

# Promoting Human Rights in Environmental Matters

## A Toolkit for Parliamentarians on the Escazú Agreement



Table of Contents

Introduction ..... 6

How to use this Toolkit ..... 8

Acronyms & Abbreviations..... 10

**01 An environmental and human rights Treaty ..... 12**

    1.1 The Escazú Agreement and the climate crisis .....15

    1.2 The Escazú Agreement and human rights.....18

    1.3 The Escazú Agreement and democracy .....20

    1.4 How does the Escazú Agreement relate to other relevant international instruments? .....22

    1.5 How does the Escazú Agreement relate to economic, social and cultural rights, and to civil and political rights? .....26

    1.6 How does the Escazu Agreement align with the Sustainable Development Goals? .....28

**02 The four pillars of the Agreement ..... 32**

    2.1 The Right to Information (Articles 5 and 6) .....34

    2.2 The Right to Participation (Article 7) .....36

    2.3 Access to Justice (Article 8) .....37

    2.4 Human rights defenders (Article 9) .....38

    2.5 Capacity Building and Cooperation (Articles 10 and 11).....40

**03 Advancing Environmental Rights: Lessons and Mechanisms for Implementation..... 42**

    3.1 National Implementation .....44

    3.2 Key Mechanisms for Effective Implementation.....52

        i The treaty’s multilateralism as an opportunity for success ..... 52

        ii The development of guides and roadmaps for the Agreement's implementation ..... 53

        iii The Six Representatives of the Public..... 54

        iv The Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance..... 54

        v Action Plan for Human Rights Defenders ..... 55

        vi The Decision on Mainstreaming the Gender Perspective ..... 56

**04 Addressing questions about the Agreement ..... 58**

    4.1 Upholding the Rule of Law .....61

**05 Escazú Agreement: A tool to advance environmental governance in the Caribbean ..... 64**

    5.1 Addressing specific challenges in the Caribbean .....64

    5.2 Unlocking Caribbean Potential: Inspiring Success Case Studies and Opportunities .....68

**06 Resources for Parliamentarians ..... 72**

    6.1 The role of parliamentarians:.....73

    6.2 SAMPLE: Parliamentary Question to Relevant Minister on Ratification of the Escazú Agreement .....76

    6.3 SAMPLE: Language for Parliamentarians .....77

    6.4 Leveraging Collaboration for Effective Climate Governance and Environmental Democracy .....79

    6.5 Additional Resources and Further Readings .....82





## Executive Summary

The Escazú Agreement is a groundbreaking framework for environmental governance in Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighting the intrinsic link between environmental protection and human rights. By ensuring the core principles of environmental democracy – the three rights of access to environmental information, public participation, and environmental justice – the Agreement empowers communities to assert their right to a healthy environment. In this context, this **Toolkit for Parliamentarians on the Escazú Agreement** is designed to equip legislators with the necessary tools and resources to effectively advance climate governance and environmental democracy in the region.

This Toolkit emphasizes the crucial role of parliamentarians in promoting accountability for environmental harm, safeguarding environmental defenders, and enhancing public engagement in environmental decision-making. Ultimately, it seeks to strengthen the capacity of legislators to advance sustainable development and uphold human rights in the face of pressing environmental challenges.



April 2024, Opening Ceremony, Third Conference of the Parties of the Escazú Agreement in Santiago, Chile.





## Introduction

The Escazú Agreement stands as a landmark regional instrument in environmental governance, embodying a collective commitment to bolstering environmental human rights and fostering sustainable development across Latin America and the Caribbean. By ensuring access to environmental information and facilitating public participation, the Agreement empowers individuals and communities to safeguard their right to a healthy environment – a right increasingly under threat as the climate crisis emerges as one of the most pressing global challenges of our time.

The multi-faceted impacts of the climate crisis pose significant risks to the very foundations of human well-being, dignity, and quality of life, highlighting the urgent need for strengthened environmental governance and human rights protections as outlined in robust multilateral environmental agreements like the Escazú Agreement.

The implications of the climate crisis as a threat to the right to a healthy environment are vast and profound. From rising temperatures and sea levels, to extreme weather events and ecosystem disruptions: the impacts of the climate crisis are already being felt worldwide and in Latin America and the Caribbean region in particular.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2018, October). *Factsheet: The climate crisis is a human rights crisis.*, [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/FactSheetClimateChange.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/FactSheetClimateChange.pdf)

Environmental Group Protests at United Nations Headquarters, April 1992;  
Credit: UN Photo/Michos Tzovaras



These changes not only compromise the integrity of natural ecosystems but also exacerbate existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities and marginalized populations – placing these individuals at the forefront as defenders of their environment.

In this context, the Escazú Agreement stands as a beacon of protection for environmental defenders, who often face grave risks in their advocacy efforts.<sup>2</sup> By committing to the safeguarding of environmental defenders, the Agreement reinforces the vital role these individuals play in upholding environmental rights and promoting sustainability. Civil society organizations (CSOs), including environmental groups, indigenous persons, human rights defenders, and community leaders, are key to ensuring the Agreement's objectives are not only achieved but also sustained. Through close collaboration, civil society and parliamentarians can support the creation of an enabling environment where citizens' rights to information, participation, and justice are upheld, ensuring that the commitments of the Escazú Agreement translate into meaningful change, especially for those experiencing the harsh impacts of climate change and environmental harm. The development of this Toolkit is the result of a broad consultation process and

collaborative input by PGA members over three years within the framework of PGA's Climate Action Campaign. The Toolkit reflects PGA's peer-to-peer methodology as it includes recommendations and insights from interactive sessions, round tables, and breakout discussion groups where parliamentarians engaged in meaningful dialogues, exchanged ideas, and shared experiences.

The objective of the Toolkit is to empower legislators with the knowledge, resources, and tools necessary to effectively advance climate governance and environmental democracy in the region, exploring the Escazú Agreement as a vital tool for strengthening environmental rights and promoting sustainable development. It aims to enhance understanding of the critical connection between environmental protection and human rights, promote accountability for environmental harm, and support the safety and access to justice of environmental defenders. Additionally, the Toolkit encourages greater public participation in environmental decision-making and facilitates collaboration among parliamentarians to share best practices and coordinate efforts toward sustainable development.

<sup>2</sup> We must urgently protect environmental defenders, joint statement by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), the Rapporteur on Economic, Social, Cultural, and Environmental Rights (REDESCA) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), April 2022, [https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/PReleases/2022/084.asp](https://www.oas.org/en/IACHR/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/PReleases/2022/084.asp)







## How to use this Toolkit

Terms, contexts, legal systems, and discourse vary considerably from one place to another but this Toolkit is designed to be of practical benefit to parliamentarians from Latin America and the Caribbean and to inspire other peers from around the world on best practices.

PGA stands ready to assist you and support you in the implementation of recommendations.



Photo: Part of the Amazon rainforest in the Emilio Goeldi Museum of the fauna and flora in Belém, Brazil; Credit: [UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe](#)

# 01

## An Environmental and Human Rights Treaty

This chapter introduces the Escazú Agreement, emphasizing its significance as the first legally-binding treaty in Latin America and the Caribbean that incorporates environmental rights with human rights. It explores the treaty's connection to the climate crisis, its alignment with other international agreements, and its relevance to economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as its linkage with the Sustainable Development Goals.

## The Four Pillars of the Agreement

This chapter outlines the four fundamental pillars of the Escazú Agreement: the right to access information, participation, and justice and protections for human rights defenders, along with the importance of capacity building and cooperation to enhance implementation efforts.

# 03

## Advancing Environmental Rights: Lessons & Mechanisms for Implementation

Focusing on practical strategies, this chapter shares country-specific lessons learned from implementing the Escazú Agreement and identifies key mechanisms for effective implementation.

## Addressing Questions about the Agreement

This chapter addresses questions surrounding the Escazú Agreement. It also emphasizes the importance of upholding the rule of law through legal certainty, stable legal frameworks, and an inclusive civil space.

# 05

## Escazú Agreement: A Tool to Advance Environmental Governance in the Caribbean

This chapter examines the unique circumstances faced by the Caribbean region in the context of the Escazú Agreement and presents successful case studies that demonstrate the potential for effective environmental governance, offering inspiration and opportunities for future action.

## Resources for Parliamentarians

The final chapter provides resources specifically tailored for parliamentarians, outlining their critical role in advancing the goals of the Escazú Agreement. It includes key recommendations based on peer discussions, a sample parliamentary question, and sample language to assist parliamentarians in advocating for environmental rights and effective governance under the Agreement.

# 02

# 04

# 06





Acronyms & Abbreviations

Aarhus  
Convention

Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

CBD

Convention on Biological Diversity

COP

Conference of the Parties

CSO

Civil Society Organization

ECLAC

United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

EIA

Environmental Impact Assessment

FCCCC

Framework Convention on Climate Change

GBF

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

HRDs

Human Rights Defenders

IAEA

International Atomic Energy Agency

IPCC

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

LAC

Latin America and the Caribbean

MEA

Multilateral Environmental Agreement

MP

Member of Parliament

NDC

Nationally Determined Contributions

NGO

Non-Governmental Organization

OECD

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

PGA

Parliamentarians for Global Action

SDGs

Sustainable Development Goals

UDHR

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN

United Nations

UNEP

United Nations Environment Program

UNFCCC

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNHRC

United Nations Human Rights Council



## 1

## An environmental and human rights Treaty



On March 4, 2018, in Escazú, Costa Rica, a group of Latin American and Caribbean States, members of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), finalized the Escazú Agreement aiming to implement Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which states that “environmental matters are best handled” by ensuring “access to information”, “the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes” and “access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy.”<sup>3</sup>

The Escazú Agreement entered into force on Earth Day, April 22, 2021. This date holds symbolic significance as Earth Day is observed globally as a day to raise awareness and take action on environmental issues.

The entry into force of the Escazú Agreement on Earth Day underscores the commitment of the signatory countries to promote environmental democracy, transparency, and sustainable development in the Latin American and Caribbean region.<sup>4</sup>

The Escazú Agreement is the first treaty addressing access to information, public participation and justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean celebrated as a much-anticipated advancement in environmental governance

<sup>3</sup> Rollo, A. (2021, March 11). *The Escazú Agreement: A leap forward for environmental and human rights protection in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Opinio Juris. <https://opiniojuris.org/2021/03/11/the-escazu-agreement-a-leap-forward-for-environmental-and-human-rights-protection-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

<sup>4</sup> Guterres, A. (2021, April 22). *Secretary-General's message marking the entry into force of the Escazú Agreement*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2021-04-22/secretary-generals-message-marking-the-entry-into-force-of-the-escazu-agreement>

within the region. The treaty provides a multilateral and human rights-based framework to underpin and promote environmental democracy, cooperation, and capacity-building.<sup>5</sup>

“

**The Escazú Agreement's entry into force provides hope and inspiration, and sets the stage for sustainable and resilient recovery. By adopting a rights-based approach, fostering capacity-building and cooperation, and focusing on the most vulnerable, this regional treaty is a major leap forward in forging transformative pathways for people and our planet.**

UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, on April 22, 2021, New York, on the occasion of the entry into force of the Escazú Agreement.

<sup>5</sup> Rollo, A. (2021, March 11). *The Escazú Agreement: A leap forward for environmental and human rights protection in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Opinio Juris. <https://opiniojuris.org/2021/03/11/the-escazu-agreement-a-leap-forward-for-environmental-and-human-rights-protection-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>





# KEY ELEMENTS OF THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT

	First regional environmental treaty of Latin America and the Caribbean.
	Seeks to safeguard the right of present and future generations to a healthy environment and sustainable development, through procedural rights.
	Reinforces the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and other internationally agreed commitments.
	Puts into practice Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.
	First treaty to include specific provisions on human rights defenders in environmental matters.
	Links human rights and the environment.
	Based on the interconnectedness of access rights.
	Establishes national obligations with regional cooperation and support, creating a common standard for all.
	Centrality of capacity-building and cooperation to support implementation.
	Example of multilateralism for sustainable development and of inclusion of the public in international negotiations



El Yunque National Forest in Puerto Rico is home to over 200 species of trees and plants, 23 of which are found nowhere else. Credit: "20120106-OC-AMW-0417" by [USDAgov](#) is marked with [Public Domain Mark 1.0](#).

## 1.1 The Escazú Agreement and the climate crisis

*Latin America and the Caribbean region is home to approximately 40 percent of the world’s biodiversity, hosting over 25 percent of the world’s forests.<sup>7</sup> The Caribbean is one of the world’s top biodiversity hotspots, characterized by both a high level of regionally unique species and a severe degree of habitat loss and vulnerability to extinctions.<sup>8</sup>*

- The climate crisis exacerbates environmental degradation, increasing community vulnerabilities, intensifying resource conflicts, and heightening the risks faced by environmental defenders. Addressing the climate crisis is, therefore, an environmental imperative as well as a moral and ethical responsibility to uphold the right to a healthy environment for present and future generations.<sup>9</sup>
- By fostering transparency, participation, and accountability in environmental governance, the Escazú Agreement paves the way for a future where all individuals are able to thrive in a clean, safe, and sustainable environment.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, a region historically marked by economic growth driven by the exploitation of natural resources, such prosperity has co-existed with

6 Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, November 23). *Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement*. [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641\\_pfc-white\\_paper-escazu\\_implementation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641_pfc-white_paper-escazu_implementation_guide.pdf)

7 UNEP-WCMC. (2016). *The state of biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean: A mid-term review of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets*. UNEP-WCMC, Cambridge, UK. <https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo4/outlook-grulac-en.pdf>

8 CARICOM. (2018, November). *The state of biodiversity in the Caribbean Community: A review of progress towards the Aichi biodiversity targets*. [https://caricom.org/documents/16630-un\\_environment\\_-\\_the\\_state\\_of\\_biodiversity\\_in\\_the\\_caribbean\\_community\\_b5....pdf](https://caricom.org/documents/16630-un_environment_-_the_state_of_biodiversity_in_the_caribbean_community_b5....pdf)

9 PGA Members remain vigilant in addressing environmental crimes, including Ecocide, and the need to recognize such acts as a crime under international law. PGA members are actively working to have Ecocide included among the most serious crimes under the Rome Statute, thereby placing it within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court.



extreme inequality—the highest in the world.<sup>10</sup> This socio-economic dynamic has long fueled conflicts over land, minerals, and other natural resources, placing additional pressure on the environment and those who protect it.

- This inequality also exacerbates the impacts of the climate crisis, as vulnerable communities—often those who contribute the least to environmental degradation—bear the brunt of its effects. Positive action is needed to address these inequities and create a more equitable and resilient future for the entire region.



**Climate change is not an abstract, or academic threat. For my people, and the people of SIDS, it is a persistent and destructive reality. Intense hurricanes are now an annual terror. Coastal erosion is wiping away our productive areas for tourism and agriculture. The climate crisis is not on the horizon. It is here, now, burning through our ecosystems, flooding our villages, and leaving us with fewer tomorrows. And yet, we find ourselves at an absurd situation: continuing to subsidize the very industries that are accelerating our destruction.**

Hon. Gaston Browne, Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Corporate Governance, and Public Private Partnerships of Antigua and Barbuda, at the General Debate of the 79<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 27 September, 2024.

