



Forum of the Countries
of Latin America and
the Caribbean on
**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**
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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

SUMMARY OF THE CHAIR



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INTRODUCTION

At the thirty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), held in Mexico City from 23–27 May 2016, the member States adopted resolution 700(XXXVI), sponsored by Mexico, establishing 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 (SDGs), its targets and means of implementation, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

The first meeting of the Forum was held in Mexico City, from 26–28 April 2017. The meeting was chaired by Mexico, in its capacity as Chair of the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC, and convened under the auspices of the Commission. The second meeting of the Forum was held in Santiago, from 18–20 April 2018, chaired by Mexico, and convened under the auspices of the Commission. The third meeting of the Forum was held in Santiago, from 24–26 April 2019, chaired by Cuba, and convened under the auspices of the Commission.

The fourth meeting of the Forum was held from 15 to 18 March 2021, in virtual format owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and was chaired by Costa Rica and convened under the auspices of the Commission. It was open to member States of the Forum and observers, the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, regional and subregional bodies, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. Preparatory activities for the Forum included meetings of associate members of the Commission and the civil society meeting on 15 March. In addition, more than 30 side events were held, two of which were organized by the Office of the President of Costa Rica: “Women and nature: financial solutions for an inclusive and equitable economic recovery” and “The environmental big push for sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery”.

The purpose of the meetings of the Forum is to share experiences and best practices among the Latin American and Caribbean countries regarding actions taken to achieve the SDGs in the region.

1. Opening session

At the opening session, moderated by Adriana Bolaños Argueta, Minister ad interim for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, statements were made by Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations; Munir Akram, President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in New York; Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); and Carlos Alvarado Quesada, President of the Republic of Costa Rica.

The Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations noted that the Latin American and Caribbean region was particularly affected by the COVID-19 crisis and faced the worst economic contraction in its history, potentially erasing the progress made towards equality, and especially gender equality. Countries’ rapid responses through unprecedented fiscal and social measures saved millions of lives and prevented an increase in poverty. However, there were five key areas for action: (i) COVID-19 vaccines must be a global public good, especially through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility, which should be given full support; (ii) institutional support must be given to financing for development —critical for middle-income countries and small island developing States (SIDS) where debt and vulnerability to climate

change were linked— and the proposals for debt service suspension, the Fund to alleviate COVID-19 economics (FACE) proposed by Costa Rica, the Debt for Climate Adaptation Swap initiative and the proposed establishment of a Caribbean resilience fund; (iii) align policies on COVID-19 and climate action towards renewable energy, sustainable mobility and tourism, digitalization, health-care manufacturing, the bioeconomy and the circular economy; (iv) build an equal future where women could take their rightful place in society; and (v) make the most of the repositioning of the regional United Nations development system. Upcoming international conferences such as the high-level political forum on sustainable development offered opportunities to help shape our common future and Latin America and the Caribbean had much to offer as countries could help the world anchor the recovery from COVID-19 in the longer-term promises of the 2030 Agenda. The challenges ahead were significant, but the region had the capacity to drive transformative change over the next ten years. The United Nations would remain a steadfast partner at this pivotal moment in building a better future for all.

