



**Forum of Ministers of the Environment
For Latin America and the Caribbean**

The San Jose Declaration

**XXIII Meeting
Of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**

26 October 2023

We, the Ministers, and Heads of Delegation at the XXIII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean,

Recognizing the outstanding role of the Forum Presidency and its Bureau during the intersessional period, the important work carried out by the Forum's High Level Officials Segment, as well as the contributions of the Regional Consultative Meeting for Major Groups,

Appreciating the kind support of the Government of Panama and the hospitality of the Panamanian people, for holding our XXIII meeting in Panama City, headquarters of the Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Environment Programme,

With the purpose of providing a regional vision that contributes to the achievement of positive and ambitious results at the Sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly,

1. At this critical moment in history, we recognize the wealth of our region as a treasure shared by present and future generations. From providing food and clean water, to regulating the climate and promoting health, our ecosystems play a vital role in the well-being of humanity and the health of the planet. However, while we celebrate the abundance of our region, we are also aware of the serious impacts that our territories and therefore our economies are already facing. Environmental crises, including biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution, land degradation and water scarcity, along with poverty and inequality, pose difficult challenges that endanger the sustainability of our ecosystems and the communities that depend on services that they provide.
2. Recalling the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the document "The future we want" of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and Resolution 76/300 of the United Nations General Assembly that recognizes the human right to



a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, we reaffirm our commitment and determination to undertake effective, inclusive, sustainable and rights-based multilateral actions, to tackle the challenge of sustainable development, climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, desertification and land degradation and water scarcity, and we strongly call for inclusion and solidarity.

3. We emphasize the need for the developed countries to provide developing countries with adequate, predictable, timely and additional means of implementation, to development aid, including financial resources from all sources, national and international, public, private and alternative; capacity development; and technology transfer, technical and scientific cooperation, including exchange of best practices and techniques. We call for the region to prioritize the allocation of quality, highly concessional, new, additional, predictable financial resources in adequate quantities so that they do not increase the debt burden or pressure on the limited fiscal space of our countries without reducing the funds allocated to the fight against poverty.
4. The people of Latin America and the Caribbean, especially the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and those living in poverty, are already suffering the impacts of the climate emergency, evidenced by floods, droughts, frosts, landslides, agricultural and natural or physical infrastructure losses, forest fires and vegetation cover, which affect the lives and development of our communities, as well as the environment and its components. These impacts limit the capacities to promote sustainable development and increase the debt of our countries due to the need for emergency care, causing greater inequalities and social injustices. In this context, we emphasise that the fight against poverty and inequality, as well as the respect for, protection and fulfilment of human rights is essential in the fight against environmental crises.
5. We are firmly committed to accelerating action against climate change, in line with the objectives, commitments and principles of the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, in addition to being committed to strengthening cooperation with a view to the adoption of an ambitious package of decisions for COP 28, as well as for future Conferences of the Parties to the Convention and, in particular, for the construction of a regional vision on the desired outcomes of the next Latin American and Caribbean COP, COP 30 to be held in the city of Belem, Brazil, in 2025.
6. We will promote the transformation of financial systems and their governance, with the aim of guaranteeing the alignment of all public and private financial flows with sustainable development, with low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilience, in line with the Paris Agreement, and with efforts to eradicate poverty, in a way that reflects equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities, in light of different national circumstances.
7. We urge developed countries to meet their resource provision and mobilization commitments, including the goal of mobilizing the minimum of \$100 billion annually in climate finance, to support the needs of developing countries, and recognize the need to make progress substantial in the deliberations on the new quantified collective climate finance objective, guaranteeing its access in a fair, agile, equitable and timely manner.



8. We require that the new financing arrangements for loss and damage, the Santiago Network and the Fund, do not establish differentiation between developing nations in the context of climate change, especially for access to financing. Likewise, we call on the financial system to progressively reduce financing associated with fossil fuels.
9. We will promote national and regional initiatives that integrate efforts regarding air and soil quality, as well as water quality and quantity and implement measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation, to have an integrated approach and take advantage of synergies during the preparation and execution of projects and sectoral measures to reduce combined emissions of GHGs, air pollutants and short-lived climate pollutants.
10. We highlight that just transitions are a key enabler for the ambition and implementation of actions against climate change, which must consider principles of equity, inclusion, gender, and climate justice in the context of sustainable development, as well as efforts to eradicate poverty.
11. We reaffirm our commitment to a sustainable energy future, which allows us to strengthen energy security, promote energy interconnection and integration, promote market stability, while guaranteeing a fair, clean, sustainable, affordable and inclusive energy transition, respectful of ethnic and cultural diversity, which in turn provides the flow of sustainable investments necessary to leverage the decarbonization of the energy sector and the fulfilment of the objectives of the Paris Agreement, through the harmonization of economic growth and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in the electricity sector.
12. We recognize the importance of REDD+, created under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to protect, conserve, restore, recover and sustainably manage forest ecosystems in developing countries by valuing their capture and carbon storage, as well as other social and environmental benefits and we call on all international, regional or local, public and private actors and institutions to strengthen the resources available for payment by results guided by the Warsaw Framework.
13. We observe with concern that the concept of vulnerability adopted in the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index accepted by the United Nations System and outside it, in particular the international financial institutions (IFI), the multilateral development banks and the Member States, does not incorporate any debt indicator, does not show climate change scenarios in the analysis and it is intended only for the recurrence of external shocks, which goes against the conceptual framework and technical precepts given by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). ratified in its latest report of 2023, where socio-economic variables are part of the sensitivity. Additionally, the index leaves out structural gaps for developing countries, indicators of inequality, poverty and institutional capacity. The above could have erroneous readings of present and future vulnerability, which hinders access to financing and technological resources for many of the countries in the Region that present low-alarming vulnerability values.
14. We underline the indispensable role of our National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, in



