



PARTICIPATION OF SOCIAL ACTORS IN THE ACTIVITIES  
OF THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS PROCESS

OEA/Ser.E  
ASCA/doc.37/23  
17 April 2023  
Original: Spanish

**OUR SUSTAINABLE GREEN FUTURE**

**(Thematic Consultations among civil society and social actors on  
the mandates of the Ninth Summit of the Americas)**

**Participants:**

ORGANIZATION / SOCIAL ACTOR	REPRESENTATIVE	COUNTRY
Social actor	María Rosa Ávila	Argentina
Social actor	Adriana Páez Pino	Colombia
Social actor	Laura Rossi Centeno	Colombia
Guyana National Youth Council	Onika Stellingburg	Guyana
Centro Familiar Afrosanteño (CEFAS)	Dallys Gutiérrez	Panama
Asociación Suyay De Los Andes	Melissa Huayhua	Peru
Instituto de salud y derechos humanos (INSADEH)	Pedro Quiñones	Peru
Social actor	Silvia Way	Peru
Social actor	Dayalice Anza	Venezuela

The following report on the follow-up and implementation of the mandates adopted by the governments of the Americas is divided into 3 sections.

**I. Problems and realities in the Americas**

**Environmental governance.** The governments of the countries of the Americas, within the framework of the global strategic plan for sustainable development, show a commitment to including in public policies actions that are strengthening socioeconomic, political, and environmental processes in their communities under a sustainable inclusive and gender approach. However, social realities in communities require greater commitment and political will, as well as a major citizen engagement effort, so that all multilateral and intersectoral agreements on environmental and sustainability issues can be implemented in the short term.

In the framework of the mandates and agreements reached at the Ninth Summit of the Americas, it is worth noting that governments have failed to get behind the final document. In Guyana, there has been little to no publication by the Government of the Ninth Summit outcome document nor engagement with organizations that participated in the process.

**Human rights and social justice.** Within the framework of environmental agreements that promote human rights and equal opportunities for populations affected by climate change, it is urgent to strengthen agreements. Land and environmental defenders continue to be murdered. Reporting

mechanisms remain inefficient. The response of governments is one of indifference. This generates impunity. Although the Escazú Agreement has come into force, it has not been implemented in all the countries of the Hemisphere, and in those countries that have ratified it, it is not being carried out. The right to health is a core human rights obligation but the political actions of governments continue to dehumanize health systems.

**Education.** National public policies on environmental education do not generate outcomes for meeting the SDGs. In the area of university education, for example, in medical schools in Colombia, for example, diseases caused by the effects of climate change are analyzed within a research framework without the findings being incorporated into healthcare systems. More active and deeper interaction is needed. The impacts of climate change, heat waves, floods, hurricanes, and socioeconomic factors on health protection and risk management systems, as well as environmental education, are relevant for boosting sustainability policies. Engagement from households Hemisphere wide, environmental education, as well as norms of coexistence, do not include education in values. Developing countries do not have access to information on progress in technology and research.

**Health.** The causes of climate change are progressively increasing in the Hemisphere, and its impact is being felt in terms of an increase in diseases caused by contaminated water, including dengue, malaria, asthma, tuberculosis, Ebola, yellow fever, cholera, diarrhea, intestinal parasites, hypothermia, trachoma, and plague. Also, symptoms affect emotional and mental stability (depression). In addition, there is increased mortality due to high temperatures, undernutrition, and low-quality diets because of soil degradation, as well as cardiorespiratory ailments caused by poor air quality. Living conditions in urban areas as well as in coastal and island areas of the Caribbean are being affected by a lack of basic water/sanitation infrastructure, as a result of high levels of mortality and infectious and contagious diseases. Areas with deficient healthcare facilities. Risk management plans continue to be inefficient, while healthcare systems in the Hemisphere lack the necessary tools and care mechanisms to enable health professionals to provide primary care not only at the local level, but also at the national level, for diseases caused by climate change. Healthcare systems do not provide free supplies made of biodegradable materials for women during their monthly biological cycle.

