# 3rd Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement and Regional Agreement on Access to Environmental Information in Latin America and the Caribbean

**Date**: 2018-03-04

**Location**: Escazú, Costa Rica

## Executive Summary

The 3rd Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement focused on advancing the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation, and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted in Escazú, Costa Rica, on March 4, 2018. This landmark treaty, which entered into force on April 22, 2021, aims to enhance environmental rights and protections, particularly for vulnerable groups. It emphasizes the importance of public participation in environmental decision-making and the need for transparency and accountability in governance. The agreement is a significant step towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, promoting equality, and ensuring a healthy environment for present and future generations. The meeting underscored the commitment of member states to implement the agreement effectively and foster regional cooperation in environmental governance.

## Characteristics

* The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation, and Justice in Environmental Matters was adopted in Escazú, Costa Rica, on March 4, 2018, and emphasizes the rights of access to environmental information and participation in decision-making.
* It is the first legally binding treaty on environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, incorporating provisions for human rights defenders.
* The agreement aims to combat inequality and discrimination, ensuring that vulnerable groups have access to environmental rights and justice.
* It promotes transparency, accountability, and public participation in environmental governance, linking global and national frameworks for sustainable development.
* The treaty establishes mechanisms for cooperation, capacity-building, and the sharing of best practices among member states to enhance environmental democracy.

## Actors

| Category | Actor |
| --- | --- |
| Political Actors | United Nations; United Nations Officials; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) |

## Main Themes

| Category | Subcategory |
| --- | --- |
| Inclusion & Social Development | Public Participation; Access to Information |
| Data & Governance | Digital Governance; Data Protection |

## Practical Applications

* The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean was adopted on March 4, 2018, and entered into force on April 22, 2021. This legally binding agreement aims to guarantee the rights of access to environmental information, public participation in environmental decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters.
* The agreement includes provisions for the establishment of a Voluntary Fund to support the financing of its implementation, allowing Parties to make voluntary contributions.
* A Conference of the Parties has been established to promote the implementation and effectiveness of the agreement, with regular meetings to discuss and adopt necessary rules and financial provisions.
* The agreement emphasizes the need for capacity-building and cooperation among Parties, particularly focusing on least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states in the region.
* Each Party is required to create and strengthen national capacities to implement the provisions of the agreement, including training authorities and civil servants on environmental access rights and developing awareness-raising programs.
* The agreement mandates the establishment of independent oversight mechanisms to promote transparency in access to environmental information and to monitor compliance with the rules.
* Each Party is encouraged to promote public participation in environmental decision-making processes and to ensure that the public is informed and able to participate effectively.
* The agreement recognizes the rights of human rights defenders in environmental matters and commits Parties to create a safe environment for their work.

## Commitments

No specific quantifiable commitments or targets identified.