

Committee of Permanent Representatives - Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday, 4 March 2021

Peru intervention (1)
Ambassador Silvia Alfaro – Permanent Representative

Agenda Item 3: inputs of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Thank you Chair and let me also congratulate you for the exemplary manner in which you are conducting the work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Let me also thank the Secretariat for preparing the documents supporting this agenda item on the UNEA contribution to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), in New York.

Allow me to present what we consider to be of the utmost importance in light of the UNEA contribution to the HLPF:

It is not only timely, but necessary, that the HLPF 2021 focuses on the COVID-19 recovery and how it can contribute to achieve the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic goes beyond the health sector, and has, especially in developing countries, profound socio-economic consequences, hindering the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The pandemic has exposed inequalities and shortcomings all over the world, as well as the challenges that we, as the international community, face in addressing, not only international health emergencies, but also the three global crises of climate change, loss of biodiversity and pollution identified in UNEPs Medium Term Strategy.

Global challenges require global responses. Therefore, supporting multilateralism and strengthening international cooperation and solidarity will continue to be our best tools to overcome the pandemic and its impacts on the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

The very existence of any human being depends on the environment into which that person is born and develops. A healthy environment is essential for the enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation. The current COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the conditions of daily life, including a safe and sustainable environment, have an important impact on health inequities.

The pandemic has also shown that the health of our environment and human health are inextricably linked, and, at the same time, that the environmental crisis is inter-linked with the climate and pollution crises. Hence there is a need to address the social determinants of health, from a multidisciplinary and multisectoral approach, in order to overcome health inequities and improve access to public services, as well as to address the climate, nature and pollution crises together in a coordinated, integrated and equitable manner.

We are living in exceptional times. However, it is also a moment in time that offers new opportunities to understand that the sustainability of the planet depends on the responsibility we

take on and the actions we deploy to protect nature. In this regard, Peru supports the “one health” approach as a way to promote inclusive, sustainable, resilient development that takes into account nature-based solutions.

The pandemic reminds us of the urgent need to take measures to combat the threats posed by climate change, the accelerated loss of biodiversity and pollution. As such, it is fundamental that economic recovery plans incorporate an environmental dimension that enables a resilient and low-carbon economy to be achieved.

For countries such as Peru, that is highly vulnerable to climate change and is hugely biodiverse, the protection of the environment and the application of nature-based solutions that lead us to a low-carbon and resilient development path constitutes an inescapable responsibility that we have with our citizens and with our future generations. Peru has committed to increase its ambition to reduce carbon emissions from 30% to 40% by 2030, with a view to becoming carbon neutral by the year 2050. Likewise, we are preparing our National Adaptation Plan, and we have implemented a series of measures to promote the circular economy, as well as Clean Production Agreements with the private sector, the eradication of single-use plastic, and the conservation of our biodiversity to ensure that our economic performance is compatible with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The tasks described above, require a coordinated effort by our society as a whole, including the State, and the decisive commitment of the private sector, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples and academia, in order that we can all contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Finally, we also believe the contribution of UNEA to the HLPF must highlight the role of UNEP as the leading environmental authority. This is particularly relevant in the perspective of UNEP's 50th anniversary, which offers a unique opportunity to engage in a collective reflection on how UNEP has contributed, during its 50 years of institutional life, to achieve sustainable development and the need to further strengthen its articulating role regarding climate change, biological diversity, and pollution control, while respecting the mandates of the different multilateral environmental agreements.

We hope these ideas can be reflected in the UNEA contribution to the HLPF.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.