



**Intersessional Meeting of the Forum of
Ministers of Environment
of Latin America and the Caribbean
Bridgetown, Barbados
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**Report of the
Intersessional Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of
Latin America and the Caribbean**

Agenda Item 1. Opening of the meeting

- 1.** The meeting began with an Opening Ceremony on Tuesday, 5th November at 9:00 a.m. with words from Mr. Leo Heileman, Regional Director and Representative of the United Nations Environment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean and H.E. Mr. Trevor Prescod, Minister of Environment and National Beautification of Barbados, as President of the Forum.
- 2.** The president took the opportunity to apologise for the outgoing president, the Honourable Minister from Argentina, who was planning to attend this meeting. Owing to the unsettled situation in Argentina, he regrettably was not able to attend. The President welcomed the representative from Argentina, Mr Demian Dobry, and informed the meeting that His Excellency, Gustavo Martinez Pandiani, Ambassador of Argentina to Barbados, will tomorrow, deliver a statement on behalf of the outgoing president.
- 3.** The meeting was attended by 80 delegates from 25 countries of the region, including four ministers and three vice ministers; and 10 national/regional agencies or commission representatives along with representatives from three agencies of the United Nations system. The list of participants is attached as Annex I to the present report.
- 4.** From the Bureau, in addition to Barbados, the meeting was attended by Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Guatemala, and Honduras. In the absence of Peru, the Bureau agreed to designate Bolivia as Rapporteur for the Intersessional Meeting.

Agenda Item 2. Organisation of work

2.1. Adoption of the rules of procedure of the meeting

- 5.** It was proposed that delegates adopt the rules of procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly, *mutatis mutandis*, to govern the proceedings of the meeting. The practice is that the decisions and outcomes of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean as well as the conclusions and recommendations of its intersessional meetings are adopted by consensus.

2.2. Adoption of the agenda and the schedule of sessions of the meeting

- 6.** Under this item, delegates considered the Provisional Agenda and the Provisional Annotated Agenda, as well as the Schedule of Sessions proposed by the Secretariat. According to the rules of procedure as is usual practice, followed by that of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the agenda and schedule of meeting were adopted *mutatis mutanda* without modifications.

Agenda Item 3: Follow-up of the decisions adopted by the Twenty First Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 9th – 12th October 2018)

- 7.** The XXI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the Declaration of Buenos Aires and four decisions, namely: 1. Chemicals, marine litter, and waste management, 2. Climate change; 3. Consumption and

sustainable production: decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental impact; and 4. Innovative solutions to enhance the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystems.

3.1. Decision 1 - Chemicals, marine litter, and waste management.

8. The meeting examined Decision 1 on Chemicals, marine litter, and waste management, for which the president invited the secretariat, represented by Mr. Jordi Pon, Regional Coordinator for the Chemicals and Waste Subprogramme to present on the topic.

9. Countries thanked UNEP for the information provided regarding the progress made in the implementation of the Action Plan 2019-2020 on chemicals and waste management and highlighted the importance of implementing the group of planned activities, as well as start the design of the next plan for 2021-2022. A number of countries highlighted the importance of continuing to work on this area with a regional approach and recognised it as a priority for the region. Regarding the management of chemical products, countries also highlighted the importance of the synergetic approach with regard to the Stockholm, Rotterdam Basel and Minamata Conventions. Some countries noted the possibility of working through regional centres on issues such as the management of mercury as well as management of chemicals. The impacts of disasters caused by natural hazards on the management of chemicals and waste was raised. In particular, countries' abilities to contain chemical waste during and after events was a concern, as well as the management of waste which usually occurs. One country requested that this issue, along with the development of a protocol for the quick clean-up of the waste, be included in the work plan.

10. Another area of concern for countries was the social impacts of waste management. In this regard, a number of countries reported that they were developing or had developed action plans and strategies to address waste management. Other countries highlighted national laws that have been passed to achieve a number of goals including, but not limited to, eliminating the use of plastic bags, the sustainable use of resources and regulate the use of mercury in the framework of the Minamata convention.