**Education.** National public policies on environmental education do not generate outcomes for meeting the SDGs. In the area of university education, for example, in medical schools in Colombia, for example, diseases caused by the effects of climate change are analyzed within a research framework; however, they have not been incorporated into health care systems. More active and deeper interaction is needed. The impacts on local communities of climate change (heat waves, floods, hurricanes, and socioeconomic factors) hamper the development of the social fabric. These are realities that are essential to include in public policies for sustainability, health protection systems, risk management systems, and environmental education. Curricula do not include environmental education as a subject. Hemisphere-wide, there is a lack of inclusive participation of households in environmental education. Values and rules of coexistence are needed. Developing countries still do not have access to information on progress in technology and research.

**Gender and environment.** There is a strong women's leadership in the governmental sphere and in scientific and research groups, with certain inequalities and inequities in decision-making and pay. Workplace and sexual harassment continue to occur in almost all areas, especially in civil and environmental engineering and related areas, education institutions, law enforcement, energy companies, ports, the film industry, and the media, among others.

**Food and agriculture.** In countries such as Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, and Mexico, in 2023 large areas of forest land will continue to be harmed by anthropogenic changes, degradation, and deforestation in the interests of short-term economic benefits and large agricultural enterprises. Regulations to sanction environmental violations and protect forest lands are ineffective. Public policies implemented to monitor agricultural activities and logging attach little value to environmentally sustainable transition. Herbicides such as glyphosate continue to be used in agriculture as well as for domestic use, necessitating the introduction of effective regulatory frameworks on the use of all chemical substances, such as zinc, borax, cyanide, and mercury used in illegal mining. Scientific evidence shows that such inputs have harmful effects on health, the environment, and biodiversity, giving rise to food insecurity in the region. If follow-up on treaties, international agreements, public protection policies, and national regulations continue to be flexible, the goal of zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050 will not be met and food security will be at risk. In the case of biotechnology, transgenic foods are hugely important for food security, since they are resistant to herbicides, pests and conditions caused by climate variability. The United States, Brazil, Argentina, and Canada are foremost among the 18 countries in the region that grow and market such foodstuffs.

**Water resources.** In watersheds and micro watersheds, variations in rainfall patterns are resulting in medium-scale natural disasters. In addition, there are high levels of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, coastal erosion, and deforestation caused by anthropogenic factors, livestock, and cattle ranching in lower and upper micro-watersheds. Furthermore, climate change is severely impacting countries in wet tropical areas. Water is a natural asset and part of the value chain for strengthening the SDGs, and yet water security is not promoted in the Hemisphere. Some of the region's countries have inefficient water protection and security programs, as they dispose of solid waste and wastewater by discharging them into different water bodies in urban, rural, and coastal areas. Even though the States have mechanisms to mitigate the effects of climate change, the collection system control policies do not contribute to the transition. Furthermore, controls on illegal mining are insufficient and extraction methods include the use of chemicals that flow into rivers and seas, while the ponds and lakes left behind encourage the proliferation of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, resulting in diseases such as dengue fever.

**Economic factors of sustainable development.** According to nationally determined contributions, agreements, standards, national plans, and projects are being implemented to mitigate climate impact. However, such standards and national plans contradict the social and habitability reality of communities in environmental terms. According to statistics, the United States and Canada spend large amounts of economic resources on climate change mitigation. At the same time, however, they are also the region's worst-performers in the fight against climate change. They are also CO<sub>2</sub> producers. According to international agreements, the goals, and results to be achieved are the same for all parties, so the implementation of good environmental practices requires governments in developing countries to redouble their efforts, given the social problems they face and the constraints of economic shortage on their administrations. Resource mobilization in developing countries is approached from a solidarity perspective, with financial support from international banks. However, the reality is that this financial support results in additional economic commitment for their governments because in the case of the circular economy (use of recycled materials), although it stimulates local economies and contributes to the creation of sustainable businesses, it is still a debt.

**Wealth accounting.** Developing countries should evaluate the concept of natural capital, a methodology that serves to “quantify the value of ecosystems,” as well as to regulate and monitor services provided by natural resources. The value of natural resources must be quantified in order to guide and reveal opportunities for flexible financing, as well as to contribute to the construction of

more environmentally friendly areas and the development of sustainable cities. However, it is also essential to keep in mind that natural resources are free inputs for life and must be protected from unscrupulous, large economic interests.

## **II. Good environmental practices by governments**

Since 2020, it is notable how the governments of the Americas accelerated the development and implementation of multilateral ecologically sustainable agreements for providing financing and grants to the public and private sectors to protect natural capital. The following practices, in particular, are worth noting.

