

Remarks by Mrs. María José Iturbide Flores, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of the Republic of Guatemala
Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEA-6
Nairobi, Kenya

- His Excellency Mr. William Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya;
- Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
- Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers,
- The Honourable Ms. Leila Benali, President of the Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly;
- The Honourable Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly;
- The Honorable Mrs. Paula Narváez, President of the UN Economic and Social Council;
- The Honorable Mrs. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme
- Honourable delegations present here;
- Ladies and gentlemen

Esteemed participants,

I extend warm greetings on behalf of Dr. Bernardo Arévalo de León, President of the Republic of Guatemala, as we gather for this significant assembly. Representing my country in this vital discourse, we unite to tackle the urgent challenges encapsulated by the central theme of this gathering: "Effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral measures to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution."

Firstly, I thank the Government of Kenya for their gracious hospitality and the United Nations Environment Programme for organizing this event. Guatemala, renowned for its multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual, and megadiverse landscape, proudly upholds a Guatemalan System of Protected Areas, covering 33% of its territory. Our diverse ecosystems, intertwined with the profound traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples, underscore our unwavering commitment to environmental preservation.

Guatemala is highly susceptible to the global impacts of climate change, primarily due to its geographical features marked by volcanic activity and recurrent extreme weather phenomena such as floods, prolonged droughts, and erratic temperature fluctuations. These adversities affect agricultural productivity, exacerbating food insecurity and endangering public health, particularly among vulnerable populations and women.

The repercussions of these challenges extend beyond environmental degradation; they spark societal upheaval, driving internal displacement, worsening migration trends, and threatening the welfare of indigenous communities, especially women and girls. Recent years have seen a troubling surge in natural disasters, resulting in significant casualties and hindering social progress through economic setbacks and infrastructure damage.

In alignment with our 2024-2028 Government Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals, Guatemala has embarked on concerted efforts to mitigate these crises and promote sustainable development. Key initiatives include:

- Committing to the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, with a pledge to conserve 30% of the planet's marine and terrestrial areas, prioritizing the involvement of Indigenous Peoples in biodiversity management.
- Advocating for proper waste management to combat water, soil, and air pollution.
- Implementing measures to ensure the sustainable use of water resources and compliance with regulations on wastewater discharge.
- Aligning with global commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change through Nationally Determined Contributions.

Guatemala aligns itself with the imperative to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C, as stipulated in international agreements, stressing the urgency of collective action guided by scientific insights. While our nation's greenhouse gas emissions represent a small fraction of the global total, we have established legislative frameworks and strategic plans to bolster environmental stewardship and contribute meaningfully to the global agenda.

Moreover, Guatemala remains steadfast in honoring its international, regional, and national commitments, spanning the 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. We recognize the crucial role of international cooperation in advancing initiatives such as the Marine Litter Action Plan and promoting gender equality in environmental governance.

In the spirit of global solidarity, Guatemala advocates for differentiated support for developing countries, acknowledging their unique vulnerabilities and capacities. We call for robust financial assistance, technical expertise, and technology transfer to effectively empower nations like ours to fulfill our environmental obligations.

In conclusion, Guatemala reaffirms its dedication to multilateral cooperation as the cornerstone for addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Let us seize this assembly as a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and mutual support, guided by principles of shared responsibility and environmental stewardship.

Thank you.