- Environmental human rights defenders in the region are particularly vulnerable, frequently facing threats and human rights violations in their efforts to safeguard the environment and uphold their rights relating to land and natural resources. Global statistics highlight this danger: in 2023 alone, at least 196 defenders worldwide lost their lives protecting their homes and our planet. Latin America accounted for 85 percent of these cases, with lethal attacks against defenders concentrated in four key countries, which accounted for more than 70 percent of murders: Brazil, Colombia, Honduras,

<sup>10</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), & United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2019). *Climate change and human rights: Contributions by and for Latin America and the Caribbean*. [www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/S1900999\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/S1900999_en.pdf); Gaudin, Y., & Pareyón Noguez, R. (2020). *Brechas estructurales en América Latina y el Caribe: Una perspectiva conceptual-metodológica* (Documentos de Proyectos, LC/TS.2020/139; LC/MEX/TS.2020/36). Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL). <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e6ab3765-bb01-43a7-9279-757e3a3bd747/content>

and Mexico. According to Global Witness, of those murdered in 2023, 43 percent were Indigenous Peoples, and 12 percent were women<sup>11</sup>, with 11 of the 18 countries documented by Global Witness reporting incidents within the region.



**Chile would like to further stress the linkage between the basic obligation of all States to prevent significant environmental damage, based on the no-harm principle, and the fulfillment of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. From a procedural perspective, this right entails access to information, access to meaningful participation and access to justice and effective remedies, including their safe exercise free from intimidation, reprisals, and criminalization. The fulfillment of all these procedural aspects is necessary to ensure accountability, transparency, and monitoring of climate change impacts.**

Jorge Carvajal San Martin, Ambassador of the Republic of Chile to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, 20 December 2024, Written Replies of the Republic of Chile to Questions Posed by Judges Cleveland, Tladi, Aurescu, and Charlesworth in the Request for an Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States Concerning Climate Change, International Court of Justice.

- As both an environmental and human rights treaty, the Escazú Agreement prioritizes transparency and public participation as critical elements in advancing sustainable development and includes explicit provisions to protect environmental defenders, who have been thrust to the frontlines of the climate crisis. These defenders are recognized within the Agreement as essential actors in environmental governance, entitled to the right to conduct their efforts free from fear of reprisal.

<sup>11</sup> Global Witness. (2024, September). *Missing voices: The violent erasure of land and environmental defenders* (Annual defenders report 2023/2024). [www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/missing-voices/](http://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/missing-voices/)





## 1.2 The Escazú Agreement and human rights

The Escazú Agreement stands out among international environmental treaties for its pioneering incorporation of environmental and human rights protections, establishing a groundbreaking framework that views environmental well-being as an essential element of human rights. This approach recognizes that environmental health is not only vital for human rights to be realized but is, in fact, a human right in itself.<sup>12</sup>



**The human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment for all people was unequivocally recognized by UN General Assembly Resolution 76/300, adopted on 28 July 2022.**

- Unlike similar environmental treaties, the Escazú Agreement explicitly addresses human rights, embedding them throughout its text. From the outset, the preamble emphasizes that “access rights” — including access to information, public participation, and justice in environmental matters — are essential to realizing human rights, affirming the importance

<sup>12</sup> Rollo, A. (2021, March 11). The Escazú Agreement: A leap forward for environmental and human rights protection in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Opinio Juris*. <https://opiniojuris.org/2021/03/11/the-escazu-agreement-a-leap-forward-for-environmental-and-human-rights-protection-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international treaties. This explicit connection between environmental health and human rights protection demonstrates the Agreement’s commitment to viewing these domains as inseparable.<sup>13</sup>

- The Agreement’s core principles incorporate foundational human rights standards such as equality and non-discrimination, non-regression (ensuring that existing protections are not reduced), and the pro-persona principle, which prioritizes the broadest protection for individuals in cases of interpretative ambiguity.
- Most notably, Escazú expands the scope of environmental rights beyond current generations. Article 1 of the Agreement explicitly acknowledges “the right of every person of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development,” thus affirming the rights of future generations to environmental and developmental sustainability.<sup>14</sup>
- By formally linking environmental and human rights protections, the Escazú Agreement marks a paradigm shift in environmental governance. It uniquely underscores the necessity of protecting both the environment and the rights of individuals and communities, particularly those who depend directly on natural resources, setting a new standard for environmental treaties globally.<sup>15</sup>



**The Escazú Agreement commits parties to guarantee the right to a healthy environment, (...) It provides citizens and communities with the tools needed to hold States accountable for protecting and fulfilling this fundamental right.**

Dr. David Boyd, Former UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment.

<sup>13</sup> Dávila, A. S. (2023). The Escazú Agreement: The last piece of the tripartite normative framework in the right to a healthy environment. *Stanford Environmental Law Journal*, 42(1), 63. [https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/J\\_Davila-Escazu-Agreement\\_web\\_2-20.pdf](https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/J_Davila-Escazu-Agreement_web_2-20.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Rollo, A. (2021, March 11). The Escazú Agreement: A leap forward for environmental and human rights protection in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Opinio Juris*. <https://opiniojuris.org/2021/03/11/the-escazu-agreement-a-leap-forward-for-environmental-and-human-rights-protection-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

<sup>15</sup> United Nations. (2020, November 9). UN experts hail landmark environmental treaty in Latin America and the Caribbean. United Nations Human Rights Office. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/11/un-experts-hail-landmark-environmental-treaty-latin-america-and-caribbean>





- The Agreement explicitly recognizes the “public” as a stakeholder entitled to meaningful participation in the work to construct, implement, and enforce the Agreement.
- Through the effective implementation of these environmental democracy principles, the rule of law is strengthened, information is more robust, and accountability can be realized. In the current context of a rise in authoritarian regimes<sup>16</sup>, the need to protect and uphold democratic principles is more pressing than ever. See PGA’s [Parliamentary Toolbox for Democracy Defense](#) for more information on the erosion of democratic principles and what parliamentarians can do more broadly.

### 1.3 The Escazú Agreement and democracy

- Democracy is both an ideal and a form of government. Its institutions allow individuals to work toward peace, the rule of law, justice, sustainable development, inclusion, respect for human rights, and prosperity. Efforts to combat democratic backsliding and the impacts of the climate crisis are intrinsically linked – by bolstering one, the other is thereby reinforced.
- Environmental democracy sets a standard of how decisions are made, with “access rights” at its core. These three key principles which stem from [Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development](#) (Principle 10) embody the procedural dimensions of the right to a healthy environment.
- Overall, Principle 10 aims to deepen democracies and social cohesion, build trust in the adopted environmental decision, eliminate asymmetries, and prevent socio-environmental conflicts.
- The Escazú Agreement enshrines Principle 10, which specifically seeks to ensure that every person has access to information, can participate in the decision-making process, and has access to justice in environmental matters with the aim of safeguarding the right to a healthy and sustainable environment for present and future generations. Through the implementation of these access rights, the Escazú Agreement ensures that those vulnerable communities most affected and who often have additional layers of existing inequalities – namely women, indigenous and afro-descendant communities – can mitigate these inequalities through participatory decision-making.

16 Freedom House. (2024, February). *Freedom in the world 2024: The mounting damage of flawed elections and armed conflict*. [https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/FIW\\_2024\\_DigitalBooklet.pdf](https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2024-02/FIW_2024_DigitalBooklet.pdf)



"Caribbean fishermen Sugar Beach St Lucia" by <http://heatherbuckley.co.uk> is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.





VII Meeting of the negotiating committee of regional agreement on access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. Buenos Aires, 31 July - 4 August 2017. Credit: "Principio 10, Acuerdo Escazú" by Gafotos is licensed under CC BY 3.0.

## 1.4 How does the Escazú Agreement relate to other relevant international instruments?

The Escazú Agreement complements and supports other international instruments, including multilateral environmental agreements and human rights treaties<sup>17</sup>. The Agreement reinforces existing international agreements and frameworks by advancing principles of environmental democracy, transparency, accountability, and sustainability in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

- **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** The UNFCCC's primary objective is to prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system and to promote cooperation among countries to address the climate crisis. The Escazú Agreement complements the UNFCCC by ensuring that countries in Latin America and the Caribbean uphold citizens' rights to information and participation in climate-related decision-making processes, providing a legal basis to hold governments accountable for both climate mitigation and adaptation actions.
  - Articles 4, 6, and 12 contain provisions on access to information.
  - Articles 4 and 6 also contain provisions on public participation and awareness.
- **Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement/High Seas Treaty):** The BBNJ Agreement, or the High Seas Treaty aims to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, for present and

future generations, in large part through international cooperation and coordination with existing international instruments. It reinforces the Escazú Agreement by emphasizing access to information, public participation, and with respect to indigenous peoples and local communities as holders of traditional knowledge and key stakeholders.

- Articles 9, 14, 19-21, 26, 28-29, and 32-37 contain provisions on access to information and public participation.
  - Articles 7, 13, and the Preamble contain provisions relating to the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.
  - Article 41 underscores the need to strengthen cooperation and coordination between relevant legal instruments and frameworks, recognizing indigenous communities as key stakeholders.
  - Article 51 establishes a clearing-house mechanism consisting primarily of an open-access platform.
- **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):** The Escazú Agreement reinforces the CBD by ensuring that public participation, access to environmental information, justice, and accountability are integral to environmental governance. It strengthens the rights of local communities and indigenous peoples in the decision-making process, aligning closely with the CBD's goals of equitable participation, sustainable use of biodiversity, and the protection of ecosystems. By combining legal access, transparency, and community rights, the Agreement complements the objectives of the CBD in fostering a more inclusive and accountable approach to biodiversity conservation.
    - Articles 14 and 17 contain provisions on access to information.
    - Article 8 and the Preamble recognize the crucial participation of women in policy-making and implementation, with respect and knowledge preservation of the innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities.
  - **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF):** The Escazú Agreement reinforces the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by fostering transparent, inclusive, and a rights-based governance in environmental matters. By ensuring access to environmental information, promoting public participation, and protecting the rights of local and indigenous communities, the Escazú Agreement supports the GBF's goals of equitable and effective biodiversity conservation. Together, these frameworks enhance environmental governance by ensuring the active involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making processes, facilitating knowledge-sharing, and securing the rights of vulnerable groups, ultimately strengthening the implementation of global biodiversity targets.
    - Target 21 ensures that knowledge is available and accessible to guide biodiversity action.
    - Target 22 ensures public participation in decision-making and access to justice and information related to biodiversity for all people.

17 Further reading: UN ECLAC. (n.d.). Observatory on Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean. United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. <https://observatoriop10.cepal.org/en>



- **Paris Agreement:** While the Paris Agreement focuses on climate action, Escazú supports its goals by fostering transparency and accountability, empowering vulnerable communities to engage in climate policies, and hold governments accountable for their commitments, thereby reinforcing the principles of equity and inclusivity in global climate governance.
  - Articles 4, 7, and 12 contain provisions on access to information.
  - Article 7 also contains recognizes a gender-responsive and participatory approach that considers vulnerable groups, with respect to the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities.
  - Article 12 also contains provisions on access to public participation.
- **Aarhus Convention:** The Escazú Agreement draws inspiration from the Aarhus Convention, a legally binding instrument that promotes access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters in Europe and Central Asia.<sup>18</sup> The Escazú Agreement extends similar principles to the Latin American and Caribbean region, but with more extensive emphasis on human rights and specifically includes provisions to guarantee a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders in environmental matters according to Article 9.
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** The Escazú Agreement recognizes the interdependence between environmental rights and human rights, echoing the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By promoting access to environmental information, public participation, and access to justice, the Escazú Agreement supports the realization of fundamental human rights, including the right to a healthy environment, and the right to an effective remedy for environmental harm, as well as the rights specifically established by the UDHR such as the right to participation in public affairs.

<sup>18</sup> The Escazú Agreement, alongside the Aarhus Convention, aims for the implementation of Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration. Principle 10 emphasizes the importance of public participation (active participation, access to information and access to justice) in addressing environmental issues.



A solar water heater is located in the house of Mariela Ojeda in Llanquihue, Chile. Credit: IMF Photo/Tamara Merino



# How does the Escazú Agreement relate to the economic, social and cultural rights as well as to the civil and political right?

## ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS: THE NEED



### 1 Right to Education



### 2 Right to Health



### 3 Right to Food



### 4 Rights to water and sanitation

## HOW THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT ADDRESSES IT:

Indirectly, by emphasizing the importance of environmental education and awareness as essential components of sustainable development, which includes fostering environmental literacy and education among communities.

By promoting access to information about environmental factors that impact public health (e.g. pollution and resource management), and empowers communities to participate in decision-making processes regarding environmental policies to ensure health considerations are prioritized.

Indirectly, by ensuring access to information and participation in decisions that affect agricultural practices and land use, which are crucial for food security – and by promoting sustainable resource management, to help protect ecosystems that provide food sources.

By contributing to better governance and protection of water resources, ultimately promoting equitable access to clean water and adequate sanitation.

\*The analysis provided is based on a correlation developed by PGA, as the Escazú Agreement does not explicitly reference these rights.

## CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS: THE NEED



### 1 Freedom of Expression and Participation



### 2 Right to Non-Discrimination



### 3 Freedom of Assembly and Association



### 4 Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Detention



### 5 Right to Participate in Government

## HOW THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT ADDRESSES IT:

By promoting public participation in environmental decision-making processes to support freedom of expression and association. Individuals and communities are empowered to voice their concerns about environmental issues without fear of reprisal, contributing to a more open and democratic society.

By emphasizing the need to consider the rights and needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups in environmental matters. This supports the right to non-discrimination, ensuring that all individuals have equal access to environmental information, participation, and justice.

By protecting environmental defenders from attacks, threats or intimidation. This is crucial for the rights of freedom of assembly and association, ensuring individuals and groups can organize and advocate for environmental protection without fear of retribution.

By providing mechanisms for individuals and communities to seek justice when their environmental rights are violated. It reinforces the right to seek redress through legal means when environmental laws are breached or when actions harm the environment.

By ensuring that the public has the opportunity to participate in environmental decision-making processes. This aligns with the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, enabling citizens to influence decisions that impact their environment and health.

\*The analysis provided is based on a correlation developed by PGA, as the Escazú Agreement does not explicitly reference these rights.





# HOW DOES THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT RELATES TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?



## 1.6 How does the Escazú Agreement align with the Sustainable Development Goals?

The Escazú Agreement offers a path to advance implementation of the Development Agenda 2030<sup>19</sup> by strengthening the rule of law, bolstering participatory democracy, protecting human rights, and preventing social conflicts amid changes to economies' production structures.