**Health.** The Government of Argentina has promoted a program for reducing health risks associated with climate change as part of its climate action efforts. International cooperation partnerships have been established, mobilizing US\$299,839 in non-reimbursable funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for its implementation.

**Biodiversity.** A grant of US\$12.84 million was provided to an approved GEP-financed project to strengthen the management of shared freshwater ecosystems in four Amazonian countries: **Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru**. The project focuses on strengthening watershed surveillance based on traditional knowledge. Implementation of management systems for information access and community participation in order to build an integrated strategic water resources plan. The National Forest Conservation Program in **Costa Rica** has increased the percentage of forest in the country to 50 percent. Forest conservation helps not only to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also to protect biodiversity and water quality.

**Innovative practices.** Green business ventures, through the circular economy program, supports financing and solid waste collection management. In terms of innovation, Latin America is breaking molds, as it is advancing environmental and technological research in the efficient use of natural resources, construction of hydroelectric plants, transition to materials that substitute wood, and development of biodegradable materials, among others. The **Dominican Republic** stands out because it has implemented large-scale solid waste collectors. Also, innovation and research related to the use of clean and renewable energies, such as the construction of small-scale hydroelectric plants and transition to the transformation of materials and solid waste into biogas.

In terms of innovation and adoption of new sustainable technologies, **Canada and the United States stand out** for their promotion of public policies on CO<sub>2</sub> reduction, as well as their implementation of programs that promote financing, incentives, and subsidies for the commercialization of carbon capture, elimination, and storage. The United States Government is currently implementing around 13 facilities and 30 installation processes in different sectors in the country. So far, CO<sub>2</sub> storage has been done by means of the saline geological method. The program will generate new training and employment opportunities. These sustainable policy actions also support the implementation of biomass projects using agricultural waste. The **Canadian** government is developing the Wild Rose Onshore Wind Farm project (409.6 MW) located in Alberta. This project is notable for its 152 MW capacity, which is expected to generate 546 GWh of energy per year and cut annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by more than 289,339 tons.

Notable in this transition framework in the region has been the installation of wind systems. From 2017 to 2021, **Uruguay** generated 94 percent of its electricity from renewable sources, setting a new standard in that regard, alongside other countries such as Denmark, Ireland, and Portugal. Wind energy was pivotal in achieving that objective, underscoring its importance as a renewable energy source. Wind farm installations increased significantly in 2022, with the **United States, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia** standing out.

Several Latin American cities have also implemented sustainable mobility plans, which include promoting bicycle use and building infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

The transition of the textile industry, the transformation of solid waste, the appropriate use of natural resources and timber are fundamental, as well as a great opportunity to offset carbon footprints, in addition to promoting and implementing renewable energies. Though still in the process of development, research and implementation, biomass is already being used in projects involving this input in rural areas, as in the case of a project whose artisanal practice is being developed in **Argentina**, using apple pulp to produce logs to replace firewood and charcoal.

**ADVOCACY MECHANISMS.** Climate initiatives and financing for sustainable development are promoted, including several conferences at the regional and national level, including the Energy Summit in Guyana, an NDC Investment Forum in St. Lucia and the Latin America and Climate Change Week in the Dominican Republic.

### **III. Recommendations for the implementation of the mandates of the Ninth Summit of the Americas**

#### **Environment**

- a. Encourage people to consume natural resources responsibly and efficiently, through a strategic communication and dissemination plan on measures to address climate change and contribute to sustainable development.
- b. Provide technical support for 5 NGOs, representing Indigenous people, to produce and distribute knowledge products on traditional forest conservation habits, over a 2-year period. This should include consultations within forest dwelling communities to share best practices and provide training on as directed by the knowledge products (Subparagraph A)
- c. Promote the strengthening of civil society in citizen participation spaces with a view to constructing an inclusive environmental policy based on the development of initiatives whose mitigation and adaptation projects are promoted through participation in public consultations, in addition to incorporating feedback and recommendations from civil society in decision making, since in some States, civil society is only a reference for internal governmental compliance.
- d. Advocate for follow-up on nationally determined contributions, so that delivery time are reduced from four to two years, given the urgency of meeting the goals of zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050.
- e. Strengthen and promote the implementation of effective regulatory measures to neutralize greenhouse gas emissions in the mining, forestry, and food production industries.
- f. Encourage the inclusion in national plans for transportation systems, of the implementation of good environmental practices and their monitoring, with regulatory measures enforced in sea and land (urban, interprovincial, or departmental) transport terminals, mass transportation

systems, rail terminals, and airports, in order to move towards the neutralization of carbon footprints.

