



**IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME**  
**ACTION PLAN ON HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**  
**IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN OF THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (the Escazú Agreement) is the first environmental treaty in Latin America and the Caribbean region and the first in the world to contain specific provisions on the protection of human rights defenders in environmental matters on its Article 9.<sup>1</sup>

To support the implementation of article 9 of the Agreement, at its first meeting in 2022, the Conference of the Parties to the Escazú Agreement decided to establish, through decision I/6, an open-ended ad hoc working group on human rights defenders in environmental matters. The main task of the working group was to prepare an action plan in that regard and to present it to the Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, for consideration and adoption. Therefore, Decision III/2 of the COP3 held in Santiago, Chile, from 22-24 April 2024, adopted the Action Plan on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The objective of the Action Plan is to highlight a set of priority areas and implement strategic measures to advance towards the full and effective implementation of article 9 of the Escazú Agreement. To facilitate its implementation, it was also decided to maintain, until the close of the ordinary meeting of the COP to be held in 2030, the open-ended ad hoc working group on human rights defenders in environmental matters. This working group has a new mandate: to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the measures included in the Action Plan and to report to the Conference of the Parties.

The Action Plan, in its priority area D on evaluation, follow-up and review, states that within the framework of the institutional architecture of the Agreement, a programme for the implementation of the action plan will be developed, which will consider, among other factors, responsibilities, deadlines and possible sources of support.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 9 of the Escazú Agreement states that 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. It also establishes that each Party shall take adequate and effective measures to recognize, protect and promote the rights of those persons, groups and organizations, as well as appropriate, effective and timely measures to prevent, investigate and punish attacks, threats or intimidations that human rights defenders in environmental matters may suffer while exercising the rights set out in the Agreement



The coordinators of the Working Group prepared a programme proposal that defines for each priority area and strategic measures of the Plan, the deliverables (concrete activities or products), responsibilities for implementation (including main responsible and possible collaborators), timeframes in which they will be implemented (continuously until 2030, in the short term i.e. between 2025 and 2026, in the medium term i.e. between 2027 and 2028, or in the long term i.e. between 2029 and 2030), and the level of application (regional, national, federal, subnational or local).

It should be noted that the activities and products of the Action Plan to be applied at the regional and national levels consider the 2025, 2027 and 2029 Forums, as well as the meetings of the Conference of the Parties in 2026, 2028 and 2030 (or COP4, COP5 and COP6, respectively) as relevant milestones for its implementation.

To implement the plan, “each Party, to the extent of its ability and in accordance with its national priorities, shall: (i) seek State action at all levels (national, federal, subnational and local, as appropriate), including by the executive, legislative and judicial branches, and (ii) provide the means for national implementation within the framework set forth in article 13 of the Escazú Agreement”. The Action Plan also recalls that the implementation of the plan “may benefit from contributions to the voluntary fund established in article 14 of the Escazú Agreement, and the voluntary contribution of additional resources from other sources will be encouraged” and that the Secretariat of the Escazú Agreement will encourage partnerships with various stakeholders.

Finally, to develop the plan, meaningful public participation will also be sought, through mechanisms such as open dialogues, especially with persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, including indigenous peoples and local communities, and persons or groups in vulnerable situations.



IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME				
PRIORITY AREAS/STRATEGIC MEASURES	Deliverables (products/activities)	Responsible for the implementation	Deadline	Implementation level
<b>A. Knowledge creation</b>				
A.1. Prepare an assessment of the situation of persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters in the States Parties, which, depending on the availability of data, considers, among other factors: the number of victims or violations and the different types of violations; international and national instruments and mechanisms related to prevention, protection and punishment, such as early warning systems and protocols for action by national and subnational institutions; existing practices and other experiences and community-based initiatives and self-protection strategies carried out by those who promote and defend human rights in environmental matters. The assessment will take into account information provided by the States Parties and other key stakeholders and will provide relevant conclusions.	Regional assessment with a synthesis report with relevant conclusions	<u>Main responsible:</u> Coordinators of the Working Group, Secretariat, States Parties <u>Collaborators:</u> Invitation to collaborate to the UN System, relevant regional organizations, elected representatives of the public, the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, among others.	(Short term) 2025-2026	Regional



