



REPORT

Latin America and the Caribbean – European Union Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change

5 May 2023, San Jose, Costa Rica

Room Cocori 1, DoubleTree by Hilton Cariari San Jose Hotel

Background

The Ministerial Meeting on Environment and Climate Change between Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the European Union (EU) was an opportunity for the exchange of views on areas for strengthened collaboration between the two regions.

Ministers responsible for the environment and climate from LAC countries; the EU Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries; and Ministers from EU Member States discussed opportunities for cooperation on environment, biodiversity, climate action, and the green economy.

The meeting was part of the “Road to 2023”, agreed at the 3rd Ministerial Meeting of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the EU, hosted on 27 October 2022 by Argentina as Presidency pro-tempore of CELAC, where the Foreign Ministers agreed on a roadmap to upgrade the relationship between both regions.

The outcomes of this meeting will be used as an input to the EU - CELAC Summit of Heads of State & Government on 17 and 18 July 2023, in Brussels, Belgium.

The meeting was co-chaired by Minister Franz Tattenbach of Costa Rica and Commissioner Sinkevicius. Ministers and other senior representative from thirty-one (31) EU and LAC countries attended the meeting either physically or virtually.

The discussion was organized around two sessions. The first one focused on the topics of biodiversity and the circular economy. The second session focused on climate change.

Welcome addresses

Mr. Juan Bello, UNEP Regional Director and Representative for LAC, reminded participants about the high vulnerability of the LAC region to the effects of climate change and about the need for multilateral collaboration to identify and implement solutions across the environmental agenda. He thanked the organizers and participants for their contribution to move towards common goals. He highlighted that with the financial support of the EU, UNEP will continue to support the region, working on key programmes such as EUROCLIMA+, Caribbean Waste Programme, and biological corridors.



Minister Ms. Romina Pourmokhtari of Sweden, the country currently holding the Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers, indicated that Sweden is halfway through the presidency of European Union and on track to deliver on its promises, with the green transition one of the top priorities. She recognized the key role of international negotiation for securing sustainability globally and hoped for increased regional cooperation between LAC and EU. She stressed that the climate transition needs high ambition, speed, and an inclusive perspective, just as the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). She shared her confidence that bridges can be built for cooperation, stressing that LAC is an important partner to the EU, where they can learn from each other's successes and failures.

Minister Carlos James, from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, representing the Pro-Tempore Secretariat of CELAC, highlighted that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are facing extreme weather and rising waters. He also shared that debt repayment is too high, hindering the assignment of resources to climate action. He reminded participants that their food security and livelihoods are at stake and more financial resources must be made available.

Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, welcomed participants. He acknowledged that the EU has a very special relationship with the region. He expressed his interest in close cooperation in environmental forums even when there are challenges such as the war in Ukraine and recovery from COVID-19, because on climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are existential threats that cannot be postponed. He mentioned the goals of the EU on carbon neutral, circular and resource efficient economy through the European Green Deal. These challenges need to be tackled together in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as our international commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The EU is trying to lead by example with the European Green Deal covering a 'whole-of government approach, climate law, RePowerEU strategy, EU Biodiversity Strategy, Circular Economy Action Plan, Strategy for sustainable food systems, a Zero Pollution Action Plan and a Sustainable Chemicals Strategy. But he acknowledged that no country or region can advance a sustainability agenda in isolation. He expressed satisfaction that this meeting was a signal of commitment of the two regions to work together to address the common environmental and climate challenges, including towards the EU-CELAC Summit in July. He underscored that sustainability must be at the heart of the common agenda, built on the already existing solid foundation.

Mr. Franz Tattenbach, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, and President of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighted the commitment of the LAC region to environmental protection, reflected in the over 40 years of existence of its Forum of Ministers of Environment. He also underlined the long-standing collaboration with the EU. He stressed the needs for increased cooperation, the role of the private sector (including the sustainable taxonomy framework), and to adapt solutions to the particular characteristics of the LAC subregions, while acknowledging that European Union member States also face challenges that will only be truly addressed through global cooperation.

