

# 11th Annual Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

*8 - 12 July 2024*

## **Regional Statement of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean Countries**

Mr. Chair,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean Countries (GRULAC).

This 11th Annual Subcommittee meeting is a special occasion, as it kickstarts our conversations on the medium-term strategy (MTS) for the period 2026-2029 and the programme of work and budget for the period 2026-2027.

Indeed, here we begin the task given by UNEA decision 6/7, which requested inclusive and regular consultation with Member States and, as appropriate, relevant stakeholders, in the elaboration of the new MTS. The UNEA decision also requested UNEP to make every effort to reflect consensual views. These elements should be clearly embedded in the roadmap, as they are crucial to ensure an inclusive process towards a successful approval at UNEA-7.

Over the course of this week, we are also tasked with reviewing the Programme's performance in the domains of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The environmental challenges demand immediate and decisive action. Failure to act urgently on climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution will result in catastrophic consequences, including severe weather events, irreparable loss of biodiversity, and detrimental effects on human health.

On climate change, we commend the work of the Programme on the Emissions and Adaptation Gap Reports, which shows us the sense of urgency to act, as global temperatures reach record numbers and climate impacts intensify, and, at the same time, the need to deliver on finance, especially on adaptation.

In this context, we appreciate UNEP's efforts, identified in the Programme Performance Review, in supporting the mobilization of resources to developing countries for climate mitigation and adaptation measures towards the goal of USD 100 billion through 2025 - and wonder what could have been accomplished if the goal had been met.

Looking forward, we are convinced that our road to COP30, in the City of Belém, goes through the update of nationally determined contributions in line with this renewed sense of urgency and considering the results of the first global stocktake of the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), duly met by a renewed commitment in COP29 of a new Collective Quantified Goal, taking into account the needs and priorities of developing countries, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

On biodiversity, as a group of countries that are home to most of the world's biodiversity, we remain deeply committed in our national efforts to its conservation, restoration, sustainable use, and to the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. We celebrate that a country from our region, Colombia, will lead the road to COP16, Cali, where we will further translate the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) into action.

With the message of "Peace with Nature", COP16 has also been called the People's COP, highlighting the special relationship of Indigenous Peoples, People of African Descent, and local communities with the territories they have traditionally inhabited, integrating their traditional knowledge into the care and protection of biodiversity.

GRULAC further calls for the ratification and swift entry into force of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). This agreement is crucial for ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, including by promoting the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from activities with respect to them.

We appreciate UNEP's joint work with the Food and Agriculture Organization on the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, as well as the support provided to countries in the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its KM-GBF. In addition to the challenges and shortcomings identified for this area in the Programme Performance Report, it is crucial that UNEP also includes the lack of financing as an essential challenge in the implementation of the Framework.

On pollution, we agree with the Programme Performance Report that UNEP's work is more urgent than ever. In this area, we support the focus on circularity, sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and health, which should be an integral part of the new MTS.

UNEA has also launched important processes in this area. We are actively working with the ambition of completing, by the end of 2024, the negotiations of an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, as set out in resolution UNEA 5/14, to achieving the goal of ending plastic pollution to protect the human health and the environment, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic.

GRULAC continues to support an ambitious outcome in this process. We are committed to maintaining the momentum to gradually end plastic pollution, depending on the support that developing countries will receive through robust and dedicated means of implementation provisions, in order to fulfill the future instrument.

In line with UNEA Resolution 5/8, our region further supports the ongoing efforts to establish a Science-Policy Panel to contribute to the sound management of chemicals and waste, noting that developing countries face significant challenges in terms of developing effective policies to tackle chemicals, waste, and pollution.

We welcome that, in the formulation of the new MTS, the key strategic pillars of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution will be retained, allowing for renewed actions and commitments to

address these challenges, with an emphasis on interventions focused on their direct drivers and underlying causes.

The Group also notes that UNEP will conduct a series of sessions to engage multilateral environmental agreements and the three Rio Conventions to identify areas to promote synergies, cooperation or collaboration for their respective national implementation. In doing so, we are of the view that UNEP should be attentive to avoid duplicating efforts, fully respect the mandates of each of those agreements and concentrate on functions of most added value.

We also consider it important to incorporate the socioeconomic perspective of developing countries across all domains, as well as the additional environmental challenges that have been the object of concern of many countries during UNEA-6.

Furthermore, it is indispensable that the new MTS prioritizes UNEP's Foundational Subprogrammes (Science-Policy and Environmental Governance), ensuring that concrete actions are implemented and that the necessary budget is provided to advance these initiatives beyond mere integration as crosscutting actions of the thematic subprogrammes.

Finally, on human resources, GRULAC appreciates the ED's efforts to achieve gender parity and equitable regional representation among UNEP's staff. We regret, however, that Latin America and the Caribbean have seen the smallest increase in staff compared to other regions. In that regard, we would like to enquire what challenges the Program has identified to increase the hiring of human resources from GRULAC countries.