

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

GOVERNANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMOCRACY

Benefits of accession to the Escazú Agreement given the situation of the environment in El Salvador

Carlos García
September 2021



The current government management has shown lack of interest and commitment towards consensus building to advance in the generation of long-lasting sustainable solutions in the country.



The Escazú Agreement represents a unique opportunity for the region to achieve progress in the expansion and deepening of environmental democracy and governance, where the participation of people becomes the main means of implementation of national public policies.



This agreement allows to elevate and amplify the voices of actors and populations that have been historically and systematically excluded from national, regional and global decisions.

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INTRODUCTION

El Salvador, originally known as Kuskatan (place of precious stones), located in the region of Central America, characterized by its mountainous reliefs, its varied climate and biodiversity, is a country that has undergone irregular periods due to its constant social, political and economic changes. These situations have led society to suffer small and high disparities in issues of governance and democracy, especially in environment-related issues. These disparities, sometimes marked by the different political systems and anti-democratic practices adopted, have been contrary to the guaranteeing of well-being and the walking towards prosperous and peaceful societies.

Throughout its history, El Salvador has not consolidated a sufficiently robust democracy and governance to be able to respond to the challenges faced by Salvadoran society. However, different historical milestones, such as the Peace Accords in 1992, which ended the armed conflict, have allowed progress and steps to be taken on civil and political rights issues, social and environmental institutionalization.

The post-conflict stage meant a new starting point for the democratic political system in the country, which would be marked by new opportunities and challenges in terms of governance and democracy for future administrations. During 30 years of alternation between the two major parties, the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), policies and laws were enacted that allowed significant steps to be taken, such as environmental laws, policy measures on participation, the creation of dialogue spaces and social policies.

These governments, characterized by promoting neoliberal initiatives, some more than others, through policies aiming to promote private investment, made environmental permits more flexible, which produced the deterioration of ecosystems and natural assets of the country, affecting the environmental rights of present and future generations.

There would be a historic turn in 2019 after the post-conflict stage, a new political party would arrive at the government administration. On June 1, 2019, Nayib Bukele assumed his mandate as president of the Republic of El Salvador, after his victory in the presidential elections of February 3, 2019 with the flag of the Grand Alliance for National Unity (GANU) party. Salvadoran society placed its trust and hope in this elected administration, seeking, among other issues, the strengthening of good governance and democratic values in the country.

In this sense, the present document analyzes the importance and benefits of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Escazú Agreement, in the context of the validity of this instrument for environmental governance and democracy in the region and in the face of the challenges in environmental matters of the current administration of the Government of Nayib Bukele.

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THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT AND ITS MAIN ELEMENTS

The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, better known as the *Escazú Agreement*, represents a unique opportunity for the region to advance in the expansion and deepening of democracy and environmental governance¹, with a greater exercise of citizenship, where the participation of people becomes the main means of implementation of national public policies and the realizing element of peace and security.

It is considered by the United Nations Group of Experts and Rapporteurs on Human Rights “as the most important agreement concluded in the last 20 years for the region, mainly because it is an agreement on access rights in environmental matters, which establishes access to information, public participation, access to justice in environmental matters and protection for environmental defenders.” (OHCHR)

The Agreement guarantees access rights, considered as key rights because they allow access to the realization of other rights, for example, the right to live in a healthy environment for present and future generations, and the right to water and health, among others. This is a procedural instrument; that is, it seeks to ensure that what is already agreed and established, is met, generates national conditions and capacities so that the mechanisms, deadlines and procedures that regulate current national public policies and the international commitments signed by States in environmental and climate change matters are fully and effectively implemented.

1.1 ACCESS TO INFORMATION RIGHTS

Access to environmental information is one of the core elements of the Escazú Agreement, with which public policy instruments can be expanded and strengthened so that people can have access to this information in an understandable and timely manner in their native language in environmental matters. Many of the countries in the region

already have laws on access to public information, so the implementation of the Agreement will allow them to implement them concretely with respect to environmental issues; such is the case of El Salvador with respect to the Law on Access to Public Information (abbreviated LAIP in Spanish), which entered into force in 2011, and has become a tool to identify cases of corruption and highlight situations where there has been little transparency in State instances.

