

In preparation for Rio 2012, The Access Initiative (TAI) and its regional partners are beginning a campaign of accountability of governments; the first step is getting official statements on record how positions, preparation, and goals of national governments leading up to Rio 2012, known as the Five Questions Campaign (5Q Campaign). The goal of the 5Q Campaign is to incite governments to articulate their progress in implementing and supporting sustainable development objectives laid out at the Rio 1992 World Summit and follow-up conference in Johannesburg in 2002. The 5Q campaign serves three purposes: to get governments thinking about Rio 2012, get a formal statement on the record, and to lay the groundwork for the Three Demands Campaign (3D Campaign) to be launched summer 2011. Questions presented to governments across regions included:

1. What is the most important outcome that the government would like to see from Rio 2012?
2. Is the government currently undertaking a process to review its progress to date in achieving commitments outlines in Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation?
3. What are the government's current plans to include stakeholder input into the discussions on the two themes for the conference, a green economy and sustainable development governance?
4. Would the government support a call for the development of regional conventions to implement Principle 10 (P10), guaranteeing citizen rights of access to environmental information, public participation, and access to justice in environmental decision-making?
5. Has the government designated officials responsible for organizing and preparing for Rio 2012?

Fifteen TAI partners submitted these questions to their governments, 12 governments responded. Eight Latin American governments responded, two African countries, one European country, and one Asian country responded. Not too surprising, official responses were fairly vague: progress reports were general and not overly specific, as were green economy and sustainable development governance strategies; many governments do not have Rio 2012 planning committees established as of May 2011, and desired outcomes from the summit are not overly specific. Responding countries promoted the importance and value of access rights and public participation articulated in P10, however there were no specifics in how government was implementing and protecting these rights.

Responses in Latin American countries differed from the other regions in that these governments, in general, are calling for a more "holistic" approach to this summit and to environmental governance. There was concern, voiced specifically by Bolivia and Ecuador, that too much emphasis on the green economy aspect would derail the sustainable governance discussion, as well as inherently placing developing countries and indigenous communities at a serious disadvantage in negotiations and policies.

Overall there was support of development of regional conventions, similar to the Aarhus Convention. Argentina and Costa Rica discussed wanting to develop a regional or sub-regional consensus on priority issues prior to Rio 2012. Venezuela and Costa was more reticent in

support of regional conventions, voicing the need to determine what was in the best interest of their country. Latvia endorses the goals of the European Union at Rio 2012 and did not articulate specific goals or desired outcomes specific to Latvia.

All responding countries have some form of access rights written within the law; some governments promoted committees and working groups to be established or in planning that would facilitate public participation and two-way dialogue. Peru was most specific in explaining how the P10 principles were being facilitated and acted upon, describing the 2007 Clima Latino event which brought together over 1,550 civil society organizations (CSOs), scientific organizations, national and municipal authorities, trade unions, indigenous people, universities, and non-profit organizations (NGOs) to “discuss on and warn about the imminent dangers of climate change and particularly its effects on the Andean countries, Latin America and the Caribbean and, at the same time, to put forward proposals for confronting the problem.”<sup>1</sup> Cameroon officials discussed wanting to “establish a regional framework for transparent decision-making ... [and] national tracking system of citizens’ rights to access information, justice, and benefit sharing.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Desired Outcomes from Rio 2012**

Latin American countries were more specific in their desired outcomes from Rio 2012 than the African countries, Thailand, or Latvia. Argentina laid out international, regional, and national goals for the summit, these outcomes focused on the need for an international “liability regime that allows the realization of commitments made by developed countries within the UN system.” Argentina’s national and regional outcomes were concerned with the economic evaluation of natural resources, the development implications for indigenous communities, and cooperation among Latin American countries.

Bolivia has not finalized its priorities for Rio 2012, but President Evo Morales’ legal protection of nature, laid out in the Declaration of Mother Earth’s Rights is influencing the position and arguments Bolivia will be making at the summit. The Mother Earth law states, “Mother Earth is a living dynamic system made up of all the undivided community of all living beings, who are all interconnected, interdependent, and complementary, sharing a common destiny.”<sup>3</sup> While Bolivia does not yet have a formal position on the issue of sustainable development governance it is strongly against the development and implementation of an international green economy, as it is “designed to introduce market mechanisms, such as paying for environmental services, carbon offsets, and the commodification of nature.”<sup>4</sup> Bolivia has not proposed an alternative financial system to capitalism.