11. Another area highlighted and critical to the management of chemical waste was that of communication and communication post disaster. Ensuring the language of communication is clear but simple, is important to avoid placing persons at risk. Additionally, the inclusion of academia and the inclusion of young persons in communication strategies was raised. Finally, the importance of capacity building and training on information management and taking advantage of opportunities for synergies and experiences of the region was raised.

12. . One country noted its participation in the establishment of the Voluntary Coalition for the progressive closure of dumpsites, and the development of its 2019-2020 objectives and work plan, which includes the development of a roadmap and technical guides. He mentioned the importance of working on the definitions (such as a landfill), as well as the inclusion of the social component in the road map. The relationship between excess nutrients due to the use of agrochemicals and the impacts on the marine ecosystem, as well as their contribution to the development of sargassum, was also mentioned. Solid waste from urban areas was also raised as a source of concern.

13. Countries reported that concrete measures were being taken to address the management of marine debris and waste, including the development of legislation, policies, road maps, national strategies and public awareness campaigns to manage marine waste and litter management, including the ban on the use of single-use plastics in protected areas and waste reduction. One country noted that, in order to effectively manage plastics, public

education on how to dispose of them is important, particularly in schools. Several countries reported on the closure of dumpsites and one country plans to be free of dumpsites by 2030. In addition, UNEP's support was requested to eliminate the use of polystyrene foam, a product for which they have already developed legislation. One country recommended thinking of innovative solutions, in order to address alternatives to the problems of plastics that end up at sea, such as involving fishermen in the tasks of cleaning and protecting the oceans.

14. In order to ensure better waste management, one country noted the issue of waste evaluation and classification and its links to the circular economy. Another country reported that they plan to develop an inventory to assess the amount of waste and manage it. Despite the interventions of the countries, it was recognized that waste management requires resources and that international cooperation is important, as well as the strengthening of regional centres, and community-level support to work on the protection of their coasts.

3.2. Decision 2 - Climate change

15. At this point in the agenda, to review the implementation of Decision 2 on climate change, main results of the PreCOP on climate change held in Costa Rica and progress towards COP25, the meeting continued to review document UNEP / LAC - IC.2019/3. To develop the theme, the representative of the Secretariat, Mr. Gustavo Mañez, Regional Coordinator for the Climate Change Subprogram, the Vice Minister of Seas and Water of Costa Rica, Ms. Haydee Rodriguez and the Professional of International Affairs of the Ministry of Environment of Chile Mr. Felipe Cortes were invited.

16. . The President thanked the 3 presenters for their presentations, acknowledged the work done by Costa Rica during the Pre-COP and wished Chile the greatest success in the Presidency of the COP25, which will be a milestone in the global and regional sustainable development agenda. He took the opportunity to send a message of appreciation to the Government of Spain for their support to host COP25 in Madrid.

17. . Countries appreciated the good progress in implementing the climate change decision of the 2018 Forum of Ministers of the Environment. Donors and international partners - such as the European Union and others - were asked to increase financial support to strengthen Regional capacities and collaboration through the Regional Climate Change Platform of the Forum of Ministers, which will hold a meeting in April 2020 to address the Forum of Ministers of Barbados.

18. . In the light of the presentation of the preliminary version of the Carbon Zero report, Latin America and the Caribbean (UN Environment, with support from the European Union through the Euroclima+ initiative and the Government of Spain), and given the differences in Transitions towards decarbonization in island and continental states suggested that transition models adapted to each context be examined, and UNEP was requested to examine how to make a fair transition of the labour force. One country noted the need to contemplate gender-specific approaches to ensure the fair transition for both the female and male gender and welcomed the suggestions to meet the requirements of men in order to design a specific program for them, including the identification of funds . UNEP was also asked to take the initiative in this regard.

19. . It was recognized that countries cannot continue to rely on fossil fuels, and that there must also be a balance between renewable energy sources. This would allow a faster recovery after a weather event, improving resilience. In this regard, economic benefits and

job creation data that encourage countries to accelerate the transition and boost commitment to renewable energy and sustainable and electric mobility were presented.