The Agreement particularly contributes to SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, as well as SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13: Climate Action, SDG 14: Life Below Water, and SDG 15: Life on Land.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2021, April). *Escazú Agreement takes effect, enshrining right to sustainable development*. SDG Knowledge Hub. <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/escazu-agreement-takes-effect-enshrining-right-to-sustainable-development/>

<sup>20</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, November 23). *Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement*. [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641\\_pfc-white\\_paper-escazu\\_implementation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641_pfc-white_paper-escazu_implementation_guide.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, November 23). *Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement*. [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641\\_pfc-white\\_paper-escazu\\_implementation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641_pfc-white_paper-escazu_implementation_guide.pdf); International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2021, April). *Escazú Agreement takes effect, enshrining right to sustainable development*. SDG Knowledge Hub. <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/escazu-agreement-takes-effect-enshrining-right-to-sustainable-development/>

SDG 1: Addressing environmental concerns can help mitigate the impacts of poverty by safeguarding natural resources that are vital for livelihoods (e.g. clean water and fertile land), and by aligning with SDG 1's broader agenda of promoting economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. (Targets 1.4, 1.5, and 1.a)



SDG 2: Through the shared objectives of promoting food security, sustainable agriculture, and rural development, particularly in the context of environmental conservation and protection. (Targets 2.4 and 2.a)



SDG 3: enhances access to information, public participation, and justice in environmental matters to address environmental health risks (such as environmental degradation and pollution), and empowers communities to advocate for cleaner environments and hold polluters accountable. (Targets 3.9 and 3.d)



SDG 4: emphasizes the importance of environmental education and awareness as essential components of sustainable development, and by promotes access to information, public participation, and justice in environmental matters (including fostering environmental awareness among local communities). (Target 4.7)



SDG 5: recognizes that women often bear a disproportionate burden of environmental degradation and lack access to environmental decision-making processes. By promoting public participation in environmental decision-making, women can ensure their voices are heard. (Targets 5.5 and 5.b)



SDG 6: Ensuring access to justice in environmental matters, as stipulated by the Agreement, includes addressing issues of water pollution, contamination, and inequitable access to water resources. This aligns with SDG 6 goal of ensuring equitable access to [MA1] safe and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all. (Targets 6.5 and 6.b)



SDG 7: promotes renewable energy, conducting environmental impact assessments, fostering public participation, ensuring access to information, and promotes environmental justice in the context of energy development and governance in Latin America and the Caribbean. (Target 7.a)



SDG 8: ensures that economic activities are conducted in a manner that safeguards natural resources and respects human rights, the Agreement contributes to achieving SDG 8's objective of promoting sustained and inclusive economic growth. (Target 8.8)





SDG 9: encourages the adoption of innovative approaches to environmental governance and sustainable development. It promotes the use of technology and innovation to address environmental challenges, thus supporting SDG 9 goal of fostering innovation for sustainability. (Target 9.c)



SDG 10: requires participating countries to adopt measures to protect the rights of vulnerable populations and prevent environmental harm. The Agreement also helps mitigate the disproportionate impacts of development on marginalized communities, thus contributing to reducing inequalities as outlined in SDG 10. (Target 10.2 and 10.3)



SDG 11: enhances the capacity of communities to participate in decision-making processes, to support SDG 11 objective of making cities and human settlements inclusive and sustainable. (Target 11.3)



SDG 12: The Agreement includes provisions for public awareness-raising and capacity-building activities to promote sustainable development principles. By enhancing public awareness and understanding of the importance of sustainable consumption and production, the Agreement contributes to achieving SDG 12 objectives. (Target 12.8)



SDG 13: Promotes climate action, supports renewable energy development, advocates for disaster risk reduction measures, raises public awareness, and fosters international cooperation to combat climate change and its impacts in Latin America and the Caribbean. (Target 13.3)



SDG 14: promotes marine biodiversity conservation, integrated coastal zone management, pollution prevention and control, sustainable fisheries management, and international cooperation in the region. (Targets 14.4, 14.a, and 14.c)



SDG 15: promotes the conservation and restoration of terrestrial ecosystems through its provisions for sustainable development and environmental protection. By advocating for the conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity, the Agreement contributes to achieving SDG 15 objective of protecting and restoring terrestrial ecosystems. (Targets 15.7 and 15.c)



SDG 16: establishes access to justice and public participation and promotes transparency, accountability, civil society engagement, and the rule of law in environmental governance and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean. (Targets 16.3, 16.6, 16.7, 16.8, 16.10 and 16.b)



SDG 17: promotes regional cooperation and collaboration among countries in the region to address environmental challenges, as well as existing international agreements and frameworks. By fostering partnerships and knowledge-sharing, the Agreement contributes to achieving SDG 17 objective of strengthening global partnerships for sustainable development. (Targets 17.9, 17.14, 17.17, 17.18 and 17.19)

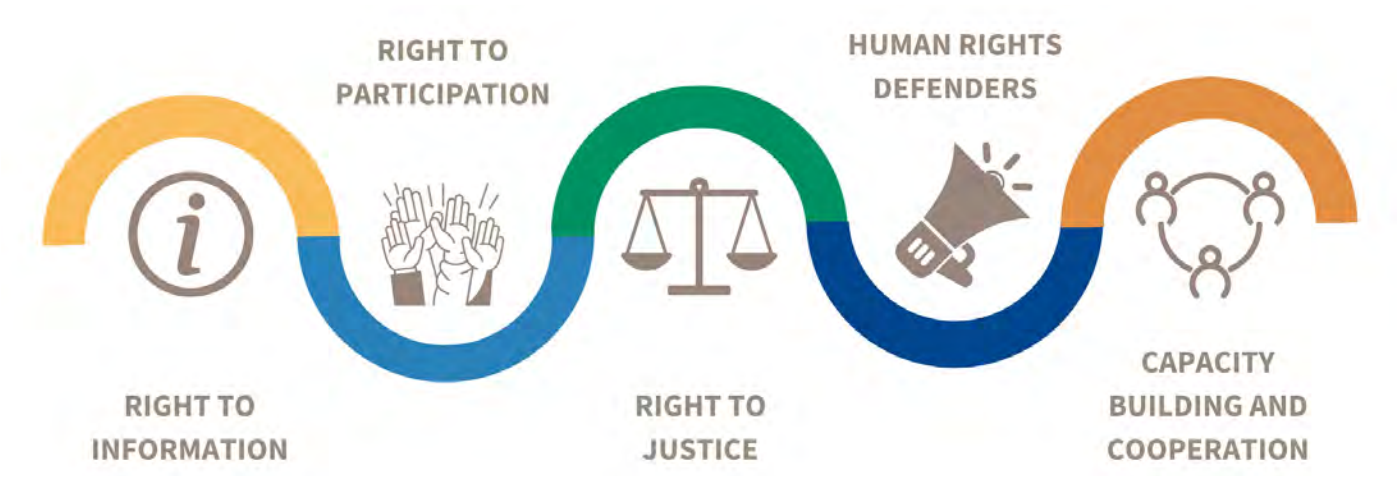


"Adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture: Colombia" by CGIAR Climate is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.



2

The four pillars of the Agreement



An increasing number of global environmental treaties have included rights to access environmental information and participation such as the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD), the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#) (UNFCCC), and the [Minamata Convention](#).<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, in Europe, the [Aarhus Convention](#) specifically focuses on access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental issues.

- The Escazú Agreement is, however, the **first regional environmental treaty in Latin America and the Caribbean to specifically address access rights**, providing a framework to ensure access to environmental information, public participation in decision-making processes, and access to justice in environmental matters within the region.
- The Agreement also adopts an inclusive approach by recognizing the importance of protecting the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including environmental defenders. It is the **first international agreement in the world to contain specific provisions protecting human rights defenders in environmental matters**, and acknowledging their critical role in advocating for environmental justice and ensuring their protection in the face of threats and attacks.

22 Olmos Giupponi, B. (2019). Fostering environmental democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean: An analysis of the Regional Agreement on Environmental Access Rights. *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law*, 28(1), 60–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/reel.12274>

Access Rights in Multilateral Environmental Agreements<sup>23</sup>

	Access to information	Participation	Access to justice	Capacity-building
 Paris Agreement	x	x		x
 Minamata Convention on Mercury	x	x		x
 Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants	x	x		x
 Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade	x	x	x	x
 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification	x	x	x	x
 Convention on Biological Diversity	x	x	x	x
 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	x	x		x
 Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change	x	x		x
 Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal	x	x	x	x
 Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer	x	x	x	x
 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	x	x		x
 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	x	x	x	x
 Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat	x	x		x

23 Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, November 23). *Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement*. [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641\\_pfc-white\\_paper-escazu\\_implementation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641_pfc-white_paper-escazu_implementation_guide.pdf)





## 2.1 The Right to Information (Articles 5 and 6)

### Article 5 Access to environmental information

1. Each Party shall ensure the public's right of access to environmental information in its possession, control or custody, in accordance with the principle of maximum disclosure.
2. The exercise of the right of access to environmental information includes:
  - (a) requesting and receiving information from competent authorities without mentioning any special interest or explaining the reasons for the request;
  - (b) being informed promptly whether the requested information is in possession or not of the competent authority receiving the request; and
  - (c) being informed of the right to challenge and appeal when information is not delivered, and of the requirements for exercising this right.

### Article 6 Generation and dissemination of environmental information

1. Each Party shall guarantee, to the extent possible within available resources, that the competent authorities generate, collect, publicize and disseminate environmental information relevant to their functions in a systematic, proactive, timely, regular, accessible and comprehensible manner, and periodically update this information and encourage the disaggregation and decentralization of environmental information at the subnational and local levels. Each Party shall strengthen coordination between the different authorities of the State.
2. The competent authorities shall endeavour to ensure, to the extent possible, that environmental information is reusable, processable and available in formats that are accessible, and that no restrictions are placed on its reproduction or use, in accordance with domestic legislation.

- The first pillar of the Escazú Agreement is crucial for protecting vulnerable populations, affirming that all people have the right to access environmental information — a right widely upheld in international human rights law. Article 5 of the Agreement establishes that States must ensure public access to environmental information “in their possession, control, or custody” in line with the principle of maximum disclosure.
- Article 5 pertains to “passive information,” which refers to information that must be provided upon request by the public. Article 6 addresses “active information,” which involves information that parties generate, such as details about projects and activities, and proactively disseminate to the public.
- Access to environmental information is closely linked to other access rights, fostering public engagement in environmental decision-making and facilitating justice. Informed individuals are empowered to participate meaningfully in environmental processes and to understand their rights and pathways for recourse.
- This access to information enhances transparency, allowing the public to monitor government actions and challenge cases of mismanagement or corruption<sup>24</sup>. Through transparency, public authorities are held accountable for their actions and decisions.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> According to the definitions in Article 2(c), this right encompasses access to information regarding environmental risks and any potential or actual harm that may affect the environment or people's health. It also includes information on the measures taken to protect and manage the environment, ensuring that such information is accessible and comprehensible, thereby enabling individuals to make informed decisions to safeguard both communities and nature.

<sup>25</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, November 23). *Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement*. [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641\\_pfc-white\\_paper-escazu\\_implementation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641_pfc-white_paper-escazu_implementation_guide.pdf)





## 2.2 The Right to Participation (Article 7)

### Article 7 Public participation in the environmental decision-making process

1. Each Party shall ensure the public's right to participation and, for that purpose, commits to implement open and inclusive participation in environmental decision-making processes based on domestic and international normative frameworks.
2. Each Party shall guarantee mechanisms for the participation of the public in decision-making processes, revisions, re-examinations or updates with respect to projects and activities, and in other processes for granting environmental permits that have or may have a significant impact on the environment, including when they may affect health.

- The Escazú Agreement upholds the right to participation in Article 7 by stipulating that State parties must guarantee transparent and inclusive public involvement in environmental decision-making processes. The Agreement explicitly recognizes the public as a stakeholder entitled to meaningful participation in the work to construct, implement, and enforce the Agreement. Information must be disseminated clearly, promptly, and comprehensively to inform the public and facilitate effective participation.<sup>26</sup>
- The right to participation ensures that individuals and communities can take part in decision-making processes that affect their lives, namely those at the forefront: women, indigenous and afro-descendent peoples.
- Safeguarding the right to participate in political and public affairs is imperative for all individuals, but especially critical for marginalized and vulnerable communities, who are often excluded from participatory processes.

## 2.3 Access to Justice (Article 8)

### Article 8 Access to justice in environmental matters

1. Each Party shall guarantee the right of access to justice in environmental matters in accordance with the guarantees of due process.
2. In order to give effect to the right of access to justice, each Party shall meet the needs of persons or groups in vulnerable situations by establishing support mechanisms, including, as appropriate, free technical and legal assistance.

- The Agreement establishes in Article 8 the right of access to justice in environmental matters recognizing that without access to justice, individuals and communities are unable to fully exercise and enjoy their human rights and ensure accountability for human rights violations.
- To safeguard the right of access to justice, State parties must guarantee the provision of due process protections through both judicial and administrative mechanisms. The Agreement also calls on State parties to strengthen their judicial systems and reduce barriers that may prevent vulnerable groups from defending their environmental rights.
- The treaty recognizes that access to environmental justice is crucial for ensuring the effectiveness of environmental laws as well as the other access rights. In this context, specialized environmental justice mechanisms are essential to ensure that disputes and environmental damages are addressed by competent authorities with the requisite expertise.

<sup>26</sup> Dávila, A. S. (2023). The Escazú Agreement: The last piece of the tripartite normative framework in the right to a healthy environment. *Stanford Environmental Law Journal*, 42(1), 63. [https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/J\\_Davila-Escazu-Agreement\\_web\\_2-20.pdf](https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/J_Davila-Escazu-Agreement_web_2-20.pdf)



## 2.4 Human rights defenders (Article 9)

### Article 9

#### Human rights defenders in environmental matters

1. Each Party shall guarantee a safe and enabling environment for persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, so that they are able to act free from threat, restriction and insecurity.
2. Each Party shall take adequate and effective measures to recognize, protect and promote all the rights of human rights defenders in environmental matters, including their right to life, personal integrity, freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association, and free movement, as well as their ability to exercise their access rights, taking into account its international obligations in the field of human rights, its constitutional principles and the basic concepts of its legal system.

- The protection of environmental defenders is a fundamental responsibility of States, as clearly outlined in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders,<sup>27</sup> that must ensure the safety of those who defend human rights, protecting them from violence, threats, retaliation, and discrimination as a result of their legitimate exercise of rights.
- The special protection of human rights defenders constitutes both a pillar and an innovation of the Escazú Agreement, recognizing the importance of human rights defenders in protecting the environment. The Agreement affirms that States shall guarantee “a safe and enabling environment for persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, so that they are able to act free from threat, restriction and insecurity” (Article 9).
- The Escazú Agreement safeguards human rights defenders by mandating that States implement “appropriate, effective, and timely measures to prevent, investigate, and penalize attacks, threats, or intimidations directed at human rights defenders in environmental matters.”
- The Agreement also stipulates that States “shall take adequate and effective measures to recognize, protect and promote all the rights of human rights defenders (...) including

their right to life, personal integrity, freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association, and free movement, as well as their ability to exercise their access rights.”<sup>28</sup>

- While Article 9.2 specifically highlights certain civil and political rights crucial for defenders (like the right to life, bodily integrity, freedom of speech and assembly), it acknowledges that these rights are not an exclusive list, and all human rights pertaining to environmental defenders must be safeguarded.
- Furthermore, the rights of defenders must be upheld, protected, and advanced in alignment with each State’s international human rights obligations, constitutional principles, and the fundamental tenets of its legal system. This emphasizes that the domestic legal and regulatory framework of each state party serves as the foundation for implementing the provisions of Article 9.<sup>29</sup>
- States have developed different protection measures and programs to guarantee the security of human rights defenders in situations of imminent risk: “from the establishment of specialized protection and investigation units for crimes against human rights activists, the establishment of an early warning system and protection by the police and bodyguards, to the establishment of programs for urgent relocation of defenders to another region or country.”<sup>30</sup> As highlighted in the following section, parliamentarians have also enacted [specific legislation on the protection of human rights defenders](#).
- Regional fora under the Agreement, such as the Conference of the Parties, represent a crucial opportunity to enhance the protection of environmental defenders as they not only provide a platform for discussion but also serve as an example of how States can create safe and meaningful spaces for defenders to engage without fear of reprisal. Similarly, the Annual Forum on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters plays an important role in this regard, providing a space for defenders to voice their concerns but also facilitating safe dialogue between civil society, governments, and other stakeholders.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> United Nations. (1999). Declaration on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms (A/RES/53/144). <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n99/770/89/pdf/n9977089.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Dávila, A. S. (2023). The Escazú Agreement: The last piece of the tripartite normative framework in the right to a healthy environment. *Stanford Environmental Law Journal*, 42(1), 63. [https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/J\\_Davila-Escazu-Agreement\\_web\\_2-20.pdf](https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/J_Davila-Escazu-Agreement_web_2-20.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, November 23). *Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement*. [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641\\_pfc-white\\_paper-escazu\\_implementation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641_pfc-white_paper-escazu_implementation_guide.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, November 23). *Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement*. [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641\\_pfc-white\\_paper-escazu\\_implementation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641_pfc-white_paper-escazu_implementation_guide.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> The Third Forum on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean will take place in Basseterre, Saint Kitts and Nevis, from 7-10 April 2025, the first one to be held in the Caribbean.