Mr. Christian Guillermet Fernández, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica a.i., welcomed participants and expressed satisfaction at the level of participation achieved for the event. He thanked the organizers for joining forces to address common challenges, in which Costa Rica, through different channels, is leading and supporting. He affirmed the country's availability to further cooperation on the environmental agenda.



Session 1 - Working together to tackle environmental and biodiversity challenges

Participating delegates were requested to answer the following guiding questions:

- 1. How to reinforce the EU-LAC partnership to tackle the biodiversity crisis on land and sea and implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) - also with the support of the Team Europe Initiative?*
- 2. How to enable a transition to circular economies and non-toxic environment for the benefit of people, nature, and water resilience?*

Commissioner Sinkevičius started by highlighted in particular the historical nature of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)** and the importance to kick-start implementation. He mentioned the need of continued cooperation among both regions to protect the unique biodiversity of LAC including through protected areas to reach the 30x30 target, promoting nature-based solutions and ecosystems restoration, and partnering to invest in a nature-positive economy that contributes to economic growth and sustainable livelihoods, including in key sectors such as food systems, blue economy, nature-based tourism, or the forest economy. He reminded delegates that the question was how to reinforce EU-CELAC cooperation, indicating that Costa Rica is a shining example of a nature-based economy.

He then highlighted that ecosystem restoration offers multiple benefits for climate, biodiversity, and society, including building resilience and water security. He stressed the need for improved environmental governance, addressing environmental crime, and the rights of indigenous peoples.

The Commissioner also addressed scaling up investments in waste management, but also in changing key value chains such as construction, food and agriculture, textiles, green hydrogen, and others with a full cycle approach.

To achieve all this, he suggested maintaining a continuous dialogue both at bilateral and multilaterals levels, making the best use of bilateral and regional programmes such as EUROCLIMA+, AI-Invest Verde, El Pacto, as well as the coordinated EU and Member States Team Europe Initiatives, and by leveraging private sector investments, including the Global Gateway Strategy, and the sustainable finance agenda, which could help change the way the financial system operates to provide more support to environmental objectives through taxonomies, green bonds, and complementary tools.

Costa Rica hailed the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework as a landmark agreement and confirmed that biodiversity is high in the national and regional agenda. The country has shown that a transition to renewable energies is possible, even if there is a need to overcome some challenges, and that it is possible to decouple agriculture and deforestation, while combining forestry and agriculture objectives to achieve net zero carbon emissions. He expressed satisfaction with the fact that the border lines between biodiversity, climate change, and oceans are being erased.

Spain mentioned the opportunity of the current context to explain the value of nature. For example, the new EU restoration legislation that aims to consolidate environmental wealth.



She recognized the existence of great challenges at national level but also great international and national frameworks, and the opportunity to work for the EU-CELAC Summit where environmental issues will be very present. She proposed areas where the regions commit to developing joint initiatives: a reinforced EUROCLIMA+ programme, critical raw materials, key value chains, and circular economy. She further stressed the importance of protecting the ocean and ocean floors and integrating biodiversity and climate in all development funds. She closed by offering Spain's commitment as upcoming EU Council Presidency from 1 July 2023 for a successful Summit.

Barbados stressed the need to translate the GBF in specific actions at national and local levels, including alignment of current policies and actions. He highlighted EU support to the Caribbean Corridor and the Mesoamerican initiative, and the need for more initiatives like these, suggesting a Caribbean-EU partnership on biodiversity and oceans. He agreed that ecosystem restoration supports positive economic and social development. He referred to the need for recovery after Covid-19 and the Bridgetown Declaration of the XXII Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC, which reflects critical aspects small island economies where partnership with the EU would be beneficial: oceans spatial planning, sustainable production and consumption (SCP), sustainable livelihoods. These are all part of the new Caribbean SIDS Programme II currently under development. He also mentioned the need for partnerships with universities, the role of research and technology and the private sector.

Belize mentioned the need for coral reefs restoration through an enabling environment (sharing lessons learned, exchanges, partnerships). Belize has great biodiversity, 104 protected areas, also prioritized restoration of lands, but it has a key gap in capacity with limited access to human and financial resources, and technologies. He stressed the need for partnerships under SDG 17, addressing transboundary issues, and strengthening support from the EU.

