

P10 Saint Lucia Contribution March 04, 2018

Protocol having been established, let me recognize the Ministers of the Environment of the host countries of Chile and Costa Rica, United Nations Environmental Programme UNEP, The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean ECLAC, Delegations from the Caribbean and Latin America, Legal and Technical Experts and Advisors, Members of the Public, Civil Society, NGOs, Ladies and Gentlemen, good day to you all.

I bring you greetings from the beautiful isle of Saint Lucia- Our Government and People. and note that as we bring to a close our independence celebrations at home, this forum is also bringing to an end, many moons of hard work and negotiations.

Today marks an important milestone in our region's environmental history. As together, we the Peoples of the Caribbean and Latin America together, have finally arrived at a framework Agreement that is sensitive to the needs of all, that is tailored to account for our differences, yet reflects at its very core, our unity on the fundamental principles espoused in the Rio Declaration. Though Saint Lucia joined the negotiations very recently, the experience has been invaluable and the lessons learned, tremendous.

We are indeed proud of the comradery forged through long hours of debate, disagreement and compromise. We will not forget the passion of the delegates from Columbia and Mexico, the dedication to a precise and properly worded text by the Jamaica delegation, and the eloquence of the delegate from Trinidad and Tobago and that of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. We would also like to thank the delegate from Uruguay Marcelo Cousillas and Legal Expert Santiago Villalpando for their hard work and guidance with the Legal Committee. Your input was critical to this process, and for that we are grateful.

We applaud the efforts of the public in bringing to the fore, the specific issues that concern them and my Government joins that of the other Countries here today, in resolving to do our best to provide the opportunities for you the public, to participate in the decision making process.

My Government stands ready to facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation as well as to provide the requisite avenues for the effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, especially with regards to redress and remedy.

We also applaud the recognitions that the negotiations and ultimately this Agreement has given to the public defenders of human rights in environmental matters. We appreciate your important work as being indispensable to the democratic process and the successful attainment of our sustainable development goals.

We wish to thank The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for their outstanding work as Secretariat and specifically in the organization, supervision and delivery of all aspects of these intense negotiations. Indeed, we have no difficulty supporting their continuation as Secretariat to this new Agreement for we have no doubt that we are in good hands.

We look forward to working closely through the Conference of Parties to ensure that our

commitment to implementing the various activities under this Agreement, does not waiver
Our Government is pleased that while we do not anticipate disputes, in the observation of the provisions under this Agreement, we have given due consideration to an Arbitration mechanism through the Conference of the Parties or through the International Court of Justice, and expect that together we will observe and respect the Rule of Law, and the principles of International Law.

As we in the Caribbean and Latin America know too well, a lack of financial and technical resources can seriously hamper the best efforts and intentions. This is why we are thrilled that a voluntary Fund has been established to support the implementation of this Agreement.

We thank the host Countries Costa Rica and Chile for their hard work and dedication to the negotiations. We also thank the hosts of the 8 previous meetings, which lay the important groundwork for our achievement here today.

We thank all of you, especially the legal and technical experts for your guidance, NGOs, civil and societal groups, the press radio and television who has ensured that our message is taken outside of those walls and to the persons that matter. We thank everyone else who has worked to see this Agreement to fruition.

On behalf of the Department of Sustainable Development, Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development, I am pleased to say that the Government and People of Saint Lucia supports this Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, and stands committed to doing our best towards its implementation.

I thank you.