providing meteorological, climatic, hydrological and oceanographic data critical for both disaster risk reduction, food security and adaptation to climate change, as well as that of National Disaster Risk Management Organizations (NDRMO) that guarantee a multi-risk approach and coordinate the contribution of different sectors to a better understanding of disaster risk and to substantially reduce it. Therefore, we are committed to fostering regional networks of meteorological and hydrological services, environmental entities and disaster risk management organizations, to facilitate data exchange and foster a collaborative environment for advanced climate modelling and early warning systems against multiple risks. We will also actively promote the adoption of standardized practices and the sharing of resources, such as cutting-edge technology and expertise, to protect vulnerable populations and improve our collective resilience to climate change and the hazards that can trigger disasters.

15. We draw attention to the effects of climate change in the vulnerabilities of countries in the region, and we urge countries, according to their capacities, to promote actions to prevent and mitigate illicit activities that impact our ecosystems, taking into account the potential impacts on social and political cohesion in the region.
16. We request UNEP, within the framework of the Environment and Emergency Preparedness Regional Network, to comprehensively address climate risk management in conjunction with humanitarian response to emergencies and crises.
17. We will work towards the full implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030; investing in nature as a source of wealth, health and employment; promoting regional cooperation actions for the conservation, sustainable use, restoration and recovery of terrestrial, aquatic, marine and coastal ecosystems, also taking advantage of their potential to address the impacts of climate change; and implementing actions to combat the illegal trafficking of species of fauna and flora, which, among other things, leads to the introduction of invasive species that put the health of ecosystems and biodiversity at risk.
18. We commit to continue carrying out concrete actions to implement the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), led by UNEP and FAO, and the Regional Action Plan that catalyses restoration in the region, contributing to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.
19. We welcome the new Global Biodiversity Framework Facility (GBFF) of the Global Environment Facility and call for increasing its capitalization so that it can serve as an effective mechanism for the implementation of the Framework, underscoring the need for new contributions and an appropriate governance structure with the effective participation of countries holding the majority of biodiversity. We call for developed countries to contribute to mobilizing \$200 billion per year by 2030, as outlined in the GBFF, in order to support the implementation of national action plans and strategies on biological diversity through the provision of new, additional, predictable, and adequate financial resources. Likewise, we encourage the private sector to invest in biodiversity for



developing countries, especially in our region.

20. We will continue efforts for the effective management of protected natural areas, and other effective area-based conservation measures, especially those of particular importance for biodiversity in accordance with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, to ensure their integrity and ecological connectivity, halt the accelerated loss of species and protect ecosystems and, consequently, ensure the provision of ecosystem services for the benefit of nature and people, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities.
21. We reaffirm, according to the respective capacities and national circumstances, our commitment to the conservation and sustainable management of forests, the reduction of the drivers of deforestation and ecosystem degradation, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, the reduction of soil degradation, and the sustainable management of water, and search for a just ecological transition, convinced that our forests can be centres of sustainable development and sources of solutions for national, regional and global sustainability challenges, reconciling economic prosperity with environmental sustainability, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty, especially for indigenous peoples and local communities. We support the development of innovative mechanisms that recognize and promote ecosystem functions and services and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and highlight the need for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources and the information on sequences of genetic resources, as well as associated traditional knowledge.
22. We recognize the invaluable contribution of indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as all women, young people, and the knowledge of elders, for the conservation and sustainable use of natural ecosystems.
23. We reiterate our commitment to promote food security, through effective actions so that our agricultural and commodity systems contribute to conserving, sustainably using, restoring and regenerating land, soils and biodiversity, at sustainable scales; and encourage our value chains and consumption patterns to be sustainable, including effective strategies and innovations to reduce food losses and waste, and encourage the food and agriculture industry, and financial institutions to create the conditions conducive to a just transition of our food systems, as well as people, in general, to become aware of their consumption habits.
24. We observe with concern the adoption of commercial measures to protect the environment, including unilateral ones, that constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade and access to other means of implementation that do not take into account the challenges of developing countries and the impact of these measures on the income of small producers and traditional communities.
25. We highlight the need to address health from a comprehensive perspective, sustainably balancing and optimizing the health of people, animals and ecosystems, in the “One Health” approach, as a strategy to prevent and/or mitigate the effects of future pandemics and emerging diseases.



