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Fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America
and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

Virtual meeting, 15–18 March 2021

**INTERGOVERNMENTALLY AGREED CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE FORUM OF THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA
AND THE CARIBBEAN ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

We, the Ministers and high-level representatives gathered virtually at the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and Caribbean on Sustainable Development convened under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), from 15 to 18 March 2021, taking in consideration General Assembly resolution 70/1, adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and 74/4, which marks the beginning of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development,

1. *Reaffirm* our commitment to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ensuring that no one is left behind, including its Goals and targets, which are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development —economic, social and environmental—, and stress that it is people-centred, universal and transformative and that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, reaching the furthest behind first and empowering those in vulnerable situations to achieve sustainable development;

2. *Also reaffirm* that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which builds on the 2002 Monterrey Consensus and the 2008 Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, provides a global framework for financing sustainable development, as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda that supports and complements it, and helps to contextualize its means of implementation with concrete policies and actions to achieve its targets; recognize the synergies with relevant instruments, in particular of the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito, Ecuador, the SAMOA Pathway, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries and the outcome document of the Second United Nations High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation, and with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;



UNITED NATIONS



3. *Further reaffirm* all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as set out in Principle 7 thereof;

4. *Note* that the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Escazú Agreement, met the conditions for entry into force on 22 January 2021 and will enter into force on 22 April 2021 for the States parties to the Agreement, as a contribution to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development;

5. *Welcome* the Political Declaration on a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted by the Foreign Ministers and high representatives of Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered virtually on the occasion of the thirty-eighth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, under the Presidency Pro-Tempore of Costa Rica, held from 26 to 28 October 2020;

6. *Look forward* to the 2021 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the ECOSOC that will be convened under the theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”, which will review in depth Sustainable Development Goals 1 on the end of poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 3 on good health and well-being, 8 on decent work and economic growth, 10 on reduced inequalities, 12 on sustainable consumption and production patterns, 13 on climate action and 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17 on partnerships, reviewed annually, while recognizing the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across all SDGs and review the targets of the SDGs with a 2020 timeline, and that will be informed by the 2020 Global Sustainable Development Report, which shall strengthen the science-policy interface and could provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policymakers in promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development;

7. *Reaffirm* in this regard the commitment to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions, as the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development; reiterate our determination to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, stress the need to keep food and agriculture supply chains functioning, ensure the continued trade in and movement of food and livestock, products and inputs essential for agricultural and food production to markets, food supply-chains, maintain functioning food systems, avoid food shortage, reduce food loss and waste and safeguard food safety, and encourage actions to enable access to safe, sufficient, affordable and nutritious food for all; reaffirm the commitment to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; reiterate the commitment for sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work, promote equal pay for work of equal value, reduce gaps of participation and entry in the labour market, and strive for universal access to social protection; recall the pledge to reduce inequality within and among countries; reiterate the commitment to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns, and that people in our region have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature; stress the strong commitment to effective climate action; recommit to promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies, as well as to substantially reduce corruption in all its forms; and reiterate the call to strengthen means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development;

8. *Note with concern* that the SDG targets with a 2020 deadline have not been fully achieved, and in this regard call upon the international community to reinforce actions to address those specific challenges, including to protect biodiversity, develop disaster risk reduction strategies, increase the availability of timely, quality and disaggregated data, engage youth, and enhance financial resources, capacity-building and technology transfer to developing countries;

9. *Express* solidarity with all people and countries affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims of the pandemic and those whose lives and livelihoods have been affected by it;

10. *Underline* the primary responsibility of governments for adopting and implementing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic that are specific to their national context, as well as for mobilizing the necessary resources to do so;

11. *Reaffirm* our commitment to international cooperation, multilateralism and solidarity in the global response to the ongoing coronavirus disease pandemic and its consequences, and emphasize that multilateralism is not an option but a necessity as we recover and build back better for a more equal, more resilient and more sustainable world through reinvigorated global action and by building on the progress achieved in the last 75 years since the creation of the United Nations;