The Escazú Agreement creates the possibility of advancing in the access to, generation and diffusion of information, so that people in decision-making positions have sufficient elements to make informed and effective decisions, in response to the challenges that people, communities and territories are experiencing in terms of the care and defense of life and nature.

2.2 RIGHT OF ACCESS TO SIGNIFICANT PARTICIPATION

Citizen participation in environmental issues in the countries of the region has been insufficient, it has been a historical debt of the States. It must be recognized that while steps have been taken in matters of access to information, in terms of public participation, it has not been deepened as necessary to expand that right. It is considered that States have had neither the capacity, the commitment, nor the will to bring the forms and mechanisms of citizen participation that are already established in their existing laws to their fullest expression.

The Escazú Agreement does not speak of binding participation but of an incident participation, which obliges States to guarantee participation from the initial stages and in all areas and levels, so its implementation would establish a precedent and turning point, where people assume a leading role to provoke transformations that are urgent and necessary in the countries. The main affirmation is that any decision on public policy in environmental matters that is adopted, if it does not involve the participation of citizens as the main means of implementation, will be a failure, because without participation, no decision is effective, correct, sustainable or lasting. The

¹ From the perspective of human rights in environmental matters, *environmental democracy* is based on the premise that meaningful participation is essential to ensure that the interests of citizens are adequately and equitably addressed in decisions regarding land and the natural common assets (World Resources Institute), which is important because it allows the right to free access to information

and effective approach to environmental problems; the right to participate meaningfully in decision-making; the right to seek the enforcement of environmental laws or compensation for damages, and access to justice. These are elements of good governance. However, for this, it is also necessary that the actions of institutions be made from the concept of *environmental governance*.

Agreement creates conditions for the realization of the Right to Consultation and the Principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), which is established in various human rights instruments on indigenous and tribal peoples.

2.3 RIGHTS OF ACCESS TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Countries commit to making effective the right of access to environmental justice² through the establishment of support mechanisms, including free technical and legal assistance to individuals or groups in vulnerable situations, since there is a great asymmetry in all countries between companies or States and communities that have to seek legal advice, which makes it very difficult to be available and independent. Definitely, the Escazú Agreement is an instrument that has a preventive nature, seeks to find solutions that inevitably go through promoting social and political dialogue between citizens and institutions, to find solutions to the entire socio-environmental conflict that is experienced in the countries and thus, ensure access to justice.

It is necessary to take steps and advance very concretely in the early resolution of socio-environmental conflicts in the territories. The adhesion and implementation of the Escazú Agreement, offers that real possibility, If this commitment is not honored by the States, that will lead to scenarios of greater conflict and will deepen schemes of impunity that have been the norm in the region, in the absence of access to prompt and fulfilled justice, as established by the Constitution of the Republic.

2.4 PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS

The Escazú Agreement is the first treaty in the world to protect environmental defenders. It is unique in the world because it contemplates mandates to the States for the protection of environmental defenders and the creation of a safe and enabling environment for the full exercise of their work, in promoting and protecting the right to live in a healthy, clean and sustainable environment.

The Agreement commits States to adopt adequate and effective measures to recognize, protect, promote and guarantee 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 freedom of movement, as well as their ability to exercise their rights of access, taking into account their international obligations in the field of human rights, their constitutional principles and the basic concepts of their legal system. Each Party shall also take appropriate, effective and timely measures to prevent, investigate and punish attacks, threats or intimidation that may be suffered by environmental human rights defenders.

3 THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION OF NAYIB BUKELE

After 2 years of administration of the government of Nayib Bukele, there is much uncertainty and concern about anti-democratic and authoritarian practices, and about the lack of interest about environmental issues, totally absent in his discourse and sustainable public policies. His management has been marked by little commitment and opacity in mandates related to the environment, as well as its ineffective response to the context of climate emergency and environmental crisis lived in the country and globally, where

a strong level of ethical and political commitment to the environment is required. On the contrary, it can be seen how the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN), which has obligations established in the Environmental Law for the protection of natural assets, has been reduced to a permit processing entity, making environmental regulations more flexible and allowing abuses from the private sector in terms of ecosystem integrity and biodiversity.