## 2.5 Capacity Building and Cooperation (Articles 10 and 11)

### Article 10 Capacity-building

1. In order to contribute to the implementation of the provisions of the present Agreement, each Party undertakes to create and strengthen national capacities, based on its priorities and needs.

### Article 11 Cooperation

1. The Parties shall cooperate to strengthen their national capacities with the aim of implementing the present Agreement in an effective manner.

To successfully advance the 4 pillars of the Agreement, the Escazú Agreement establishes mechanisms for capacity building and cooperation (Articles 10 and 11) emphasizing the importance of fostering the abilities of countries in the region to effectively implement environmental policies and promote sustainable development. The Agreement underscores the need for collaboration among governments, civil society, and other stakeholders to share knowledge, expertise, and resources for enhancing environmental governance and protecting environmental rights (Article 11). Capacity Building and Cooperation under the Agreement include:

- Providing support to countries in the region to strengthen their technical capacities in areas such as environmental monitoring, assessment, and enforcement of environmental laws.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Of particular note is the vital need to enhance the capacity-building components to provide more robust support for countries in the region, particularly in areas such as environmental monitoring, assessment, and enforcement of environmental laws.

- Building the institutional and human capacities of governments, particularly in countries with special needs in the region, to effectively address environmental challenges and fulfill their obligations under the agreement.
- Facilitating the exchange of experiences, best practices, and lessons learned among countries and stakeholders to enhance their understanding of environmental issues and improve decision-making processes.
- Promoting inclusive and transparent processes that allow for meaningful participation of civil society, indigenous peoples, and other stakeholders in environmental decision-making and implementation.
- Encouraging cooperation and collaboration among countries in the region with international organizations to address transboundary environmental issues and promote sustainable development.

In this regard, it is also important to highlight Article 12’s provision for a virtual and universally accessible clearing house on access rights represents an important step.<sup>33</sup> Operated by ECLAC in its capacity as Secretariat, the clearing house serves as a repository for member States’ laws, regulations, rules, and policies related to access rights, including legislative, administrative, and policy measures, as well as codes of conduct and good practices.

<sup>33</sup> Tigre, M. A. (2024). The right to a healthy environment in Latin America and the Caribbean: Compliance through the Inter-American System and the Escazú Agreement. In C. Voigt & C. Foster (Eds.), *International courts versus non-compliance mechanisms: Comparative advantages in strengthening treaty implementation* (pp. 262–284). Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/international-courts-versus-noncompliance-mechanisms/right-to-a-healthy-environment-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/BD7A878B25E63FD6720A9A157C9FA1C8>



3

Advancing Environmental Rights: Lessons and Mechanisms for Implementation

The Escazú Agreement is open to all 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. As of the date of this publication, [24 countries have signed, and 17 have ratified the Agreement](#).

In 2023, the Agreement was ratified by Belize and Grenada. In April 2024, Dominica deposited the instrument for ratification of the Escazú Agreement and Colombia followed suit by also depositing the instrument of ratification in September 2024.<sup>34</sup>

The environmental rights defender Judith Nunta from the shipibo-conibo people after giving a speech on Earth Day in the COP3 of the Escazú Agreement, that took place in Santiago de Chile in 2024. Credit: "Judith Nunta en COP3 Escazu" by Scann is marked with CC0 1.0.



PARTICIPANT	SIGNATURE	RATIFICATION/ ACCESSION	
Antigua and Barbuda	27 September 2018		4 March 2020
Argentina	27 September 2018		22 January 2021
Belize	24 September 2020		7 March 2023
Bolivia	2 November 2018		26 September 2019
Brazil	27 September 2018		
Chile			13 June 2022
Colombia	11 December 2019		25 September 2024
Costa Rica	27 September 2018		
Dominica	26 September 2020		22 April 2024
Dominican Republic	27 September 2018		
Ecuador	27 September 2018		21 May 2020
Grenada	26 September 2019		20 March 2023
Guatemala	27 September 2018		
Guyana	27 September 2018		18 April 2019
Haiti	27 September 2018		
Jamaica	26 September 2019		
Mexico	27 September 2018		22 January 2021
Nicaragua	27 September 2019		9 March 2020
Panama	27 September 2018		10 March 2020
Paraguay	28 September 2018		
Peru	27 September 2018		
Saint Kitts and Nevis	26 September 2019		26 September 2019
Saint Lucia	27 September 2018		1 December 2020
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	12 July 2019		26 September 2019
Uruguay	27 September 2018		26 September 2019

34 Center for International Environmental Law. (2024, August 29). Victory: Colombia strengthens environmental democracy with the constitutionality of the Escazú Agreement [Press release]. [www.ciel.org/news/victory-colombia-escazu-agreement/](http://www.ciel.org/news/victory-colombia-escazu-agreement/)





### 3.1 National Implementation

The implementation of the Escazú Agreement has made significant strides across Latin America and the Caribbean. National implementation of the Escazú Agreement is essential for the protection of access rights and of human rights defenders in environmental matters. In line with COP Decision III/1<sup>35</sup>, all Parties are encouraged to establish national roadmaps, ensuring that the necessary measures and structures are in place for effective implementation.

In the subsections below, examples are presented of countries at various stages of this process, with a focus on countries where PGA members have championed the Agreement. The three dynamic categories are (1) robust implementation, for countries that are leading in the implementation of the Agreement; (2) advancing implementation, for countries that have made notable progress towards effective implementation; and (3) emerging efforts, for countries who are not yet State Parties but have begun to implement the Agreement’s provisions.<sup>36</sup>

With continued parliamentary leadership and broad social engagement, the region is on track to enhance environmental democracy, transparency, and justice, securing the right for all people to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment:

#### i. Robust implementation<sup>37</sup>:

The countries below are examples where well-established environmental laws are increasingly

<sup>35</sup> Third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. (2024, April 22–24). Decisions adopted. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. [https://acuerdodeescazu.cepal.org/cop3/sites/acuerdodeescazu3/files/2400669e\\_cop.ez3\\_decisions\\_adopted\\_6\\_may.pdf](https://acuerdodeescazu.cepal.org/cop3/sites/acuerdodeescazu3/files/2400669e_cop.ez3_decisions_adopted_6_may.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Andrade-Goffe, D., Excell, C., & Sanhueza, A. (2023, October). *The Escazú Agreement: Seeking rights to information, participation, and justice for the most vulnerable in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://doi.org/10.46830/wriipt.19.00135>

<sup>37</sup> The classification of countries into “robust implementation,” “advancing implementation,” and “emerging efforts” is based on an evaluation of their legal frameworks, progress in ratifying and implementing the Escazú Agreement, the effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms, civil society engagement, and parliamentary commitment to the Agreement’s principles.

in line with the effective implementation of the Escazú Agreement. They have more robust legal frameworks, effective enforcement mechanisms, and active civil society participation.

- **Argentina** has shown strong commitment, with former parliamentarians such as Ms. Graciela Camaño and Ms. Gladys Gonzalez, as well as current Dip. Margarita Stolbizer (PGA Board Member and former PGA President) spearheading legislative reforms to align with the Escazú Agreement. It is vital that this momentum continues and that instances of international environmental cooperation are prioritized for continued progress.
  - In April 2023, then Dip. Graciela Camaño proposed [Bill 1540-D-2023](#) to enhance the implementation of the Escazú Agreement and update the Regime of Free Access to Public Environmental Information.<sup>38</sup>
  - In March 2024, in their efforts to advance access to environmental public information in Argentina, PGA members, including Dip. Margarita Stolbizer, Dip. Karina Veronica Banfi, and Dip. Roxana Reyes, championed Law 25.831—the country’s first national law regulating specific access to environmental information. This law enshrines the right of every individual to freely and openly access environmental data held by the State, aiming to set foundational standards for transparency, ensuring that information across national, provincial, municipal, and autonomous levels of government, as well as from public, private, and mixed-service providers, is available to the public.
  - In June 2023, Dip. Margarita Stolbizer co-signed [Bill 2402-D-2023](#) to incorporate environmental crimes into Argentina’s criminal code, referencing the Escazú Agreement’s goals. Furthermore, on April 24, 2024, Dip. Stolbizer introduced Draft [Resolution 1805-D-2024](#), requesting detailed updates from the National Executive Branch on the National Plan for implementing the Escazú Agreement, including progress, indicators, planned actions, governance, and Argentina’s involvement in COP3 in Santiago de Chile. Argentina’s [plan for implementation](#)<sup>39</sup> is a key instrument for ensuring the comprehensive application of the Agreement’s principles, particularly around public access to environmental information and participation.
- **Belize** has shown strong, bi-cameral, parliamentary support for the Escazú Agreement, particularly through the efforts of Sen. Janelle Chanona and Hon. Valerie Woods, MP (Speaker of the House of Representatives, and PGA Board Member) who worked to ensure that Belize ratified the Agreement. They are developing their own roadmap for implementation. Belize’s commitment to environmental democracy and public participation is evident in its legislative initiatives, including efforts to increase transparency and accessibility of environmental information.

<sup>38</sup> The draft law provides a comprehensive and detailed classification of environmental crimes within Argentina’s Penal Code as a crucial step crucial to equip judges with the necessary tools to effectively investigate, prosecute, and punish unlawful actions that harm the environment, ultimately aiming to ensure that those responsible for environmental degradation are held accountable.

<sup>39</sup> Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible (MAyDS). (2023, October). *Plan Nacional para la Implementación del Acuerdo de Escazú*. [www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/2023/09/plan\\_nacional\\_acuerdo\\_de\\_escazu.pdf](http://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/2023/09/plan_nacional_acuerdo_de_escazu.pdf)





**Belize's ratification of the Escazú Agreement is an important step towards the recognition, protection, and promotion of the rights of all human rights defenders in environmental matters, in Belize and beyond. With the instrument of ratification deposited one day before International Women's Day, let us not forget that it is most often women, indigenous, and afro-descendant peoples who are at the forefront. I am encouraged by this positive step, look forward to effective implementation, and call on fellow parliamentarians in the Caribbean and Latin America to take action towards robust implementation of this unique regional Agreement to ensure the full recognition of the universal human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.**

Hon. Valerie Woods, MP (Belize),  
Speaker of the House of Representatives, PGA Board Member.

- **Chile** is actively working to implement the Escazú Agreement,<sup>40</sup> building on its well-established environmental legal framework. Parliamentarians such as Dip. Félix González, Dip. Luis Malla Valenzuela, and Dip. Vlado Mirosevic, have been instrumental in promoting the incorporation of human rights protections for environmental defenders into national law.<sup>41</sup> Chile has made significant progress in advancing environmental justice and ensuring that the public has access to vital environmental information.
- **Ecuador** stands out for its Roadmap for the Implementation of the Escazú Agreement,<sup>42</sup> which outlines clear strategies for incorporating the Escazú Agreement's principles into national policies, more concretely Ecuador's roadmap emphasizes transparency and public participation.

40 Gobierno de Chile, & Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL). (2024, September 13). Ruta para la implementación del Acuerdo Regional sobre el Acceso a la Información, la Participación Pública y el Acceso a la Justicia en Asuntos Ambientales en América Latina y el Caribe en Chile. <https://hdl.handle.net/11362/80665>

41 Dip. Vlado Mirosevic and Dip. Luis Malla Valenzuela introduced a draft law aimed at establishing a normative framework to protect human rights defenders in environmental matters. This legislative initiative, supported broadly by PGA members in the Environment Committee, including Chair Dip. González underscores the strong bicameral commitment to operationalizing the Escazú Agreement in Chile.

42 Gobierno del Ecuador, & Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL). (2023). La Ruta para la implementación del Acuerdo Regional sobre el Acceso a la Información, la Participación Pública y el Acceso a la Justicia en Asuntos Ambientales en América Latina y el Caribe en el Ecuador. <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e1d3dc8d-6bdf-44ed-899c-282b4debe517/content>

- **Mexico** has also been proactive in developing legislation to align with the Escazú Agreement, with then Sen. Emilio Alvarez Icaza (former PGA Board Member) introducing bills aimed at harmonizing Mexico's legal framework with international environmental standards.<sup>43</sup> However, further progress is needed in strengthening enforcement mechanisms and ensuring broad public access to environmental decision-making processes. Furthermore, Mexico is still working on its federal Roadmap for Implementation, although it has published an Implementation Guide for article 9 of the Agreement.<sup>44</sup>
- **Saint Lucia** has developed a clear roadmap<sup>45</sup> for implementing the Escazú Agreement, with the active participation of parliamentarians and a strong focus on strengthening public participation and environmental justice. The country's commitment to the Agreement is underscored by its alignment of national policies with the principles of transparency and inclusiveness in environmental decision-making.
- **Uruguay** also stands out for its Roadmap for the Implementation of the Escazú Agreement,<sup>46</sup> which outlines clear strategies for incorporating the Escazú Agreement's principles into national policies. Uruguay's strong environmental legal framework has made it a regional leader in integrating these principles into governance.

43 Sen. Icaza proposed Bill LXV/2PPO-76-3151/131563 aiming to harmonize the Federal Environmental Responsibility Law and the National Code of Protection of the Regulatory Environment in accordance with international law instruments on environmental matters such as the Escazú Agreement, seeking to enshrine the right to information and social participation in environmental matters.