- g. Fortalecer los programas de protección y de seguridad hídrica para proteger el ecosistemas acuíferos y biodiversidad marina para la salud ambiental, los cuales, deben ser menos flexibles y generar resultados óptimos para la mitigación.
- h. Establish community farms in each region of Guyana that is managed by a local committee. Committees should be balanced in gender, considering marginalized groups, and free from political interference, serving for 2 years. Profits from the community farms are used to buy equipment and tools that can be leased to farmers within the community. These community farms will help local farmers access tools and equipment that are unaffordable to them but necessary for the execution of their work. (Subparagraph H).
- i. Design a single-use plastic phase out strategy and action plan that covers the phasing out of popular single use plastic items.

## **Health**

- a. Promote the strengthening of primary healthcare at the local level in health systems, as well as the inclusion of human health risks from the effects of climate change as a promoter of infectious diseases, sociological impacts, and mental disorders.
- b. Strengthen water protection and security programs to protect aquifer ecosystems and marine biodiversity for environmental health, which should be less flexible and generate optimal results for mitigation.
- c. Promote the use of biodegradable materials in healthcare systems, as well as their subsidization, not only for the industrial safety of health personnel, but also for patients and members of the public, such as women, who need to use biodegradable inputs during their monthly life cycle.

## **Education**

- a. Design and implement an ongoing climate change environmental awareness strategy in partnership with youth-led NGOs to speak to key climate issues over a 1-year period. This should be targeting marginalized groups and school-aged children.
- b. Strengthen education systems through the inclusion of environmental education and the circular economy as course subjects in national curricula; include environmental research in such plans to advance environmental surveillance and student commitment to the environment.
- c. Encourage activities for the enactment of legislative bills and the inclusion of environmental education as an integral part of protection, healthcare, and risk management systems in national development plans.
- d. Organize awareness spaces with the artisan fishing association to promote joint actions to strengthen the activity as a source of employment through training and recruitment, as well as the strengthening of women in the association.
- e. Promote education and training for the empowerment of women, mothers, female heads of households, older persons, and male household heads, to inculcate good environmental practices in future generations, paving the way for employment opportunities as new technologies merge with local cultural and environmental factors.
- f. Provide biannual regional training opportunities and the creation of regional standards for disaster response for the Caribbean to guide practitioners during crisis. (Subparagraph A)

### **Land Defenders and Environmental Protection**

- a. Strengthen multilateral and inter-sectoral agreements on land and environmental defenders, with a legal approach that provides security guarantees to safeguard the lives of environmental defenders.
- b. Promote a harmonious preventive global awareness initiative for the protection and defense of the environment involving other international organizations.
- c. Promote protection actions to limit trade in natural capital amid the rise of emerging economies.
- d. Protection of the rights of indigenous and local communities that depend on forests and ecosystems. This should include land titling and protection for human rights defenders working to defend land and forests.
- e. Foster the development and implementation of comprehensive public policies for sustainable forest and ecosystem management, setting the stage for good environmental practices in forestry, agroforestry, arboriculture, and other land uses. These policies should be consistent with international commitments, the rights of communities and Indigenous peoples, and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- f. Reinforce and strengthen regulations to restrict the use of herbicides, such as glyphosate, and of chemicals such as zinc, borax, cyanide, and mercury.
- g. Promote regulatory measures designed to prosecute the commercialization of fauna as an animal trafficking offense to neutralize the introduction of invasive species and protect and safeguard wild animal species that have been harmed, thus preventing biodiversity loss.

### **Gender**

- a. Promote women's leadership based on their abilities, skills, and work competencies to strengthen parity in pay and decision-making opportunities. Promote access to justice for the criminal prosecution of workplace and sexual harassment of women in all areas of professional and social activity.
- b. Promote access to justice for the criminal prosecution of workplace and sexual harassment of women in all areas of professional and social activity. Strengthen environmental public policy with the inclusion of comprehensive solid waste management plans for proper classification and management of waste, for example, by promoting the participation of women in seminars and different training events to strengthen business venture opportunities involving the processing of materials of which the raw material comes from recycling.
- c. Introduce public policies that guarantee gender equality in agroforestry and agricultural processing programs.

