INTER-AMERICAN AIR QUALITY DAY (IAQD)
DECLARATION

The Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Inter-American Association of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering (AIDIS), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), and the United Nations Environment Program/Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNEP/ROLAC)

Brought together in the city of Cancun, Mexico on 28 October 2002 for the XXVIII AIDIS Inter-American Congress, agree upon the following:

Considering:
That close to 440,000 premature deaths per year in Latin America and the Caribbean are attributable to air pollution. (Source: WHO Health and Environment in Sustainable Development. Five years after the Earth Summit, 1997.)
That acute respiratory infections are one of the five leading causes of death in children under the age of five in the Region of the Americas and the Caribbean. (Source: Health in the Americas 1998-2002.)
That more than 100 million inhabitants in cities of Latin America and the Caribbean breathe air that does not meet World Health Organization (WHO) air quality guidelines. (Source: WHO Health and Environment in Sustainable Development. Five years after the Earth Summit, 1997.)
That more than 120 million people in the United States (Source: EPA 2001 Annual Report) and approximately 14 million people in Canada (Source: Environment Canada, 2002) breathe air that does not currently meet fine particulate and ground-level ozone air quality standards established by Canadian governments.
That air quality is a growing problem, worsening with population increase, urbanization, climate change, increased industrialization, economic development and globalization.
That government leaders in the Americas region have committed to reduce under-five child mortality by two-thirds and to improve children’s environmental health.
That the Declaration of Rio de Janeiro of June 1992 proposes principles for sustainable development, the first principle of which indicates that “human beings are the center of concern for sustainable development, and have a right to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.”
That leaders at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, have renewed commitments to improve the environment, in particular the social aspects of the environment.
That CWWA is an association of Caribbean professionals in the water and wastewater field. Following a recent strategic planning session, the association has expanded its role to deal with wider environmental issues. Towards this end, it now supports the establishment of the Inter-American Air Quality Day. The CWWA represents a series of small Island states with fragile ecosystems that are very susceptible to adverse environmental conditions, a key one being air pollution.
That **ECLAC** is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations. Its mission is to contribute to sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean region, to coordinate actions destined for their promotion, and to strengthen the economic relationships of the countries -- between themselves and with the nations of the world as a whole. Created in 1948, ECLAC functions as a study center in the region that collaborates with Member States and various local, national and international institutions in the analysis of development processes through the formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of public policies.

That **AIDIS** is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization, established in 1948. It consists of 30,000 professionals from 32 countries in the Americas with 24 National Chapters and 17 Technical Divisions. The purpose of AIDIS is to improve quality of life in the Americas by training professionals in the sanitation and environmental protection sector, educating the public in subjects of sanitation and the environment, analyzing problems at the national, regional and Inter-American level, enabling solutions to these problems and promoting the sharing of experiences and knowledge.

That **OAS** considers that planning and decision-making for sustainable development require understanding and integrating environmental considerations, as well as social and economic factors. We will assess the environmental impact of our policies, strategies, programs, and projects nationally and in the framework of international agreements to ensure that adverse environmental effects are identified, prevented, minimized, or mitigated, as appropriate.

That **PAHO/WHO** is an international public health organization with 100 years of experience devoted to improving the health and living conditions of the peoples of the Americas. PAHO/WHO orientates its activities toward the most vulnerable groups, including mothers and children, workers, the poor, the elderly, and refugees as well as displaced people. Its interests concentrate on subjects related to equity -- for those who lack resources for adequate health care -- and in a Pan American approach that promotes the joint efforts of the countries on common matters.

That **UNEP** is the principal global environmental authority to the United Nations in charge of promoting a coherent implementation of the environmental dimension for sustainable development. In this regard, it assesses the importance of environmental services that provide ecosystems for the development of both rural and urban communities -- and its close relationship with public health. In addition, the Regional Office recognizes that the care and sustainable use of water resources, air quality, and soil, are indispensable and priority aspects in biodiversity conservation and ecosystems productivity.

That these six institutions, brought together for the XXVIII Inter-American Congress of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering, promoted by the Inter-American Association of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering (AIDIS), in Cancun, Mexico, from 27 October to 1 November 2002, raise awareness of the described conditions on air quality and health effects within the framework of their functions, and

**Declare:**

That a commemoration of air quality and health through an “Inter-American Air Quality Day” be observed the second Friday of August of every year.

That all governments, municipalities, grassroots organizations, non-governmental associations, guilds, companies in the private sector, and international agencies celebrate the Inter-American Air Quality Day and consider it noteworthy for proposing participatory solutions to the challenges of air quality and good health.

That consciousness-raising and awareness-building activities are carried out, so that citizens, organizations and governments are well-informed about the causes and health consequences of air pollution, as well as actions to take to improve air quality and thereby improve the health status of citizens of the Americas.

In testimony and in conformity with what has been stated this Declaration is hereby signed,

Cancun, Mexico 28 October 2002.

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AIDIS
Carl-Axel P. Soderberg
Presidente

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CWWA
Ana Treasure
Presidente

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CEPAL
Alicia Bárcena
Directora, División de Desarrollo Sostenible y Asentamientos Humanos

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OMA
Richard A. Meganck
Director de la Unidad de Desarrollo Sostenible y Ambiental

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OPS/OMS
Mauricio Pardón
Director, División de Salud y Ambiente

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PNUMA/CRORPALC
Ricardo Sánchez Sosa
Director Regional para América Latina y el Caribe