44 Gobierno de México. (2024, September 27). Guía de implementación del artículo 9 del Acuerdo de Escazú en México. [https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/950190/Guia\\_de\\_Implementacio\\_n\\_del\\_Articulo\\_9\\_del\\_Acuerdo\\_de\\_Escazu\\_.pdf](https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/950190/Guia_de_Implementacio_n_del_Articulo_9_del_Acuerdo_de_Escazu_.pdf)

45 Government of Saint Lucia, & Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2024, April 22). Road map for the implementation in Saint Lucia of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. <https://hdl.handle.net/11362/69164>

46 Gobierno de la República Oriental del Uruguay, & Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL). (2024). Ruta para la implementación del Acuerdo Regional sobre el Acceso a la Información, la Participación Pública y el Acceso a la Justicia en Asuntos Ambientales en América Latina y el Caribe: Uruguay. <https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ambiente/comunicacion/publicaciones/plan-nacional-para-implementacion-del-acuerdo-escazu-sobre-derechos#:~:text=El%20Plan%20Nacional%20de%20Implementaci%C3%B3n%20plantea%20una%20serie,fue%20aprobado%20por%20la%20Resoluci%C3%B3n%20Ministerial%20N%C2%BA%201224%2F024>



## ii. Advancing implementation:

State Parties to the Escazú Agreement are required to progressively and effectively implement it. These countries have made notable progress towards this end:

- **Antigua and Barbuda** has made significant strides toward strengthening environmental protection in the Caribbean, as well as notable progress in advancing environmental policies. The country is developing a comprehensive roadmap for full implementation of the Agreement's provisions.
- Following years of efforts,<sup>47</sup> **Colombia** ratified the Escazú Agreement on September 25, 2024. The Colombian Congress, which supported the Agreement since 2022, played a pivotal role in this achievement, with Dip. Andrés Cancimance as a key advocate. The Agreement is especially significant for Colombia given the country's high rates of violence against environmental defenders. Its ratification is a crucial step toward strengthening legal protections for defenders of the environment, offering tools to improve transparency, public participation, and justice in environmental matters while addressing gaps in national legislation.
- **Dominica** has also made significant strides toward strengthening environmental protection in the Caribbean, especially with the country becoming the 16th State Party to the Escazú Agreement, as announced during the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement in Santiago, Chile in 2024.
- **Guyana** ratified the Escazú Agreement but has not yet developed a full implementation roadmap. While the country is working to integrate the Agreement's principles into national policies, challenges remain in capacity-building, particularly in rural and indigenous communities. Guyanese parliamentarians under the leadership of Hon. Amanza Walton Desir, MP (Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs, and PGA Board Member) are leading efforts to advance the effective implementation of the Agreement, ensuring a more inclusive and transparent environmental governance framework.

<sup>47</sup> The environmental movement in Colombia that supported the Escazú Agreement gained momentum during the 2019–2020 protests in Bogotá, where the environmental sector organized a national environmental strike. As a result of these protests, negotiations were held with then-President Iván Duque, leading to an agreement for Colombia to sign the Escazú Agreement. In 2022, the Colombian Congress endorsed the agreement, moving it to the final phase: approval by the Colombian Constitutional Court. After a thorough review, the Court declared the agreement constitutional, and on September 25, 2024, Colombia deposited the instrument of ratification.



**The Agreement provides an important framework for improving and complementing legal mechanisms in Guyana: for example, with regard to improving coordination between the relevant government bodies and the private sector in order to advance the implementation of the agreement; improving the dissemination of information and the enforcement of environmental legislation; promoting public participation and meaningful involvement in decision-making processes.**

Hon. Amanza Walton Desir, MP (Guyana),  
Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs, Climate Action Campaign Convenor.

## iii. Emerging efforts:

Though these countries have not yet ratified the Agreement (a necessary step towards securing the access rights and protection of human rights defenders in environmental matters), parliamentarians have been taking concrete actions to ensure the provisions of the Agreement are effectively implemented once they become State Parties:

- **Honduras** has not ratified the Escazú Agreement yet, and although the country has environmental legislation in place, enforcement remains a significant challenge. Honduras is also one of the most dangerous countries for environmental defenders, which underscores the need for the protections offered by the Escazú Agreement. Efforts by parliamentarians to raise awareness about the benefits of ratification are beginning to take root, specifically those made by Dip. Ramón Barrios, Chair of the Committee on Legislation and Constitutional Affairs, who is leading action for Honduras to ratify the Escazú Agreement, noting its widespread benefits through the reduction of socio-environmental conflicts, strengthening efforts to address the climate crisis, reducing environmental vulnerability, and potentially bolstering investment opportunities.
- There is parliamentary support for the Agreement in **Jamaica**, with parliamentarians Hon. Angela Brown Burke, MP (PGA Board Member) and Sen. Sophia Frazer-Binns, working to raise its awareness. With comprehensive environmental laws already in place, Jamaica is well-positioned to ratify and implement the Escazú Agreement. In Jamaica, barriers to effective public participation in Environmental Impact Assessment processes must be addressed, ensuring that all stakeholders, particularly marginalized communities, have meaningful opportunities to engage. Additionally, government agencies must prioritize making environmental and climate data accessible, transparent, and easily comprehensible to the public, enabling informed participation and decision-making in environmental governance.



“

Climate change is a threat multiplier, and has placed those already disenfranchised, often women, indigenous and afro-descendants, at the forefront as human rights defenders of the environment. As parliamentarians, we are uniquely equipped to ensure the protection of human rights through the robust implementation of tools like the Escazú Agreement.

Hon. Dr. Angela Brown Burke, MP (Jamaica), PGA Board Member.

“

As the first regional environmental agreement of the Caribbean and Latin America, the Escazú Agreement is an opportunity for Jamaica to model in concrete terms our Constitutional human right of every person of present and future generations to live in a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

Senator Sophia Frazer-Binns (Jamaica),  
Shadow Minister of Environment and Ecological Heritage.

- In **Suriname**, significant efforts have been made to advance the Agreement's principles. The PGA National Group, led by its Chair Hon. Patrick Kensenhuis, MP, is at the forefront of this push, advocating for accession and fostering strong collaboration with civil society. This collective commitment has led to efforts to have the treaty translated into Dutch, ensuring broader accessibility and engagement in Suriname's implementation process.
- **Trinidad and Tobago** has established solid environmental laws but has not yet ratified the Escazú Agreement. The country faces challenges related to enforcement and public participation, but there is growing multi-partisan support for ratification within Parliament, both in the House of Representatives and the Senate. PGA National Group is leading efforts to engage stakeholders and promote the Agreement's principles in the country, having developed a country-specific set of [Key Recommendations for Parliamentarians to Advance Effective Climate Governance and the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters](#). Parliamentarians have also supported the

inclusion of the right to a healthy environment in Trinidad and Tobago's constitutional review, ensuring that environmental rights are enshrined as fundamental rights within the country's legal framework.



**Video:** Hon. Patrick Kensenhuis, MP (Suriname), Chair of PGA National Group, highlights the link between human rights and the environment, calling on fellow parliamentarians to defend the human rights of their constituents. [Watch](#)

“

The significance of the country's signature and ratification of the Agreement cannot be overstated. However, it is paramount to recognize that the next steps of ensuring its effective implementation hold even greater importance. This undertaking needs a collaborative approach to guarantee success – multi-sectoral, multi-partisan, and multi-lateral – reflecting the spirit of the agreement.

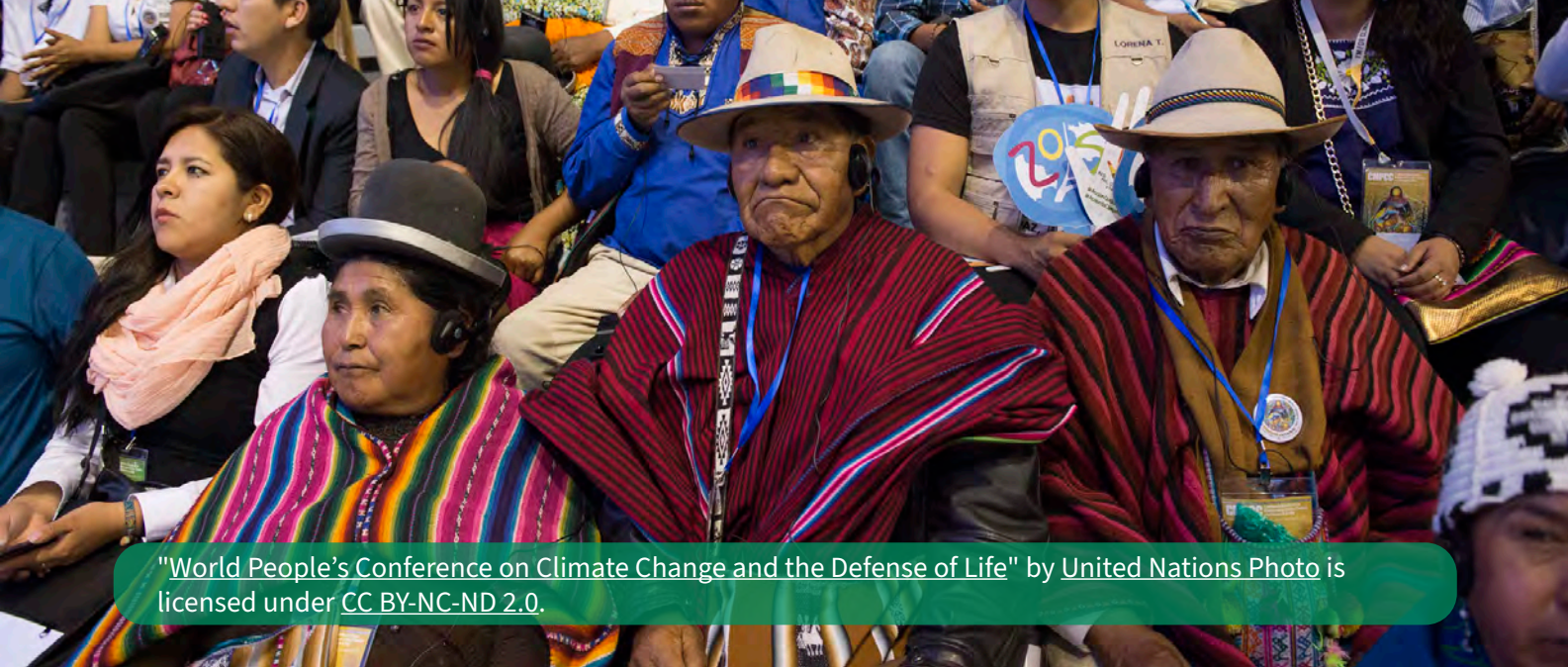
Hon. David Lee, MP (Trinidad and Tobago), Opposition Chief Whip.

“

**Ratifying the Escazú Agreement can help assist in tackling climate change through its mechanisms among other things by ensuring that the public is provided with accessible timely and comprehensive information on environmental issues, and that they can meaningfully participate in environmental decision-making processes.**

Senator Anthony Vieira (Trinidad and Tobago).





"World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Defense of Life" by United Nations Photo is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

### 3.2 Key Mechanisms for Effective Implementation

#### i. The treaty's multilateralism as an opportunity for success

- The Agreement is an example of multilateralism for sustainable development and environmental protection.<sup>48</sup> The process that resulted in the Escazú Agreement is an example of how the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean can join forces to tackle common challenges and strengthen environmental governance alongside with social and economic development, based on dialogue, cooperation and capacity-building.<sup>49</sup>

“

**In these troubled times, we must try to adopt transformative pathways and focus on a sustainable, inclusive recovery grounded in multilateralism, partnership, cooperation and regional integration. The Escazú Agreement precisely brings all of these elements into focus.**

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Costa Rica, Rodolfo Solano Quirós, in his capacity as Chair of the Presiding Officers of the Agreement, Second Meeting of the Signatory Countries to the Escazú Agreement, held virtually this December 9-10 under the auspices of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.

48 Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, October). *Rules relating to the structure and functions of the Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance*. <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c8a615a2-d067-47c0-b7f2-ad195a6b8ec4/content>

49 Barchiche, D., Hege, E., & Napoli, A. (2019). *The Escazú Agreement: An ambitious example of a multilateral treaty in support of environmental law?* IDDRI, Issue Brief N°03/19. <https://www.iddri.org/en/publications-and-events/issue-brief/escazu-agreement-ambitious-example-multilateral-treaty-support>

- States Parties to the Agreement must adhere to the international commitments outlined within it. However, even States that are not party to the Agreement can benefit from the Escazú Agreement, as it provides robust guidance on how to best protect the rights to information, participation, and access to justice in environmental matters.<sup>50</sup>
- The content of the Escazú Agreement addresses universally supported principles centering on the protection of human rights and the implementation of mechanisms aimed at fortifying the rule of law, as well as fostering sustainable development and environmental governance.<sup>51</sup>

#### ii. The development of guides and roadmaps for the Agreement's implementation

- To facilitate the implementation of the Escazú Agreement, ECLAC developed the [Implementation Guide of the Escazú Agreement](#). The guide provides States Parties and stakeholders with essential guidance to ensure compliance with the treaty's provisions, serving as a resource for countries considering ratification.
- Additionally, several State Parties have developed Roadmaps for the Implementation of the Agreement developed with the support of ECLAC, and with the participation of parliamentarians and various stakeholders. The aim of these guides is to establish the priority actions to implement effectively the Escazú Agreement in their countries. The following countries have developed roadmaps for implementation: [Argentina](#), [Chile](#), [Ecuador](#), [Saint Lucia](#) and Uruguay. The following countries are expected to develop roadmaps for implementation in 2025: Belize, Grenada, Mexico, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis.
- The roadmaps serve as crucial and dynamic guides for effective implementation of the Escazú Agreement, which must remain flexible to acknowledge evolving circumstances and opportunities. To ensure the long-term effectiveness of the Agreement, the roadmaps must be underpinned by robust follow-up mechanisms and strong accountability frameworks alongside sustained efforts in transparency, independent oversight, and effective monitoring of progress. These measures foster sustainability, build resilience against political instability, and ultimately enhance the Agreement's effectiveness.

50 Dávila, A. S. (2023). The Escazú Agreement: The last piece of the tripartite normative framework in the right to a healthy environment. *Stanford Environmental Law Journal*, 42(1), 63. [https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/J\\_Davila-Escazu-Agreement\\_web\\_2-20.pdf](https://law.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/J_Davila-Escazu-Agreement_web_2-20.pdf)

51 López-Cubillos, S., Muñoz-Ávila, L., Roberson, L. A., Suárez-Castro, A. F., Ochoa-Quintero, J. M., Crouzeilles, R., Gallo-Cajiao, E., Rhodes, J., Dressler, W., Martinez-Harms, M. J., & Runting, R. K. (2022). The landmark Escazú Agreement: An opportunity to integrate democracy, human rights, and transboundary conservation. *Conservation Letters*, 15:e12838. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12838>



### iii. The Six Representatives of the Public

- Under the framework of the Escazú Agreement, the six representatives of the people play a crucial role in promoting public participation and transparency in environmental decision-making processes.
- As of 2024, the elected representatives are from El Salvador, Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, Costa Rica and Santa Lucía<sup>52</sup>, respectively, and their input and expertise contribute to more informed and inclusive decision-making processes.
- The representatives of the people support the implementation of the Escazú Agreement to ensure that the rights enshrined in it are upheld while also tracking progress, identifying challenges, and advocating for the effective implementation of the agreement's provisions. They may also engage in capacity-building activities to strengthen the ability of CSOs and other stakeholders to effectively engage in environmental decision-making processes.
- PGA members have actively collaborated with the Members of the Public for the Escazú Agreement<sup>53</sup>, working together to address challenges related to its effective implementation and to ensure objectives are successfully achieved. This collaborative work has been essential in fostering dialogue, sharing expertise, and advocating for the strengthening of environmental rights across the region.