Colombia recalled that LAC and the EU are historically economic partners, but LAC cannot continue to be seen only as a provider of commodities and natural resources. LAC should be seen as a critical region for the survival of the human species. It is a region key for the stability of the planet, the Amazon corresponds to the lungs of the planet, the Andeans are its spine. Otherwise, there will be no biodiversity protection, nor climate transition, nor political stability. LAC needs to be seen as critical for survival, a key region to provide stability for the planet. She also highlighted the importance of the communities and indicated that the European Green Deal should value their resilience. She proposed to work together in a green transition to understand how commodities provided to the world put pressure on nature and communities, and how this can be addressed.

Further, Colombia asked the EU to support a multilateral agreement on debt-for-nature swap, which would support conservation and a shift to agricultural systems within the limits of nature, ensuring resilience and wellbeing. By contrast, she considered that a lot of small projects are less needed, reminding also that LAC has middle income countries which are vulnerable and will be experiencing El Niño phenomenon this year. Finally, she emphasized that fiscal resources are exhausted, with Colombia paying twice as much for debt service each year than for its education budget. She expressed concern regarding companies that may be exporting certified goods to the EU, while the communities risk being left out of the benefits, which will not create equality nor conservation.

France mentioned the GBF as their focus in the coming years. They will promote a partnership to facilitate resource mobilization to make funding accessible to concrete conservation



projects. He called on Member States to provide resources. He highlighted the programme focusing on the five great forests of Mesoamerica that contributes to a number of targets of the GBF, as well as the High Ambition Coalition on Nature and People (led by Costa Rica, United Kingdom, France) as an example of success. He also mentioned legal frameworks to phase out single-use plastics and to promote a circular economy and waste management with extended producer responsibility. He mentioned the next meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (INC) in Paris, hoping the treaty will complement climate change and biodiversity agreements.

Croatia called to intensify efforts to implement ambitious goals on water management, nature-based solutions to act as a protection system, the circular economy with a transition based on connection of materials and products, and resource efficiency as a core principle for investments and throughout the plastics life-cycle.

Ecuador mentioned the development of public policy with a multisectoral approach, with early actions to update the national biodiversity strategy, its action plan and a financing strategy. He indicated the government is planning strategies such as the declaration of the Galapagos Brotherhood with its financing mechanisms. They want to replicate this approach in the country and the LAC region. He stressed that these initiatives can only be successful with cooperation, technology transfer, and financing.

Germany indicated that the green transitions require international cooperation, ensuring a green future together. He said potential actions could include jointly implementing the GBF, where the country is working to establish a partnership to ensure rapid implementation, and he called on participants to join the partnership. Germany will provide EUR 1.5 billion through the International Climate Initiative and Team Europe. He also mentioned the Treaty of the High Seas and called for ratification by the countries present in the meeting. Further, he acknowledged German contribution to deforestation, and the need for deforestation-free supply chains, through a constructive dialogue with all affected stakeholders in producing and consuming countries. He underlined the circular economy transition for everyone including the private sector to protect climate and biodiversity.

Dominica highlighted the need to protect biodiversity, which provides a foundation for agriculture and tourism, for identity and country survival. He acknowledged continued EU support, and also mentioned the need to build resilience to sea level rise and extreme weather events, while developing carbon sinks with nature-based solutions.

Jamaica indicated that strengthening the partnership with the EU is critical to tackle the triple planetary crisis. Biodiversity is a priority, with EU-LAC collaboration in GBF implementation to reach the 30x30 target and help address the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, the restoration of coastal ecosystems, and access to benefit sharing. For this, the countries will need technical and scientific support. He called for financial commitments to the GBF to be honored and to continue the replenishment of environmental funds. He also emphasized that LAC must not be a dumping ground for unwanted products and needs to be supported to manage solid waste.