<p>A.2. Ensure continuity and wider dissemination of spaces for capacity-building, exchanges and reflection on the situation of persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean. These forums for exchange will be organized periodically starting in 2025, and every two years thereafter, for the duration of the present plan, and will include recognized specialists in the subject and the support of the Secretariat of the Escazú Agreement, and the thematic areas and methodologies will be determined through a participatory process.</p>	<p>1)3 Forums and 2) preparatory activities</p>	<p><u>Main responsible:</u> Working Group Coordinators, Secretariat, Presiding Officers, States Parties <u>Collaborators:</u> Invitation to collaborate to the UN System, relevant regional organizations, elected representatives of the public, the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations promoting and defending human rights in environmental matters</p>	<p>2025, 2027 y 2029</p>	<p>Regional</p>
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<p>A.3. Strengthen the content related to persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters in the Observatory on Principle 10 in Latin America and the Caribbean, as the clearing house referred to in article 12 of the Agreement, promoting the dissemination, accessibility and understanding of the Agreement, and establishing synergies and linkages with other existing repositories. The assessment referred to in action A.1 will be published in the Observatory. The States Parties shall report on new relevant legislation, policies, plans and programmes that have entered into force, in order to update the information on this subject in the Observatory.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Strengthen the section of the P10 Observatory on environmental defenders</li> <li>2) Generation of resources on the subject,</li> <li>3) Publication of contributions by States Parties, and</li> <li>4) Publication of the assessment mentioned in A.1.</li> </ol>	<p><u>Main Responsible:</u> Secretariat and States Parties. <u>Collaborators:</u> Invitation to the UN System, and relevant international and regional organizations.</p>	<p>1), 2) and 3) Continuously until 2030, and 4) 2026.</p>	<p>Regional, national, federal, subnational y local</p>
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<p>A.4. Disseminate the information gathered in this area, ensuring that it is accessible and understandable, in line with the standards of the Agreement. This process will take into account the problems that the public —and especially persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters— may face in terms of connectivity and the digital divide.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Dissemination activities of the assessment during its preparation and its results, and/or updates,</li> <li>2) Activities for the dissemination of the Forums,</li> <li>3) Dissemination of the Forum Reports,</li> <li>4) Dissemination materials of the P10 Observatory,</li> <li>5) Dissemination materials of the activities of the Working Group, such as minutes and other documents.</li> </ol>	<p><u>Main responsible:</u> Working Group, Secretariat, States Parties.</p> <p><u>Collaborators:</u> Invitation to collaborate to elected representatives of the public, the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters and international organizations, among other actors.</p>	<p>Continuously until 2030</p>	<p>Regional, national, federal, subnational y local</p>
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**Area B: Recognition**



<p>B.1. Foster exchanges and partnerships between persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters and the States Parties to advance in the recognition of their work.</p>	<p>1) Workshops and/or webinars, 2) agreements and partnerships</p>	<p><u>Main responsible parties:</u> States Parties <u>Collaborators:</u> the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, among other actors and relevant regional and international organizations.</p>	<p>Continuously until 2030</p>	<p>National, federal, subnational y local</p>
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<p>B.2. Regularly implement measures for dissemination, communication and raising public awareness, which are adapted to the social, economic, cultural, geographical and gender characteristics of the public, and which relate to the situation of human rights defenders in environmental matters and the relevance of their essential work.</p>	<p>1) Seminars and webinars, 2) campaigns and public outreach, 3) awareness-raising materials.</p>	<p><u>Main responsible:</u> Secretariat, Working Group Coordinators, States Parties. <u>Collaborators:</u> Invitation to the UN System, relevant regional and international organizations, elected representatives of the public, and the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters.</p>	<p>Continuously until 2030</p>	<p>Regional, national, federal, subnational y local</p>
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<p>B.3. Organize activities to commemorate and recognize the work of persons, groups and organizations for their contributions to the promotion and defence of the environment, the strengthening of democracy, access rights and sustainable development, including posthumous recognition activities. As part of these activities, efforts will be made to ensure the participation of State authorities and managers, and the timely participation of those who promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, especially indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the inclusion of persons or groups in vulnerable situations.</p>	<p>1) Commemoration activities in the framework of regional meetings of the Agreement;  2) Promotion of recognition activities in regional meetings outside the Agreement; and  3) National commemoration activities.</p>	<p><u>Main Responsible Parties:</u>  Secretariat,  Working Group  Coordinators,  Presiding Officers,  States Parties  <u>Collaborators:</u>  Invitation to participate to the UN System, elected representatives of the public and the public, in particular, individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters.</p>	<p>In Forums (2025, 2027 and 2029) and as defined by each State Party</p>	<p>Regional, National, federal, subnational y local</p>
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<p>B.4. Forge partnerships with different stakeholders and national, regional and international forums or other bodies focused on environmental themes related to the present plan, in order to carry out activities for the recognition and promotion of the work and rights of persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, in accordance with the rules of each one.</p>	<p>1) Activities in national, regional and international forums, 2) Partnerships for recognition and promotion</p>	<p><u>Main Responsible Parties:</u> Presiding Officers, Working Group Coordinators, Secretariat, States Parties <u>Collaborators:</u> Invitation to the UN System, the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, international organizations, among others.</p>	<p>Continuously until 2030</p>	<p>International, Regional, National, federal, subnational and local.</p>
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**Area C: Capacity-building and cooperation for national implementation of the action plan**