12. *Emphasize* that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the normal functioning of open markets, global supply chain connectivity and the flow of essential goods, and that these disruptions hinder the fight against poverty, hunger and inequality, ultimately undermining efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, reaffirm that emergency measures must be targeted, proportionate, transparent and temporary, that they must not create unnecessary barriers to trade or disruption to global supply chains, and that they must be consistent with World Trade Organization rules, and call upon member States to reaffirm the critical importance of connected global supply chains in ensuring the unimpeded flow of vital medical and food supplies and other essential goods and services across borders, by air, by land and by sea;

13. *Encourage* further strengthening of World Health Organization preparedness and response to health emergencies and of pandemics preparedness and multidimensional response capacities, taking into account the recommendations of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, the International Health Regulations Review Committee (IHRRC) in case of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other contributions regarding this matter that can be made by the World Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization and other relevant organizations;

14. *Reaffirm*, in that regard, General Assembly resolutions 74/270, 74/274, 74/306 and 74/307 and *urgently call* for universal, unhindered, timely, inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory access to, and fair distribution of all quality, safe, efficacious and affordable diagnoses, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines against COVID-19, as well as health technologies and products, including their components and precursors, that are required in the response to COVID-19 as a global priority; encourage strengthening of scientific international cooperation necessary to combat the pandemic and support initiatives in this regard, such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP), and relevant pledging appeals; and call for the recognition of the COVID-19 vaccine as a global public good;

15. *Recognize* that, inequalities, or even a rise in inequalities, remain pervasive in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, even in those with high levels of economic growth, which have been further exacerbated within and among countries by the COVID-19 pandemic, perpetuating all multiple and intersecting forms of violence, discrimination, stigmatization and exclusion in the region, especially for persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations; and that tackling inequality requires, inter alia, further

investment in social services, including social protection services, and economic opportunities in a partnership between governments, the private sector, the international financial system, civil society and other relevant stakeholders working together, in accordance with national plans and policies, in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

16. *Also recognize* that the COVID-19 pandemic has a disproportionately heavy impact on women and girls, older persons, youth, children, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, indigenous peoples, persons of African descent, migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees, as well as the poor, deepening existing inequalities for persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations; and that the coronavirus disease has also disproportionately affected people of all ages with pre-existing medical conditions, showed a higher mortality rate in men infected by COVID-19, and elevated the risks of front-line and health-care workers;

17. *Express* profound concern that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing a devastating impact on health, including mental health and well-being, loss of life, economic growth and employment, resulting in the decimation of jobs and entrepreneurship, and the extended deterioration of public services, which, in the context of increased poverty in all its forms and dimensions and a widening digital gap, as well as ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, the deterioration of oceans, and vulnerability to climate change and disasters, result in a critical incidence on the fulfilment of sustainable development and humanitarian needs and the enjoyment of human rights across all spheres of society and risk slowing down the progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including on food security, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and inclusive and equitable quality education made over the past decades;

18. *Reaffirm*, in that regard, our renewed commitment to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions and hunger everywhere, to further promote sustainable development, including inclusive economic growth, protecting the environment and promoting social inclusion, to combat inequalities within and among countries as well as to respect and promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including the right to development, ensure gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls throughout their life course, peaceful and inclusive societies in which no one is left behind while preserving the planet for future generations;

19. *Reiterate* the urgency to promote decent work for all, as well as social protection policies aimed at avoiding unemployment, reducing labour informality and the failure of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, and enhancing income support mechanisms to better assist the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in times of crisis in order to end poverty in all its forms and dimensions;

20. *Stress* that recovery from the pandemic should enhance and support the development policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, foster investment in innovation, research and development, as well as renewed regional solidarity and cooperation, including for the strengthening of public health systems, and on epidemiological control, while strengthening democracy and fulfilling all human rights for all; and recognize the importance of developing recovery plans that promote sustainable development and drive transformative change towards peaceful, just and inclusive societies, including by empowering and engaging all women, adolescents and girls, with the effective engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society;

21. *Urge* Member States and other relevant stakeholders to accelerate the catalytic role that digital technologies play in reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on life-long learning and quality education, health, communication, commerce and economic recovery and ensure a path towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, while striving to address the digital divide within and among countries and regions;

22. *Emphasize* with deep concern the particular adverse effects of the pandemic in all countries of the region dependent on commodities, remittances or tourism, as well as the impact of limited fiscal space and high debt levels on countries' abilities to withstand the consequences of the COVID-19 shock and to invest in a sustainable recovery and reconstruction of their economies and welfare;