The President of the Economic and Social Council said the world was at a turning point and the first order of business must be equality in the distribution of and access to vaccines. To respond to and recover from pandemic, the international community must mobilize financing required by developing countries. In the Economic and Social Council there was emerging agreement on the actions needed. The first was debt relief: the Group of 20 (G20) Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) was welcome, but should be expanded and extended until the end of the COVID-19 crisis. The private sector, which held most of the debt of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), should be brought into debt suspension exercise, and that should be utilized to restructure debt on a case by case basis. An architecture for sustainable debt management must also be built. Second, least developed and middle-income countries required additional liquidity to invest in recovery. Developed countries had injected over US\$ 14 trillion into their economies but developing countries did not have access to reserve currency to create such liquidity. The creation of new special drawing rights (SDR) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the redistribution of developed countries' unutilized quotas to developing countries would be critical. The United States Secretary of the Treasury had recently recommended the creation of 500 billion new SDRs which could generate US\$ 56 billion in new money for the region. Costa Rica's proposed FACE initiative could also provide significant avenues for developing countries to overcome the liquidity crisis and build back sustainably, and it was hoped that it would be adopted by international financial institutions. The Economic Commission for Africa proposal for the establishment of a liquidity and sustainability facility deserved international support. Third, much more concessional financing must be mobilized for countries most in need, as the poorest cannot afford to take on new debt. Under the Eighteenth Replenishment of International Development Association Resources (IDA18), US\$ 30 billion had been allocated for concessional financing and that figure must be at least doubled. Donor countries must finally fulfil their promise to provide 0.7% of GDP as official development assistance (ODA). Regional and subregional financial institutions should increase capitalization and adopt more flexible lending criteria. The illicit flows of funds from poor countries must be stopped and the climate finance pledge of US\$ 100 billion annually must be honoured: the 14 recommendations of the High-Level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda (FACTI Panel) should be endorsed and implemented; and investment in sustainable infrastructure was needed to prevent a climate catastrophe. The creation of a public-private facility for sustainable infrastructure investment under the auspices of the United Nations had been proposed to help developing countries bridge the existing infrastructure investment gap. Systemic inequalities must be addressed and Latin American and Caribbean countries and ECLAC had a vital role to play in promoting the transition to a more equal, dynamic and prosperous world.

The Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) said that amid the health crisis, the value of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was clear, establishing it as a vital space for sharing the lessons learned and challenges faced during the pandemic and action taken by countries to achieve the SDGs, as well as for providing input for the next high-level political forum on sustainable development. The meeting was taking place in the midst of a crisis that had deepened the serious structural problems and revealed the unsustainability of the region's development model. The pandemic had caused in 2020 the sharpest economic contraction in 120 years, increasing unemployment and labour informality, poverty and extreme poverty, and with disproportionate effects on rural areas, women, children and young people, indigenous peoples, Afrodescendants and migrants. Among the most notable effects of the crisis was the substantial number of women who exited the labour market, due in part to rising demand for care in the home, setting back more than a decade of progress. The crisis had also revealed deep digital divides, with 46% of children having no access to tele-education. Against that background, there was a renewed call to move towards a care society with universal social protection, which would represent a major civilizational change, and to establish a basic digital basket in the countries of the region, to which 1% of GDP would be allocated. The situation was a wake-up call as to the dangers of not achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. In the framework of the decade of action for the SDGs, it was highlighted that the region must focus on strategic sectors in order to move towards sustainable development, and that international financing was crucial. In that regard, the FACE initiative was of particular relevance, as it would provide concessional loans regardless of countries' income levels and without conditions. The response to the crisis must be accompanied by the course-correcting actions needed to achieve sustainable development. Greater democracy was also a must, but nothing would be achieved without access to vaccines, which called for changes in intellectual property and patent regulations, collective action and a multilateral approach, based on public goods to close the broad gaps.

The President of Costa Rica said the world had changed since the drafting of the SDGs and the comprehensive nature of the 2030 Agenda was at risk. The pandemic had revealed the wide gaps in the region. High indebtedness and limited fiscal space restricted the capacity to respond adequately to the crisis, and in the case of the Caribbean and Central America, there were also pre-existing vulnerabilities, such as those linked to climate change. Given the urgent need to speed up recovery, the capacity to invest in the future, in sustainable solutions and in the most vulnerable was imperative, avoiding the temptation to pursue recovery at all costs. The pandemic must be taken as a warning sign about humanity's pressure on ecosystems. The current production and consumption systems had reached their limit, placing the world at crossroads that demanded a structural change in the development model to ensure a safe and healthy home for current and future generations. The "new normal" must be truly new. Nationally determined contributions must be updated, investments redirected towards carbon neutrality and a common front formed to mobilize the resources needed to support countries to implement the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. Amid the tensions that the global governance architecture now faced, the value of multilateralism could not be overemphasized. Solidarity and international cooperation were the only real way out of the crisis. Latin America and the Caribbean must speak with a strong and united voice for it to reshape the world order for the better. Regional consensus already existed, as expressed in the *Political Declaration on a Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean* adopted at the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC and the conclusions and recommendations of the fourth meeting of the Forum, and the region should put forward its proposals in all global discussions, in particular at the high-level political forum and the 2021 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development.