<p>C.1. Formulate regional guidelines which are useful for the various stakeholders and which consider the approaches and principles of the present plan, to support the national review, adaptation and formulation of laws, policies, plans and programmes, along with prevention, investigation and punishment measures, with respect to attacks, threats or intimidations that persons, groups or organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters may suffer.</p>	<p>Regional document with guidelines</p>	<p><u>Main responsible parties:</u> Working Group Coordinators, Secretariat, States Parties  <u>Collaborators:</u> Invitation to the UN System, elected representatives of the public, international organizations, the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, among others.</p>	<p>2027-2028</p>	<p>Regional</p>
<p>C.2. Provide support and technical assistance to the Parties for the full and effective implementation of article 9 of the Escazú Agreement through the preparation and execution of national implementation plans and road maps, including capacity-building to assess the situation of persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, in accordance</p>	<p>National implementation plans and roadmaps</p>	<p><u>Main responsible parties:</u> Secretariat, States Parties.  <u>Collaborators:</u> Invitation to international and regional organizations and</p>	<p>Continuously until 2030</p>	<p>National</p>



<p>with national needs, contexts, specificities and priorities.</p>		<p>other relevant actors.</p>		
<p>C.3. Create, foster or strengthen forums for coordination and collaboration with other bodies or existing mechanisms for the prevention, investigation and punishment of attacks, threats or intimidations that may be suffered by persons, groups or organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, in an effort to establish synergies between States and other stakeholders for the effective implementation of article 9 of the Escazú Agreement.</p>	<p>Articulation and collaboration instances</p>	<p><u>Main Responsible Parties:</u> Presiding Officers, Working Group Coordinators, Secretariat, States Parties. <u>Collaborators:</u> the UN System, elected representatives of the public, the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, and international organizations.</p>	<p>Continuously until 2030</p>	<p>Regional and national</p>



<p>C.4. Encourage the observance of international regulations, recommendations and guidelines on respecting and ensuring a safe and enabling environment for persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters.</p>	<p>International and regional dialogues and exchange opportunities</p>	<p><u>Main responsible:</u> Secretariat, Working Group, States Parties <u>Collaborators:</u> the UN System, the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, international and regional organizations</p>	<p>Continuously until 2030</p>	<p>International, Regional</p>
<p>C.5. Foster the establishment and strengthening of institutions that provide pro bono legal assistance to persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters that have been victims of crimes and human rights violations.</p>	<p>1) Regional and national capacity-building and experience sharing sessions; 2) Dissemination activities at the regional and national level.</p>	<p><u>Main responsible:</u> Secretariat, Working Group Coordinators, States Parties, <u>Collaborators:</u> the UN system, international and regional organizations, the public, among others.</p>	<p>Continuously until 2030 and in every forum (2025, 2027 and 2029).</p>	<p>Regional, National</p>



