, Costa Rica
Tel: (506) 2208 2100
Website: <https://www.intercontinental.com/hotels/us/es/san-jose>

3. Meeting coordination

The meeting is being organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Government of Costa Rica, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship.

Questions on substantive matters related to the meeting may be addressed to Carlos de Miguel, Chief of the Sustainable Development Policies Unit, and Valeria Torres, Economic Affairs

Officer, both of the Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division of ECLAC (principio10.lac@cepal.org, tel. (+56) 2 2210 2310). On behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, Adriana Murillo, Head of the Multilateral Department (ammurillo@rree.go.cr tel (+506) 2539 5422), and Daniel Zavala, Human Rights Officer in the Directorate-General for Foreign Policy (dzavala@rree.go.cr, tel (+506) 2539 5570), will be available to participants.

Consultations on operational aspects of the meeting may be addressed to María Paz Rivera (mariapaz.rivera@cepal.org, tel. (+56) 2 2210 2618) and Adrián Sandí (asandi@rree.go.cr, tel. (+506) 2539 5567) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, or Katia Vega (vicemi@minae.go.cr, (+506) 2233 9469), of the Ministry of the Environment and Energy of Costa Rica.

4. Hotel reservations

A limited number of rooms have been reserved with special rates at the following hotels:

- **HOTEL REAL INTERCONTINENTAL SAN JOSÉ (meeting venue)**

Autopista Próspero Fernández
Opposite Centro Comercial Multiplaza, Escazú
San José, Costa Rica
Telephone: (506) 2208 2100
Attention: Amanda García, Reservations Manager
Email: amanda.garcia@r-hr.com

Single standard room: US\$ 119 + 13% tax (includes breakfast and Internet)

- **QUALITY HOTEL REAL SAN JOSÉ**

Autopista Próspero Fernández
Pozos
San José, Costa Rica
Telephone: (506) 2204 6700
Attention: Amanda García, Reservations Manager
Email: amanda.garcia@r-hr.com

Single standard room: US\$ 85 + 13% tax (includes breakfast, Internet and transfer to and from the meeting venue)

Requests for reservations should be addressed directly to the hotel chosen **by 16 February 2018**. After that date, the hotels reserve the right to change their prices and cannot guarantee room availability. **Please use the form on page 7 to make a reservation.**

Delegates are responsible for their own reservations. It is advisable to check that the hotel has processed your request and to ask for a reservation number or confirmation code.

The hotel requires a credit card number to hold a reservation. Hotels in Costa Rica apply a no-show policy, whereby reservations may be cancelled up to **48 hours** prior to expected arrival; otherwise, cardholders will be charged for the first night. All delegates must settle their own hotel bill at the end of their stay.

5. Entry requirements for Costa Rica

Entry visa:

All foreigners must enter Costa Rica with a valid passport, ticket for their return journey or onward travel, and at least US\$ 100 per month of tourist stay.

Circular DG-0009-02-14 of the Directorate-General for Migration and Aliens stipulates that nationals of the following Latin American and Caribbean countries require a visa to enter Costa Rica:

- Colombia
- Cuba
- Ecuador
- Haiti
- Jamaica
- Nicaragua
- Dominican Republic

Nationals of other Latin American and Caribbean countries do not require a visa to enter Costa Rica. For specific queries on other nationalities and passport validity requirements, please see circular DG-0009-02-14, available online at: <http://www.migracion.go.cr/extranjeros/visas.html>.

Yellow fever vaccination:

As stipulated in Decree No. 33934-S-SP-RE, vaccination against yellow fever is compulsory before admission to Costa Rican territory for individuals proceeding from geographical areas considered to be at risk. Vaccination must be demonstrated with the International Certificate of Vaccination against Yellow Fever, which is valid 10 days after immunization is accredited. The Latin American and Caribbean countries considered at risk for yellow fever are: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Individuals who have been in transit in the airports, ports or border posts of at-risk countries during their journey to Costa Rica are exempt from the yellow fever vaccination requirement. The full decree and ministerial decision amending the list of geographical areas considered to be at risk of yellow fever transmission are available at the following links:

<http://www.costarica.cl/docs/Decreto%20Vacuna%20contra%20la%20Fiebre%20Amarilla.pdf>
https://www.ministeriodesalud.go.cr/images/stories/docs/DTIC/2016/dm_oficializacion_zonas_risgo_fiebre_amarilla_2016.pdf

Any queries in relation to matters of entry to Costa Rica (visas or yellow fever vaccinations) should be addressed directly to the nearest Embassy of Costa Rica.

6. Local transport

Participants are responsible for their own transport to and from the airport and the hotel.

7. Online registration and participant registration

An online registration system will be available on the ECLAC website (<http://negociacionp10.cepal.org/9/en>) as from **Monday, 15 January**.

Registration of participants will take place from 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 28 February in the lobby of the Salón Real III at the Hotel Intercontinental San José.

You will be issued with an identification badge, which, for security purposes, must be shown at all meetings.

For any further information on participant accreditation, please contact Paula Warnken (paula.warnken@cepal.org, tel. (+56) 2 2210 2651) or María Paz Rivera (mariapaz.rivera@cepal.org, tel. (+56) 2 2210 2618).

Online registration **does not exempt** participants from the requirement to send an official note to the Secretary of the Commission indicating the names of the head of delegation and accompanying members.

8. Opening session

The opening session will start at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, 28 February.

9. Internet

The offices and conference rooms set aside for the meeting will have wireless Internet access (Wi-Fi).

10. Languages

The official languages of the meeting will be English and Spanish. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided.

11. Medical services

The Government of Costa Rica will provide first aid services in case emergency medical assistance is required at the meeting venue.

12. Documents

This will be a paper-smart meeting. All official documents and statements will be made available to read or download at the ECLAC website <http://negociacionp10.cepal.org/9/en>. Participants are advised to bring their laptop computer, tablet or other mobile device to the meeting, since only a limited number of printed documents will be available.



HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

Name		Surname	
Head of delegation	Delegate	Observer	Special guest
Title:		Agency:	
Address:			
City:		Country:	
Tel:	Fax:	Email:	

I request a reservation at:

HOTEL REAL INTERCONTINENTAL SAN JOSÉ <input type="checkbox"/> (meeting venue) Autopista Próspero Fernández Opposite Centro Comercial Multiplaza, Escazú Tel: (506) 2208-2100 Standard room: US\$ 119 + 13% tax <input type="checkbox"/> *Includes breakfast and Internet Email: amanda.garcia@r-hr.com Attention: Amanda García	QUALITY HOTEL REAL SAN JOSÉ <input type="checkbox"/> Autopista Próspero Fernández Pozos Tel: (506) 2204-6700 Standard room: US\$ 85 + 13% tax <input type="checkbox"/> *Includes breakfast, Internet and transfer to and from the meeting venue. Email: amanda.garcia@r-hr.com Attention: Amanda García	
Date of arrival in Costa Rica:	Flight No.:	Scheduled arrival:
Date of departure from Costa Rica:	Flight No.:	Scheduled departure:

I authorize use of the following credit card to guarantee my hotel reservation:

American Express	MasterCard	Visa	Other
Card number/security code:			Expiry date:

Reservations should be made directly with the hotel **by 16 February.**