23. *Call for* a global coordinated multilateral response to address the current impacts on sustainable development of the COVID-19 pandemic and the policies necessary to address the current economic downturn and future depression, begin economic recovery and minimize the negative effects on livelihoods, while striving to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals; welcome global, regional and national initiatives seeking international solidarity in the face of the economic and social downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, taking into account the specific circumstances of each country, aimed at laying the foundations for a strong sustainable and inclusive global recovery; and encourage Member States and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and international financial institutions, to mobilize a large-scale comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences amounting to at least 10 per cent of global gross domestic product;

24. *Call upon* Member States of the United Nations and international financial institutions to provide more liquidity in the financial system, especially in all developing countries, including by the implementation of instruments such as a Liquidity and Sustainability Facility and the broader use of Special Drawing Rights and emphasize the need to increase access to concessional finance for the countries of the region, especially in the context of the global pandemic, including by the creation of new financial mechanisms or funds to support countries facing fiscal pressures and consider offering low-interest loans to open up the fiscal space and, in this regard, welcome regional and global proposals and look forward to the operationalization of the Fund to Alleviate COVID-19 Economics (FACE);

25. *Underscore* the need to grant special dispensation to the vulnerable countries of the region, with regard to the actions of credit rating agencies and the measures necessary to achieve debt sustainability and reduce the indebtedness of developing countries and, in this regard, welcome innovative financing mechanisms such as the steps by the Group of 20 to provide a time-bound suspension of debt service payments for the poorest countries, the institution of the Debt for Climate Adaptation Swap initiative for the Caribbean, the creation of a Caribbean Resilience Fund, and the inclusion of hurricane and pandemic clauses as part of new borrowing arrangements;

26. *Recognize* the need to enhance the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through Sustainable Development Goal 17, as well as the seven action areas of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, to pursue policy coherence and an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors, and to reinvigorate the global partnership for sustainable development to secure our objectives for people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership;

27. *Welcome* the forthcoming fifth annual retreat of the Group of Friends of Monterrey held virtually on 17–18 March 2021;

28. *Stress* the importance of addressing the diverse needs and challenges faced by all developing countries, including countries in special situations, such as least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as the specific challenges facing middle-income countries and countries in situation of conflict and post-conflict;

29. *Reiterate* that national averages based on criteria such as gross national income (GNI) per capita are not aligned with the multidimensional scope of sustainable development enshrined in the 2030 Agenda and do not reflect all the particularities, development needs and challenges of developing countries; recall that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda calls upon the United Nations system, in consultation

with the international financial institutions, to develop transparent measures of progress in sustainable development that go beyond per capita income, taking advantage of the initiatives existing, as appropriate; recognize poverty in all its forms and dimensions, as well as the social, economic and environmental dimensions of domestic production and structural gaps at all levels;

30. *Also reiterate* the call to address further the specific development needs of middle-income countries through, inter alia, innovative financing for development as stated in the Monterrey Consensus, an accurate response to their requirements, taking into account variables that go beyond per capita income criteria, and eliminate increasing difficulties and conditionalities faced to access financial and non-financial resources, as appropriate, recall that 73 per cent of the world's poor population is concentrated in these countries, where cooperation can have a multiplier effect on the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, and look forward to actively participating in the high-level meeting on middle-income countries convened by the President of the General Assembly, to discuss the gaps and challenges middle-income countries face in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

31. *Stress* the importance of addressing the particular and diverse needs and challenges faced by countries that are close to surpassing or have recently crossed the upper-middle-income threshold but still have structural gaps and vulnerabilities, considering the multidimensional scope of sustainable development and the limits of criteria such as gross national income (GNI) for measuring development, especially in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic;

32. *Recall* the convening of the high-level meeting to review progress made in addressing the priorities of small island developing States through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway on 27 September 2019 and the adoption on 10 October 2019 of its political declaration, in which Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation with and support to small island developing States in the context of sustainable development, in line with their national development strategies and priorities, and look forward to the implementation of the calls made in that political declaration;

33. *Reiterate* the call for immediate and substantial actions to facilitate the responses of small island developing States to recover from the unfolding crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and address the unprecedented health and economic crisis unfolding in such States, while preserving their sustainable development achievements and commitments, and reinforce their resilience to climate change in line with the Samoa Pathway and the political declaration of the high-level meeting to review progress made in addressing the priorities of small island developing States through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway;