Portugal highlighted the existence of several cooperation instruments in climate change, circular economy, water and sanitation, and nature protection, saying that there is a shared cost for everyone involved, and there is a relationship between biodiversity loss, climate change and the pandemic. He underlined that the country has created the largest protected



area of the North Atlantic and is preparing a national voluntary carbon market. He lamented that unprecedented wildfires and droughts are being experienced in all continents. He mentioned the upcoming 9th International Wildland Fire Conference to be held in Portugal on 18-19 May and welcomed the water agenda with the recent water conference. He closed by stressing the importance of life cycle management of waste.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines highlighted the blue economy, which is linked to resilience, calling for GBF implementation to consider marine biodiversity and enhancing conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal sectors. He also stressed the need for cooperation through political will, technology transfer, data gathering and use to fill in gaps. He shared that the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) has developed a comprehensive model of research on marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems to create a better understanding and enable a system for management of human activities. He finished by calling for the establishment of a system for access to benefits.

Slovenia highlighted that they have increased protected areas by more than a third and are mainstreaming biodiversity in several sectors. He called for the use of secondary raw materials and extended producer responsibility, joined by consumer awareness and preventive measures, as well as exchange of good practices and knowledge on circular economy.

Sweden mentioned the importance of the new GBF and the need to now focus on implementation. She highlighted the circular economy as an enabler for the climate transition. The goal on zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions requires action across the board from transportation, extraction industries, construction and other sectors, and the need to change the view of resources through a whole life cycle approach. She called for policy coherence across government sectors and value chains, showcasing frontrunners and implementing extended producer responsibility. She mentioned the importance of a new global framework on the sound management of chemicals and waste to be agreed later in 2023 by the international community

Trinidad and Tobago highlighted the need to cooperate in agroecology and biodiversity protection in value chains, indicating that ecological services are key to the country's wellbeing.

Brazil shared they have three top priorities: addressing social inequality, eliminating hunger, and climate action. They called for increased regional cooperation through links to CELAC, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) and the Organization of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty (OTCA), mentioning an Amazon Summit to be held in August. They highlighted that there was a clear message from the Bureau of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC for cooperation in all issues and mentioned that OTCA is an opportunity for articulation in the subregion. Along these lines, he mentioned a strong commitment to halt deforestation, a just economy and ecological transition and high-level dialogues on climate and environment. They underlined solid technical expertise in monitoring deforestation and the role of the Amazon Fund in GHG emissions reduction, welcoming the EU's intention to contribute to it. He further highlighted the importance of the GBF, where funding is the top priority to enable the country to protect its immense protected areas, which they plan to increase, without double counting of benefits for the purpose of meeting international commitments.

Honduras highlighted that healthy ecosystems and the well-being of the population are mutually dependent. The country has prioritized protection of forests and marine areas,



including the livelihoods of the coastal population. He indicated that the main challenge is the indebtedness of countries and the need for relief mechanisms: debt swaps, payments for results under REDD, for example. He called for reinvestment in the countries without limiting development. He shared that Honduras has a voluntary agreement with the EU on forestry, but they need to expand it to ensure the traceability of production systems, and that such agreements must redistribute benefits among the population. He also proposed joint work on water governance to restore and increase productivity and grow local economies, which requires transboundary collaboration.

Panama shared that the Forum of Ministers of Environment has already approved a regional Biodiversity Restoration Program, which needs additional support for its implementation, which could be a basis for collaboration among the regions. She also shared that the region also has a Forum Working Group covering the issue of plastics, which can be used as a channel for collaboration. Finally, she called for incorporation of circular economy concepts in national climate plans and updating the regulatory frameworks.

Mexico shared its “Sowing Life Program”, one of the largest restoration plans in the world. They seek synergies with the EU’s zero-deforestation supply chains initiative, including the integration of social equity to ensure that local communities also benefit, as well as on water governance.

Peru indicated that Team Europe actions already under implementation in Peru can be strengthened to contribute to GBF implementation. For example, circular economy initiatives that can support greening of the private sector and cities and include more actions to strengthen capacities and to ensure participatory implementation at national and local levels. She also suggested that the EU supports the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat to implement indicators of the new GBF.

Argentina reminded everyone of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. In this sense, the goal of 30 by 30 of protected areas needs reciprocity with financing. They expect the new GBF fund and other sources to be effective. In addition, he highlighted the need to modify the current consumption and production system and that developed countries recognize the need to protect ecosystem services, that those primarily responsible for the environmental crisis must pay for.

El Salvador called for increased collaboration in the sustainable management of resources and waste, where increased capacities, technology and sharing of best practices are key.