20. Delegates mentioned the impact of climate change on health, and that countries should include a chapter on the health sector in their National Adaptation Plans (NAP).

21. Several countries updated on the process of reviewing ambition levels within the framework of their future Nationally Determined Contributions (the NDCs). In reporting on its NDC, one country shared the doubt that it could be more ambitious, and rather focus on capacity building and awareness. One country reported its success with the progress of its NDCs with the academic sector. Other countries reported on the enactment of new laws to support compliance with their NDCs.

3.3. Decision 3 - Sustainable consumption and production: decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental impact.

22. The President continued with agenda item 3.3, with Decision 3 - Sustainable consumption and production: decoupling economic growth from the use of resources and environmental impact. He invited the UNEP Regional Resource Efficiency Coordinator, Ms. Adriana Zacarias to present the topics of: a) Regional Council of Government Experts on Sustainable Consumption and Production and members of the Steering Committee; b) Scientific knowledge and sustainable, resilient and inclusive cities; c) Sustainable public procurement, d) eco-labelling and other social labelling to accelerate the efficiency and sustainable use of natural resources; and d) Regional Coalition on Circular Economy. Mr. Luis Rodriguez, Eco-labelling expert, Ministry of Environment of Costa Rica, presented the progress made in the Sustainable Consumption and Consumer Information project in which Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico have formed the “Environmental Alliance of America”, to support the development of the Americas Environmental Seal and environmental product statement. Mr. Rodriguez reiterated the invitation to all countries to join the Alliance, several countries expressed interest. One country expressed the need to give consideration to the special circumstance of Caribbean SIDS.

23. Countries thanked UNEP for their work in this area. With regard to the formation of a Regional Coalition for the Circular Economy, many countries expressed their support for the initiative and interest in participating in it. They recognized the importance of developing a common regional vision and strategy on circular economy, in order to have a greater impact, build cooperation and exchange best practices. Some countries shared their activities on circular economy and stressed the need to consider regional spaces / approaches in the Circular Economy and not just national approaches, this is particularly important for the Caribbean SIDS region. Likewise, it was requested to include the private sector, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and to emphasize the consumer side and behavioural change. Countries were invited to send comments to the concept note on the proposal of this coalition. UNEP’s support was requested to build this coalition in close cooperation with international and regional partners (World Economic Forum (WEF), Platform for Accelerating Circular Economy (PACE), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), Konrad Adenauer, among others).

24. UNEP reported on the work with the International Resources Panel to develop the regional report on “The weight of cities” that will weigh the demand for natural resources of cities by 2050. The progress made in working with the Global Alliance for Sustainable Building and Construction (Global ABC) and the development of the “Regional Roadmap on

Sustainable Building and Construction”. To this end, the Secretariat kindly requested assistance in responding and distributing the survey, providing inputs and thus contributing to the development of this Roadmap. The survey is available at the following link.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/18iZdVCcdVehR7L40Q9jZ5-f32ZYt2iW-nULclhv-aM>

25. Countries reaffirmed their interest in continuing work on sustainable public procurement. Some members suggested strengthening ties with the health sector. The countries welcomed the proposal for a new project to expand work on sustainable public procurement, supporting cooperation and the exchange of best practices between the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

26. The 10YFP Secretariat invited all countries to answer the questionnaire on SDG 12.1. Its objective is to gather information on policies and activities that contribute to the implementation of the SCP agenda at the national level. It is available at the following link: <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/how-report-progress-sdg-12>. The deadline to complete the report is January 4, 2020.

27. Countries requested progress on the dialogue with the European Union (EU) for the development of regional programs “SWITCH Caribbean” and “SWITCH Latin America”, reaffirming their interest as expressed in Decision 3 (paragraph 2) of the XXI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment. The EU expressed its continued interest and informed that these programs could be possible for the framework cooperation and the funds available for 2021. They stressed that these programs should be developed taking into account the particularities and priorities of the regions. UNEP was requested to continue the dialogue with the European Union to follow up on this request.