34. *Recall* the holding of the comprehensive high-level midterm review on the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 in New York on 5 and 6 December 2019 and the High-Level Political Declaration, in which all the relevant stakeholders are called upon to commit to the accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action; and welcome the convening of the regional review meeting for the Latin America region in Santiago on 11 and 12 June 2019 in ECLAC Headquarters;

35. *Emphasize* the need to strengthen international development cooperation, noting with concern that there are still structural problems aggravated by the reduced access to Official Development Assistance (ODA) and concessional finance for countries in the region, including middle-income countries, and call upon the developed countries to fulfil their ODA targets, and further recognize the urgency of concrete and immediate action to create the necessary enabling environment at all levels for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including national efforts and international and regional cooperation that support policies and programs to increase investment in sustainable development;

36. *Reaffirm* that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also acknowledges that the implementation of sustainable development will depend on the active engagement of both the public and private sectors and, recognizing that the active participation of the private sector can contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, encourage alignment of private sector incentives with national public goals towards long-term investment according to national realities and capacities, including innovative financing instruments and approaches, and further encourage the consideration of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, to bridge the region's structural inequality gaps and eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions;

37. *Also reaffirm*, in order to fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the importance for our region of accessing and mobilizing additional, sufficient, adequate and well-directed financial and non-financial resources and capacity-building for the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, and further recommend increasing international and regional cooperation, inter alia, to support domestic science and technology research and innovation;

38. *Stress* further the critical role of science, technology and innovation in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and bear in mind that technological change includes new and powerful tools that can help to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; in this context take note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation and the High-level Thematic Debate on the Impact of Rapid Technological Change on the Sustainable Development Goals and Targets, that took place on 11 May 2020; and of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted at the Seventh Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in November 2020, as well as the the 2020 edition of the *Latin American Economic Outlook*, LEO;

39. *Reaffirm* the outcome document of the Second United Nations High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40) and commit to its implementation; reiterate the important contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; reaffirm that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation and is an important element of international cooperation for development; acknowledge the need to enhance development effectiveness of South-South and triangular cooperation; and welcome the contributions of South-South and triangular cooperation to poverty eradication and sustainable development;

40. *Further* recognize that triangular cooperation complements and adds value to South-South cooperation by enabling requesting developing countries to source and access more, and a broader range of resources, expertise and capacities, that they identify as needed in order to strengthen national capabilities and support States' efforts to achieve their national development goals and internationally agreed sustainable development goals, and stress the importance of South-South and triangular cooperation as a means of bringing relevant experience and expertise;

41. *Commit* to continuing to promote a universal, rules-based, open, transparent, predictable, inclusive, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and look forward to achieving positive results at the WTO Twelfth Ministerial Conference in 2021, in particular an agreement on comprehensive and effective disciplines on fisheries subsidies and on the continuous reform of agricultural trade rules, in accordance with their respective mandates and emphasize, in addition, that trade, with appropriate supporting policies, can, inter alia, contribute to promoting inclusive economic growth, reducing inequalities within and among countries and eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions;

42. *Reaffirm* that States are strongly urged to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries;

43. *Recommend* redoubling efforts to substantially reduce illicit financial flows by 2030, including by combating tax evasion and corruption and increased international cooperation as well as reducing opportunities for tax avoidance to make sure that all companies, including multinationals, pay taxes to the governments of countries where economic activity occurs and value is created, as well as that the value created is distributed in a way that reinforces economic and social equality and inclusion, particularly in favour of the most vulnerable, to achieve sustainable development, according to national legislations; and further recall that every State has, and shall freely exercise, full permanent sovereignty over all its wealth, natural resources and economic activity;

44. *Express concern* that the region continues to experience a decline in correspondent banking relationships, impacting the ability to send and receive international payments, with potential consequences for the cost of remittances, financial inclusion and international trade, among other areas, and thus for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

45. *Recognize* the positive contribution of migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination and stress that remittances are a form of private capital that cannot be equated to other international financial flows such as foreign direct investment, ODA, or other public sources of financing for development; and encourage concrete measures, as appropriate, to ensure that adequate and affordable financial services are available to migrants and their families in both origin and destination countries, and to reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and to eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent of the amount transferred, while promoting conditions for cheaper, faster and safer transfer of remittances in both source and recipient countries;

