

## Closing Statements

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United Nations Environment Programme

XXII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

1-2 February 2021

- During these difficult times of pressing urgent domestic demands and constrains and uncertainties about the future, we have undertaken in a very professional manner a very inclusive and exhaustive process for the preparations and finalization of this Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean. The results of this are action-oriented decisions on key issues to advance the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the region and a clear declaration and communique to the world of our vision and the way forward.
- **The voice of the environmental ministers is important.** This forum called the attention, as never before, to a wide range of multilateral and regional institutions, banks, partners, donors, civil society to take decisive and transformation decisions and action along with governments to have sustainable recovery from COVID-19 while also addressing the three planetary crises of Climate Change, Habitat degradation and loss of Biodiversity, and Pollution.  
The result: We have identified opportunities to enhance cooperation which should now be turned into concrete initiatives. For example, on the regional plan on ecosystems restoration, the region is sending a powerful message that this is a high priority for us and that there is political will to undertake action, and we have come up with a set of measures that can make this possible. This is what the forum has achieved by being the political platform to enhance inter and intra-regional cooperation.
- **The forum is now more transparent and increasing the opportunities for all to be engaged.** For the first time, we held a forum for civil society in the margin of the forum of ministers, and for the first time **all** deliberation were accessible to everybody through the U tube channel. The result is that there is more confidence and openness and trust. We need to build upon on this. We are willing to have a civil society forum of the XXIII meeting in Costa Rica, but this time with the participation of governments in order to hold a constructive dialogue.
- **The forum is inclusive of all countries of the region and a vital space for dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation.** The region is not homogenous with different views in different countries, but we were able to find common ground and build upon our commonalities. The result was that we were able to set priorities and common goals and ambition. We had very high-level participation and high-quality presentations in all of the ministerial dialogues. I would like to thank all presenters in this Forum, governments, regional and multilateral institutions, United Nations organizations, civil society, academia, private sector financial institutions, MEAs. It is noteworthy that we had civil society participation in all of the panels.
- **The commitment and ambition of the Presidency:** the participation of the Prime Minister of Barbados yesterday morning is a landmark for the forum. It is testimony of the

commitment and conviction that guided the Presidency work. We were challenged to think beyond of the future with very clear and ambitious proposals on the functioning of the forum. This has opened a route to strengthen the forum so we will undertake further reflections and detailed analysis, on how you would like us the Secretariat of the Forum to serve better. I would like to express appreciation for the excellent leadership of Barbados in this forum, the Prime Minister and Minister Forde as well as very capable team that supported the preparations.

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- **We look forward to working with the Minister of Environment of Costa Rica as the new President of the Forum of Minister and with the new Bureau of the Forum.**

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- **I have had the great honour to serve you as the Regional Director of UNEP for the last four and a half years**, and as many of you know I will be proceeding on retirement at the end of May this year. The recruitment process for my replacement is underway. During the last four and a half years our office was able to significantly increase support to countries on environmental governance, policy, legislation and regulation, increased environmental advocacy, including for Multilateral Environmental Agreements, with strong growth in programmes and projects in support of the countries, increasing national and subregional presence, significant resource mobilization and dramatically increased visibility. This has only been possible because of the fantastic team we have at the UNEP regional office (including subregional, national and project offices). I will leave this office knowing that our super regional office team will always be here to support the countries of our region.

- I would like to express my sincere appreciation for all the support and confidence you have given to UNEP and to myself during the time that I had the honour to serve you and the region in this noble quest to make our planet and in particular Latin America and the Caribbean, a better and more environmentally sustainable home.

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- **So I end my statement by saying**

- **A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL.**

- **Muchisimas Gracias a todos.**

- **Merci beaucoup a tous**

- **Muito Obrigado a todos.**

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