

164th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives UNEP

Statements by Colombia on Agenda item 6. Report of the Executive Director to the 164th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Regarding the quarterly report for the 164th Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, under “Part D. Foundational Subprograms, section ii. Environmental Governance, focused on the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI)”:

Colombia highly values and appreciates the work of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative - IRI, implemented by UNEP. The Initiative has significantly impacted our country by raising community awareness and influencing local policies on forest conservation and sustainable use.

Regarding this Initiative, we are interested in knowing if, given your work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, you have considered establishing setting up partnerships and exchanging experiences between the Congo Basin and the Amazon Basin (Colombia, Peru, and Brazil) in the areas of forest governance, halting deforestation, and restoring tropical forests.

The recent Summit of the Three Basins held in Congo in October 2023 has deepened ties between authorities of Amazonian countries and these basins. It's essential to continue this process to share experiences, such as voluntary conservation agreements, community forest concessions, and protection of environmental defenders and park rangers.

Simultaneously, we are keen to understand how the Initiative in the Amazon has addressed the defense of the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities and if there are plans to promote further and develop the concept of environmental justice, as was done in Colombia during dialogues with candidates in regional elections, many of whom are now elected.

This concept holds a significant interest in our country as we seek to enhance its application and development within initiatives led by the government and corporations operating in ecosystems rich in biodiversity, such as the Amazon. That involves special considerations of participation and cost-benefit analysis in decision-making. Environmental justice should be emphasized as a crucial factor in addressing global environmental crises and their means of implementation.

Some additional questions we have about the Initiative are:

-Do you have methods to measure the impact of your programs, and how do you assess the effectiveness of the policies promoted?

-How does the Initiative collaborate with other international or regional programs to reinforce conservation efforts and fight against deforestation?

-What are the plans or next steps for the Initiative in the countries where it operates?

Finally Colombia would like to support the statement made by the distinguished ambassador of Brazil.