2. Presentation of the document *Building forward better: action to strengthen the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, fourth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean¹

The document *Building forward better: action to strengthen the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, fourth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighted that in a world in crisis, with slow growth, inequality and an environmental emergency, the unprecedented health crisis was exacerbated by the inequality matrix. The region was facing the pandemic amid serious existing structural problems, compounded by geopolitical constraints in the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. All that increased the possibility that the Goals of the 2030 Agenda would not be achieved and put their comprehensiveness at risk. The strategy for a decade of action for the SDGs had to be realistic, build on progress, acknowledge the challenges of implementation and be aligned with a transformative recovery. ECLAC proposed a strategy for action: a big push for sustainability based on the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs. There was a crisis of multilateralism, with geopolitical tensions, a new economic landscape and worn out global governance models; structural gaps persisted, with insufficient growth, inequalities and the concentration of wealth; fragmentation of health and education services, inadequate social protection, mistrust and corruption led to social unrest. There were also global challenges such as biodiversity loss, the technological revolution and migration. The health crisis had claimed 718,000 lives in the region and ECLAC estimated substantial excess mortality and a 0.5-year loss in life expectancy. Risk factors such as poverty and overcrowding and fragmented and unequal health systems were exacerbating the situation. There was also a care crisis in which women were particularly affected. Countries had implemented policy responses to address the pandemic, such as restrictions on movement (physical distancing), and allocated resources to the health system and to bolster incomes. The central challenge was access to vaccination, given the hoarding of vaccines by some countries, limited financial and negotiating capacities to procure vaccines, and limited infrastructure, logistics and primary health-care services for national distribution.

The economic, social and environmental impacts of the pandemic occurred against the backdrop of a culture of privilege in the region, which had three features: difference was normalized as inequality and considered part of the natural order in the mindset of those who were in a position of privilege and of those who were subordinate; hierarchies were established for the benefit of whoever was in power at the time (according to class or bloodline, race, gender, birthplace, culture or a combination of these), which contributed to strong inertia in terms of power and inequality; and the culture of privilege was perpetuated by actors, institutions, rules and practices, generating asymmetries in multiple spheres. Thus, policy design or implementation was biased, distorted and ineffective (e.g. in the tax system, public safety, education, health, infrastructure, etc.). Disillusionment and anger signalled a breaking point in the continuity of a model associated with four decades of low growth, concentration of wealth and environmental deterioration. Institutions reproduced the behaviour of agents with greater economic and political power, and there was a rentier tendency based on the ownership of natural resources and the financial economy. The pandemic had magnified the structural problems and it could be said that the region was facing a lost decade. Caribbean countries faced multiple vulnerabilities: more than 80% of the Caribbean population lived in areas below 5 metres above sea level, which exacerbated the consequences of climate change and disasters related to natural phenomena. They also depended heavily on imported food and other imported goods and faced high debt levels. The pandemic had led to a decline in tourism as tourist arrivals plummeted by 64% in the first eight months of 2020.

¹ LC/FDS.4/3/Rev.1.

The crisis increased the risk of reprimarization and hindered diversified industrialization, with a bigger impact on the sectors with the greatest potential for technological growth and a smaller impact on natural-resource-intensive sectors. The labour market was particularly hard hit and unemployment in 2020 came to 10.7%. Labour informality levels were high (54%) and only 47.2% of employed persons were affiliated with or contributed to pension systems. In terms of digital technologies, mobile broadband penetration stood at 70% and fixed broadband at 14%, but one third of the population had limited or no access to the Internet and 46% of children aged 5–12 lived in households with no Internet connection. More than 42 million households had no Internet connection and, of those, half were in the two poorest quintiles of the population; 77% of rural households and 33% of urban households were not connected. The number of online companies tripled, but only 21.3% of employed persons could work from home (3% in the first quintile and 70% in the fifth quintile).