Costa Rica is in the process of analyzing what issues they wish to prioritize at Rio 2012, some issues they are focusing on are decreasing biodiversity and (unspecified) actions under the

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.comunidadandina.org/desarrollo/climalatino\\_e.htm](http://www.comunidadandina.org/desarrollo/climalatino_e.htm)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.yesmagazine.org/planet/the-law-of-mother-earth-behind-bolivias-historic-bill>

<sup>4</sup> Feedback form

Kyoto Protocol (1997).<sup>5</sup> Costa Rica, like Argentina, is interested in the possible coordination with (unnamed) countries in the region to coordinate a prioritization of issues prior to Rio 2012.

Ecuador does not ardently oppose the green economy, but wants Rio 2012 to be an opportunity for the acceptance of alternative views of what constitutes development, such as the Paradigm of Good Living. The tenets of Ecuador's Principles of Good Living go beyond measuring GDP and economic viability, and includes the overall well-being of society: (1) unity in diversity, (2) human beings who seek to live in society, (3) equality, integration, and social cohesion, (4) complying with universal rights and promoting human capabilities, (5) harmonious relations with nature, (6) fraternal, cooperative, and solidarity-based coexistence, (7) liberating work and free time, (8) rebuilding of the public sphere, (9) representative, participative, and deliberative democracy, and (10) a democratic, plural, and secular state.<sup>6</sup> Ecuador believes Rio 2012 provides a platform for the redefinition and framing of quality of life.

El Salvador wants a full assessment of the (unspecified) unfulfilled, fulfilled, and in-progress objectives declared in Rio 1992: Rio 2012 needs to implement legally-binding mechanisms mandating the fulfillment of the 1992 objectives. A specific issue El Salvador wants focus on is the mining and quarrying industries, deforestation, desertification, oil, and climate change.

Mexico does not explicitly endorse a legally-binding agreement emerging from Rio 2012; but it believes current international mechanisms in place are insufficient to support countries aspiring toward sustainable development. One mechanism needing enriching is the Commission on Sustainable Development. Additionally, Mexico promotes the concept of a green economy but wants a clearer definition of what "green economy" entails.

Similar to Mexico, but not specific in its examples, Peru also believes institutions (no clarification of types of institutions, whether civil, environmental, etc.) need strengthening. Venezuela gave no definitive response as to what it would like to see emerge from the Rio 2012 summit.

Cameroon did not respond to what outcomes it would like to see from Rio 2012. Gabon gave a list of objectives, such as a regime promoting the "access, sharing, and utilization of biological and genetic resources" and establishment of the mechanisms for "good governance." Gabon did not specify if these regimes and mechanisms would be at the national, regional, or international level, whether these would promote environmental good governance; nor what these biological and genetic resources were. Madagascar laid out a very specific goal for Rio 2012: active participation of communities based on sharing carbon sale profits, a la Kyoto Protocol.

Latvia endorses the objectives of the European Union regarding the desired outcomes of Rio 2012. The European Commission has launched three consultations to prepare a European Union position going into Rio: the first consultation will be focusing on a roadmap to a resource-efficient Europe (open to public authorities, private sector, environmental stakeholders,

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<sup>5</sup> [http://unfccc.int/essential\\_background/kyoto\\_protocol/items/1678.php](http://unfccc.int/essential_background/kyoto_protocol/items/1678.php)

<sup>6</sup> <http://plan2009.senplades.gob.ec/web/en/principles;jsessionid=F01DFB58D3AE31CA39FDA5F7D62A7ADE>

citizens), the second consultation is about communications of the EU position, and the third consultation focused on the state and future of a Europe's bio-based economy.<sup>7</sup>

### **Current Processes Being Undertaken in Review of Agenda 21, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation**

In preparation for Rio 2012 TAI and its partners are asking governments processes and policies they have implemented supporting the objectives of Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Sustainable Development, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

The Rio 1992 Earth Summit resulted in the Agenda 21 document and Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, among others. The Summit was an unprecedented opportunity for the international community to gather and re-envision economic development and human relations with the environment. Resulting documents laid out objectives to address the complex issue of sustainable development. Agenda 21 is the comprehensive and detailed plan of action to be taken globally, nationally, and locally by organizations of the UN system, governments, and major groups in every area in which human impacts on the environment; Agenda 21 notes special attention needs to be given to “economies in transition.”<sup>8</sup> The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development supports Agenda 21 by defining the 27 principles<sup>9</sup> of sustainable development, as well as the rights and responsibilities of states regarding sustainable development issues.<sup>10</sup>

The purpose of the 2002 the World Summit on Sustainable Development was to examine international and national progress on the outcomes laid out in the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The resulting Johannesburg Plan of Implementation<sup>11</sup> established new commitments and ranging from poverty eradication, health, trade, education, science and technology, regional concerns, natural resources, and the institutional arrangements.

