



INFORMATIVE BULLETIN No.1

FIRST INTER-AMERICAN MEETING OF MINISTERS AND HIGH LEVEL AUTHORITIES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
OCTOBER 5-6, 2006, SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA, BOLIVIA

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

"Sustainability of economic development and strengthening of environmental management, across the public and civil participation, governance, gender equality and protection of the indigenous peoples' rights"

1. Ministerial Meeting: Context and Background

The Ministerial Meeting is a forum that will identify and propose concrete partnerships at the regional and hemispheric levels. The main focus of the meeting will be to identify specific opportunities for cooperation among OAS Member States in integrating environmental considerations into development, poverty alleviation, social and economic policies. **The Meeting will take place in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, October 5-6, 2006.**

2. Objectives of the Meeting

- The Ministerial meeting will seek to promote the environment–economic nexus, and refer to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) with particular relevance to sustainable development.
- The meeting will identify and advance concrete partnerships at the regional and hemispherical level to integrate environmental considerations into social and economic development and poverty alleviation policies.
- To promote organized public and civil society participation, good governance, gender equality and the inclusion and respect of the indigenous peoples.

In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) "to build a comprehensive approach and a coordinated strategy, tackling many problems simultaneously across a broad front" the meeting shall identify practical, exemplary lessons from successful projects and policies. These lessons will integrate the three pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social development, and environmental protection.

3. Agenda Items for the Ministerial

The meeting will examine three areas: (1) Sustainable Management of Water Resources; (2) Natural Disaster Risk Reduction; and (3) Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry, and Tourism. As part of the preparatory process for the Ministerial Meeting, the Department of Sustainable Development (DSD) of the Organization of American States is organizing three technical workshops related to the three agenda items.

Workshop on Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry, and Tourism

This workshop was held in San Jose, Costa Rica, November 2nd, 2005 to identify management and policy approaches that support sustainable agriculture, forestry and tourism. It identified the mechanisms at the national and regional levels that promote these objectives. It also promoted the central role of rural communities in resource management and application of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples.

Participants agreed that a major obstacle is the fragmentation of sustainability issues and development policies; the lack of integration among key economic sectors and different ministries at the national level adds another obstacle to achieve sustainable development. Given the multiple sectors involved in sustainable resource management, the discussions recognized that a broad range of related regulatory matters require good governance, solid support, and close examination. The need to approach environmental management from an economic perspective was highlighted. The workshop also examined the role of public and citizen participation in the efforts leading to the support of community-based projects, associations and policies on sustainable agriculture, forestry and tourism. Participants emphasized the pivotal role of rural communities, including traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, in achieving the objectives of sustainable agriculture, forestry and tourism, in order to implement successful projects that promote sustainable subsistence.

Workshop recommendations include:

- Building links across sectors
- Establishing voluntary initiatives
- Promoting innovative financing



The following editions of the Bulletin will include recommendations from the other two preparatory workshops: Risk Management of Natural Hazards; and Integrated Water Resources Management.

4. Opportunities for Participation

DSD is committed to making and implementing policies that will ensure civil society participation – individuals, the private sector, the labor sector, indigenous peoples, academics, and other non-governmental actors – in planning, managing, and decision-making for sustainable development.

To facilitate the discussion and to act upon your comments/recommendations on the Ministerial Meeting themes, DSD is hosting a **Virtual Consultation Forum with Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples**. The Virtual Forum will be held from **May 17 to September 30, 2006**.

Comments and recommendations posted in the Virtual Consultation Forum will be compiled in a document that will be presented to the Working Group on Sustainable Development (composed by delegates from the Member States to the OAS) during its July and August meetings as part of the preparatory process for the Ministerial meeting. Considerations from these preparatory meetings will contribute to the draft **Declaration of Santa Cruz**. One document with comments from civil society will be submitted to each one of these meetings; therefore, your prompt and continuous contribution to this Virtual Forum is vital. The resulting draft Declaration of Santa Cruz will be presented during the one-day Preparatory Meeting of Government Representatives (each Member States assigns a representative of their Government to attend this meeting) for their consideration. Furthermore, a final document containing a compilation of comments and recommendations posted in the Virtual Forum will also be presented at this meeting. The Declaration of Santa Cruz will be presented during the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Officials.

Key questions of the Virtual Forum include:

1. What are the needs on sustainable development that require an immediate response from competent organisms?
2. What do you think should be the priority on sustainable development during the discussion of ministers and why?
3. What are the benefits of using adequate practices for sustainable development?

To participate in this Virtual Consultation Forum, please visit:

<http://topics.developmentgateway.org/environment/discussion/default/showDiscussion.do~id=1441?id=1441>

The Virtual Consultation Forum and this Informative Bulletin are two initiatives to promote organized public participation. This will engage civil society with sustainable development issues – environmental policies focusing on poverty alleviation, economic and social development. The DSD encourages civil society to take part in these initiatives, providing comments that will affect discussion during the Ministerial Meeting.

For more information about the Ministerial visit our website: <http://www.oas.org/dsd/> and/or http://www.oas.org/dsd/MinisterialMeeting/ReunionInterAm_eng_v1.htm or contact Joaquin Tamayo (jtamayo@oas.org)
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The Organization of American States (OAS) is the world's oldest regional organization, dating back to the First International Conference of American States, held in Washington, D.C., in 1889. The Charter of the OAS was signed in Bogota

in 1948. The OAS currently has 35 member States and has granted permanent observer status to over 48 states. The OAS is the region's premier forum for multilateral dialogue and concerted action, it brings together the countries of the Western Hemisphere to strengthen cooperation and advance common interests.

Through its Department of Sustainable Development (DSD), the General Secretariat of the OAS (GS/OAS) fulfills member States mandates by promoting the implementation of policies, technical cooperation projects and partnerships that translate sustainable development and environmental protection goals into concrete action. A key objective entails integrating environmental priorities set by OAS member States within mainstream development, poverty alleviation and good governance-related policies.