Chile reminded participants of the right to a healthy environment and the Treaty of Escazu. She stressed the need for mainstreaming gender considerations in environmental action, and highlighted that coherent governance must be at the center of cooperation. She shared that Chile is part of the High Ambition Alliance, but this is insufficient as declarations must be translated into actions. She shared that Chile recently established a nature fund for public-private partnerships, although other countries have had it for decades, therefore the need to share good practices.

Guatemala mentioned the soil protection for food security and highlighted the need for effective and efficient financing to help countries with limited resources and high debt to implement actions aligned with international commitments and the SDGs acknowledging EU and German support received.



Session 2 - Working together on an ambitious agenda to address climate change

Participating delegates were requested to answer the following guiding questions:

1. *How to enable a viable transition towards decarbonized economies in the EU and LAC?*
2. *How to address climate change vulnerability by making our economies and societies more resilient and promoting better development for all the citizens?*

Minister Tattenbach from Costa Rica reminded delegates on the focus on working together to address climate change and making a transition to a viable future through bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, reconfirmed the EU's strong commitment on climate action with the 'Fit for 55' policy package. He stressed the importance of supporting a joint agenda that promotes decarbonisation of the economies notably through carbon markets. He highlighted that the EU is already cooperating on a number of LAC initiatives such as EUROCLIMA+. Looking to the future, the focus should be on the most polluting sectors, and he mentioned that emissions trading systems are considered one of the most effective ways of addressing this issue. He also mentioned the need to enhance disaster risk reduction, support for communities, and financial support for implementation in LAC. In this sense, he referred to the Global Financial Pact, hoping to enhance global financial assistance to support sustainable finance. He also offered the EU support and experience on sustainable finance taxonomies to help distribute funds in alignment with environmental goals.

Barbados referred to Decision 3 on climate change of the XXIII Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC, which already refers to key actions the countries of the region have identified. He called for a social partnership which may entail the creation of laws to ensure inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable. Among the key areas of concern for his country is food security. He also mentioned the Bridgetown Initiative to reset the financial system through a package of policies to make development finance more effective. He considered that the EU Green Deal provides the right framework and acknowledged that the EU is the largest provider of climate finance. He asked the EU to elevate these issues in the G20, G7 and other relevant fora. To close, he called for new research and platforms to address specific matters that impact resilience in the region, especially in the Caribbean.

Belize reminded everyone that climate change amplifies other risks and impacts, and that the world faces two gaps: an ambition gap and an implementation gap. He also reminded the delegates that small developing countries contribute the least to climate change but are affected disproportionately. He called for collaboration to adapt national climate policies due to new scientific findings, mentioned the need for financing for the disaster prevention, tackling existing problems, supporting recovery, and building adaptation (including nature-based solutions). He stressed the key role of an effective Loss & Damage Fund and debt swaps for adaptation and reduction of poverty.

Colombia highlighted the convergence of agendas: to reduce GHG emissions work needs to be done on land use change, which is linked to stopping deforestation and therefore protecting biodiversity. CBD and UNFCCC are part of the same agenda in Colombia. She called for



collaboration for a just energy transition, highlighting that production of the needed materials needs to be scaled up and the consequences of this must be foreseen and addressed, otherwise the effect on the planet and in LAC countries, where the minerals are located, will be worse.

She highlighted that the current model for extraction of minerals is clashing with stopping deforestation, protecting natural areas, and ensuring benefits are distributed to communities, a problem that is set to get worse unless immediate action is implemented.

She made three proposals. First, to find a solution to the convergence of the three agendas (mineral extraction, biodiversity, and climate change), where LAC cannot be seen only as a carbon sink, nor as a frontier for the exploitation of fossil fuels or minerals. She proposed that territorial limits must be placed on the climate decarbonization agenda. Second, LAC should prepare a comprehensive, just energy transition plan with a focus on sustainable industrialization and biodiversity protection. Third, the development of a robust early warning system, where she highlighted that LAC ecosystems and regions are very complex. She stressed that the high vulnerability of LAC and that LAC ecosystems are key to the stability of the world must be given visibility.

Dominica mentioned that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are in the frontline of climate change, with hurricanes impacting heavily on the GDP. The country has a national resilience strategy and plan with three targets by 2030 and looks forward to work on Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, the Global Goal on Adaptation.