Many of the responding Latin American countries are taking direct and visible steps to address issues of sustainable development in their countries. Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and El Salvador did not specify specific processes and actions their countries had taken to fulfill objectives of sustainable development laid in Agenda 21 or the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Bolivia is not currently undertaking processes outlined in the 1992 declarations and 2002 plan. At the time of the questionnaire the Ministry of Environment and Water was not aware about Rio 2012, therefore had not done any self-analysis in how Bolivia has worked toward sustainable development objectives.

Mexico's Ministry of Environment stated its focus on Section 3 of Agenda 21 which articulates the need to strengthen the role of major groups. Mexico did not articulate specific

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<sup>7</sup> <http://uncsd.iisd.org/news/eu-launches-consultations-on-rio-2012-resource-efficiency-and-bio-based-economy/>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res\\_agenda21\\_01.shtml](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res_agenda21_01.shtml)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf151/aconf15126-1annex1.htm>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.un.org/geninfo/bp/envirp2.html>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD\\_POI\\_PD/English/POIToc.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/POIToc.htm)

policies or programs it has implemented “for the achievement of sustainable development [through] broad public participation in decision-making.”<sup>12</sup>

Cameroon stated it wanted to “establish a regional framework for transparent decision-making available to citizens...a national tracking system.” Cameroon did not express how it implemented policies and processes that facilitated public participation in decision-making. Similarly, Gabon discussed examples of practicing access rights it would like to emulate, specifically the Auto Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the proposal of a law of access by the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC). Madagascar has no processes in place to manage a review of national progress regarding Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, or the Johannesburg Implementation Plan.

The Latvian government approved the Sustainable Development Strategy for Latvia (Latvia 2030) in 2010, which defines the law on development planning in Article 19,<sup>13</sup> and will be integrated in all sectorial strategies and development programs. Additionally, consultative rights of public opinion are stated in the 2006 Environmental Protection Law<sup>14</sup> and the Latvian constitutional law (Satyersme) defines general citizen rights. A Tri-Lateral Collaboration Board for environmental matters made up of 15 government representatives is an arena in which the public, state officials, and private sector can meet for cross-sectorial discussions regarding development and the environment.

### **Current Government Process for Stakeholder Input on the Green Economy and Sustainable Development Environment Themes**

Latin American countries were more concerned with the implications of a green economy, and have had more stakeholder discussions regarding this theme than the issues of sustainable development governance. Environmental reports in Argentina are produced by the Federal Council on the Environment (COFEMA) that works with local governments on natural resource management and initiatives related to the national sustainable development agenda. Venezuela is very interested in green economy opportunities, however its potential meetings with industries are not planned for public posting.

The Costa Rican Ministry of Environment, Energy, and Telecommunications (MINAET) have plans to hold a CSO workshop for discussions about the Rio 2012 themes. Costa Rica plans on discussing both at this CSO workshop and Rio 2012 its progress in eco-tourism and renewable energy industry, as well as the importance of access rights. Mexico’s CSO Liaison Office is planning a similar series of meetings with different stakeholders to discuss these themes. The Peruvian Ministry of Environment’s infancy has been quite productive, collecting experiences from different institutions and planning a meeting between organizations for a comprehensive report on issues of natural resource management.