3.4 Decision 4: Innovative solutions to enhance the benefits of ecosystems and biodiversity.

28. The President proceeded with the agenda item three, Decision 4: Enhancing the benefits of ecosystems and biodiversity. He invited the Regional Coordinator of Biodiversity and Ecosystems of UNEP, Mr. Alberto Pacheco Capella, to introduce this session. The presentation focused on the following topics: a) Regional Cooperation Programme on Biodiversity; b) State of negotiations on the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and timeframes; c) III Latin America and Caribbean Congress on Protected Areas (Lima 14th – 17th October 2019) and d) Blue Economy Summit, 6th -7th June 2019.

29. The presentation recalled the region’s rich biodiversity and its benefits to people provide essential contributions to the economy, livelihoods, the quality of life and the eradication of poverty. It mentioned that the region is also bio-culturally diverse, with traditional knowledge of indigenous people and local communities promoting, among other things, the diversification and conservation of many varieties of cultivated plants and domestic animals that are the staple foods of many other regions of the world.

30. The region has begun to address the challenges reconciling development needs with biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. In fact, most recent efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals demonstrate an integrated approach to mainstreaming biodiversity into productive sectors, particularly, agriculture, fisheries, forest and tourism.

31. It is important to highlight how many SDGs refer to biodiversity, and their integration to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Countries in the region are acknowledging that if the intent is to eradicate poverty, fight against hunger, ensure water availability and ensure health and wellbeing, biodiversity must be maintained.

32. An important element raised was that as we draw to a close on the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the global community has a new opportunity to upscale the ambition over biodiversity, and in particular with the 2050 Vision to “living in harmony with nature”. The post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is the opportunity to define measurable baselines and outcomes, to unify the biodiversity agenda with the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. To make the critical linkages with the climate change regime – to bend the curves – decrease emission and increase biodiversity.

33. The Regional Cooperation Programme on Biodiversity aims at coordination between countries and the exchange of information to develop specific strategies and plans. Within the framework of these plans and strategies, actions can be carried out that aim towards the integration of biodiversity in all economic sectors, with special attention to those that depend on biodiversity and those relevant to the living systems of indigenous peoples and local communities. It seeks to collaborate in the development and prioritization of post-2020 actions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and support the transformative process of the coming decades, aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

34. Countries recognised the importance of the blue economy to their economies. The importance of oceans and its opportunities was emphasize, in terms of productive sectors, livelihoods and food security. Valuing that space, within the blue economy was highlighted as being critical to the region.

4. Session on the topics of the Buenos Aires Declaration and additional initiatives annexed to the report proposed by countries

35. The President introduced the last session of the day, the Buenos Aires Declaration, which was one of the important outputs of the last meeting of the Forum of Ministers. A series of topics were annexed to the final report as priority topics indicated by group of countries. The session focussed on four themes of the Buenos Aires Declaration, to report on the progress made in these areas: a) Establishing an environmental data and information framework to strengthen the science-policy interface of Latin America and the Caribbean; b) Gender gap; c) Environmental Training Network; and d) Montevideo V Programme

36. Mr. Francesco Gaetani, Regional Coordinator for the Environment Under Review Subprogramme of UNEP was invited to deliver the presentation to the meeting.

4.1 Establishing an environmental data and information framework to strengthen the science-policy interface of Latin America and the Caribbean

37. Countries supported the proposed initiative and noting that it would be critical to strengthen the Forum of Ministers and to support evidence-based decision making in the region. Some expressed their wish to see this initiative and related reporting to drill down to the national level, filling in any data and capacity gaps. It was recommended that the communication aspects of the framework should be considered with due regard, including engagement with relevant media and journalists and that capacity building also needs to be addressed. Other countries cautioned against duplication of work and encouraged maximisation of limited resources taking advantage of those initiatives already developed at regional and national level.

4.2 Gender gap

38. In relation to this agenda item, the Secretariat presented the draft report "Gender and the environment: a preliminary analysis of gaps and opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean" and the proposal to advance a regional work plan. The Deputy Regional Director Officer in Charge and Coordination for Development Officer, Ms. Piedad Martin made an introduction to the topic, which was subsequently presented by Ms. Ndibi Schwiers, Director of the Department of Environment of Guyana.