46. *Recall* the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, in Marrakech, Morocco, on 10 and 11 December 2018, and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 73/195 of 19 December 2018; and in this regard take note of the endorsement by a number of Latin American and Caribbean countries¹ of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration;

47. *Reaffirm*, inter alia, the sovereign right of States to determine their national migration policy and their prerogative to govern migration within their jurisdiction, in conformity with international law, including International Human Rights Law;

48. *Call upon* States to promote and protect effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, especially those of women, children and adolescents, and to address international migration through international, regional or bilateral cooperation and dialogue and a comprehensive and balanced approach, recognizing the roles and responsibilities of countries of origin, transit and destination in promoting and protecting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants and avoiding approaches that might aggravate their vulnerability;

¹ Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

49. *Take note* of the upcoming Latin American and Caribbean regional review of implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which will be held in April 2021;

50. *Welcome* the Buenos Aires Declaration of the IX Regional Meeting on International Mechanisms for Humanitarian Assistance in Latin America and the Caribbean (MIAH), hosted by the Government of Argentina in June 2019;

51. *Recognize* the importance of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development as the regional agenda on population and development for Latin America and the Caribbean beyond 2014 in order to reinforce the application and further implementation and follow-up of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and as a complementary tool for the integration of population issues into sustainable development;

52. *Also recognize* the importance of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development, adopted during the third session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico in 2019, for promoting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, tackling the current multidimensional crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and moving towards a transformative, inclusive and resilient recovery with equality; and invite the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to participate in the in the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, to take place in the second half of 2021, as well as in the fourth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development, to be held virtually in Antigua and Barbuda in the second half of 2021;

53. *Welcome* the ongoing regional efforts to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls throughout their life course, and recall of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, adopted at the thirteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and note the Santiago Commitment, adopted at the fourteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the sixtieth meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women, and underscore that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls throughout their life course will make a crucial contribution to progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and that the protection and full realization of their human rights are essential to achieving sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, and in this regard recommend further mainstreaming of a gender responsive approach into national sustainable development policies, programmes and strategies, and emergency and recovery responses to the COVID-19 pandemic;

54. *Note with appreciation* the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons;

55. *Recall* General Assembly resolution 68/237 in which it proclaimed 2015–2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent, recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected, note that 2021 marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, and look forward to the commemoration of the first International Day for People of African Descent, as mandated by resolution 75/170, on 31 August, which represents an important opportunity for the region to reaffirm its commitment to the eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

56. *Reaffirm* the importance to protect and enhance indigenous and traditional knowledge as well as cultural, social and environmental practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, and their contribution to global efforts and initiatives, in accordance with national legislation, to enable sustainable livelihoods, sustainable consumption and production patterns and practices, and food security in harmony with nature;

57. *Welcome* the multiple environmental and sustainable development events that took place during 2020, such as the 15th session of the UN Forum on Forests, the High-Level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought, the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity, and looks forward to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15), the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (COP15), the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26), which will take place in 2021, and in this regard call to enhance synergies among these events, considering regional intergovernmental priorities as established by the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, as appropriate;

58. *Look forward* to the Food Systems Summit in 2021, convened by the Secretary-General with the support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and the International Fund for Agricultural Development;

59. *Recognize* that the region is highly vulnerable to climate change owing to its geography, climate, socioeconomic conditions and demographic factors, and in this regard note with concern the findings contained in the Special Reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels; the *IPCC Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems*; and the *IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* and the *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* of IPBES; all of which represent the best available science and underscore the need to urgently increase ambition for climate action in order to achieve the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement adopted under the UNFCCC and encourage all Parties to the Paris Agreement to fully implement it;

60. *Take note* with appreciation of the outcomes of the 24th and 25th Conference of the Parties (COP 24 and COP 25), in particular the decisions adopted that will enable the full implementation of the provisions of the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and urge Parties to the Paris Agreement to finalize outstanding decisions at the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to fully operationalize the Paris Agreement in a manner consistent with its long-term goals and environmental integrity, and stress in this regard the importance of strengthening UNFCCC and of ensuring that its allocation of resources allows the effective implementation of its mandate; emphasizing, in that sense, the need to reinforce our efforts to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and ensure enhanced access to international climate finance in order to support mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, including Least Developing Countries and small island developing States, in order to leave no one behind;

