



Statement delivered by

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**Government of Barbados**

on the occasion of the

***Leadership Dialogue at the Virtual Session of Unea-5***  
***Contribution of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable***  
***Development to Building a Resilient and Inclusive Post-***  
***Pandemic World***

at

**THE 5<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT**  
**ASSEMBLY (5.1)**

22-23 February 2021

**Thank you, Mr. Chair.**

**Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen**

On behalf of the Government of Barbados, permit me to convey my thanks to all of you, for organizing this important virtual meeting of UNEA-5, despite the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Chair, Barbados, like the global community, is grappling with the unprecedented impact of the pandemic. As a nation, we have recognized the need to reposition our country on the path to building a resilient and inclusive, post-pandemic world.

It is against this backdrop, that the Twenty-Second Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean, which Barbados had the honour to host; notwithstanding, virtually, had as its theme *“The Environmental Dimension of the Post-COVID-19 Sustainable Recovery.”* Consistent with this theme; we were able to agree on a Communique on the Environmental Dimension of COVID-19 and a set of Decisions which are designed to contribute to a Post-COVID-19 Sustainable Recovery, in Latin America and the Caribbean.

I recommend that this august body avail itself of these outcomes, and invite the multilateral financial institutions to work with us, to ensure that these Outcomes can be implemented in an effective and efficient manner.

Mr. Chair, like many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and indeed, worldwide, the COVID-19 crisis has been devastating. In this regard, Barbados has not been an exception. The COVID-19 crisis has devastated our tourism sector, on which we depend, contributing traditionally over 35% of GDP.

A similar situation of continuing social disruption and economic fallout obtain throughout our region; and many Latin America and Caribbean countries are suffering from multiple crises, including, increasing levels of unemployment; deepening fiscal and trade deficits; and increasing poverty and extreme poverty rates.

As the body which is responsible for setting the world's policy agenda on environmental issues; I think we have a responsibility to help the world come to grip with the role the ENVIRONMENT must play, in the post COVID-19 Sustainable Recovery of our Member States, and by extension, our regions. Mr. Chair, in this regard, we might want to consider **the establishment of Regional Multidisciplinary Expert Compacts, under the overall auspices of UNEA, to give more in-depth consideration to how to ensure that the environmental dimension is at the core of any Post-COVID-19 Sustainable Recovery Plan.** The outputs of such an exercise would be invaluable in assisting our countries to **“build forward better”**.

Mr. Chair, amidst this, “the worse pandemic of our lifetime”, Barbados like many other Small Island Developing States, is resolved to face this challenge. Twinned with the debilitating and perennial impacts of the climate crisis, Barbados is taking action for building our economic, social and environmental resilience.

We are committed to our 2030 target of a 100% fossil free economy, buttressed by a policy framework, that supports both local and foreign partnerships.

The pandemic has brought into sharper global focus, the importance of protecting nature from pollutants, that have damaging effects on our health and wellbeing, biodiversity, water and soils. To this end, Barbados is committed to enhancing its use

of safe and sustainable agriculture practices, including promoting organic farming to meet our food security objectives.

We are also implementing a national climate resilience and ecosystems restoration framework initiative, that includes our National Clean and Green programme; a Roof-To-Reef programme; the development of a National Botanical Garden; and the implementation of a Marine Conservation Plan. These initiatives will contribute to our localization of the UN Decade of Ecosystems Restoration.

In addition, prior to the decimation of the tourism market by the COVID-19 pandemic, Barbados was one of the premier tourism destinations in the Caribbean. Post COVID-19, we are committed to rebuilding our tourism brand with a competitive green edge, as being the cleanest tourism destination of choice, in our region. The achievement of this will require the total transformation of our waste management system, that is based on a 5Rs Circular philosophy.

In 2020, we implemented a stimulus package called the Barbados Employment and Sustainable Transformation Plan, or BEST. This plan has three main features. one of which is greening of the tourism sector, through water conservation and water harvesting measures, where applicable, and the installation of renewable energy capacity, to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

Cognizant of the role of multilateralism to our rebuilding efforts, post COVID-19, the Prime Minister of Barbados, Her Excellency, Mia Amor Mottley, announced at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, that Barbados was actively considering the establishment of a Mission in Nairobi, Kenya. This will facilitate more strategic engagement with UNEP and UN Habitat, as well as strengthening our alliances,

and deepening cooperation with Kenya, and the myriad of other countries in Africa.

Mr. Chair, let me close by saying, that I look forward to fruitful and productive discussions, as well as an impactful UNEA-5.

I thank you.

**Feb 18, 2021**