39. After numerous interventions, countries agreed that it was important to include the male gender in an expanded analysis, to work on equality and to consider all vulnerable populations in the region. This matter was of particular importance to the Caribbean.

40. In addition, it was agreed to form a group of experts with volunteer countries to work in the intersessional period to finalize the gap report and make a proposal for a gender and environment action plan for the 2020 Ministerial meeting.

4.3 Environmental Training Network

41. The President continued with item 4.3 of the agenda, on the Environmental Training Network, presented by Mrs. Adriana Zacarias, Regional Coordinator of the Environmental Education Program, who stressed that environmental education is a transversal axis and an effective tool and transformative that offers solutions to the new and changing challenges that our societies demand. The progress of the Network was reported and the new 2019-2020 work plan and the results of the annual coordination meeting of the Environmental Training Network were briefly presented, which was held in Quito, Ecuador 1-2 June 2019. Ms. Frida Pin, representative of the Ministry of Environment of Ecuador, presented the "Recommendations for Action" that the Environmental Training Network prepared for the Ministers of the Environment.

42. Among the recommendations, the need to strengthen the position of environmental education units within organizational structures and to promote interministerial and intersectoral articulation, providing them with human and economic resources, was highlighted. The Network recommended conducting a Ministerial Dialogue on Environmental Education at the next meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment; and in order to give more dynamism to the Network, he proposed to nominate a President and Vice-President of the Environmental Training Network. Barbados and the other countries supported the ministerial dialogue proposal.

4.4 Access to justice

43. The President introduced a brief overview of progress made in the adoption of the Montevideo Programme on Environmental Law, and particularly with regard to access to information, public participation, and access to justice in environmental matters. He then introduced Ms. Andrea Brusco, UNEP Regional Coordinator for Environmental Governance who would be delivering a presentation followed by Ms. Karetta Crooks, from Saint Lucia, who is one of the representatives of the public in the Escazú Agreement.

44. Countries recognised the importance of the Escazú Agreement and noted its importance to issues such as access to information, justice, and human rights. Many countries reported that the Escazú Agreement was a national priority and reported on actions taken towards ratification of the agreement whilst some reported on action already being taken to implement the agreement. . It was pointed that many of the elements of Escazu were already embedded in national legislative frameworks. Further, it was mentioned that national

assessments of the requirements to effectively implement Escazu Agreement would be required in some countries. One country pointed out that the Escazu could offer the opportunity for strengthening existing access to justice pathways and to educate citizens on their rights.

Agenda Item 5 - Enhancing the engagement of the region in shaping the environmental global agenda: opportunities that UNEA 5 may bring

45. The president introduced agenda item five, Enhancing the engagement of the region in shaping the environmental global agenda: opportunities that UNEA 5 may bring. He reminded the meeting that UNEA 5 will take place in February 2021 and that discussions were underway for the definition of the theme of the meeting. The meeting was reminded of the “Thought Starter” document provided, that includes preliminary themes for the next UNEA, and the consensual elements for the theme for the fifth session of UNEA, as well as a summary of the meeting of the CPR sub-committee.

46. To present on the preparations and progress, Ambassador Fernando Coimbra, Chair of the CPR, followed by Jorge Laguna, Secretary of Governing Subsidiary Bodies of UNEP, was connected from Nairobi.

47. The meeting was reminded of the ministerial declaration entitled “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production” which was adopted by ministers of environment as the main outcome of the 2019 UN Environment Assembly along with 23 resolutions and three decisions. Analysis of and follow up on implementation of the resolutions adopted at UNEA 4 has been ongoing, with reports going to the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The UNEA secretariat has also prepared information on main political outcomes, participation and perceptions, civil society and private sector engagement, media outreach and communication and next steps.

48. The Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly is now seeking to define a theme for the next UN Environment Assembly, by no later than 31st December 2019, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

49. There was support for celebrating UNEP’s 50th Anniversary. One country suggested a theme that includes poverty eradication and SCP and suggested expanding the conversation beyond governments. It was recognised that the celebration presented an opportunity to examine the last 50 years and look progressively towards the next 50, to determine how best to approach it.