² *Environmental justice* promotes and guarantees an equitable distribution of natural assets and promotes their fair conservation and protection; in that sense, it must center not only on injustices

and inequities, but in a wide scope that integrates and includes matters of distribution, cultural recognition, political participation and capacity building as well.

In agreement with the above, the accession of the Escazú Agreement is considered important to guarantee environmental rights and the conservation of the natural assets of the country. Not counting on robust instruments generates risks and new environmental threats. In relation to the signing and ratification of the Escazú Agreement, Nayib Bukele announced on September 24, 2020 in a country-wide radio and television broadcast, that he would not sign the Agreement, arguing that the country's development could not be stopped. Thus, the only option available to El Salvador, now that the threat of non-signature has been consummated, is to become a State Party to the Agreement through the figure of accession. The agreement will strengthen the legal and procedural basis for environmental governance in El Salvador, given the gaps, flexibility of permits and economic privileges in environmental matters that the country has historically experienced.

For example, as established in the Environment Law, the Ministry of the Environment is obliged to submit every 2 years, the Report on the National State of the Environment. This is a debt of the current administration of the Ministry and the Executive Branch as a whole, since the last report made was presented in 2017 by the Government administration of President Salvador Sánchez Cerén. The provisions of article 6 numeral "3" of the Escazú Agreement mandates States to count on updated environmental information systems, which includes reporting on the status of the environment, information about pollutants and localized areas, state of land use, conservation of natural assets and ecosystem services.

On the other hand, the level of quality of life of communities and territories, far from increasing, is characterized by severe dangers that threaten food sovereignty, the human right to water and environmental defenders. In this sense, conditions of vulnerability and risks have been exacerbated by the passivity of the Civil Protection System and the reduction of the MARN budget, which has had serious repercussions on Natural Protected Areas (NPA), given the reduction of personnel assigned as environmental custodians, who carry out monitoring of environmental regulations in the territories and in particular within the NPAs, which in turn provokes the deepening of socio-environmental conflicts by not having mechanisms that prevent them from an early stage, so there is a risk of escalating conflicts. In this aspect, the Escazú Agreement is guided by the precautionary principle and establishes that the parties to the Agreement must develop and implement an early warning system in case of imminent threat to health or to the environment.

Citizen participation is essential for the consolidation of democracies. During the current administration of Nayib Bukele in the Executive Branch, it has become evident that many of the threats of closing and reducing civic and participation spaces were not only a rumor or an exaggeration on the part of civil society actors. The dismantling of the dialogue mechanisms created in previous administrations highlights

the lack of interest and commitment to promote consensus building and to advance through democratic values in the generation of lasting sustainable solutions in the country. Spaces such as the Citizens' Assemblies, the Citizen Consultative Councils, the Environmental Sustainability Council (CONASAV), among others, were spaces for deliberation, which, although they did not manage to reach an expression of direct democracy, they did take steps in terms of citizen involvement. In that sense, given the reduction of civic space and participation, the Escazú Agreement would strengthen participation mechanisms through its Article 7, which mandates the Parties to guarantee participation in environmental matters, and to generate favorable conditions that adapt to social, cultural, economic, geographical and gender characteristics.

Public consultation is an important element to guarantee the participation of people in public affairs that impact the environment, and the Escazú Agreement incorporates procedural elements for effective participation. In relation to this, it is worrisome how many public consultation processes regulated by the current Environmental Law have been negatively biased on the part of the MARN, even violating recommendations of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) on the Right to Consultation in the context of the pandemic, as has been the case for the Nahuizalco II dam, where procedural gaps were notorious both in the Environmental Impact Studies and in abuses in the call for consultation made, which did not guarantee conditions for the full participation of affected communities. Practices that instrumentalize the Right to Consultation, besides violating provisions of national law, violate regulations established in other human rights instruments signed by the country in the multilateral framework of the United Nations, or the Free Trade Agreement between the Central American region, the Dominican Republic and the United States (CAFTA-DR, for its acronym in English) in its chapter on the environment. (IACHR, 2020).