### **Financing and sustainability**

- a. Reform environmental tax legislation to levy higher taxes on activities that directly or indirectly harm the environment.
- b. Promote mechanisms to enable social actors and civil society organizations that work and lead environmental processes to access financing or donations from organizations and international banks directly, without intermediation.

- c. Promote a common fund in the region to address the consequences of possible extreme scenarios, e.g., economic losses resulting from extreme weather events, such as climate-related displacement.
- d. Promote as a requirement the mobilization of resources for the implementation of energy transition and renewable energy projects, to provide funding for forest and ecosystem conservation projects, particularly those led by local and Indigenous communities. In addition, contribute funding for forest protection, restoration of degraded lands, and promotion of sustainable land use practices.
- e. Encourage investment in sustainable technologies and practices in the use of oceans and other water bodies, including promoting marine renewable energy and implementing carbon capture technologies, as well as promoting funding for forest protection, restoration of degraded lands, and promotion of sustainable land use practices.
- f. Promote artisanal and innovative initiatives that contribute to mitigating the effects of global warming, through incentives, both for assistance with human capital and economic support.
- g. Develop and implement climate budget tracking tools for national budgeting processes to encourage ministries to align budgets with national climate plans
- h. Provide fiscal incentives for the procurement and use of locally grown food. This should however be complemented by the design and implementation of standards within the agricultural sector, implemented and enforced by agricultural extension officers.
- i. Development of preferential trade agreements within the Caribbean for regionally grown food.

### **Transition**

- a. Strengthen sustainable development in coastal and island cities within the framework of the renewable energy transition by adopting specific measures for the conservation and restoration of coastal and marine ecosystems, strengthening that promotes the protection of mangroves, the recovery of coral reefs, and the creation of marine protected areas, as this will contribute to climate change adaptation, the mitigation of its effects, and marine biodiversity protection.
- b. Channel efforts to contribute to fair energy transition for river vessels, with the aim of creating alternatives to stimulate local economic growth and new employment opportunities.
- c. Develop and implement mandatory wastewater and energy efficiency standards for all new hotels with a capacity of over 50 rooms.

### **Innovation and Technology**

- a. Promote the implementation of sustainable technologies and practices in the agricultural, forestry, mining, and other land sectors. This may include the use of sustainable agricultural techniques, promotion of renewable energy, use of more efficient technologies, and the reduction of methane emissions in livestock production.
- b. Strengthen the inclusion of new technologies through the concept of shared wealth, in which communities lead connectivity processes.
- c. Promote the implementation of sustainable technologies and practices in the agricultural, forestry, mining, and other land-use sectors, enabling the inclusion of sustainable agricultural techniques, promotion of renewable energy, the use of more efficient technologies, and the reduction of methane emissions in livestock production.
- d. Strengthen the local ecotourism sector through the implementation of sustainable connectivity systems.



- e. Establish coordinated strategic partnerships to consolidate actions that stimulate the decarbonization economy. It is necessary and urgent to boost trade in carbon elimination technologies. Encourage actions to promote economic incentives and human capital investment in sustainable technology research and in the adoption of clean-energy technologies, based on CO<sub>2</sub> capture, elimination, and storage. These are crucial areas of progress for industry—given the use of petrochemicals—as well as other sectors such as transportation, which, even though the goal of zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is close, continue to consume non-renewable fuels in the context of the energy transition.
- f. Design an app that provides simple and easily understandable interventions for the adaptation in the construction sector to guide the design of large-scale and housing projects.

### **Biodiversity**

- g. Promote actions so that the South American subregion becomes a biodiverse natural reserve and to generate necessary protections for its natural resources amid the impact of climate change on the planet.
- h. Adopt sustainable fishing practices, including fisheries management and the reduction of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. This can contribute to marine resource conservation and biodiversity protection.
- i. Provide access to information on forest and ecosystem management, including information on illegal logging, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. Information should be available in formats that are accessible and easy to understand for civil society and local communities.