### iv. The Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance

- The Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance is a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement aimed to promote implementation and support Parties in the implementation of the Agreement, aimed at advancing the Agreement's implementation and providing assistance to its Parties, while fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing to address common challenges.
- It operates on a consultative and transparent basis, characterized by a non-adversarial, non-judicial, and non-punitive approach, and its guidelines concerning the composition and responsibilities of the Committee were established during the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> In 2024, the six representatives of the public are: Mr. César Artiga, from El Salvador, Mr. Mijael Kaufman, from Argentina, Ms. Nicole Leotaud, from Trinidad and Tobago, Ms. Joara Marchezini, from Brazil, Ms. Irene Murillo, from Costa Rica and Mr. Bishnu Tulsie, from Santa Lucía

<sup>53</sup> With PGA being an NGO that Article 2 of the Escazú Agreement considers part of "the public." Accordingly, PGA collaborated as a member of the public and worked jointly with other organizations of the public.

<sup>54</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022). Rules relating to the structure and functions of the Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance (LC/COP-EZ.1/5). <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c8a615a2-d067-47c0-b7f2-ad195a6b8ec4/content>

- The Committee works to facilitate the implementation of the Escazú Agreement by providing guidance, technical assistance, and capacity-building support to the State parties. It assists them in aligning their national laws, policies, and practices with the requirements of the agreement.
- The Committee meets preferably in a virtual format, with at least one in-person meeting annually. Sessions are mostly public, except for sensitive matters like non-compliance cases. The working languages are Spanish and English, with translation available if needed. Decisions are made by consensus or a two-thirds majority, and virtual decision-making is possible. Open dialogues with Parties and the public may be held during open meetings.<sup>55</sup>

### v. Action Plan for Human Rights Defenders

- The Action Plan on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters was officially adopted at the Third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement, held from April 22 to 24, 2024, in Santiago, Chile, after a collaborative and consultative process that involved extensive input from a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, and environmental defenders.
- The Action Plan is rooted in Article 9 of the Agreement, which mandates that each Party guarantee a safe and enabling environment for those defending human rights in environmental matters. It outlines a set of strategic priorities and measures designed to address the risks faced by these defenders, focusing on four key areas: knowledge creation, recognition, capacity-building, and cooperation, as well as ongoing evaluation, follow-up, and review to ensure the plan's effectiveness and adaptability over time.
- Parliamentarians were actively engaged in both the First and Second Annual Forums on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters, which were essential platforms for developing the Action Plan. In September 2023, a delegation of parliamentarians delivered input to the draft action plan and developed a set of Key Recommendations for Parliamentarians (detailed on page 33 of the Action Plan).
- The plan will be implemented from 2024 to 2030, focusing on four priority areas: a) Knowledge creation, b) recognition, c) capacity-building and cooperation for national implementation, and d) evaluation of the action plan. These priority areas are designed to foster a holistic approach to protecting defenders.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022). Rules relating to the structure and functions of the Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance (LC/COP-EZ.1/5). <https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c8a615a2-d067-47c0-b7f2-ad195a6b8ec4/content>

<sup>56</sup> Proposed by Chile, Ecuador, & Saint Kitts and Nevis. (2024, February 28). Action plan on human rights defenders in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. Approved during the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, 22–24 April 2024. [https://acuerdodeescazu.cepal.org/cop3/sites/acuerdodeescazu/files/2400327e\\_cop\\_ez.3\\_action\\_plan.pdf](https://acuerdodeescazu.cepal.org/cop3/sites/acuerdodeescazu/files/2400327e_cop_ez.3_action_plan.pdf)



- Knowledge creation aims to understand the situation of defenders and establish mechanisms to prevent and address violations of their rights.
  - Recognition focuses on publicly acknowledging the critical work of environmental defenders, helping to raise awareness of their contributions and the risks they face.
  - Capacity-building and cooperation for national implementation emphasize the creation and strengthening of institutions that provide free legal assistance to environmental defenders and offer training for judges and prosecutors to ensure defenders' rights are upheld.
  - Evaluation of the action plan ensures that the measures put in place are effective and that progress is continuously monitored, allowing for adjustments to be made as needed.
- The Action Plan is an important framework for advancing the protection of environmental defenders at the national level. By ensuring that these measures are implemented, States will be better equipped to respond to the threats faced by defenders and foster a safer environment for their work. Ultimately, the success of the COP3 Action Plan will depend on the commitment of States to follow through on these strategic measures, creating an enabling environment for defenders to operate without fear of harm.

### vi. The Decision on Mainstreaming the Gender Perspective

- [Decision III/4](#) represents a significant step forward in recognizing the intersection of gender equality and environmental protection. Announced during the third Conference of the Parties (COP3) to the Escazú Agreement, held in Santiago, Chile, in April 2023, the initiative integrates gender mainstreaming into the implementation of the Agreement. The decision aims to address the specific challenges faced by women, particularly environmental defenders, and ensure their active participation in safeguarding human rights in environmental matters.
- The adoption of this decision underscores the vital role that women play in environmental protection and emphasizes the need to recognize and address gender-based violence and discrimination faced by women defenders, offering a framework that supports their safety and empowerment in their work. The decision also calls for strengthened partnerships among stakeholders, reinforcing the importance of collective efforts in advancing both gender equality and environmental sustainability. This milestone advances the objectives of the Escazú Agreement and aligns with global efforts to promote women's rights and gender.



Portrait of a worker at the charging terminal “Electroterminal Los Espinos” in Santiago, Chile. Metbus has 435 battery-electric buses in operation; the largest e-bus fleet outside China. Credit: IMF Photo/Tamara Merino



## 4

## Addressing questions about the Agreement

### ● How does the Escazú Agreement take into account the differences between countries?

- The implementation of the Agreement emphasizes progressivity due to the heterogeneity of participating countries and the prevalence of national priorities, including differences in legal systems such as the Common Law system. In Article 11.2, the Agreement explicitly establishes that “the Parties shall give particular consideration to least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing States from Latin America and the Caribbean.”

### ● How does the Escazú Agreement maintain the sovereignty of State Parties?

- The Agreement upholds the principle of permanent sovereignty of States over their natural resources (Article 3(i)) and sovereign equality between States (Article 3(j)). Additionally, it allows flexibility in meeting obligations, enabling States to adopt measures tailored to their national priorities.
- Parties may introduce implementation measures in line with their obligations, thereby enabling discretion as to the means used.<sup>57</sup>

### ● Does the Escazú Agreement include punitive measures for States?

- No. The objective of the Escazú Agreement is not punitive but rather focuses on capacity-building and fostering cooperation and mutual exchange. The Agreement advocates for progressive realization and establishes the Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance as non-adversarial, non-judicial, and non-punitive, with an emphasis on assistance, capacity-building, and cooperation.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, November 23). *Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement*. [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641\\_pfc-white\\_paper-escazu\\_implementation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641_pfc-white_paper-escazu_implementation_guide.pdf)

<sup>58</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, November 23). *Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement*. [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641\\_pfc-white\\_paper-escazu\\_implementation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641_pfc-white_paper-escazu_implementation_guide.pdf)

### ● How does the Escazú Agreement complement the evaluation of environmental impact processes of different countries?

- The Agreement does not propose specific requirements for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) but emphasizes the importance of well-informed and institutionalized participation to achieve optimal solutions. States are responsible for informing and considering associated parties in the EIA process.
- What the Agreement seeks is for participation to be well done, institutionalized and for the best solutions to be reached.

### ● Does the Escazú Agreement mandate specialized courts?

- While the Agreement does not mandate specialized environmental courts, such entities can enhance access to justice in environmental matters when appropriately structured and resourced.<sup>59</sup>

### ● What are the Escazú Agreement’s different dispute resolution mechanisms between Parties?

- The dispute resolution mechanism in the Escazú Agreement follows standard practices found in other treaties, and parties are given the autonomy to resolve disputes as they see fit. The Agreement allows States to opt out of certain dispute resolution mechanisms during ratification.
- In addition, Article 19.2 of the Agreement provides parties with the alternative of voluntarily accepting two other means of dispute settlement: submission of the dispute to the International Court of Justice or arbitration. Recourse to any of these means is not compulsory and under no circumstance may a party be forced to opt for one of them unless it has expressly consented to it.<sup>60</sup>

### ● Does the Escazú Agreement allow for reservations?

- Reservations are not permitted in the Escazú Agreement, which was negotiated with consensus among the participating States. This approach aligns with modern environmental treaties, such as the Paris Agreement, and facilitates comprehensive discussions among all parties involved. In addition, countries can always deposit comments.

<sup>59</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, November 23). *Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement*. [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641\\_pfc-white\\_paper-escazu\\_implementation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641_pfc-white_paper-escazu_implementation_guide.pdf)

<sup>60</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2022, November 23). *Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement* (p.235). [https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641\\_pfc-white\\_paper-escazu\\_implementation\\_guide.pdf](https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/news/files/21-00641_pfc-white_paper-escazu_implementation_guide.pdf)



### ● What is the burden of proof for environmental damage under the Escazú Agreement?

- Article 8 of the Agreement introduces a dynamic burden of proof to facilitate the demonstration of environmental damage. It explicitly establishes that to guarantee the right of access to justice in environmental matters, each Party shall have, considering its circumstances, “*measures to facilitate the production of evidence of environmental damage, when appropriate and as applicable, such as the reversal of the burden of proof and the dynamic burden of proof*” Article 8.3(e). This is particularly relevant in cases where proving environmental harm is difficult, such as contamination caused by private sector companies in industries like mining. By shifting or modifying the burden of proof, the Agreement aims to help overcome challenges in demonstrating environmental damage.



Viedma Glacier, Argentina is featured in this image photographed by an Expedition 13 crew member on the International Space Station. Credit: "iss013e06947" by NASA Johnson is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

## 4.1 Upholding the Rule of Law

Robust implementation of the Escazú Agreement is intrinsically linked to stable legal frameworks and democratic principles. The sections below emphasize how navigating challenges related to this allows for accountability, the protection of environmental rights, and the sustainable development of the region, while strengthening democratic principles and civic space.

### The Non-Regression Paradigm

- In the context of upholding the non-regression principle, which is guided by principles such as progressive realization as outlined in Article 3, it is crucial to consider the broader international landscape. Legal certainty and stable legal frameworks serve as a basis for social peace, sustainable development and democracy.
- Two main objectives emerge from this assessment: 1) Simplifying environmental language to enhance accessibility and understanding; and 2) Recognizing that attacks on environmental defenders affect us all, urging for a more globally coordinated response in such situations.

### Deterioration of democratic values

- In May 2022, a [paper jointly prepared by the UNDP Bureau on Latin America and the Caribbean and International IDEA](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-05/Governance-Democracy%20and%20Development.pdf) reported a shared concern about the quality of governance in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).<sup>61</sup>
- In contexts where democracy is under threat, there may be restrictions on civic space, freedom of expression, and the ability of civil society organizations to engage in environmental activism and advocacy. This could undermine the implementation of the Agreement and limit the ability of citizens to exercise their environmental rights.
- Without strong democratic institutions and mechanisms for accountability, there may be limited effectiveness in addressing environmental crimes, protecting environmental defenders, and providing access to justice for affected communities.
- Addressing these democratic challenges requires concerted action from parliamentarians in strengthening democratic institutions, promoting respect for human rights and the rule of law, and fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and civic engagement in environmental governance.

<sup>61</sup> International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), & United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2022, May). *Governance, democracy and development in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-05/Governance-Democracy%20and%20Development.pdf>



## Linguistic barriers

- The Escazú Agreement is available in multiple languages, including Spanish, English, Portuguese, Dutch, and French, which are commonly spoken in Latin America and the Caribbean region. These language options help ensure that the Agreement is accessible to a wide range of stakeholders across the region.
- However, despite being available in these languages, as well as in Indigenous languages such as Quechua, Mapudungun, and Rapa Nui, these translations can be considered insufficient if we take into account that Latin America and the Caribbean has remarkable linguistic diversity, particularly within indigenous communities.
- The Agreement's initial unavailability in Dutch, the official language of Suriname, posed a significant barrier for Surinamese stakeholders, including government officials, legislators, and civil society groups, to fully engage with it. This language gap may have hindered meaningful deliberations and potentially delayed the ratification process in Suriname, as stakeholders were unable to fully assess the treaty's implications for their national policies and commitments.



"16Apr7 OAS Hosts Panel Discussion on "Climate Change and La Francophonie in the Americas""  
by OEA - OAS is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.



Diann Black-Layne, Ambassador of Climate Change and Director of the Department of the Environment of Antigua and Barbuda, speaks onstage during the Small Island Developing States: A Just and Equitable Energy Transition Towards a Climate-Resilient Future panel at the UN Climate Change Conference COP28, Dec. 2023, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. "[December 5 - Energy, Industry and Just Transition, Indigenous Peoples](#)" by UNclimatechange is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.



# 5

## Escazú Agreement: A tool to advance environmental governance in the Caribbean

- Recognizing this critical issue, parliamentarians from the PGA National Group in Suriname advocated for the translation of the Agreement into Dutch.
- This development underscores the essential role of parliamentarians in promoting the accessibility of international agreements, ensuring that all relevant parties are able to contribute to and benefit from such agreements.

### 5.1 Addressing specific challenges in the Caribbean

The Caribbean nations played a vital role in the development of the Escazú Agreement, ensuring that it not only addressed the broader environmental concerns of Latin America but also responded to the unique vulnerabilities faced by the Caribbean region, and provided a vital framework to tackle the environmental and social challenges.

Between 2012-2018, nine Caribbean countries—Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago—took part in the crafting and negotiation of the Agreement. The latter two countries presided over the treaty’s negotiation process (with St. Vincent and the Grenadines being a member of the Presiding Officers until 2022), and **Guyana was the first nation to ratify the Agreement once it was opened for signature in 2018.**

#### Vulnerability to the Climate Crisis:

- The Caribbean includes a diverse group of small island nations, each with its unique geographical and demographic characteristics. Many Caribbean nations are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the climate crisis, such as rising sea levels, hurricanes, and other extreme weather events.
  - The Escazú Agreement’s provisions related to environmental protection and justice are critical for the Caribbean given its heightened vulnerability, whose culture, economy, and livelihoods center on its natural heritage.<sup>62</sup> By putting in place a comprehensive

<sup>62</sup> Why the Escazú Agreement Matters: Environmental rights, Justice, and Public participation in the Caribbean, lecture by



legal framework to support environmental stewardship and the fight against the climate crisis, the Agreement provides a foundation for strengthening the region’s resilience to these challenges, while also providing the opportunity for capacity building and cross-border cooperation that enables countries to strengthen their national capacities.