Within the already existing framework and range of national regulations, the Escazú Agreement would strengthen the procedural gaps provided for in national legislation, as established in Article 7 numeral "13" of the Agreement, which calls for the construction of appropriate spaces for consultation on environmental matters or the use of existing ones, where different groups can participate, and promote in the consultations the valuation of local knowledge, dialogue and the interaction of different visions and knowledge.

Article 6 of the Escazú Agreement on the generation of environmental information in its numeral 3, establishes that communities and territories must be informed about the environmental impact and management assessment, besides any permit granted by public authorities. In this sense, it is pertinent to know about the Ciudad Valle El Ángel case, and how the agreement could strengthen access to information and participation. The Ciudad Valle El Ángel is an emblematic case on the relaxation of environ-

mental regulations and permits. This is an urban project under construction, located in the north of San Salvador, developed by the Urbánica construction company, owned by the Dueñas family. The project would have great repercussions for the environment and will deepen territorial inequalities in access to water, severely affecting an important aquifer recharge area, the source of water from the Chacalapa River, which supplies 60 thousand people from different communities of Apopa and surrounding municipalities, and would seriously damage ecosystems and wildlife in the area.

As part of this section, it is important to mention that society is facing a scenario of constant challenges and transformations. In this sense, the government administration has promoted the adoption of a monetary policy of digitalization. The daily use of these new tools represents new environmental challenges, an example of this being the president's announcement on June 5, 2021, which would send a proposal for the legal circulation of bitcoin, without carrying out a study or analysis of the impact it may have on environmental matters. The mining of this cryptocurrency will have environmental impacts through transactions and the use of ATMs, which will generate an increase in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, producing an increase in CO₂. (Bermejo & Garcia, 2021). This is totally contradictory to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, so the Escazú Agreement will create a window of opportunity for this type of proposal to be consulted on the environmental impact.

Some setbacks on access to information during the administration of Nayib Bukele are linked to institutional and regulatory weakening, among which are: 1) The appointments of Commissioners of the Institute for Access to Public Information (IAIP) were made irregularly and in violation of procedures regulated in the LAIP and its regulations. 2) Decree number 34, signed August 26, 2020, which grants more functions and powers to the president of the IAIP, weakening plenary and collegiate decision-making (El Faro, 2020), which has as its main consequence the impossibility for citizens to challenge a candidate for commissioner when they consider that the person does not meet the requirements of law, which means greater obstacles to the rights of access to information, participation and justice in environmental matters. 3) Finally, in July 2021, the administration of President Nayib Bukele sent a reform to the Legislative Assembly with thirteen points, among which the declaration as reserved information of the assigned budget, projects and acquisitions, public expenditure and the list of suppliers of the State stands out.

On the other hand, it is essential to mention that the Escazú Agreement is a key to remove those obstacles that limit access to information and participation in other international or national agendas in environmental matters. An example of those obstacles that could be found are the

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), a commitment that States signed and ratified as part of the Paris Agreement, which are contributions made to reduce the temperature and that it does not increase 1.5 or 2.0 °C. Although these were ratified by El Salvador, the country does not have a plan and budget for their funding, or at least has not presented it publicly. On the other hand, the NDCs presented by the country are conditional, implying that they will only be possible to meet if there is macroeconomic stability, the possibility of international financial resources and if there are no extreme weather events that affect public finances. However, already in 2020, there were two tropical storms, Amanda and Cristóbal, in addition to facing the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been presented as an argument to justify the non-compliance with deadlines and responsibilities in terms of climate change. In 2020, the five-year deadline to update the NDCs expired, and in the case of the country, they were not submitted; unofficially, it is known that work is being done on their revision or update to be presented in the context of COP26. In that sense, the Escazú Agreement would make it possible to resolve and strengthen the participation and access to information of civil society in public policies or international agreements.

