

# IPCC LATIN AMERICA 1 & 2: Committee briefing paper: Global Classrooms: London Climate Change Conference



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## Regional Summary:

The intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has finalized its assessment of present and future impacts of climate change, and concluded that the world's rivers, lakes, wildlife, glaciers, coastal zones and many other elements of the natural and physical environment are showing the discernable effects of human-caused global warming.

In regards to Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the IPCC reports state "highly unusual extreme weather events" since 1992 and until now in various LAC regions, with negative impacts on populations, increasing mortality and morbidity in affected areas. The conclusion reports that in Latin America and the Caribbean there are several evidences of increases in extreme climatic events and climate change, and that the frequency of weather and climate extremes is most likely to increase. By 2050, the population in Latin America is likely to be 50% larger than in 2000, and migration from the country sides to the cities will continue.

Predicted changes are very likely to severely affect a number of ecosystems and sectors by:

- Decreasing plant and animal species diversity
- Melting most tropical glaciers in the near future (2020-2030)
- Reducing water availability and hydropower generation
- Increasing desertification and aridity
- Severely affecting people, resources and economic activities in coastal areas
- Increasing crop's pests and diseases
- Changing some human diseases distribution and emergency of new ones

Solutions to global warming across the varied countries of Latin America include pursuing new policies to curb deforestation and forest degradation; reducing emissions from cars, trucks and buses; and promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Latin America is home to a number of rapidly developing nations and vast tropical forest reserves, putting it under the watchful eye of the international community. Four countries in this region make the global top 30 list of highest annual CO<sub>2</sub> emitters, namely Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela (using 2008 data). Brazil quickly rises to the top five if emissions from deforestation are included. The region also faces a range of climate impacts, including threats to drinking water resources due to the shrinking ice pack in the Andes mountains and potential reductions in crop yields and flooding due to sea-level rise.

Tropical deforestation is a major cause of climate change; and, unfortunately, Latin America is no stranger to this issue—more forests have been destroyed in this region than in any other since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted in 1992. With 40 percent of its land mass covered by tropical forests, many Latin American countries have a tremendous opportunity to reduce their global warming emissions. Leaders on tropical forest management have emerged in the region and are advancing innovative solutions.

One standout is Costa Rica, which aims to be carbon neutral (have zero net greenhouse gas emissions) by 2021. Already a green leader with 96 percent of its electricity coming from renewable sources, Costa Rica has increased its forested area by 10 percent in the last decade. Another notable is Brazil, which has demonstrated the enormous potential of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation as well as the potential of biofuels for reducing emissions from vehicles.

### **You will need to research:**

1. Climate change issues and actions in your country.
2. UN actions by your country on Climate Change, including in your focal region
3. Climate Change issues in your committee region
4. Make sure you can discuss how your country thinks the UN should tackle:
  - Climate mitigation in your region
  - Climate adaptation in your region
  - Climate technology in your region
  - Financial responsibility for climate change in the region
5. Past UN action on Climate Change eg. UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol

### **Regional research links – a starting point:**

UNEP: Latin America and the Caribbean Climate Change:

<http://www.unep.org/documents.multilingual/default.asp?documentid=504&articleid=5558&l=en>

Climate Hot Map: Latin America:

<http://www.climatehotmap.org/global-warming-solutions/latin-america.html>

UNFCCC: Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in Developing Countries:

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/impacts.pdf>

Latin America: Failing to Adapt article:

<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=35495>

Climate Institute: Impacts on Latin America:

<http://www.climate.org/resources/climate-impacts/latinamerica.html>

Climate Change UN report: Latin America:

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=36973>

UNEP report on Climate Change in Latin America:

<http://www.grida.no/publications/vg/lac2/>

Climate Change, vulnerability and adaptation in Latin America report:

[http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/1816/1/Chatzopoulos\\_loannis%20Dissertation.pdf](http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/1816/1/Chatzopoulos_loannis%20Dissertation.pdf)