<p>C.6. Conduct training activities on the Escazú Agreement, with an emphasis on specific aspects of article 9, with persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters and relevant stakeholders at the national, subnational and international levels, such as civil society organizations, journalists and social communicators, donors, private sector actors, development banks and financial institutions, international agencies, academia, governments at all levels and relevant State institutions, especially national human rights institutions and ombudspersons' offices.</p>	<p>1) Regional training and awareness-raising activities 2) National and subnational training and awareness-raising activities</p>	<p><u>Main Responsible Parties:</u> Working Group, Secretariat, States Parties <u>Collaborators:</u> the UN System, international and regional organizations, and the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters.</p>	<p>1) In Forums 2025, 2027 and 2029. 2) Continuously until 2030</p>	<p>Regional, National, federal, subnational and local</p>
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<p>C.7. Carry out national or regional training and awareness-raising activities aimed at justice officials, such as judges and prosecutors, and persons who are involved in processes in which the State carries out functions seeking to guarantee access to justice, such as public security and law enforcement agents or other national institutions that play a key role in the functioning of mechanisms for care, prevention, investigation and punishment with regard to attacks, threats or intimidations that may be suffered by persons, groups or organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters; also, facilitate dialogue and sharing of experiences on specific subjects among these justice officials and between them and the persons who promote and defend human rights in environmental matters.</p>	<p>1) Regional training and awareness-raising activities, thematic dialogues and exchanges; 2) National awareness-raising activities, and dialogues.</p>	<p><u>Main Responsible Parties:</u> States Parties, Working Group, Secretariat <u>Collaborators:</u> UN System, international and regional organizations, elected representatives of the public, and the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters.</p>	<p>1) In every Forum in 2025, 2027 and 2029. 2) Continuously until 2030, as defined by each State Party</p>	<p>Regional, federal, national, subnational and local</p>
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<p>C.8. Prepare materials in different formats and languages, with clear and understandable content, and disseminate them in an accessible manner, so that they can be used to inform, provide training and raise awareness on the contents of article 9 of the Escazú Agreement. The adoption of a participatory approach in this process will be encouraged.</p>	<p>Elaboration and dissemination of materials in different formats</p>	<p><u>Main responsible Parties:</u> States Parties <u>Collaborators:</u> elected representatives of the public, the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters and international and regional organizations.</p>	<p>Continuously until 2030</p>	<p>National, federal, subnational y local</p>
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**Area D: Evaluation, follow-up and review of the action plan**



<p>D.1. Support implementation, evaluation, monitoring and review of the measures of the action plan, with meaningful public participation, especially by persons, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters, including indigenous peoples and local communities, endeavouring to include persons or groups in vulnerable situations.</p>	<p>Voluntary reports of the Parties at the Forums (preparatory to the periodic reports of the Parties at the COPs).</p>	<p><u>Main Responsible Parties:</u> Working Group, States Parties, Secretariat. <u>Collaborators:</u> the public, especially individuals, groups and organizations that promote and defend human rights in environmental matters.</p>	<p>Forums 2025, 2027, 2029</p>	<p>Regional and national</p>
<p>D.2. Develop an implementation programme for this action plan that considers, among other factors, responsibilities, deadlines and possible sources of support.</p>	<p>Program Document</p>	<p><u>Main Responsible Parties:</u> Working Group Coordinators, Secretariat <u>Collaborators:</u> Presiding Officers, State Parties, elected representatives of the public, and the public.</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Regional</p>



<p>D.3. Include in the regular reports of the Parties on the implementation of and compliance with the Escazú Agreement, within the framework established in article 15, paragraph 5(c) of the Agreement, the national measures and actions for the implementation of article 9 and those corresponding to the priority areas and strategic measures of this action plan, enabling the development of follow-up indicators.</p>	<p>Regular reports of the Parties on the implementation of and compliance with the Escazú Agreement</p>	<p><u>Main responsible parties:</u> State Parties, Secretariat</p>	<p>2026 (COP4), 2028 (COP5), 2030 (COP6)</p>	<p>National</p>
<p>D.4. Present the progress made in the implementation of the priority areas and strategic measures set forth in this action plan at the ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Parties to be held for the duration of this instrument.</p>	<p>Progress reports on the implementation of the action plan</p>	<p><u>Main Responsible Parties:</u> Working Group Coordinators, Secretariat, States Parties. <u>Collaborators:</u> Elected representatives of the public.</p>	<p>2026 (COP4), 2028 (COP5), 2030 (COP6)</p>	<p>Regional</p>