

To:
UNEA 7 President
Ministers of Environment
Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

Dear Excellencies,

On behalf of the **Latin America and Caribbean Regional Facilitators of the constituency of Accredited Non-Governmental Organizations of the Major Groups and Stakeholders (LAC MGS) mechanism to UNEP**, we would like to welcome the UNEA 7 presidency's efforts, and extend our gratitude, in opening this stage to receive inputs from civil society to build a transparent, ambitious, impactful, and meaningful UNEA 7 Ministerial Declaration.

In accordance with UNEA 7 president's letter sent January 15th, 2025, containing the request for inputs and expression of needs to develop a zero draft for the UNEA 7 Ministerial Declaration, *kindly find below LAC MGS's inputs in line with the UNEA 7 theme "Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet" and the questions presented by the presidency:*

1. What would the Ministers for the Environment propose as the most important elements and or key messages that would enable the ministerial declaration to take forward the UNEA theme in the most impactful manner?

One of the critical components for advancing the UNEA theme is the prioritization of ecosystem-based solutions. Ministers for the Environment emphasize the need for ecosystem restoration, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable land use to enhance climate resilience and reduce disaster risks. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2021), *"restoring degraded ecosystems can significantly mitigate climate impacts and support biodiversity conservation."* Additionally, incorporating indigenous, Afro-descendant, and local knowledge into sustainable resource management is essential, as these communities have long-standing practices that align with ecological sustainability (IPBES, 2019).

In addition to that, we also recommend the following priorities to be considered:

- A shift towards circular and low-carbon economies is imperative in tackling pollution and climate change. This involves promoting policies that reduce waste, encourage sustainable consumption and production, and expand extended producer responsibility (EPR). As highlighted by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (2020) *"circular economy practices can significantly reduce resource extraction and waste production, leading to long-term environmental benefits."* Furthermore, governments should incentivize clean energy investments, green infrastructure, and carbon neutrality strategies to accelerate the transition towards a low-carbon future (UNEP, 2022).
- Unlocking financial pathways to support businesses and organizations committed to sustainability is another key recommendation. This would enable the development of products, services, and systems that serve as viable alternatives to pollution-intensive industries. Moreover, promoting green jobs ensures intergenerational equity, providing economic opportunities while fostering environmental stewardship (ILO, 2020).
- To ensure climate resilience, it is crucial to scale up financing and technology transfer for climate adaptation efforts in vulnerable regions. Investments in early warning systems and disaster preparedness programs tailored to regional contexts can significantly reduce climate-related losses and damages.
- Scientific advancements and digital technologies play a pivotal role in promoting sustainability. As noted by UNEP (2023) *"reliable environmental data enhances policy effectiveness and improves transparency in*

governance." Additionally, fostering green technologies, AI-driven conservation efforts, and innovative financial mechanisms can further drive sustainability transitions (World Economic Forum, 2022).

- A commitment to environmental justice ensures that sustainability policies are inclusive and uphold human rights. This includes recognizing the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, who are often disproportionately affected by environmental degradation. The UN Human Rights Council (2021) emphasizes that "*environmental governance must incorporate human rights perspectives to ensure equitable policy outcomes.*" Moreover, strengthening mechanisms for public participation and access to environmental justice is crucial for inclusive environmental decision-making.
- Addressing transboundary environmental challenges requires enhanced international cooperation. Ministers stress the importance of fostering multilateral commitments to combat pollution and biodiversity loss. The Paris Agreement (2015) highlights that "*global cooperation is essential to mobilize finance and build capacity for effective climate action.*" Reinforcing international collaboration in finance and capacity-building programs can ensure a more coordinated and impactful approach to sustainability.

References

Ellen MacArthur Foundation. (2020). *The circular economy: A transformative approach for sustainable growth.*; IPBES. (2019). *Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services.* Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. ;IPCC. (2021). *Climate change 2021: The physical science basis.* Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. ;ILO. (2020). *Green jobs: Towards decent work in a sustainable, low-carbon world.* International Labour Organization. ;Paris Agreement. (2015). *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.* ; UNEP. (2021). *Ecosystem restoration for climate resilience.* United Nations Environment Programme. ; UNEP. (2022). *Low-carbon transitions: Strategies for sustainable development.* United Nations Environment Programme. ; UNEP. (2023). *Advancing environmental data for sustainability governance.* United Nations Environment Programme. ; UN Human Rights Council. (2021). *Human rights and the environment: Integrating rights-based approaches in environmental policy.* ; World Economic Forum. (2022). *Harnessing innovation for sustainability: The role of digital solutions and AI.*

2. What key messages or conclusions from recent scientific reports would the Ministers for the Environment recommend for consideration in the ministerial declaration?

We recommend considering the conclusions and gaps identified by the following scientific reports:

- a. Plastics, Chemicals, Pollution and Waste Are Exceeding Planetary Boundaries
 - i. UNEP Global Waste Management Outlook ii. WHO Air Pollution Reports
- b. The Need for a Just Green Transition to a Green Economy
 - i. ILO Just Transition Guidelines ii. UNFCCC Climate Finance Reports iii. IRENA World Energy Transitions Outlook 2023) iv. (UNEP Renewables 2023 Global Status Report.
- c. Biodiversity Loss and Ecosystem Degradation Threaten Human Well-being
 - i. IPBES Global Assessment Report ii. UNEP Global Biodiversity Outlook 5
- d. The Urgency of Climate Action
 - i. IPCC Sixth Assessment Report ii. UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2024 iii. Adaptation Gap Report
- e. Water Resilience
 - i. UN Water Global Analysis

3. What proposed collective actions and policy solutions should the Ministers for the Environment adopt to advance the UNEA theme and promote effective and inclusive environmental governance?

We recommend the following collective actions and policies solutions to advance in the UNEA7 theme:

- a. Foster collaboration between national governments, local authorities, and international bodies to implement sustainability policies effectively, by enhancing the role of local governments in environmental management.
- b. Strengthen Science and Academia institutions and collaboration, and Integrate scientific research, traditional knowledge, and technological innovation into policy design.
- c. Institutionalize participatory governance, invest in environmental education and capacity-building, support locally driven solutions, strengthen rights-based approaches

We look forward to an ambitious, strong, inclusive, and environmentally driven UNEA 7 Ministerial Declaration. Count on the LAC MGS's support in strengthening global environmental governance, multilateralism and action, together.

We wish success in this process, crucial for the wellbeing of the environment and all.

Please, accept, Excellencies, the assurances of our highest consideration,

Xiomara Acevedo
Regional Facilitator
LAC Region Major Groups and Stakeholders
accredited to UNEP

Alejandro Luque
Regional Facilitator
LAC Region Major Groups and Stakeholders
Accredited to UNEP