



XXII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment

of Latin America and the Caribbean

Bridgetown, Barbados

1-2 February 2021

Ministerial Panel:

Circularity, sustainable economy and pollution prevention

Key messages

- **Mr. Gabriel Quijandría Acosta**, Ministry of the Environment, Peru

- Minister Quijandría referred to the opportunities to move to a circular model to reactivate the economy from an integrative approach, which allows the generation of employment, the opening of new markets, greater efficiency in the use of resources and the reduction of pollution and its associated risks.
- Likewise, he highlighted the relevance of strengthening alliances and collaboration between countries, and gave as an example the Global Plastic Agreement and the establishment of the Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency, both initiatives to be presented within the framework of UNEA 5, and at the regional level, the Regional Coalition of Circular Economy for Latin America and the Caribbean, of which Peru is part of the Steering Committee along with Costa Rica, Colombia and the Dominican Republic.

- **Mr. Gerardo Amarilla**, Undersecretary of the Ministry of the Environment, Uruguay

- The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that integrated waste management is essential to respond to the emergency and avoid secondary impacts on people's health and the environment. In this regard, Undersecretary Amarilla highlighted the Voluntary Coalition to promote the progressive closure of dumpsites in Latin America and the Caribbean of which Uruguay is a member.

- Among the actions promoted by Uruguay, he highlighted: promoting Circular Economy as a central axis of the Waste Policy, prioritizing minimization and recycling. Likewise, he pointed out the substantial decrease in the informality indexes promoting the creation of "inclusive businesses", the creation of new jobs and the development of new skills, particularly for those that may increase the added value of products manufactured from waste.
- He highlighted environmental education as an essential tool for our management and expect that the LAC Environmental Training Network plays a relevant role in the transfer of knowledge and good practices between our countries.

- **Hon. Pearnel Charles, Jr.**, Minister of Housing, Urban Renewal, Environment and Climate Change, Jamaica

- The Caribbean is a particularly vulnerable region to the effects of the pandemic. The disruption of global supply chains has greatly affected the countries of the region and has highlighted the importance of developing and implementing green recovery plans that are inclusive, putting the people especially the most vulnerable at the center of these plans.
- The Minister stressed that all actors must play a critical role in the transition towards a circular economy, responsible waste management and behavioral change: the government, facilitating the regulatory frameworks that allow the management of waste and the implementation of projects and activities; the private sector, generating green jobs, financing integrated approaches and adopting extended producer responsibility mechanisms; academia which must support research and data generation; civil society facilitating dialogues between the different stakeholders and ensuring compliance with commitments by the government and the private sector; multilateral organizations can provide technical assistance and training; and finally, the key role of youth as an engine for change in society.
- Among the initiatives that Jamaica is implementing, he highlighted the ban on single-use plastics, the deposit and return system for plastic bottles, or the green economy and sustainable consumption and production strategies.

- **H.E Chad Blackman**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Barbados to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and Chairman of the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment

- From the point of view of the relationship between trade and environment, Ambassador Blackman highlighted the need to work in an integrated way and not in silos, and to develop trade and environmental policies that strengthen each other.
- Regarding the recommendations to move towards a circular economy, he highlighted:
 1. Promote trade policies that allow the expansion of circular economic models. In this sense, he mentioned how through regulations, standards, subsidies or the control of imports, the reuse, remanufacturing, repair, and eco-design of products can be promoted.
 2. Trade must foster technological development that supports the transition to circular economy. Barriers to importing technologies must be eliminated (Latin America and the Caribbean is one of

the regions with the highest rates for technology imports). It is necessary to promote dialogue between the ministries of commerce and environment.

3. There is a financial gap, especially in developing countries, to support the transition to circular models. It is imperative to foster dialogue with the financial sector to help close this gap.

- **Mr. Sergio Campos**, Head of the Water and Sanitation Division of the Inter-American Development Bank

- Pointed out the need to strengthen a shared vision at the national and transnational level, in different areas such as agriculture, electricity, sewage and solid waste.
- Adjustments must be made in the rules and regulations to meet the current challenges: electronic waste, microplastics, etc.
- There is a lack of financing mechanisms for the transition to circular economic models. The role of development banks: encouraging the private sector to move towards eco-design and circular business models.
- Change in the behavior of citizens and users, who demand circular economy products that use resources better and more appropriately. It is important to access innovation programs.
- Importance of creating spaces for exchange and synergies, such as the Regional Circular Economy Coalition for Latin America and the Caribbean, of which the IDB is part of the Steering Committee.

- **Ms. Jhannel Tomlinson**, Caribbean Youth Environmental Network

- Short-term thinking is a reality, sustainability is not something that people worry about. However, what we do influences future generations How can we make circular economy something that interests new generations?
- Focus must be placed on the channels that youth use the most. Consumerism is prevalent among the young. It is important to think how to use pop culture, and social media influencers, to send the message. How can we capitalize on their fame to advocate for sustainable behavior through influencers, music, and the arts? Social networks are essential to encourage action by young people and encourage them to participate and get involved in the dialogue.
- Circular economy should also be addressed as an alternative form of income for young people, while promoting jobs that are capable of reducing pollution.

Interventions from delegations:

- Mr. Jair Urriola - Secretary General, Ministry of the Environment, Panama
 - Include the principles of the circular economy in the public and private sectors, including sustainable public procurement.

- Mr. Magin Herrera - Vice Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Bolivia
 - Importance of the role of environmental education to promote the proper use and disposal of materials, to promote reusing and recycling.

- Mr. Rodrigo Rodriguez - Secretary of Climate Change, Sustainable Development and Innovation, Ministry of the Environment, Argentina
 - Welcomed the GO4SDGs initiative, and its importance in building synergies and advancing the SDG agenda, including SDG 12. Argentina will host the GO4SDGs regional meeting, March 9-11, in virtual format.
 - Changing consumption and production patterns is transforming a civilizing culture, SDG 12, and sustainable lifestyles.
 - It is important that decisions are made on a scientific basis, and for this the role of the International Resource Panel (IRP) is fundamental.

- Mr. Chamberlain Emmanuel - Head of Environment - Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)
 - Recognize the leadership of the OECS countries in collaborating in climate change initiatives and sustainable public procurement, with the implementation of the sustainable public procurement pilot in the Caribbean countries, with the support of UNEP.

- Mr. Paulo Proaño - Minister of Environment and Water Ecuador
 - Sustainable public procurement is an opportunity to promote circular economy and sustainable consumption models.
 - In the framework of environmental - economic and honorary incentives, Ecuador has certification mechanisms under *marca punto verde* green label programme, a first step to achieve eco-labeling in the country.
 - Provide regional initiatives such as the Environmental Alliance of the Americas, promoted by UNEP. Invite the countries of the region to join the Initiative.

In his final words, Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, highlighted the space generated by the Forum of Ministers to promote the exchange of experiences between countries, and pointed out the availability of the network of regional centers of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions, to support countries in the transition towards a sustainable and pollution-free economy.