50. Under this agenda item, the President introduced Ambassador Gustavo Martinez Pandiani, Ambassador of Argentina to Barbados, to present a brief statement to the meeting, in Argentina’s capacity outgoing President of the Forum.

Agenda Item 6 - Enhancing the role of the forum to address regional environment challenges, poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean: a stronger voice in the context of sustainable development

51. The President introduced agenda item six. Enhancing the role of the Forum to address regional environment challenges, poverty and inequality in Latin America and the Caribbean: a stronger voice for sustainable development. Under this agenda item the meeting discussed important priority issues for the region, which are a) Strengthening resilience to

disasters and emergencies; b) Elements of a regional action plan on ecosystems restoration; c) The environmental dimension of Small Island Developing States.

6.1 Elements of a regional action plan on ecosystems restoration

52. The topic on the Regional Action Plan for the Restoration on Ecosystems was presented by Mr. Alberto Pacheco Capella, Regional Coordinator for Biodiversity and Ecosystems.

53. In his presentation, he mentioned that unsustainable human activities from farming and mining to industry and construction are undermining the productivity of vast areas of farmland, forests, oceans and other ecosystems across the world. This degradation threatens food security, water supplies and the biodiversity upon which human development depends. It drives and is exacerbated by climate change. Importantly, it will put the Sustainable Development Goals out of reach unless it is urgently addressed.

54. At the moment, degradation of land and marine ecosystems undermines the well-being of 3.2 billion people and costs about 10 per cent of the annual global gross product in terms of loss of species and ecosystem services. These ecosystem services are essential to food and agriculture, including supply of freshwater, protection against hazards and provision of habitat for species such as fish and pollinators. According to the latest IPBES report, all of these ecosystems are declining rapidly. Therefore, we must stress the importance of the ecosystem approach for the integrated management of land, water and living resources and the need to step up efforts to tackle desertification, land degradation, erosion and drought, biodiversity loss and water scarcity, which are seen as major environmental, economic and social challenges for global sustainable development.

55. Restoration to stop and reverse degradation is underway in many places around the world, but must be scaled up dramatically to safeguard livelihoods, combat climate change, and support vital ecosystem services such as the supply of food and water. More countries need to join restoration initiatives and ramp up their ambition with stronger support from multilateral donors and the private sector.

56. The XXI Forum of Ministers and UNGA Res 73/284 called on a global and regional effort to recognize the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030. To date, almost 60 countries have announced political commitments to bring more than 170 million hectares of degraded land under restoration as part of the Bonn Challenge, however additional momentum is needed to generate the necessary transformational impact at all levels in order to conserve and restore ecosystems and to achieve sustainable development

57. UNEP as one of the leading agencies, together with FAO, calls for:

- a. More countries to join global and regional restoration initiatives with the existing goal to restore at least 350 million hectares of degraded forests, landscapes and seascapes by 2030.
- b. A new, ambitious target under the Convention on Biological Diversity for restoration of all degraded ecosystems by 2030.
- c. Countries who have already made commitments need to implement their pledges effectively. This may require new governance arrangements, integrated policymaking, better land and marine use planning, and capacity-building.
- d. Bilateral and multilateral donors, including those funding climate action, need to make it easier for developing countries, local Governments and the private sector to access funding for restoration programmes and projects.

- e. Consistent and long-term policy signals should be set to trigger large-scale re-direction of private finance into ecosystem restoration.

58. Countries expressed appreciation for the issues within the action plan which they felt were important for the region. It was further noted by some, that the Forum needed to identify innovative solutions that would result in concrete benefits. Some countries recommended that a coordinated way to work with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) be examined. Other countries reported on their national efforts and plans to manage their ecosystems restoration.

6.2 Strengthening resilience to environmental impacts of emergencies in Latin America and the Caribbean through the development of an environment and emergencies preparedness network.

59. The President continued with this agenda item which was presented by Mr. Dan Stothart, Regional Humanitarian Affairs Officer.