Concluding this section, it is considered that the country has environmental legislation that provides for specific mandates in matters of protection, although there is a weak implementation, execution and monitoring of regulations, such as the Forestry Law, Irrigation and Watering Law and Environmental Law, which are not adequately and effectively complied with. In many aspects, this weakness is due to the low level of commitment and ethical and political will towards the environment, which has historically been subordinated to economic interests rather than making decisive progress in the care of natural common assets. Therefore, it is evident that the country's public institutionality has not managed to create objective conditions and develop sufficient technical capacities so that the decisions adopted are based on the best scientific knowledge available, where the Escazú Agreement is specially relevant, taking into account that it is an instrument based on human rights to strengthen the governance and environmental democracy of the State, which would represent a significant step if its adhesion is materialized in the administration of President Nayib Bukele.

4 BENEFITS OF ACCESSION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT

The Escazú Agreement reflects the soundness of the regional commitment to strengthen environmental democracy and governance, highlighting the focus on inclusion and its breadth to make an impact on the reduction of inequalities and guarantee the right of all people to a healthy environment. The Escazú Agreement is an instrument that seeks to guarantee well-being and prosperity for sustainable development in terms of caring for the planet, for which it poses the need and benefits of strengthening the design and execution of public policies and decision-making on them.

The Agreement strengthens the environmental and international objectives in terms of environmental democracy that, as a State, El Salvador through the provisions and principles of international law has voluntarily or bindingly committed to their achievement, among them: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, which contains climate and institutional strengthening actions and that is related through its environmental dimension with the Escazú Agreement. In addition, we can mention the Paris Agreement, which was ratified by the Legislative Assembly of 2015-2018, which seeks to meet the goals of no increase in global temperature.

It is important to mention that the Escazú Agreement will strengthen the modalities and schemes of South-South, Bilateral and Triangular Cooperation, mobilizing resources and opportunities for training, capacity building and institutional strengthening, which would allow the mobilization of resources for the country's budgetary support, considering that during the administration of President Nayib Bukele, there have been cuts to the Ministry of the Environment in aspects that are intended for the conservation and protection of Natural Protected Areas and the management and prevention of disasters due to extreme weather events.

The following describes some of the cuts in priority environmental areas and their main income in matters of climate funding in recent years. For example, in terms of the environmental budget, during 2020, the government cut US \$3.8 million to the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and kept US \$15 million. (Gato Encerrado magazine, s.f.). This adjustment was made at the height of the pandemic, reducing the allocation aimed at NPA conservation, management and natural phenomena prevention projects,

contradicting what was promised in Plan Cuscatlán³ and the call of different experts to invest and prevent a catastrophic environmental situation.

It is important to mention that in terms of funding for development, El Salvador occupies the 10th position as a recipient of disbursed funds in a list of 21 countries, and occupies the 15th position as a recipient of climate funding, being the 13th recipient of bilateral cooperation dedicated to climate change in the 2008-2018. Besides, it is a country that strengthens its budgetary support as a recipient of funding from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and mostly from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); however, it does not receive funding from the Climate Investment Fund (CIF) (GFLAC).