#### Resource Constraints:

- Caribbean nations, often characterized by smaller economies and more limited resources, face challenges in implementing the measures outlined in the Escazú Agreement.<sup>63</sup> Adequate funding<sup>64</sup> and technical resources are more limited in the Caribbean compared to some of the larger economies in Latin America.

the Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson, Judge of the Caribbean Court, January 2020, [www.ccj.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Public-Lecture-on-why-Escazu-AgreementMatters\\_20200123.pdf](https://www.ccj.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Public-Lecture-on-why-Escazu-AgreementMatters_20200123.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL). (2019, April 24). *Caribbean countries face complex challenges to advancing on fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda*. <https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2019/en/news/caribbean-countries-face-complex-challenges-advancing-fulfillment-2030-agenda>

<sup>64</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, & United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2022). *Gaps, challenges, and constraints in means of implementing the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction in small island developing states*. [https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/SIDS\\_DRR\\_Gap\\_Assessment\\_Report\\_MoI.pdf](https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/SIDS_DRR_Gap_Assessment_Report_MoI.pdf)



- To address this, the Escazú Agreement includes provisions for capacity-building and technical assistance. The Agreement creates a mechanism for international cooperation and support, which can help Caribbean countries bridge the gap in resources and strengthen their institutional capacity for environmental governance.
- By fostering regional cooperation (Article 11) and collective action, promoting public participation and the inclusion of civil society in decision-making, the Agreement gives Caribbean nations and their citizens a stronger voice in shaping international environmental policies. It also strengthens their ability to negotiate, build consensus among small island states, and advocate for environmental justice at the regional and global levels.

### Island-Specific Environmental Issues:

- The Caribbean islands often share common environmental issues related to coastal and marine ecosystems, biodiversity, and coral reefs. Since 1950, 511 disasters worldwide have hit small states, including 324 in the Caribbean which is home to a predominant share of small states, killing 250,000 people and affecting more than 24 million through injury and loss of homes and livelihoods.<sup>65</sup>
- The Agreement's provisions for public participation, particularly in decision-making processes related to environmental assessments and disaster risk management, are crucial for ensuring that the Caribbean nations can better plan for and mitigate the specific environmental threats they face.

### Misconception about Environmental Defenders in the Caribbean:

- There is a misconception regarding challenges faced by environmental human rights defenders as not relevant to the region, despite similar risks existing in the Caribbean as in Latin America. There is also insufficient documentation regarding the threats to environmental defenders in the Caribbean. Many individuals fear speaking out due to potential backlash, intimidation, defamation lawsuits, or the loss of jobs and funding, especially for NGOs and other advocates.
- The Escazú Agreement directly addresses the protection of environmental defenders by including specific provisions that require governments to ensure their safety and security.

### Enable national institutional frameworks:

- Despite the region's reputation for progressive legal frameworks, including access to information, public participation, and environmental courts, the implementation of these access rights remains insufficient.

- There is a need to build the capacity of Caribbean civil society to access information, engage in national policy and intergovernmental matters, and leverage legal channels for seeking justice in environmental matters. Also, the public needs access to information on how the Escazú Agreement can assist with this, which is especially true among the youth, indigenous and afro-descendant peoples, and communities facing some of the worst impacts of climate change.<sup>66</sup>
- The Escazú Agreement is instrumental in addressing this gap by mandating governments to establish clear legal frameworks for public access to environmental information and justice.

<sup>65</sup> Ötker, İ., & Srinivasan, K. (2018, March). Bracing for the storm. *Finance & Development Magazine*, International Monetary Fund. <https://www.imf.org/Publications/fandd/issues/2018/03/otker>

<sup>66</sup> Open Society Foundations. (2023, May 18). Q&A: *Fighting for climate justice in the Caribbean* [Interview with Nicole Leotaud]. [www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/q-and-a-fighting-for-climate-justice-in-the-caribbean](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/q-and-a-fighting-for-climate-justice-in-the-caribbean)





May 2024, PGA Members participate in the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) in Saint John's, Antigua and Barbuda.

## 5.2 Unlocking Caribbean Potential: Inspiring Success Case Studies and Opportunities

**Saint Lucia's** and **Belize's** journeys with the Escazú Agreement serve as inspiring case studies, highlighting the critical role of parliamentarians in advancing environmental justice, transparency, and public participation in governance. Parliamentarians' proactive engagement in the Escazú Agreement illustrates how they can unlock national and regional potential by fostering collaborative governance frameworks.

As State Parties to the Escazú Agreement, both countries have demonstrated a firm commitment to strengthening their legal, institutional, and economic frameworks, particularly in the areas of environmental protection and human rights. Ratifying the Agreement has contributed to the development of more robust legal structures that protect the environment while ensuring greater public access to information and participation in environmental decision-making. The countries have also seen enhanced institutional capacity to implement sustainable practices, which has paved the way for stronger resilience, particularly in sectors like tourism and agriculture that are closely linked to environmental protection.

### Active Parliamentary Engagement:

- Saint Lucia's Parliament played a central role in the country's decision to engage in the Escazú negotiations, beginning with its participation at the Rio+20 Conference. Recognizing that environmental issues transcend national borders and require multi-stakeholder involvement, the parliament ensured that the government, civil society, and the private sector were aligned in the drive for a regional agreement on environmental rights. Similarly, Belize's success also reflects a joint and collaborative effort by the

“

At its core, Escazú is about protecting the people who protect nature. Officially, as phrased by the Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, in November 2022, the Escazú Agreement ‘is the only legally binding agreement derived from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20); it is a historic agreement’. That is a big deal. It is, in fact, a historical milestone for civil society participation in the region's decision-making processes – this type of representation was previously non-existent.

Senator Janelle Chanona (Belize).

Government of Belize,<sup>67</sup> the Senate and House of Representatives, and members of civil society.<sup>68</sup>

### Securing Support for Ratification:

- Parliamentarians in Saint Lucia worked tirelessly to gain public support for the Escazú Agreement which included a well-coordinated public awareness campaign, and grassroots sensitization efforts. This effort not only galvanized the public but also facilitated a transparent dialogue on the importance of the Agreement in the context of Saint Lucia's environmental and governance frameworks. In March 2023, Belize pushed the ratification of the Escazú Agreement, paving the way for its regional leadership with regard to environmental matters.

### Legal and Institutional Frameworks for Implementation:

- The legal backing of the Escazú Agreement was made possible through parliamentary action, with Saint Lucia's Parliament approving the necessary frameworks for ratification and implementation. This was complemented by the creation of a national implementation roadmap, which included a baseline assessment of existing laws, policies, and strategies to align them with Escazú's objectives. Parliament's oversight in this process ensured that regulatory mechanisms were established to facilitate effective implementation.

67 Saint Lucia Department of Sustainable Development. (2023, December 6). *Environmental interests convene on Escazú Agreement*. [www.govt.lc/news/environmental-interests-convene-on-escaz-agreement](http://www.govt.lc/news/environmental-interests-convene-on-escaz-agreement)

68 As an example, since 2021, the United Black Association for Development Educational Foundation (UEF) organized, raised awareness, and advocated for the Government of Belize to ratify the Escazú Agreement. On Facebook the UEF hashtags #bzeescazuagreementuef and #belizeansdahdienvironment documents UEF knowledge building about this “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.” UEF also hosted 3 Community Conversations online about the Escazú Agreement.”



“

**Saint Lucia's Parliament played a pivotal role in facilitating the country's involvement in Escazu, from securing the necessary travel permissions for government officials to providing financial and logistical support during the COVID-19 pandemic, when insurance requirements for international travel were a challenge. Parliamentarians also supported public sensitization campaigns and press engagements, ensuring that information about Escazu reached the grassroots level.**

Ms. Kate Wilson, Legal Officer,  
Department of Sustainable Development, Government of Saint Lucia.

“

**In 2021, United Black Association for Development Educational Foundation (UEF) organized, raised awareness, and advocated for the Government of Belize to ratify the Escazú Agreement. On Facebook the UEF hashtags #bzeescazuagreementuef and #belizeansdahdienviroment document UEF knowledge-building about this “Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.” UEF hosted three Community Conversations online about the Escazú Agreement. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Community Conversation was held in the Afrikan Heritage Community of Monkey River Village, Toledo District/Southern Belize, on Holy Saturday April 16, 2022. Belize signed the Escazú Agreement on 24 September 2020. On February 27, 2023 Belize Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and Immigration Eamon H. Courtenay signed the Instrument of Ratification for the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation, and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.**

YaYa Marin Coleman,  
Chairperson of United Black Association for Development Educational Foundation (UEF).

### A Strong Governance Structure:

- In line with the Escazú Agreement, Saint Lucia set up a National Coordinating Committee on Human Rights to oversee the implementation of the Agreement's provisions. This Committee, along with subcommittees monitoring progress, exemplifies a holistic, inclusive approach to governance that empowers multiple sectors and stakeholders to contribute to the national agenda. For example, Belize utilized a Human Rights Committee and multi-stakeholder advisory groups to oversee the development of the Escazú implementation plan.

### Leveraging Technology for Transparency:

- Through initiatives like the Open Government Partnership (OGP), Caribbean countries have an opportunity to modernize governance structures. Saint Lucia's establishment of an open data portal and the development of an open data policy are key examples of how digital tools can be harnessed to improve transparency, monitor environmental impacts, and provide citizens with the information needed to engage in decision-making.



"4-Global Climate Action roundtable at COP23, 13/11: 'Unlocking investment into climate resilience'" by Climate Centre is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.



## 6

## Resources for Parliamentarians

The resources in this Chapter are specifically tailored for parliamentarians, outlining their critical role in advancing the goals of the Escazú Agreement. It includes Key Recommendations based on peer discussions, a sample parliamentary question to inquire with Government officials on the status of the Agreement, sample language to assist parliamentarians in advocating for environmental rights and effective governance under the Agreement, and examples of collaboration between parliamentarians and civil society towards the effectiveness of the Agreement.



"Sayulita, Mexico - 11/29" by 350.org is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

## 6.1 The role of parliamentarians: Key recommendations from peer to peer

**In line with the implementation of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean ("Escazú Agreement")**

*Developed during the Parliamentary Caucus that took place within the framework of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's (ECLAC) Second Annual Forum on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters in Latin America & the Caribbean*

26 September 2023 | Panama City, Panamá

We, the Members of Parliament participating in the Parliamentary Caucus on Protecting Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters:

*Expressing* gratitude to ECLAC for co-organizing this conversation, to experts for sharing their knowledge, to every person promoting and defending human rights in environmental matters, and to donors for their support to Parliamentarians for Global Action's (PGA) work in the promotion of human rights, democracy and the Rule of Law;

*Recognizing* the invaluable work of the public and of human rights defenders in environmental matters to strengthening democracy, access rights and sustainable development and their fundamental contributions in this regard;<sup>69</sup>

*Acknowledging* the key role that parliamentarians play in their capacity to legislate, scrutinize government actions, and champion issues as elected representatives closest to their communities, and their shared goal to promote and protect human rights, democracy, and peace for a more equitable, safe, sustainable, and democratic world;

We agree on the following recommendations:

### On an effective legal framework:

1. Safeguard the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment by ratifying the Escazú Agreement and harmonizing its commitments in the legal framework, including through legislative reform and/or Constitutional amendment.
2. Analyze existing legal frameworks: (1) in States who have ratified the Escazú Agreement to ensure implementing legislation is effective and includes enforcement mechanisms; and (2) in States who have not yet ratified the Agreement, identify opportunities in existing legislation to strengthen a framework in line with the Agreement.

<sup>69</sup> P2, Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean ("Escazú Agreement")



## Promoting Human Rights in Environmental Matters

3. Promote dialogue with local communities to ensure the term of human rights defenders in environmental matters appropriately encompasses their inherent cultural heritage, customary rights, and diversity as afrodescendants, indigenous peoples, and women as well as their different roles and expressions as community leaders, journalists, lawyers, among others. Remain mindful of intersectionality and intergenerational approaches.
4. Use exiting processes and mechanisms in Parliaments to, meaningfully and regularly, engage with civil society, academia and the public on environmental matters.
5. Consider campaign finance reform or introducing campaign finance legislation to promote transparency and accountability in Parliament.

### On strengthening capacity and cooperation:

6. Increase regional cooperation through parliamentary networks, such as PGA to share lessons learned and concrete examples of effective implementation of the Escazú Agreement between countries who have ratified it, and to encourage discussions with those countries who have yet to ratify.
7. Engage in international and regional platforms and fora that allow parliamentarians to exchange experiences and develop innovative strategies to address common challenges, reflecting the cooperative model created by the Agreement and other international human rights instruments.
8. Commit to cross-party cooperation on the protection of the environment and related human rights and craft messages that provide accurate information on the Escazú Agreement.
9. Improve coordination among parliamentary committees with prerogatives beyond the environment to ensure an intersectional approach with an emphasis to protect human rights defenders in environmental matters.

### On improving oversight:

10. Elaborate parliamentary questions and request information from relevant Ministries to encourage the establishment of national qualitative and quantitative measures and indicators, with strong accountability and reporting mechanisms on environmental matters.
11. Maintain as priority in the legislative agenda and thus, in the allocation of funds during budgetary sessions, programs and policies that encourage multi-stakeholder cooperation between government and civil society on environmental matters both at the national and regional levels. Such programs should ensure transparency and accountability for a progressive decision-making process.

### On becoming a champion:

12. Use our platforms to educate our societies about human rights and to create a culture respectful of the environment.
13. Raise awareness on the need for the access rights to information, public participation, and justice in environmental matters through the Escazú Agreement.
14. Amplify each other's work to alert about violations of rights to environmental defenders at the national, regional and international levels.



Parliamentarians Develop Recommendations on their Role in the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters within the framework of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's (ECLAC) Second Annual Forum on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters in Latin America & the Caribbean.



## 6.2 SAMPLE: Parliamentary Question to Relevant Minister on Ratification of the Escazú Agreement

The Escazú Agreement, formally known as the [Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation, and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), adopted on 4 March 2018 in Escazú, Costa Rica, is the first legally-binding treaty in the world to specifically protect environmental human rights defenders while also guaranteeing the rights to access environmental information, participate in environmental decision-making, and access justice in environmental matters.

The Escazú Agreement reinforces the region's commitments at the national, regional, and international levels to access rights, the implementation of sustainable development obligations, the Sustainable Development Goals, and particularly supports vulnerable groups, including women, indigenous peoples, and afro-descendants, who are often at the forefront of climate action.

Ratifying and effectively implementing the Escazú Agreement is a critical step in reaffirming our commitment to environmental justice, human rights, and sustainable development. By adopting this groundbreaking agreement, our country would solidify its dedication to upholding the human rights of our citizens, especially marginalized groups.

The Escazú Agreement is also an essential tool for aligning our country with international best practices, positioning it as a leader in environmental governance within the Latin American and Caribbean region. Ratifying the Agreement would enable our country to strengthen its legal and institutional frameworks, ensuring that environmental policies are transparent, inclusive, and accountable. This would further enhance the protection of environmental human rights defenders, who often face significant risks in the pursuit of environmental justice, by providing legal safeguards and reinforcing the rule of law.

In view of the above, and recognizing the potential of our country to become a model advancing environmental governance and the protection of environmental defenders, I would like to ask the Honorable Minister [...]:

15. What actions has our country undertaken to strengthen environmental governance?
16. Has your Ministry engaged with regional instruments such as the Escazú Agreement to foster the three access rights to information, participation and justice in environmental matters?
17. Could you provide a timeline and outline the key priorities of the environmental laws or initiatives currently under consideration by your Ministry?