26. We recognize the need to address in an integrated manner, with a preventive approach, the different forms of pollution, including air, soil, ocean, and plastics and microplastics pollution, as well as the importance of sustainable management of fresh water and chemicals and their waste, with a focus on pollution mitigation, including so-called pollutants of emerging concern. We recognize the differentiated and more serious impacts of pollution on the most vulnerable groups and communities, as well as on indigenous peoples, local communities, and on their lands.
27. We commit to taking measures to stop the adverse impacts of different forms of pollution, strengthening technical capacities, inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, the adoption of public policies and legal, management and technical instruments, law enforcement, the regional exchange of experiences, environmental education and the promotion of sustainable production and consumption patterns, in accordance with national circumstances and capacities.
28. We welcome the results of the Fifth Session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) held in Bonn, Germany, from 25 to 29 September 2023, which adopted the new Global Framework for Chemicals, and we reiterate the region's commitment to the effective implementation of this instrument and the Bonn Declaration, for a planet free of damage from chemicals and waste.
29. We recognize the urgent need to strengthen the science-policy interface at all levels to promote regional cooperation and national action to minimize and prevent the adverse impacts of pollution. Therefore, and in line with UNEA Resolution 5/8, we highlight and support the process initiated by the Open-Ended Working Group to establish a Scientific-Policy Panel to contribute to the rational management of chemicals and waste and prevent pollution for the protection of human health and the environment.
30. We recognize that plastic pollution represents a serious environmental problem at the global scale, negatively impacting the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development, affecting the enjoyment of human rights and with adverse effects on human health and the environment, including the marine environment. Plastic pollution, which can be of a transboundary nature, has disproportionate negative consequences in our region and on the achievement of sustainable development; demanding immediate attention and action and international cooperation, all of which are imperative to establishing solid frameworks to combat pollution collectively and sustainably, in line with the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.
31. We welcome the UNEA Resolution 5/14 "End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument" which sets out to develop an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment and, also taking into consideration the relation with land-based pollution, we will continue to promote the adoption of measures throughout the entire plastic life cycle. This includes measures related to polymers and chemicals of concern, as well as problematic and avoidable plastic products; promoting an inclusive circular economy



approach as one of the available models to achieve sustainable consumption and production practices and environmentally sound waste management including recycling; generating and implementing effective extended producer responsibility policies. Further to this, in compliance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities according to their respective capabilities, we will continue to encourage the development and implementation of relevant political and regulatory instruments, as well as research, technology transfer, and education; the Rio Principles, as per the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; just transition, including an inclusive transition for waste-pickers; the promotion and protection of human rights; a gender perspective; intergenerational equity; non-discrimination; access to information, public participation and access to justice; transparency and accountability; coherence among existing MEAs and the use of available science, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems.

32. We will strengthen regional cooperation to improve monitoring of air, soil and water quality, as well as to develop and enforce legal frameworks that adopt air, soil and water quality standards in accordance with the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO), as well as the preparation, mobilization of resources and implementation of sectoral projects to prevent and reduce emissions (air pollutants, GHG and short-lived climate pollutants), air pollution and negative impacts in health and the environment.
33. Remembering that more than two thirds of the 540 billion dollars granted worldwide in agricultural support to producers are harmful to the environment, especially soil and freshwater pollution, we call for reduction of global agricultural subsidies, in line with Art. 20 of the Agreement on Agriculture of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
34. We highlight the importance for all humanity of having healthy oceans and marine and coastal ecosystems, essential for the development of our countries. Recognizing their vulnerability to environmental impacts, we advocate for the adoption of concrete actions to protect, conserve and sustainably use our oceans, their biodiversity and ecosystems, and to develop mechanisms that increase resilience, particularly among indigenous peoples and local coastal communities.
35. We welcome Resolution 77/321 of the United Nations General Assembly, **by which we welcome** the adoption of the "Agreement within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea relating to the Conservation and Sustainable Development of Marine Biological Diversity in Areas Outside National Jurisdiction", which will facilitate the fair and equitable distribution of benefits derived from the use of marine genetic resources and digital information on sequences of marine genetic resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction, the evaluation of the environmental impact of projects or activities in international waters, as well as the establishment of management mechanisms and establishment, among others, of marine protected areas outside national jurisdiction, in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
36. We recognize the importance of strengthening ocean governance at the regional level, through the Conventions and Action Plans of the Regional Seas, and the Regional Fisheries Organizations, as



appropriate, as well as other frameworks, instruments or competent bodies that provide frameworks for cooperation for the sustainable management of the marine and coastal environment.