60. Countries expressed appreciation for UNEP's work under this area and one country noted that they had been unaware of UNEP's emergency response services, highlighting some of the biodiversity impacts that they have suffered both from direct hurricane impacts (e.g. on the bird population), as well as the environmental impacts of poorly managed clean-up and disaster waste management.

61. It was noted that civil protection and disaster management agencies are often extremely busy and not able to quickly respond to environmental issues or coordinate environmental actors. In this regard, it was highlighted that all partners working in the space should be considered, without waiting to act, since quick action following an event is necessary in order to reduce the risk of losing environmentally sensitive resources.

62. One country informed the meeting of their capacity to support the development of response and risk reduction in the wider region. A note of caution was raised, considering the number of actors mandated by law in certain health emergencies with environmental dimensions and in this regard the aim should be to complement and avoid duplication.

63. It was pointed out that the establishment of the network should be part of an overall cooperation programme.

64. A request for expressions of interest will be circulated to countries to allow those who wish to present their interest to be members of the network.

6.3 The Environmental Dimension of Small Island Developing States

65. The President continued with agenda item six, with its last point, the Environmental Dimension of Small Island Developing States and invited Barbados to present on this topic, through Mr. Travis Sinckler, Senior Environmental Officer of the Ministry of Environment and National Beautification of Barbados.

66. Recognising the importance of SIDS, the Forum of Ministers of Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean adopted a number of decisions on SIDS over the past several years which focussed on the special circumstances of Caribbean SIDS and SIDS in general, the representative of Barbados noted that perhaps one of the most impactful decisions of the Forum of Ministers was Decision 4 (2003), which called for the establishment of a Caribbean SIDS Programme.

67. He further noted that the Buenos Aires Declaration adopted by the XXI Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment supported the call for scaled-up implementation of the Environmental Dimension of the SIDS Sustainable Development Framework.

68. To that end, he recommended that the Intersessional Meeting recommends that the Forum of Ministers of the Environment establish a Caribbean SIDS Cooperation Programme. Further, that initiative focus on the environmental dimension of SIDS sustainable development policy framework and integrate both SIDS-SIDS Cooperation and SIDS-Latin America Cooperation, involving as many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean as possible, with a view of building on the existing trans-hemispheric structures. Countries supported the recommendation and proposal made by Barbados.

69. The Regional Director for UNEP noted that there has been increasing support to SIDS, recognising the establishment of regional and sub-regional offices in the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands. He added that examining improving and strengthening UNEP's support for the SIDS will be examined.

Agenda Item 7 - Enhancing the capacity of the Forum to foster cooperation among development institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean including the Interagency Technical Committee

70. The President continued with the following agenda item 7, Enhancing the capacity of the Forum to foster cooperation among development institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean.

71. The secretariat presented document UNEP/LAC - IC.2019/7 before the meeting. It was informed to the meeting that the Forum of Environment Ministers has historically been a space for the exchange of cooperation and collaboration. An important pillar of the Forum's work has been the contribution and participation of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (ITC), which is composed of the United Nations Development Program, the United Nations Environment Program, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

72. During this session, the meeting reviewed and discussed cooperation and alliances to advance the implementation of the decisions adopted during the Forum Meetings, as well as the nature, role and composition of the ITC, to review the possible expansion to other entities, as agreed in the last XXI Meeting of the Forum. The President invited the Secretariat, Ms. Piedad Martin and representatives of the Inter-Agency Technical Committee to make recommendations: Robin Rajack, Inter-American Development Bank; Ms. Valerie Hickey, World Bank; Mr. Luis Maia, European External Action Service; Mr. Lyes Ferroukhi, United Nations Development Program; and Mr. David Barrios, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

73. The members of the Committee made brief presentations on their contributions to the implementation of decisions and recommendations to strengthen the role of the Committee and regional cooperation in environmental matters within the framework of the Forum.