## 6.3 SAMPLE: Language for Parliamentarians

Parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to advance the Escazú Agreement and play a key role in advancing its implementation. The resources below support effective communication with constituents, colleagues, and government officials, to mobilize support, and foster a collaborative approach to environmental governance within communities and beyond:

### Communicating with fellow Parliamentarians

- The Escazú Agreement is unique because it explicitly ties environmental protection to human rights. It protects the right of citizens to access environmental information, participate in decision-making, and to be protected from attacks, threats, or intimidation, especially those at the forefront protecting the environment.
- The Agreement addresses the alarming number of attacks, threats, and intimidation faced by environmental defenders—particularly indigenous peoples, and local community leaders. This is an urgent human rights issue, as these individuals are often fighting to protect natural resources that sustain their communities, countries, and the planet.
- Those who defend our lands, rivers, and forests are often at risk of attacks, threats and intimidation. This Agreement provides a crucial framework to protect those protecting our planet. In implementing Escazú, we are affirming our commitment to both human rights and environmental justice.
- By supporting regional instruments protecting the environment and human rights, such as the Escazú Agreement, our country would demonstrate leadership in protecting this linkage, aligning ourselves with global norms that emphasize the indivisibility of human rights, environmental justice, and democratic principles.

### Communicating with Constituents<sup>70</sup>

- The Escazú Agreement is a historic treaty that not only ensures our right to know about environmental issues but also guarantees our right to have a say in decisions affecting our land, air, water, and communities. It provides protection and redress to those defending the environment, preventing silencing or prosecution for standing up for the planet. This Agreement is about protecting human rights while safeguarding our natural resources for future generations, by supporting it we are safeguarding our collective right to live in a healthy environment and protecting the people who work tirelessly to defend it.
- This treaty is not just about laws; it is about rights—our rights. It ensures that communities like ours can be part of decisions about the projects and policies that shape our environment. I encourage you to explore the vital tool that is the Escazú Agreement, as it strengthens our democracy, protects the rights of environmental defenders, and ensures a cleaner, safer world for present and future generations.

<sup>70</sup> Further reading: Cognuck González, S., & Numer, E. (2020, November). Escazú Agreement for young people: Gain in-depth understanding of the Escazú Agreement, its importance and all its articles. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/reports/escazu-agreement-young-people>



## Communicating with Government officials

- The Escazú Agreement represents an essential opportunity for our government to protect the fundamental rights of our citizens while also advancing environmental justice. It ensures that people who speak out for the environment will have legal protection from threats and violence. By exploring mechanisms under regional instruments such as this Agreement, we not only fulfill our international human rights obligations but also set a strong example for regional leadership in sustainable development and democratic governance.
- The Escazú Agreement ties environmental protection directly to human rights. It acknowledges that without the protection of environmental defenders, we cannot ensure the long-term health of our natural resources. Engaging with this Agreement would help strengthen our commitment to both human rights and environmental sustainability. It is a forward-looking decision that aligns with our country's values and international responsibilities.
- The Agreement is designed to complement and strengthen our existing environmental and human rights frameworks, as well as democratic principles. It does not impose burdensome obligations but instead provides a transparent, inclusive, and participatory approach to environmental governance. The Escazú Agreement presents us with an opportunity to align domestic policies with internationally recognized standards for human rights and environmental protection. It can enhance our country's ability to address environmental challenges while ensuring that every citizen has a say in decisions that affect their health and well-being. We are not just fulfilling an international commitment; we are building a stronger, more resilient democracy that prioritizes transparency, human rights, and sustainable development.



November 2024, PGA, ECLAC, CANARI, and the University of the West Indies, jointly host the Parliamentary Caucus: 'The Escazú Agreement as a Tool for Climate Governance and Environmental Democracy in Trinidad and Tobago.'



April 2024, Chilean Parliamentarians gather to discuss the important role of parliamentarians in implementing the Escazú Agreement.

## 6.4 Leveraging Collaboration for Effective Climate Governance and Environmental Democracy

This section highlights the successful collaboration between parliamentarians and civil society within the framework of PGA's Climate Action Campaign. By combining the expertise and grassroots engagement of civil society with the vital role of parliamentarians, PGA members have demonstrated how such alliances can drive more inclusive, transparent, and impactful environmental governance.

- On 25-27 April 2022, PGA participated in the [Workshop on Leadership for Good Governance and Social Transformation in the Caribbean](#) hosted by the Commonwealth Secretariat, UN Women, and Caribbean Women in Leadership (CiWIL), bringing together parliamentarians, high-level representatives, human rights and gender experts, and civil society representatives to discuss key issues around gender equality and women's rights in the region, and to exchange best-practices on gender-responsive legislation, policies, governance and development processes.
- In November 2022, PGA was invited by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to participate in the [First Annual Forum on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean](#), in Quito, Ecuador. [Dip. Luisa Magdalena González \(Ecuador\) representing PGA](#) outlined the access rights to participation, information, and justice in environmental matters secured by the Escazú Agreement, and [Dip. Ramón Barrios \(Honduras\)](#), PGA Member and Chair of the Legislation and Constitutional Affairs Committee in the National Congress, took the chance to [announce his commitment to work towards Honduras' adherence to the Escazú Agreement](#).



- On April 19, 2023, PGA, in collaboration with two civil society organizations, Fundación Sustentabilidad Sin Fronteras and Uno.Cinco, hosted the [official side event to the Second meeting of the Conference of the Parties \(COP2\) to the Escazú Agreement: Empowering Parliamentarians as Champions for the Escazú Agreement](#).
- On July 11, 2023, PGA and ParlAmericas jointly organized the virtual meeting “[Towards effective environmental governance: Access to information, participation, and justice](#)” to continue the momentum from COP2 and examine the challenges and opportunities related to advancing environmental governance in the region through the Escazú Agreement and access rights, and to identify strategies parliamentarians may use to increase public awareness and inform national debates on the benefits of ratifying and implementing the Escazú Agreement.
- From September 26 to September 28, 2023, PGA organized the participation of a PGA delegation to the [Second Annual Forum on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) in Panama City, Panama. PGA convened the hybrid [Parliamentary Caucus: Protecting Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters](#), jointly with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in its capacity as Secretariat of the Escazú Agreement. Example below:
- On March 21, 2024, Hon. David Lee, MP (Trinidad and Tobago), participated in the Inception Workshop for the implementation of the project [EnviroRightsTT: Building civil society capacity to access information, participate in policymaking and access justice in environmental matters](#), organized by CANARI in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The Inception Workshop aimed at: building awareness on the importance of rights to access information, participation and justice in environmental matters to protect the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment; enhancing knowledge of challenges in environmental governance and management in Trinidad and Tobago in terms of access rights; and engaging in identifying priority areas for advocacy actions.
- From April 22 to April 24, 2024, the PGA Secretariat participated in the [Third Conference of Parties for the Escazú Agreement \(COP3\)](#) in Santiago, Chile. PGA hosted an official virtual side event to COP3 “*Developing a Toolkit for Parliamentarians on the Escazú Agreement*”, bringing together parliamentarians from Latin America and the Caribbean in a consultative manner to provide input on the PGA draft Toolkit for Parliamentarians on the Escazú Agreement.
- On April 22, 2024, the PGA Secretariat met with parliamentarians from the Chilean Chamber of Deputies and Mr. Sebastián Benfeld, Founder and President of Escazú Ahora, for a briefing session on PGA’s Campaign for a Human-Rights Based Approach to Climate Action and to discuss the important role of parliamentarians in implementing the Escazú Agreement. During the meeting, Chilean parliamentarians committed to advancing the effective implementation of the Agreement in the country and expressed their renewed enthusiasm in continuing working with PGA to achieve it.

- From May 27 to May 30, 2024, PGA participated in the [Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States \(SIDS4\)](#) in Saint John’s, Antigua and Barbuda. PGA jointly hosted with ParlAmericas the official virtual side event to SIDS4 “*Empowering Action on the Escazú Agreement: A Parliamentarians & Civil Society Dialogue*”, bringing together parliamentarians and civil society representatives from the Caribbean SIDS for a dialogue on the Escazú Agreement as a critical framework for effective and inclusive environmental governance that contributes to the region’s sustainable growth.
- On November 13, 2024, PGA, ECLAC, CANARI, and the University of the West Indies (UWI), jointly hosted the [Parliamentary Caucus: The Escazú Agreement as a Tool for Climate Governance and Environmental Democracy in Trinidad and Tobago](#), bringing together parliamentarians, experts, and civil society to explore the Escazú Agreement as a tool for ensuring the rights to access information, participation and justice in environmental matters, while reinforcing the human right to a healthy environment.



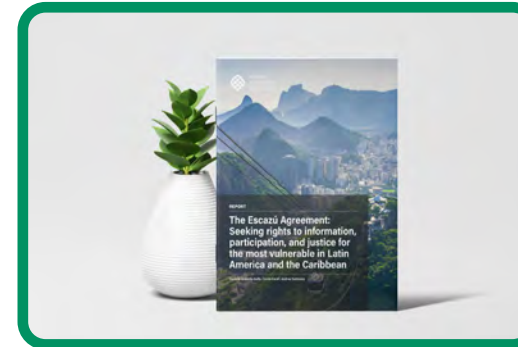
Second Annual Forum on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, 26-28 September de 2023, Panama City, Panamá



## 6.5 Additional Resources and Further Readings



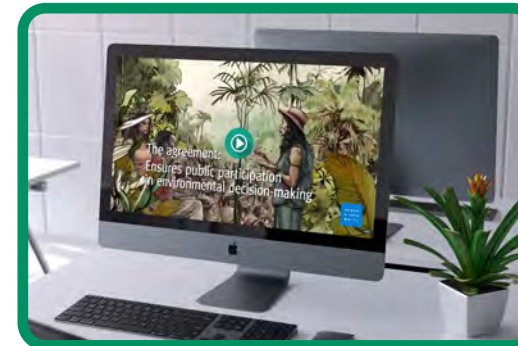
[Factsheet for Parliamentarians: The Escazú Agreement, an Environmental and Human Rights Treaty](#)



[The Escazú Agreement: Seeking Rights to Information, Participation, and Justice for the Most Vulnerable in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)  
(World Resources Institute)



[Observatory on Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)  
(ECLAC)



[Video: What is the Escazu Agreement?](#) (Human Rights Watch)



[Implementation guide of the Escazú Agreement](#)  
(ECLAC)



[Website of the Escazú Agreement Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance](#)  
(ECLAC)



[Participación pública en asuntos ambientales: Acuerdo de Escazú y normas nacionales, Una guía para su implementación](#) (FARN)



[What You Need to Know about the Escazu Agreement. On Earth Day, find out why the agreement is so important to children and youth](#)  
(UNICEF)





## SDG 16: Promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

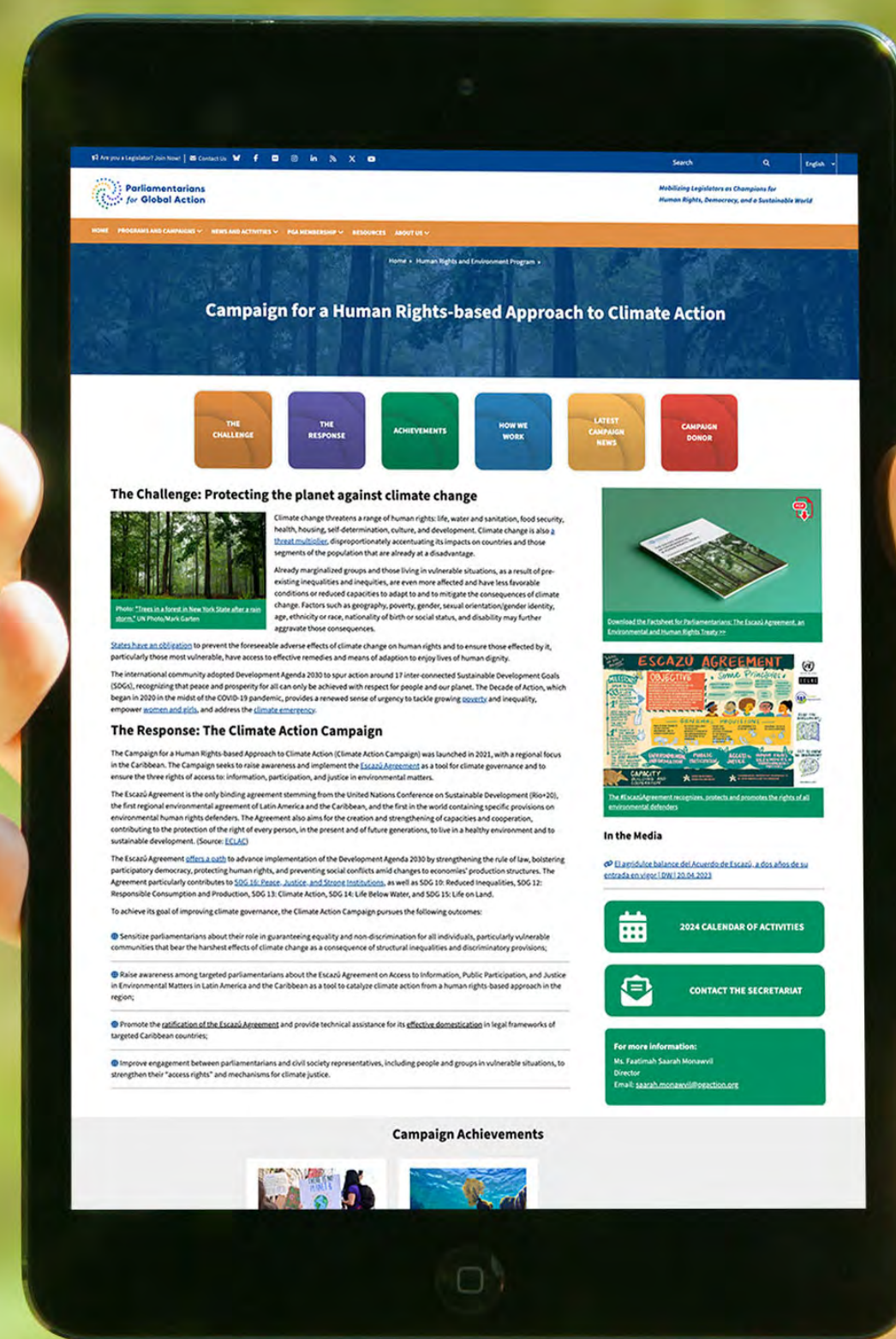


## Protecting Environmental Defenders in Latin America: The Escazú Agreement (IUCN)



## Access to Environmental Information in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Synthesis of Decisions Adopted by Oversight Bodies and Selected Judgements (ECLAC)

Read more about our Campaign for a Human Rights-based Approach to Climate Action at:  
[pgaction.org/hre/climate-action/](https://pgaction.org/hre/climate-action/)







"Monitoring coastal ecosystems, Suriname" by [UNDP Climate](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#).

The PGA Secretariat stands ready to assist you in these or other actions. For technical assistance and/or additional resources, please contact:

**Ms. Faatimah Saarah Monawvil**

Director

Human Rights and Environment Program

E: [Saarah.Monawvil@pgaction.org](mailto:Saarah.Monawvil@pgaction.org)

**Ms. Ana Filipa Vilalva Repas**

Program Associate

Human Rights and Environment Program

E: [ana.repas@pgaction.org](mailto:ana.repas@pgaction.org)