Ecuador proposed collaboration on tools to incentivize cleaner production through tax and other incentives. He highlighted the need for companies to first reduce their GHG emissions, before using compensation. They requested support to develop their National Adaptation Plan, including environmental and geographical data to make decisions.

Greece highlighted the need to engage the private sector and to ensure that funding reaches the most vulnerable, particularly in SIDS. He indicated that the sustainable finance taxonomies offer criteria and approaches to streamline green investments that are really green.

Jamaica highlighted the critical backdrop to this meeting, with increasing extreme weather events, El Niño phenomenon, and drought throughout the LAC region. He indicated that the global financial architecture must change. He confirmed commitment to achievement of the country's Nationally-Determined Contribution (NDC) and to a clean energy matrix. He shared that Jamaica is committed to 40% reduction in emissions by 2030 and 50% of energy coming from renewables by 2030, while it is working to update and upgrade all policies. He thanked the EU for its support to Jamaica's forestry sector and the EUROCLIMA+ program, while he called on the EU to help make more funds for adaptation available and easier to access, including the Fund for Loss and Damage, during COP 28.

Portugal highlighted that implementation must be followed by monitoring and reporting, an area where there can be collaboration. He shared that Portugal is committed to reducing emissions in line with the Paris Agreement with a focus on waste, forestry, land use, and energy. He proposed that seeking to achieve carbon neutrality should be seen as an opportunity for new initiatives and recognized that international cooperation is essential.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stressed the need to address climate finance as a fundamental issue in the context of transition towards zero carbon economies. He shared that



many LAC countries share similar resources and challenges, such as accessing finance to develop renewables. He complained about the lack of support and coordination among member states but also agencies. He suggested that the EU establishes a facility to support moving towards renewables including technical support, expertise, and research. He also proposed developing a vulnerability index to determine which countries are a priority for adaptation.

Slovenia raised the need for every country to prepare a long-term strategy on the basis of high ambition and early action, with broad public discussion, for a transition that is just and leaving no one behind, including human rights and gender equality. He indicated that actions for adaptation are equally critical and urgent. He stressed that planning and implementing strategies requires wide inclusion of a cross section of society and industry representatives to ensure ownership and a solid human rights-based approach. He also mentioned nature-based solutions as important for both mitigation and adaptation, and agreed that the global financial infrastructure must adapt to the current context.

Sweden indicated that decarbonized economies require a transformation at global level and across sectors, including the investments being made, international cooperation on technology transfer, and business sector participation to accelerate action. She shared that in Sweden economic growth has been decoupled from GHG emissions. She proposed to encourage business actors in the EU to help in this transition in LAC. She stressed the need for climate policies that are comprehensive and bound by targets, leaving no one behind. She mentioned the link between health, biodiversity, mitigation, adaptation, and the creation of green jobs. She proposed to continue the exchange of knowledge and best practices, but in a better way than before.

Spain referred to the need for a fair decarbonization of the energy system with renewable energies supported in all regions, sustainable mobility in cities, and synergies between mitigation and adaptation. He shared that the Secretariat of the Iberoamerican Community (SEGIB) has climatic, hydrological, and meteorological networks that can be leveraged. He reconfirmed the commitment of the country to support action towards the Summit and to implement the European Green Deal.

Trinidad and Tobago reminded delegates that reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring survival of SIDS depends on global actions to develop renewable energy and decarbonize the economy, while ensuring a just transition. He expressed concern at the increased weather variability and its impacts, highlighting that higher ambition and actions are needed from countries with more financial and technical resources.

Brazil indicated that there are opportunities for a bioeconomy, including benefits for indigenous peoples. He shared that Brazil is committed to reduce deforestation in the Amazon, with strong coordination of 19 Ministries. He highlighted that deforestation is a complex phenomenon with multiple causes and the need to acknowledge the challenges of small producers or the fact that initiatives such as deforestation-free commodities can be counterproductive. Any initiatives or actions need to be science-based and not be discriminatory, while respecting each country's legislation and monitoring systems. He also called for a clear decision on the Global Adaptation Goal, which is crucial for the LAC region which is suffering from drought, desertification, and floods.



