



Organization of
American States



“Breaking down the Silos: Integrating Environmental Sustainability in the Post-2015 Agenda”

Background:

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio 1992) introduced the notion of sustainable development as “development that satisfies present needs without compromising the needs of future generations,” while simultaneously approving Agenda 21, an ambitious program that would change the development paradigm, orienting it towards the notion of sustainability as an interface between economic, social, and environmental development. Twenty years later, the leaders of the world met once again in Brazil (United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20) to renew their commitment to sustainable development, review progress made and discuss new challenges.

As in previous conferences, the General Secretariat of the OAS, through its Department of Sustainable Development, played a prominent role both leading up to and during Rio+20 including through a series of hemispheric dialogues and Initiative on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability (of which the OAS-DSD is a partner), established under the leadership of the Division of Environmental Law and Conventions of the United Nations Environment Program (see: <http://www.oas.org/en/sedi/dsd/rio+20/defaultRio+20.asp> and <http://www.oas.org/en/sedi/dsd/Rio+20/default.asp>)

These contributions, as well as the participation of the General Secretariat throughout the Rio +20 process, respond to the fact that the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development (AG/RES. 2312 (XXXVII-O/07) and AG/RES. 2644 (XII-O/11) was established with the purpose of having OAS activities and efforts contribute significantly to the implementation of Agenda 21 and other agreements emanating from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio 1992) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002), thus avoiding duplication and respecting the conceptual policy framework for sustainable development established in the Rio conference documents. The implementation of the Inter-American Program for Sustainable Development is consequently consistent with and complementary to regional and multilateral entities, particularly the United Nations.

The challenge resulting from the Rio+20 conference is the definition of a post 2015 development agenda that is focused on sustainability with concrete and measurable objectives. In light of this, global, regional and thematic consultations have been held with sub-regional stakeholders.

The General Secretariat of the OAS contributed to the sub-regional consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Guadalajara and organized by the Government of Mexico by providing inputs gathered from previous consultations with social actors in the framework of the Summits of the Americas and the General Assembly on “Energy, Environment and Infrastructure” (March 2013).

Promoted by the UN and with the logistical support of the UNDP, a Global Consultation on Environmental Sustainability in the post-2015 development agenda was carried out under the



**Organization of
American States**



leadership of Costa Rica and France. The resulting report, titled “Breaking down the Silos: Integrating Sustainable Development in the post-2015 Development Agenda,” captures the essence and key messages of the eight month consultation process that involved more than five thousand people from the academic sector, civil society, and youth, women, and men from across the globe that opted to focus the dialogue on the links between environmental sustainability and human development. At the forefront of these discussions was the need to base the post-2015 agenda on principles related to integrated approaches to development, inequality, human rights, and the capacity for recuperation and resilience in order to fully integrate environmental sustainability. There was also a call for urgent collective action in areas related to 1) economic transformation, 2) governance and accountability, 3) local action and empowerment, and 4) education.

In an effort to move towards a complementarity between the multilateral and inter-American sustainable development agendas, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Costa Rica and the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the OAS, together with the General Secretariat of the OAS through its Department of Sustainable Development, will host a dialogue with key stakeholders on the outcomes of the Thematic Consultation on Environmental Sustainability for the Post-2015 Development Agenda.