61. *Emphasize* the need to significantly increase climate finance, which is additional to Official Development Assistance (ODA), to support action on mitigation and adaptation to climate change and ensure enhanced access to international climate financial flows with a special focus on increasing the resilience of the most vulnerable; and in this regard aim to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including by making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development;

62. *Underscore* the need, in view of the high vulnerability of the region to climate change, to urgently promote the adoption of policies and planning that effectively contribute to increasing resilience to climate-induced disasters and achieving the long-term goals of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, inter alia and where applicable, by taking climate change into account in macroeconomic policy, fiscal planning, budgeting, credit risk, public investment management, and procurement practices;

63. *Welcome* the updated Nationally Determined Contributions submitted in 2020 and call for the nationally determined contributions that will be updated and submitted in 2021 to reflect the highest possible level of ambition, in line with the principles of progression and non-regression and the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement;

64. Considering the global trend of biodiversity loss and the need to realize the 2050 Vision of Living in Harmony with Nature, *urge* the adoption of an ambitious, realistic and effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF), to be adopted at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Kunming, China, and further note that GBF must address the three objectives of the Convention in a balanced manner, be based on scientific evidence, include targets and measures to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, and must guarantee new and additional financial resources from developed countries, as well as from other sources, for implementation and long-term monitoring and management in developing countries;

65. *Recognize* the United Nations General Assembly proclamation on the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030) and welcome the United Nations Ocean Conference on scaling up actions for ocean protection, conservation and sustainable use based on science and innovation for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 to be held in 2021;

66. *Also recognize* that improving the environmental quality in our cities is one of the challenges we have ahead of us to achieve sustainable development, which will require efforts in a multitude of areas, such as air, soil and water pollution, water scarcity, sanitation, sustainable transportation, sustainable production and consumption, energy efficiency including clean energy sources, sustainable management of chemicals and waste, and decreasing food loss and waste, taking into consideration the New Urban Agenda, which promotes the full realization of the right to adequate housing and the right to an adequate standard of living, without discrimination, and welcomes the outcome of the first session of the UN-Habitat Assembly, which took place in May 2019;

67. *Recall* the need to renew and enhance efforts for the sound management of chemicals and waste, as expressed in the 2030 Agenda, including its relevant Goals and targets, recognize the Action Plan for Regional Cooperation on Chemicals and Waste Management adopted by the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean that aims, inter alia, to support the implementation of the chemicals and waste-related international agreements in the countries of the region, and encourage the implementation of the decisions adopted at the XXII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean held in Barbados from 1 to 2 February 2021;

68. *Applaud* the “Caribbean first” initiative advanced by ECLAC since its thirty-seventh session, held in Havana in May 2018, and the peer learning sessions on challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean, held in the framework of the second, third and fourth meetings of this Forum;

69. *Recognize* the impact of disasters on sustainable development, poverty eradication and the reduction of inequalities in Latin America and the Caribbean; acknowledge the need to adopt a broader and more people-centred and inclusive preventive approach to disaster risk reduction, and realign disaster financing to anticipate, plan for and reduce disaster risk; commit to integrate disaster risk reduction into

plans, policies and strategies at all levels, highlighting the importance of generating environmental and territorial data and information for decision-making by governments and policymakers, in line with national priorities, considering multidisciplinary and interinstitutional coordination mechanisms; and welcome the outcomes of the Sixth Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Americas, hosted by the Government of Colombia in June 2018, and look forward to the Seventh Regional Platform to be hosted by the Government of Jamaica in 2021;

70. *Note with appreciation* the continued support of ECLAC to member countries in the conduct of damage and loss assessments following natural disasters, most recently the assessments done in Honduras and Guatemala following the passage of Hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020, as well as for the Bahamas following the passage of Hurricane Dorian in September 2019, while conveying our solidarity for the recent impacts of hurricanes and other hydro-climatic events in other countries of the region, including Belize, Colombia, El Salvador, Jamaica and Nicaragua, added to the difficulties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and recognize that sustainable development objectives including economic growth, the reduction of poverty and inequality, and the promotion of sustainable cities and settlements, are inextricably linked to the achievements of disaster risk management and disaster risk reduction;

