

Latin America Set for Key Role in 2014 Climate Change Agenda

3 April 2014

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- Latin America set to adopt an ‘ aggressive ’ climate change agenda this year
- Calls for governments, the private sector, civil society, media and individuals to work together to find solutions
- The region can make significant reductions in global greenhouse emissions
- Learn more about the meeting at <http://wef.ch/la14>

Panama City, Panama 3 April 2014 – Latin America has a unique opportunity this year to reposition the region in

the international agenda on climate change. In December, Lima will host this year ’ s most important climate

negotiation session, the Conference of the Parties (COP), a prelude to the 2015 agreement on climate change to

be signed in Paris. The former deadlock between the United States and China on climate change has been lifted,

paving the way for a new type of negotiation.

“ Latin America can position an aggressive agenda ” in the panel on climate change, said Manuel Pulgar-Vidal

Otalora, Minister of Environment of Peru. Governments in the region are working with the UN Economic

Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) to develop policies to adapt to climate change, the

minister said.

The important goals and actions being taken in Latin America to adapt to climate change and reduce emissions

could be leveraged at COP to advance the climate change agenda, said Renat Heuberger, Chief Executive Officer

and Deputy Chairman of South Pole Carbon, Switzerland: “ What if Latin American countries could unite their voice

and signal that a movement is starting? ”

A successful outcome for COP requires that people imagine the solutions to climate change. “ If we don ’ t imagine

solutions, it is hard to set goals, ” said Pulgar-Vidal Otalora. He foresees the COP producing an agreement that

contains principles and goals for 2015. All sectors of society – the private sector, civil society, indigenous

populations and governments – must work together, the minister said. At last year ’ s COP, a large bloc of civil

society organizations walked out.

Hopes and action should not be delayed until a COP agreement is hammered out, panellists cautioned. “ To say we

can ’ t act till this major treaty comes is a cop-out; we have all the tools, ” said Georgie Bernadete, Co-Founder and

Head, Strategy, Shopbeam, USA. All citizens can act through voting to promote more sustainable policies. “ We

should not be electing politicians that don ’ t have an environmental agenda, ” said Nicolás Ibarguen, Publisher and

Editor, Poder Magazine, USA.

“ Latin America brings unique assets and liabilities in the fight against climate change. The region is home to the

Amazon Basin, and can therefore contribute to a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide. As the most

highly urbanized region in the world, Latin America must develop efficient, environmentally friendly urban

transport, ” said Carlos E. Represas, Member of the Board, Swiss Re, Mexico.

Preventive and curative action is required to address climate change. The cost of natural disasters and extreme

weather events drains public resources, and credit agencies now assess the ability of a government to withstand those costs. “ Risk management of the consequences of climate change is very important, ” said Represas.

Solutions to climate change must be implemented at the local and regional levels with governments. “ Solutions foster sustainable development and bring money, ” said Heuberger.

Panellists offered compelling statements that add fuel to the climate change narrative. “ We are damaging our natural infrastructure, ” said Ibarguen. “ The environment is the operating system of our economy, our world. The element that is missing is us, ” said Benardete. The term “ global warming ” should be abandoned since temperatures are not always hotter. “ The real issue is climate change, ” said Heuberger.

The co-chairs of the meeting are: Arancha Gonzalez Laya, Executive Director, International Trade Centre

(ITC), Stanley Motta, President, Copa Holdings, Panama; Arif M. Naqvi, Founder and Group Chief Executive,

The Abraaj Group, United Arab Emirates; Frits D. van Paasschen, President and Chief Executive Officer,

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, USA; Jorge Quijano, Chief Executive Officer, Panama Canal Authority,

Panama; and Sir Martin Sorrell, Chief Executive Officer, WPP, United Kingdom.

Public figures participating in the meeting include Laura Chinchilla, President of Costa Rica; José Miguel Insulza

, Secretary-General, Organization of American States (OAS), Washington DC; Laurent Salvador Lamothe,

Prime Minister of Haiti; Ricardo Martinelli, President of Panama; Luis Alberto Moreno, President,

Inter-American Development Bank, Washington DC; and Enrique Peña Nieto, President of Mexico.

Notes to Editors

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