In terms of policy responses to the crisis, the countries of the region had taken measures in three areas: strengthening health systems, supporting household income and protecting production capacity, for which they had devoted fiscal expenditure averaging 4.3% of GDP; implementing State guarantees amounting to 2.5% of GDP; and supporting aggregate demand and maintaining macrofinancial stability through conventional and non-conventional instruments. Non-contributory social protection in 2020 represented 1.25% of 2019 per capita GDP and covered 84 million households and 326 million people. Emergency transfers limited the rise in poverty: without them, the number of people living in poverty would have been 230 million instead of 209 million and there would have been 98 million in extreme poverty instead of 78 million (the Gini index was 5.6% higher than in 2019). On the environmental front, with the right policies, the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on emissions could give the region time to comply with nationally determined contributions (NDCs): lower emissions provided an additional 3–4 years to make the investments needed to fulfil conditional NDCs and 6–7 years to fulfil unconditional NDCs.

The pandemic was heightening the risk to the comprehensive nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was at a critical point, with only one third of the targets on track to be achieved. On a positive note, almost all countries had mechanisms in place for the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda. Thirty-one countries in the region had such a coordination mechanism, although there was little involvement of planning authorities in the formulation and evaluation of pandemic-response measures. The countries of the region had taken ownership of the 2030 Agenda and national and local voluntary reviews were on the rise: worldwide, a third of the countries that would be presenting reviews for the third time in 2021 were from the region, and 28 of the 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean would have submitted their reports to the high-level political forum between 2016 and 2021. It was necessary to foster new engines of growth with redistributive results, and overcome the gaps and the trap affecting middle-income countries. Progressive taxation was needed, as well as the closure of technological and investment gaps, taking into account data protection and cybersecurity, changing the conversation with civil society and the private sector, and moving from indifference to solidarity.

In the session dedicated to comments on the report, moderated by Adriana Bolaños Argueta, Minister ad interim for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, it was noted that the report outlined an integrative approach to the multiple facets of the crisis, along with a set of proposals for action based on analysis and statistical projections. The serious economic, social and environmental consequences of the crisis highlighted the urgency of a transformation of production and consumption patterns. The recovery had to be transformative and the new reality had to be sustainable, inclusive, innovative, green and decarbonized. The title of the report made reference to “building forward better”, which gave it a positive spin, and the mention of “action” was also critical as it was important to produce a report that led to action to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The document was a valuable contribution to the *Global Sustainable Development Report* being prepared for launch in 2023, because it was data-based and highlighted how the

impact of the COVID-19 crisis had added to existing structural problems in Latin America and the Caribbean, adding further economic, social and environmental obstacles to achieving sustainable development and causing another decade to be lost. It highlighted how the 2030 Agenda led the region in a growth direction based on environmental sustainability and equality, which was different from the existing path. Equality was of utmost importance for environmental sustainability and for tackling the challenges of climate change. Women were on the front line of the crisis and were the hardest hit. The report brought together information that provided a good overview on how countries were coping with the situation. Availability of vaccinations was a new dimension of inequality and joint vaccine production in the region was a very important area of opportunity. All the trends described showed that only a third of SDG targets were on course to be met, so Latin America and the Caribbean needed assistance. Some measures had positive effects on one target and negative effects on another, so there was a need for policies that harmonized interactions between SDGs to support each other. A critical contribution of the report was laying out practical suggestions for bringing about transformative change via a new collaborative model between the State, the market and society, acting together in the best interests of development.

ECLAC was a very valuable resource in Latin America and the Caribbean and its history and thinking had positioned it as a global interlocutor. Given the crisis, it had to be borne in mind that the world had changed and there was no longer any way to return to the previous reality: there was nowhere to go back to. Global governance was at a juncture where it was not clear whether there was a change in global hegemony or whether there was any possibility of building democratic multilateral governance. There was a deterioration in the tools of global governance. One example of this was the process of production and distribution of vaccines. The value of the work of ECLAC was that it had incorporated new elements into the traditional discourse, and although it was an economic commission, it had successfully mainstreamed a holistic and interdisciplinary approach. The document presented to the Forum addressed the problems of today's world: the transformation of the world of work, automation and the difficulty of maintaining welfare systems, which were consolidated in developed countries and largely not consolidated in countries of the region. The pandemic had made transformative recovery a key concept. The document also referred to restructuring of the United Nations development system in the region, seeking synergies and cooperation among the agencies, funds and programmes of the system. The system also needed to be present at the local level, together with non-governmental organizations and research groups, for its work to have a real impact on the ground. The report also highlighted the need for greater regional integration, particularly in the post-COVID-19 recovery phase.