74. The presentations of the ITC highlighted some key points that include, among others, a) strengthening the collaboration of the ITC, its participation in coalitions and, based on the comparative advantages of each member, defining the scope of their work, b) map the actions of the ITC in relation to the decisions of the Forum and identify where there are gaps; c) that the Secretariat prepare an Action Plan for the decisions of the forum to which the technical support of the ITC can be added with greater clarity of roles and expected results;

d) focus on the implementation of concrete actions and not so much on planning, e) expand the scope of the environmental agenda so that it is immersed in a whole-of-the-government approach; and e) invite other agencies to the spaces created by the forum.

75. With regard to the challenges, the following key challenges and needs were identified: a) improve policies in the region avoiding inconsistency between sectors, b) strengthen institutional credibility including with the private sector and communities, c) access to innovation and financing of both international funds (GEF, GCF) and domestic resources and private investments; d) support countries to adopt a programmatic approach to environmental vertical funds to generate more synergies between projects and sustainability of results, increase the ambition of NDCs and have a focus on nature-based solutions; and e) involve the private sector and civil society and make them more active in the Forum and the implementation of regional priorities.

76. The European Union was further invited to present its approach to decarbonization and the foundations of the future Green Deal to be presented at the first meeting of the new European Commission. The lessons learned and recommendations that were shared in relation to how to generate structural changes included: a) the need to assume collective responsibilities and be willing to bear the costs; b) availability for radical changes in mentality, including adoption of innovations and new technologies; c) the focus on partnerships to define common goals and objectives; d) focus cooperation on results and concrete actions while deepening political dialogue and information exchange on solutions that have worked; and e) the construction of a constructive collaboration in international forums, obtaining support between countries.

77. One country stressed the importance of valuing ecosystems and our environment by not leaving negative externalities management only to States and mentioned the important role that UNEP and the forum play. Some countries noted that an implementation and follow-up framework based on concrete results is needed to guide the Secretariat and countries in monitoring and implementing decisions; a framework that has specific goals, actions and indicators. It was also suggested that more intensive work be carried out in the intersessional period between the Presidency and the Bureau to position the agreements of the Forum, as is already being done at the UNEA and the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

78. One country suggested that an award scheme be established to celebrate the work carried out by companies, communities and others in the region, as there are best practices and experiences that should receive recognition. This could be part of a wider effort to improve the visibility of the Forum.

79. Some countries noted that a working modality for the Forum is needed to guide the work during intersessional periods, including the Presidency, the Secretariat and the ITC. Another country suggested that more synergies be created between ITC members and with other agencies to support the implementation of the Forum's priorities and requested the preparation of a concrete proposal for the next ministerial meeting.

80. PAHO requested to be part of the ITC and raised the importance of the health sector in advancing environmental goals. Therefore, it is proposed that more joint actions be carried out between the environmental and health sectors, including improving monitoring, and strengthening the performance of institutions, and supporting vulnerable communities, among others.

81. Finally, there was a call from countries to prioritize in the internal policy the agreements of the Forum relevant to each country, strengthen internal coordination within the same government including a more direct relationship with the Ministries of Finance and for the

Forum to have adequate mechanisms to measure and monitor the achievement of results within the framework of the objectives of the Forum.

Agenda Item 8 - Conclusions and recommendations for the XXII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment

82. Under this agenda item delegates were invited to reflect and agree on a number of conclusions and recommendations in light of the discussion on the priority topics presented during this intersessional meeting, towards the next session of the XXII Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean. The conclusions and recommendation were adopted and is annexed to this report.

Agenda Item 9 - Other matters

83. Under this agenda items delegates did not present any other matters for discussion.

Agenda Item 10 - Closing of the meeting

84. The participants thanked Barbados for the work in the organization of hosting of this meeting, as well as the Secretariat for the contributions and facilitation of the activities of the meeting.

85. The President thanked participants, on behalf of the people of Barbados for their trust in him as President of the Forum. He believed that the quality of the meeting was high and gave the opportunity to convey their perception of what they believe transpired. He thanked the Secretariat for organizing the meeting and the national team who worked hard preparing to host the meeting, which manifested in persons from LAC being in Barbados. He noted that the tentative period for hosting the next meeting for the Forum is scheduled for the first 2 weeks of November 2020.

86. The meeting was closed on Wednesday 6th November 2019 at 5:40 pm.

Annex 1

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