37. We recall the importance of continuing to improve understanding and knowledge of the ocean and the seabed, in particular the extent and vulnerability of biodiversity and seabed ecosystems, by increasing marine scientific research activities, through a broad collaboration, to achieve science-based decision making.
38. We recognize the role of Costa Rica as co-chair of the Third United Nations Ocean Conference, to be held in Nice, France, in June 2025, and welcome the call for the "High Level Event on Ocean Action: Immersed in change", which will be held in San José, Costa Rica, on June 7 and 8, 2024.
39. We recognize the importance of the commitments of the Plan adopted at the United Nations Water Conference 2023, and we reiterate our commitment to the Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development from 2021 to 2030.
40. We emphasize the importance of working on complete and open access to relevant data from the region on environmental policies and information, as a basis for effective policies, and on training for the effective use of emerging technologies. We will promote the creation of an Environmental Data and Information Framework to strengthen the interface between science and policy in the region, integrating data systems for adequate monitoring of the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, as well as early warnings, evaluations and reports to support informed decision making.
41. We reaffirm the need to take measures to transform economic and financial systems and their governance, and guarantee consumption patterns and sustainable production, including circular economy models along value chains, which contribute to preventing and minimizing pollution, increase social and economic resilience, eradicate poverty and improve people's well-being. We invite the UNEP Finance Initiative (UNEP-FI) and relevant agencies to provide technical assistance, construction and capacity development to the financial sector in the region.
42. We will promote policy coherence, with an emphasis on the creation of green jobs to improve social inclusion and gender equality.
43. We will continue to strengthen our participation in the Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law, promoting regional areas to support our countries in the development, updating and implementation of environmental legislation.
44. We recognize the significant contribution of all women to environmental management and sustainable development in the region, playing a fundamental role in the care of ecosystems and life, particularly through their tireless and often unrecognized community leadership. We reaffirm the importance of the gender perspective in all environmental and political dimensions and at



various levels of decision-making and recognize the need to improve the management of gender-sensitive monitoring and reporting indicators and gender-disaggregated environmental data. We recognize the efforts being made by countries in Latin America and the Caribbean for the implementation of global commitments, the Enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender in its Action Plan, and nationally determined contribution processes that have allowed the identification of lessons learned and regional priorities that contribute to the update of the Gender Action Plan of the UNFCCC.

45. We reaffirm our commitment to scale up efforts to implement Decision 8 on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the XXII Meeting of the Forum, recognizing their high vulnerability to environmental threats, from sea level rise to biodiversity loss. Recognizing their unique economic and ecological challenges, we commit to strengthening resilience and ensuring sustainable futures for SIDS communities and call on the Interagency Technical Committee (ITC) to actively collaborate in mobilizing resources for the SIDS II Programme and to collaborate with the SIDS Blue-Green Economy Knowledge Transfer Hub established at the University of the West Indies (UWI). We also recognize and support the role of Antigua and Barbuda in hosting the Fourth International Conference on SIDS in 2024.
46. We highlight the adoption of the Ibero-American Environmental Charter and express our interest in promoting coordination and fostering synergies between the forum **and this instrument.**
47. We recognize the importance of, and thank the Government of Chile for sponsoring the intergovernmental regional consultation on the implementation of the Resolution 5/12 of the UNEA on the environmental aspects of minerals and metals management, with the aim of developing non-prescriptive proposals to improve the environment, and the sustainability of minerals and metals throughout their life cycle, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE RESULTS

48. We will continue to strengthen the implementation of the decisions and results of our Forum of Ministers of the Environment and request support from UNEP and the members of the Interagency Technical Committee with the mobilization of financial and human resources and regional cooperation activities.
49. We acknowledge the importance of realizing the full potential of the universal membership of the United Nations Environment Assembly and to further strengthen UNEP, and therefore encourage all Member States to seek accreditation to the Committee of Permanent Representatives and engage actively in the work of the Committee; and to contribute to the Environment Fund, with due consideration to the voluntary indicative scale of contributions.
50. We request the Bureau to conduct the work during the period between sessions and we call on UNEP to convene an intersessional meeting to review progress on the implementation of the



outcomes of this forum.

51. We entrust the current President of the Forum with representing it at COP 28 of the UNFCCC and transmitting this Declaration to the Sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Countries on Sustainable Development.

+++++