71. *Reiterate* that the region, in particular small island developing States, continues to face the adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters and, in this regard, recognize the economic challenges, including unsustainable debt levels, arising in part from extreme weather events and slow-onset events, and the need to build creative and innovative partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean for sustainable development with regard to environment, climate resilience and post-pandemic recovery;

72. *Recognize* that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development, as well as for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the national, regional and global levels, in relation to the progress made in implementing its Goals and targets, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities; and that there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities, to achieve sustainable development;

73. *Welcome* the continuous efforts of countries from our region to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda through its mainstreaming in public policies, institutional arrangements, and national and subnational follow-up and review; encourage these countries to further deepen their national efforts in that endeavour and to engage in in-depth knowledge-sharing with peers and partners throughout the region; highlight in that regard the 28 national coordination mechanisms for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the increase in the number of national and subnational initiatives promoting articulation between development priorities, plans, budgets and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the efforts of raising awareness and training to disseminate the Agenda and its relationship with national development objectives; as well as by strengthening the involvement of local and other actors at the national level, as appropriate, in the achievement of sustainable development;

74. *Also welcome* the numerous contributions and the support provided by the United Nations development system at the regional level, aiming to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals; and reiterate the need that their activities be carried out in a coherent and coordinated manner and in line with national policies and priorities;

75. *Further welcome* the actions taken by the Secretary-General to strengthen and adapt the United Nations development system to better support Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the repositioning of the United Nations development system, including through an empowered and independent Resident Coordinator system, supported by the Development Coordination Office, including

its regional presence, and reiterate our commitment and support to the Secretary-General in advancing, implementing and respective follow-up of his actions in this regard;

76. *Also welcome* the efforts of the Secretary-General in formulating the recommendations to harness the regional assets of the United Nations development system, recognizing the steps taken to better position the regional assets to support countries as they seek to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the region;

77. *Take note* of the presentations of the 2020 system-wide results report of the United Nations development system in Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean and take note also of the practice of convening the United Nations Regional Collaborative Platform and the Resident Coordinators of Latin America and the Caribbean during the meetings of the Forum, the latter upon previous consultation with their respective national public counterparts, as an opportunity to interact with the regional mechanism for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and with the member States of the Forum and strengthen the nexus among analytical, policy and operational work of the United Nations development system at the regional level;

78. *Welcome* the detailed commitments and actions of the Secretary-General to improve the United Nations development system's offer in countries serviced by multi-country offices to ensure more tailored technical and policy support, enhanced and aligned capacities and physical presence, strengthened policy support with regard to financing for development, data systems, disaggregated data collection and data use for informed decision-making, as well as better integration and participation of States in intergovernmental forums and processes and fostering South-South and triangular cooperation and cross-regional learning, and commend the work of ECLAC in supporting its member States and associate members covered by the multi-country offices in the region;

79. *Reaffirm* the role of the Commission as an essential component of the United Nations development system based on: (i) its convening function as an intergovernmental platform for policy advice and dialogue; (ii) its ability to act as a think tank for devising analysis and policy recommendations; and (iii) its capacity to provide technical cooperation and normative and capacity-building support to its member States, and in this regard stresses the importance of ensuring adequate regular budget resources in order to fulfil the mandate of the commission;

80. *Welcome* the presentation of the Regional Knowledge Platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean —SDG Gateway— developed through a regional inter-agency effort of the United Nations system under the leadership of ECLAC, as a key tool for supporting the capacities of countries and other stakeholders in the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, encourage the countries to use it to promote collaborative work and horizontal cooperation for closing gaps in data availability for follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and further invite the countries of the region to disseminate their statistical information relating to the Sustainable Development Goals via online platforms that can be integrated with the SDG Gateway;

81. *Take note with appreciation* of the Annual report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean entitled “Building forward better: actions to strengthen the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,² prepared by ECLAC, and note with concern that the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic, social and environmental effects are putting at risk the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in this connection, welcome the scenario simulations and trend projections to 2030 set

² LC/FDS.4/3/Rev.1.