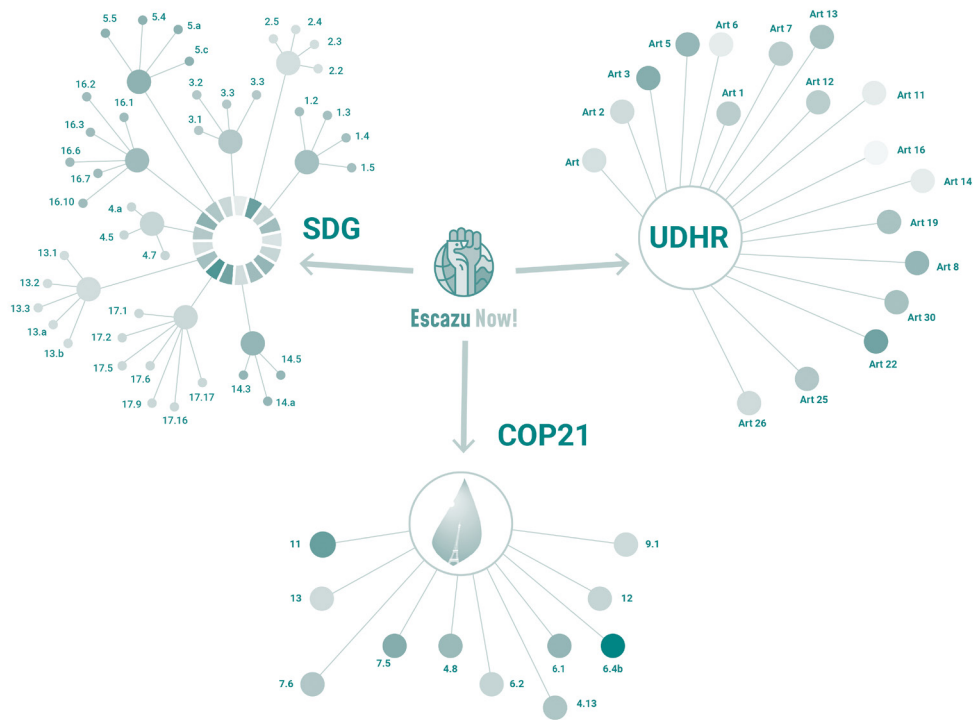
El Salvador is experiencing constant environmental conflict in the territories; therefore, the Agreement would contribute to the early prevention of conflicts from the effective exercise of access rights, providing elements for their peaceful resolution. A strong democracy allows participatory decision-making in environmental matters and increases confidence in the decisions taken by the institutions of government administrations, considering that the Agreement responds to the demands of social actors, and community and territorial networks.

It allows to raise and amplify the voices of historically and systematically excluded actors and populations such as women, youth and indigenous peoples in national, regional and global public decisions, affirming the capacity for proposal and solution that these populations have to face challenges and challenges to ensure the care and protection of natural common assets and seek the global common good, which undoubtedly represents a significant contribution to ensure that no one is left behind, one of the foundations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It favors a State policy of effective compliance with accountability. It also provides a greater understanding by social actors of the decisions taken, thus contributing to a higher level of demanding and consequently, to an eventual higher level of compliance with commitments. Definitely, it favors a due, stable and good governance of natural common assets.

³ Plan of campaign proposal during the 2019 presidential elections presented by Nayib Bukele, then candidate for the Grand Alliance for National Unity Party.

Form 1
ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT AND ITS LINK WITH INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS



*Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Prepared by: Artiga César, García Carlos, Escazú Agreement National Promoting Group, El Salvador, 2020

With the accession to the Escazú Agreement, El Salvador would assume a common minimum floor, allowing it to raise its level of commitment and ambition with respect to what is already established and in force in national legislation and regulations, expanding the legal grounds and promoting a greater realization of citizenship rights.

The country is immersed in a complex context that is marked by deep threats of setbacks in terms of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Therefore, with the implementation of the Escazú Agreement, conditions are created to strengthen indicators of democratic governance and territorial social governance⁴ in matters of access to information, public participation and justice in environmental.

It will make it possible to show and manifest a commitment to transparency, establishing clear rules of the game for all individuals and groups, as well as the reduction of the margin of corruption in the public management of States and Governments. Environmental democracy is key for the achievement of sustainable, fair and inclusive development in the region.

The Escazú Agreement is a realizing element of the right to consultation, taking into account that it expands and establishes the right to participation of every person, with a particular emphasis on individuals and groups in situations of vulnerability, guaranteeing their full and effective participation on equal terms, including indigenous peoples and ethnic groups.

Finally, the Escazú Agreement is the only agreement at the global level that includes environmental defenders; therefore, a significant step would be taken to advance in the protection of those who protect the environment, a debt in which the Salvadoran State does not have protocols for the protection or identification of people who are making a contribution to the care of nature and of natural assets and who are in scenarios of constant aggression, intimidation and conflict in their communities.