The Bolivian president, Evo Morales, has denounced Rio 2012’s push for a green economy, stating in a Letter to Indigenous People that capitalism “seek[s] to expand capitalism

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res\\_agenda21\\_23.shtml](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res_agenda21_23.shtml)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.article19.org/about/index.html>

<sup>14</sup> [www.ymparisto.fi/download.asp?contentid=108878&lan=sv](http://www.ymparisto.fi/download.asp?contentid=108878&lan=sv)

to the commodification of nature.”<sup>15</sup> However Bolivia does not have the financial capacity to implement and support the collection, processing, and dissemination of information. Ecuador, like Bolivia, is concerned about the framework in which the international community will discuss a green economy. The consensus in Ecuador is that the world has reached its growth and consumptions limits and we must adopt policies and systems that support living within these limits. Ecuador believes there are too many “intermediaries in the development system and that processes take too long and are not resolved;” negotiations need to be transformed into actions. There was not articulation of how, or if, these themes would be placed in a public discussion with stakeholders.

El Salvador’s politics and society are more split: the right-wing parties support more economically productive policies, while left-wing parties, such as the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) party are fighting for protection of the environment and conservation of natural resources. No formal discussion has been set up however to debate this issue.

Both Cameroon and Gabon did not describe any forums for discussion between stakeholders regarding the green economy and sustainable development governance theme. Madagascar is planning a two day national meeting with stakeholders for discussing the gains the country has made toward implementing the objectives of the Rio Declaration of Environment and Development and to discuss the themes of Rio 2012.

Latvia has not yet defined what “green economy” means for itself, and has not specified any plans for discussions with stakeholders. Current Latvian leadership has asserted it follows EU protocol regarding conventions, but did not state how this impacted national dialogue between stakeholders.

### **Support of Regional Conventions to Implement P10**

Argentina is aware that a regional agenda poses more of a complex task than a national agenda for Rio 2012 as “linkages are more complex” due to the diverse economic, social, cultural, and environmental relationships between the countries. Argentina is focusing on four areas for regional improvement, but not outright support regional conventions to monitor implementation of P10:

- Consideration of specific needs and vulnerabilities, correcting the course of international funding
- Assisting programs and projects to implement concrete actions and outcomes to address regional challenges (environmental services, eradication of poverty, improving quality of life in urban areas, improving education, mitigation, and improving natural disaster response and reconstruction)
- Improve and intensify synergies between Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

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<sup>15</sup> <http://pwccc.wordpress.com/2010/10/07/presidents-letter-to-the-indigenous-peoples-nature-forests-and-indigenous-peoples-are-not-for-sale/>

- Develop new capabilities focused on environmental management, increased productivity and competitiveness, and improving the level of employment.

The Bolivian government supports P10 but has not formally or informally endorsed the formation of regional conventions to monitor regional implementation of P10. Costa Rica prioritizes access rights, several bills are currently under legislation, however before endorsing a regional convention implementing and promoting P10 Costa Rica would need to examine what was in the best interest of the country. Ecuador also has not formerly endorsed a regional convention. El Salvador is in the process of adopting a law on access to public information and promotion, but support is primarily coming from the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), a leftwing political party. Mexico supports a regional convention monitoring the implementation of P10. Peru has not formerly endorsed a regional convention.

Cameroon did not formally endorse a regional convention. Gabon mentioned the importance of establishing necessary mechanisms for good governance, citing the Auto Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) which is “devoted to civil society controlling and monitoring free and transparent elections” as a model. Madagascar leadership supports the call for the development of a regional convention to implement P10.

Latvia is a member of the EU and Aarhus convention, its leadership declares support of public participation and promotes participation through governmental work.

### **Designated Rio+20 Planning Committee**

Many governments named individuals as responsible for national Rio+20 preparations; the extent to which preparations had begun was unclear. Argentina currently has three people on the Rio+20 planning committee, though they warned that this group might change come the October 2011 elections. Bolivia has two individuals from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs currently responsible for preparing Bolivia for Rio+20; while the Bolivian Ambassador will most likely lead the Bolivian delegate at the Earth Summit, no formal negotiating team has been established. Costa Rica’s UN Ambassador of Global Environmental Issues at the Ministry of Foreign is leading Costa Rican Rio+20 preparations. Ecuador did not name specific individuals preparing for Rio+20, but the Ministry of Culture and Natural Heritage is the designated lead. El Salvador did not state who or what department was responsible for national Rio+20 preparations. The Ambassador and General Director for Global Issues are heading Mexico’s Rio+20 efforts; two subordinates support him. Peru had two individuals from the Environmental Ministry working on Rio+20, but no negotiating team had been named. Venezuela responded that teams were being formed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment, but no specific individuals or departments were listed.

Neither Cameroon, Gabon, or Latvia mentioned Rio+20 committee or negotiating team.

