

CONTRIBUTIONS OF COLOMBIA TO THE DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF UNEA-7.

1. NATURE AND CLIMATE – COP16

It is proposed to promote the implementation of integrated actions that allow for effectively addressing the climate crisis and the loss of biodiversity. In this regard, recognizing the fundamental synergy between the NDC and the NBSAP, two key instruments for the sustainability and development of the country. This important synergy would allow nations to optimize resources, improve implementation and accountability mechanisms, as well as strengthen institutional frameworks at the national and territorial levels, enabling the coordinated fulfillment of climate and biodiversity commitments.

This can be reflected in a call to address the NDC and NBSAP in an intersectoral manner for territorial biodiversity management and climate action, with a commitment to promoting more resilient territories and enhancing ecosystem services in rural landscapes, defining actions and enabling conditions for ecological and productive restoration processes, and enhancing resilient ecosystems for climate regulation, clean water provision, and food security.

2. MINERALS FOR THE ENERGY TRANSITION

Colombia proposes to highlight in the Declaration the importance of mineral extraction as a fundamental economic pillar and emphasize the need for a transition toward a sustainable, responsible mining model aligned with environmental protection and human rights. Below is the suggested wording by the Deputy Ministry of Policies:

“The increasing global demand for minerals and metals for new technologies (AI, for example) and transactional currencies (from gold to cryptocurrencies) implies a huge demand for energy sources, and the entire chain of exploration, production, transformation, use, value, and final disposal has material and long-term impacts on biodiversity, territories, and lives. All stakeholders involved in this demand and use of technologies and currencies must acknowledge, comply, and respond to reduce the environmental impacts.”

During COP16 in Cali, Colombia led the "Voluntary Joint Declaration on Responsible Mining Practices," committing to establish accountability and traceability mechanisms in the mineral supply chain. The declaration should highlight the timely and key outcomes of the UN Secretary-General's Critical Minerals for the Energy Transition Panel report, its principles, and recommendations, emphasizing Action Recommendation 2: “A global framework for traceability, transparency, and accountability throughout the mineral value chain, from mining to recycling, to strengthen due diligence, facilitate corporate responsibility, and build a global market for critical

minerals for the energy transition.” This is crucial, as much more needs to be done globally in mineral value chains to reduce the negative impacts of mining production on biodiversity, climate, and the right to a healthy environment. This is a key message to be included in the declaration.

Express interest in considering the development of a legally binding international instrument that establishes a global framework for traceability, transparency, and accountability throughout the mineral value chain, from extraction to recycling. This instrument would strengthen due diligence, promote corporate responsibility, and consolidate a global market for critical minerals in the energy transition.

3. PLASTICS

Colombia, as a megadiverse and bioceanic nation, proposes that the Declaration reaffirms the commitment to the protection of ecosystems, particularly marine and coastal ones, and the conservation of biodiversity in reference to the decisions of COP16. It also proposes to emphasize the need to act decisively against plastic pollution, which impacts all natural environments, affecting climate resilience and the health of our oceans, which play a crucial role as carbon sinks.

It is fundamental for Colombia that the Declaration reflects the need for a global transition towards decarbonization and the reduction of fossil fuel use in plastic production. It is also proposed to include in the text the need to incorporate the principles of prevention and precaution, ensuring concrete measures such as source reduction, promoting circularity, and the responsible substitution of plastic materials.

The declaration should also acknowledge the progress made in the Plastic Treaty and emphasize the importance of strengthening national and local programs for sustainable production and consumption, promoting integrated plastic management throughout its life cycle, and preventing microplastic pollution.

4. DEBT SWAPS AND FINANCING

We propose referring to the debt situation in developing countries and how this severely limits their ability to address climate crises and protect biodiversity. Countries with high biodiversity and key ecosystems (such as the Amazon or tropical forests) provide essential global public goods for global climate stability. The Declaration should invite the mobilization of resources for climate action and biodiversity conservation that do not increase debt and allow countries to expand their fiscal space. This requires debt restructuring, access to concessional financing, and debt relief mechanisms linked to environmental commitments (such as debt-for-nature swaps).

Latin America and the Caribbean hold a large portion of the planet's biodiversity, but many of these countries face high levels of debt that limit

their ability to invest in conservation and climate adaptation projects. It is important to allude to the need for developing countries to meet the financing commitments set forth in Multilateral Environmental Agreements and for the financial mechanisms to include the mobilization of resources from all sources, concessional financing, debt restructuring, and technical support to enable these nations to meet their environmental commitments without worsening their debt burden.

5. EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

As discussed in the framework of the Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean, it is proposed to encourage the strengthening of early warning systems in Latin America and the Caribbean in the declaration, recognizing their essential role in disaster prevention, mitigation, and adaptation. Developing countries need to strengthen their capacities and have advanced technological solutions in monitoring and forecasting extreme climate events, such as floods, landslides, and droughts, using real-time data and predictive models. It is also proposed to refer to the need to establish/strengthen regional cooperation mechanisms for exchanging knowledge, methodologies, and tools, with the goal of improving the capacity to respond to and build resilience against extreme weather events, strengthening integrated disaster risk management and territorial security.

6. CLOSURE OF LANDFILLS

Colombia proposes to mention the need to strengthen countries' efforts to transform landfills, as they constitute a significant source of methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas. In this regard, the country has adopted public policies aimed at the progressive closure of landfills, promoting the transition to circular economy models that optimize waste management and favor reduction, reuse, and recycling. Methane capture and the energy recovery of organic waste are key solutions for mitigating emissions and contributing to the fight against climate change.

7. JOINT WORK IN THE COPs

Colombia proposes calling for greater collaboration and coordination between countries in Latin America and the Caribbean at the Conferences of the Parties (COPs), with the aim of consolidating actions to address planetary crises in an integrated manner.

Colombia proposes highlighting the urgency for countries in the region to commit to more ambitious greenhouse gas emission reductions and implement climate adaptation policies, create innovative climate finance mechanisms that allow the most vulnerable nations to access the resources needed for adaptation and mitigation, without increasing the financial and debt burden of developing countries.

Additionally, it is suggested to underline the need for a reform of the international financial system to facilitate access to climate finance on favorable terms, enabling developing countries to meet their climate commitments without compromising their economic stability. These initiatives aim to ensure that climate action is just and effective, promoting both sustainable development and resilience for the most vulnerable communities.

In this context, Colombia emphasizes the importance of a multilateral approach based on cooperation, solidarity, and the exchange of knowledge and technologies. Only through this type of collaboration can we jointly and effectively face the challenges of climate change, strengthening the resilience of the most affected communities and ensuring a sustainable future for all.

8. FOSSIL FUELS

In the context of the growing recognition of the devastating effects that the burning of fossil fuels has on climate change and global health, Colombia reiterates its call for the creation of an international treaty focused on the non-proliferation of these fuels. This treaty should promote the gradual reduction of hydrocarbon extraction and associated minerals, with the aim of mitigating their negative impact on ecosystems and local communities.

Colombia also advocates for a just energy transition, which includes training and support for economies that depend on fossil fuels. It is essential that decarbonization policies do not undermine labor rights or harm the well-being of workers in these sectors.

Furthermore, we emphasize the urgent need to strengthen technical and financial support to developing countries in order to foster resilient and sustainable economies that ensure job and educational opportunities aligned with a decarbonized future. In this regard, we underline that all actions must be based on the best available scientific evidence, as indicated in the IPCC reports, and be in line with the principles of equity and human rights.