⁴ The Alliance of Ulúas, Lencas and Nonualcos (territorial organization of indigenous peoples) has generated and developed a proposal for a governance mechanism that starts from their own concepts, knowledge and ancestral practices, seeking to guarantee citizen participation and promote that decisions are addressed in an inclusive and sustainable way with long-lasting solutions. This initiative called *Territorial Social Governance*, is a self-managed exercise that integrates visions from the imaginary of life of the ancestral legacy that

is carried out as a political expression of the peoples, from their right to self-determination, considering that this means participating in the decisions for the care of life, nature and the global common good. The peoples and communities play a decisive role in the territories, and these practices allow them to link with the ancestral principles and values and to walk progressively in the well-being and in the construction of peace in an intergenerational and intercultural manner with all the actors and sectors that co-inhabit the territories.

5

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the administration of the Government by president Nayib Bukele presents through the Ministry of the Environment to the Legislative Assembly, the draft Law of Accession of the country to the Escazú Agreement, so that it is approved and El Salvador becomes a State Party to the Agreement, which would allow the State to implement it and its citizens to have a robust instrument to exercise democracy and environmental citizenship.
- Integrate the principles of access to information, participation of the Escazú Agreement in the discussion and approval of the Water Law, as a significant contribution to guarantee Access Rights, participation mechanisms and territorial social governance from communities, individuals and organizations defending the environment, land and water.
- Raise the level of commitment, ambition and ethical and political will with the environment: With the construction of a dialogue table for the process of accession and implementation of the Escazú Agreement; increase the budget executed in environmental matters for the conservation and protection of the natural common assets; strengthen environmental impact assessments so that private and market sectors and interests do not abuse of common assets at national level; pass environmental laws including the ban on agricultural toxins, the law on sovereignty and food security, reforms to the constitution to recognize water and food as a human right and a Climate Change Law; restore spaces for environmental participation such as CONASAV and citizen participation boards.
- Promote in a broad, transparent and participatory manner with civil society, a process of updating and proposing budgetary funding of the NDCs, considering that current ones do not meet the level required to meet the goal of not increasing global temperature by more than 1.5 °C. These do not meet the necessary elements to strengthen and raise the level of effectiveness and technical and scientific capacity that support measures that are urgent and necessary in addressing the challenge posed by climate change, its manifestations, projections and scenarios for the present and for the future, based on the most recent reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science and Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). This process of updating or creating new NDCs must be accompanied by the formulation of an implementation plan that clearly establishes a budget with the identification of sources of financing, both of domestic and external resource mobilization.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) arrived in El Salvador in 1989, with the aim of supporting dialogue between the country's leftist forces, in the face of the peace agreement negotiations between the government and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front. It acquired its status as an “International Mission” in 1995 and, since then, has been able to support various processes of research, formation, debate and political advice in collaboration with diverse social, political and governmental actors who identify with democratic values, feminism, human and environmental

rights and good governance. Thus, the FES is committed to strengthening transformative leaderships with emphasis on progressive youths and the formation of progressive alliances for the attention of the problems that most affect the population of the country.

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GOVERNANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMOCRACY

Benefits of accession to the Escazú Agreement given the situation of the environment in El Salvador



The current management of the Executive Branch has proven that many of the threats of closure and reduction of civic space were not only a rumor or an exaggeration on the part of civil society actors. The dismantling and reduction of the dialogue and participation mechanisms created in previous administrations highlights the lack of interest and commitment to promote consensus building and advance through democratic values in the generation of lasting sustainable solutions in the country.



The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, better known as the Escazú Agreement, represents a unique opportunity for the region to advance in the expansion and deepening of democracy and environmental governance, with a greater exercise of citizenship, where the participation of people becomes the main means of implementation of national public policies and the realizing element of peace and security.



The Escazú Agreement allows to raise and amplify the voices of historically and systematically excluded actors and populations such as women, youth and indigenous peoples in El Salvador, in national, regional and global public decisions, affirming the capacity of proposal and solution that these populations have to face the challenges to ensure the care and protection of natural common assets, which undoubtedly represents a significant contribution to ensure that no one is left behind, one of the foundations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

More information on the subject is available here:
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