Honduras shared that increased indebtedness due to extreme meteorological events puts even more pressure on LAC countries, saying that his country is not a large emitter, but the issue of decarbonization is one of survival and is beyond their control. He expressed that the current economic model is not working and realistic alternatives need to be developed.

Mexico confirmed its commitment to mitigation and adaptation actions that will benefit communities. He highlighted that the country increased its NDC goal at COP 27, and that the climate action agenda has been linked to the biodiversity one. The country has also recently launched its sustainable finance taxonomy, which can be an area for collaboration between the regions. He insisted on the development of solutions that respect communities. Furthermore, he mentioned efforts on development of renewable energies, sustainable development of lithium mining and similar initiatives. He offered to share the country's vision with LAC and EU, as well as the rest of the world.

Panama recognized the need for a transition in all industries, creating efficient monitoring systems to ensure that the strategies are well implemented, and ensuring they are inclusive. She shared that Panama has started identifying budget lines with investments aligned with climate goals. They are also developing a sustainable finance taxonomy in collaboration with UNEP to ensure that investments are aligned with mitigation and adaptation goals. She stressed the need to consider the local characteristics of subnational regions to develop appropriate actions in the future, integrating their priorities, needs and capacities, including a gender perspective. She reminded participants that LAC still has a low historical contribution to climate change but a very high vulnerability. She shared that the country has adapted its analysis of new investments to try to ensure they are resilient.

Peru expressed concern at the loss of glaciers and the need for swift action. They expressed the need for integrated management, including sensing, monitoring, and evaluation, to aid planning and implementation of adaptation strategies. She also mentioned the need for increased capacities for anticipating climate change events and their effects, helping to develop plans and strategies need to with participation of both public and private sector actors. She mentioned efforts to ensure participation of the private sector such as *Huella Peru* and others, but more efforts are needed to ensure the benefits reach the communities.

Argentina mentioned that now that the Covid-19 pandemic is over, Northern hemisphere countries are returning to practices that emit GHG emissions and overproduce goods, with the consequences on the environment. He insisted on the call for developed nations to increase financial support to developing countries, while sharing that, even without international financial support, the country has increased the coverage of protected areas and advanced in a national adaptation plan.

Italy reminded participants that the country made a commitment to establish the Italian Climate Fund but considered that finance alone is not enough. Rather, it needs to ensure economic growth and social inclusion with biodiversity integrated across the board. She mentioned Team Europe as a tool for this integration. She also highlighted that the private sector also has a vital role to play and Italy recognizes the need for clean and sustainable infrastructure which will be supported through Team Europe initiatives that support adaptation and mitigation.



Closing remarks

Minister Tattenbach of Costa Rica highlighted that many of the comments made in the two sessions were similar, which is natural as both are closely related in LAC. For example, the protection of biodiversity and the transition to renewable energies. He considered the dialogue demonstrated broad agreement with the European Union priorities and ideas, such as the need to mobilize the private sector, to protect biodiversity while ensuring no one is left behind and others. He thanked participants for their contributions and considered the meeting as successful.

The **EU Commissioner, Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius**, highlighted that the meeting showed that both the EU and LAC share strong common interests to tackle the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and agree that action was urgently needed as foundation to achieve the sustainable development goals. Echoing comments made by Costa Rica, Colombia and others, he reiterated that climate and environment were part of the same agenda and a comprehensive approach was needed to avoid trade-offs between the two, while also ensuring a just and equitable green transition that turns these challenges into opportunities. Thirdly, he acknowledged that finance is key, and it needs a comprehensive approach looking at mobilizing all types of capital and using innovative tools as well, reforming the global financial architecture. He welcomed the fact that the participants share common determination and interests. Recognizing that change is not easy, mutual commitments are the basis to find a common landing zone and to build a strong political push for the EU-CELAC Summit. He agreed that acceleration of actions is urgently needed and proposed to work together to ensure that sustainability is at the center of the EU-LAC Global Gateway investment agenda as one deliverable for this Summit. He thanked all participants and Costa Rica for hosting.

NOTE: This report has been prepared by UNEP as secretariat to the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, in consultation with the Co-Chairs of the meeting.