
KEYNOTE ADDRESS OF MR. RICARDO ULATE, DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY OF COSTA RICA

Distinguished Co-Chairs of INECE, Miss Sylvia Lowrance, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Mr. Gerard Wolters, Inspector General of the Ministry of Environment of the Netherlands, Mr. Charles Sebukeera, Director of the National Environmental Management Authority of Uganda, distinguished Director of INECE, Mr. Durwood Zaelke, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen; On behalf of the government and the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, it is my pleasure to welcome all of you to this sixth meeting of the International Conference on Environmental Compliance and Enforcement organized jointly by INECE with the support of many international environmental related organizations and institutions.

This is probably one of the forums that will provide important input to the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg later this year. And I said this because many of the findings coming from the experience obtained during the ten years after Rio indicates that there have been a lot of opportunities for international and national dialogue, that there have been several global and international legal and political instruments, both binding and non binding, and there have also been a lot of international and national initiatives oriented towards a common objective, obtaining sustainable development, but there is still a feeling that a lot more commitment and concrete results are to be expected, both at the national and international levels.

Environmental enforcement and compliance is a relatively new area in many developing countries. Many of our countries have experienced a deep legal and institutional transformation in the recent years in order to follow "the trends of the fashion" in environmental issues, by imple-

menting new and more strict legislation and creating new institutional settings in order to achieve goals shaped by the international community but where developing countries participated in a limited way and whose legal and institutional frameworks probably had not reached the level of maturity required for such a transformation.

The capacity of the countries to guarantee the fulfillment of the regulations included as a result of many legislative improvements as well as legal international developments is without any doubt, one of the critical elements of environmental governance. As in many other fields in modern politics, environment could no longer be seen as a responsibility of the governments only. Civil society and private sector in particular, have a particular role to play in achieving national sustainability goals. In this regard, raising awareness among the different actors and sectors of the society, both at the national and international levels, should be seen as a strategic tool to promote the attitudinal changes required by a new culture, a culture that requires a clear commitment from all towards a goal that is a global responsibility: environmental sustainability for the current and new generations.

Achieving environmental enforcement and compliance is also one of the issues to be addressed from an intersectoral perspective; not only from the executive, but from the legislative and judicial branches of the government. Harmonization of both, legislation and practices is critical to provide a clear message to all interested sectors. The provision of resources to increase the capabilities of the governments to obtain the desired goals should be addressed from a development perspective.

During the last two decades, Costa Rica has been devoting a lot of efforts and resources to the consolidation of a system

of conservation areas and to the payment of environmental services as a mechanism to guarantee the sustainability of biodiversity and forest related resources to the new generations. During the last decade, new issues have raised to the international consciousness and the country is still on the process to find out the right paths to be followed in order to fulfill all the society expectations. The results of this conference would be an additional input to the search for knowledge, but in particular to the search for successful experiences already gained.

Again, welcome to Costa Rica. It is our hope that all of you have the opportunity to widely contribute to the discussions of the very interesting areas to be covered during the conference, and also to enjoy at least a bit of our country.