forth in the report regarding a selection of SDG indicators as well as the analysis of the policy measures implemented by the States of the region in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and their effects on the SDG targets;

82. *Commend* the 24 countries of the region³ that have already presented voluntary national reviews at the ministerial segment of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of ECOSOC, and the 11 countries⁴ preparing to do so in 2021, of which 7 are presenting a second or third review, and highlight the commitment and leadership shown by these 24 countries in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including by integrating it into their national strategies and adjusting institutional arrangements;

83. *Take note* of the efforts of subnational and local governments who have conducted Local Voluntary Reviews, showing the increasing political will and commitment of their cities and regions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as their interest in actively supporting the follow-up and review processes;

84. *Recognize* that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, as a regional mechanism to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its means of implementation, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, in preparation for the High-Level Political Forum, has become an example of regional coordination of multiple stakeholders, such as governments, the United Nations system, the private sector, academia and civil society, to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean;

85. *Highlight* the commitment of the countries of the region to address statistical challenges and advance in the generation of quality data for the SDGs, in a timely manner, including through the strengthening of statistical systems that guarantee reliable and disaggregated data, to allow a detailed analysis of the progress in the SDGs, in order to identify inequalities and needs of the most vulnerable, and acknowledge the contribution made by ECLAC and the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean of the Statistical Conference of the Americas to the indicators of the region; recommend that such contribution continue on a regional framework of indicators for regional statistical follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean; and encourage the Statistical Conference of the Americas to continue analysing national statistical capacities of the region to identify areas of cooperation, in consultation with the respective governments, with a view to advancing in the generation of disaggregated, accessible, timely and reliable data;

86. *Commend* the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean for Sustainable Development for providing useful opportunities for sharing of best practices among multiple stakeholders in the peer learning sessions on institutional arrangements, national measurements and challenges and priorities, challenges in the Caribbean, participatory approaches to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, platforms for follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals, continuity in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, institutional framework, planning and budgeting for the 2030 Agenda, implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the subnational level, statistical capacities, and measurement and georeferencing, held during the four meetings of the Forum convened thus far, and recommend continuing to include peer learning sessions in its meetings on other emerging issues of interest, upon request and as identified by the Forum;

³ Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

⁴ Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay.

87. *Welcome* the participation and contributions of the associate members of ECLAC in the Forum, recognize their specific political and economic constraints and their vulnerabilities in their pursuit of sustainable development, and encourage their continued inclusion, where appropriate, in the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies;

88. *Also welcome* the work of civil society to strengthen their engagement in the Forum, including through the Mechanism for the participation of civil society in the Sustainable Development Agenda, adopted by civil society at the margins of the Second Meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, and the participation in the third meeting and their declaration, and look forward to the meaningful participation and contribution of civil society in the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development;

89. *Further welcome* the contributions of all relevant stakeholders to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region, and the participation, according to resolution 700(XXXVI) of ECLAC, of parliamentarians, local governments, private sector, civil society and academia in the fourth meeting of the Forum, and encourage their continued commitment to ensure that no one is left behind;

90. *Recommend* that the Chair of the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC submit the present conclusions and recommendations and a Summary of the Chair, along with the Political Declaration on a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted by Foreign Ministers and High Representatives on the occasion of the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC, as regional contributions to the 2021 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of the ECOSOC along with the regional results report of the United Nations Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean for their due consideration, as well as to make it available for other relevant regional and international events and processes;

91. *Request* that this regional contribution, which reflects the commitment of the countries of the region to the 2030 Agenda and highlights the challenges, priorities and progress achieved in the region on the implementation of the Agenda, be considered an input to the agreed conclusions and recommendations of the ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum follow-up and the Ministerial declaration of the High-Level Political Forum by its facilitators;

92. Moreover, *request* the President of the Economic and Social Council that the contribution of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development be mainstreamed in the sessions of the High-Level Political Forum to enrich its debates, highlight the region's expectations in this global platform and ensure coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at all levels (national, regional and global);

93. *Commit* to actively participate in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in relation to the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in order to benefit from lessons learned;

94. *Express* our deepest appreciation to the Republic of Costa Rica as the Chair of the Forum, and to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, for their leadership in convening the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and Caribbean on Sustainable Development in a virtual manner in the interest of safeguarding the well-being of the participants amidst the outbreak of the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.