# First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement: Decisions and Rules of Procedure

**Date**: 2022-04-22

**Location**: Santiago, Chile

## Executive Summary

The First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement, held in Santiago from April 20-22, 2022, established foundational rules and procedures for the implementation of the Agreement on access to information, public participation, and justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. Key decisions included the adoption of rules of procedure, the election of Uruguay as Chair and four Vice-Chairs, and the establishment of a Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance. The Conference emphasized the importance of public participation and the protection of human rights defenders in environmental matters. Future meetings were scheduled, with an extraordinary meeting planned for April 2023 and the second ordinary meeting for April 2024, to further advance the Agreement’s objectives and ensure effective implementation.

## Characteristics

* The Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement was held in Santiago from April 20-22, 2022, focusing on access to information, public participation, and justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.
* The meeting adopted rules of procedure emphasizing public participation, with provisions for virtual meetings and significant public involvement in decision-making processes.
* A Chair and four Vice-Chairs were elected to lead the Conference, with a commitment to gender balance and geographical representation.
* The establishment of a Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance was agreed upon, aimed at promoting the Agreement’s implementation and ensuring public participation.
* Financial arrangements were discussed, including the creation of a Voluntary Fund to support the Agreement’s activities, with a call for contributions from Parties and other organizations.
* An open-ended working group on human rights defenders in environmental matters was established to enhance protections and develop an action plan for future meetings.

## Actors

| Category | Actor |
| --- | --- |
| Political Actors | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Uruguay; Antigua and Barbuda; Argentina; Mexico; Saint Lucia |
| Civil Society Actors | Public; Human rights defenders in environmental matters |

## Main Themes

| Category | Subcategory |
| --- | --- |
| Data & Governance | Digital Governance; Public Participation |
| Inclusion & Social Development | Digital Inclusion; Social Cohesion |

## Practical Applications

* Adoption of the Rules of Procedure for the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement, facilitating structured meetings and public participation.
* Election of Presiding Officers, including Uruguay as Chair and Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Mexico, and Saint Lucia as Vice-Chairs, to lead the Conference of the Parties.
* Establishment of the Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance, which promotes the implementation of the Escazú Agreement and supports Parties in compliance.
* Creation of a Voluntary Fund to support the financing of the implementation of the Escazú Agreement, with Mexico as the first contributor.
* Agreement to hold ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Parties at least once every two years, with the next ordinary meeting scheduled for April 2024.
* Establishment of an open-ended ad hoc working group on human rights defenders in environmental matters to prepare an action plan and facilitate public participation.
* Decision to hold an annual forum on human rights defenders in environmental matters to gather input for the action plan.

## Commitments

* Requests the public to designate one of its elected representatives within two months of the adoption of the present decision to be a member of the Presiding Officers.
* Agrees to convene an extraordinary meeting, to be held in Argentina, tentatively on 20 and 21 April 2023.
* Also agrees that the second ordinary meeting will be held, tentatively, from 22 to 24 April 2024.
* Requests the Secretariat to continue exploring additional sources of funding to support the activities planned for the 2022–2024 period.