3. Dialogue on a resilient and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and achieving the 2030 Agenda

During the dialogue, moderated by Pilar Garrido, Minister of National Planning and Economic Policy of Costa Rica, the countries reaffirmed their commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, which served as a guide for addressing the needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2030 Agenda had enabled countries to make significant progress on social, economic and environmental fronts, but the pandemic had deleterious consequences on health, education, unemployment, poverty and food security and exposed existing gaps. In the response to the pandemic and its effects, in addition to health, social protection was prioritized. It was necessary to rebuild with equality and sustainability and build resilience while revitalizing the regional response to the pandemic, especially regarding equitable access to vaccines. The countries reaffirmed that multilateralism was the cornerstone of sustainable development and was crucial for tackling challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries must show greater commitment, responsibility, empathy and solidarity. Delegations welcomed the document presented by ECLAC and appreciated its timely recommendations for the region's recovery. The

importance of the concept of development in transition was stressed, as the classification of countries determined on the basis of GDP was not a multidimensional approach. Several countries highlighted the importance of local adaptation of the SDGs as a way to focus efforts on the most critical areas, and highlighted their progress in terms of environmental policies and climate change response, in particular energy transition initiatives.

The COVID-19 crisis had hindered the achievement of the SDGs and tested the resilience of societies and institutions. It had widened structural gaps and undermined the recovery capacity of the countries of the region. The systemic and comprehensive health crisis had revealed the lack of comprehensive policies to deal with systemic crises. The current development model was called into question: it was not inclusive or equitable and did not meet the needs of the population. The effects of the pandemic, which deepened pre-existing structural problems, had compounded that model and it was those worst affected who had benefited the least from development. Designing a recovery plan that included the pillars of sustainable development was vital. The recovery must be sustainable and inclusive to tackle the health, economic and, in particular, social effects of the crisis by means of lasting solutions, and the 2030 Agenda was the appropriate road map. Resilient recovery meant more than just fighting the pandemic: it required making cross-sectoral and coordinated decisions to close gaps and combat poverty and inequality. The main challenge was to ensure social justice and protection for the most disadvantaged, to leave no one behind. A collective response and a new social compact were needed to confront the current and future pandemics. More specifically, the COVID-19 pandemic had forced the region to adapt, innovating and applying new ways to work, study and coexist. While the importance of the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and their potential to overcome the barriers to access and participation that predated the crisis had become clear, access to technology must be expanded to all corners of the region.

Resilience-building was imperative for Caribbean countries: economies must evolve to withstand different types of shocks and not succumb to systemic failures. It was not enough to build back better; it was necessary to build forward better. Small island developing States (SIDS) were disproportionately affected by the pandemic, given their inherent vulnerability to disasters and high dependence on tourism, which had taken a severe hit. However, these countries being classified as middle-income countries based on the outdated tools for measuring wealth, they had no access to concessional financing. It was imperative to develop a vulnerability matrix, as per capita GDP did not reflect the vulnerability of SIDS economies. Cuba and Nicaragua reiterated that the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the United States—and which had intensified under the previous administration—harmed key sectors, such as tourism, and impeded countries' development. Furthermore, it was a systematic and flagrant violation of the human rights of the population and could be deemed a crime against humanity in times of pandemic.

Society's capacity to protect all people, especially the most vulnerable, must be strengthened. The increase in gender-based violence during the pandemic illustrated that need. The State must play a central role in the integration of all the rights enshrined in the 2030 Agenda, and public policies must be implemented at the territorial level if they were to have an impact. Public-private partnerships were important, as was the incorporation of business sectors, trade unions and civil society organizations. Countries called for cooperation and solidarity, with multilateralism as the cornerstone and a people-centred approach. They also recalled the objectionable undermining of the funding and structure of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the midst of the pandemic, the consequences of which, for example, were reflected in the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

In the presentations by civil society, the document “The Organizations of the Society Civil Latin America and the Caribbean before the decade of action for the implementation of Agenda 2030” was read out.² They highlighted the need to strengthen the democratic systems of the countries of the region and address the COVID-19 crisis with a human rights approach, promote decent work, respect the human rights of vulnerable groups, protect land and environmental defenders, journalists and human rights defenders, have disaggregated data on the fulfilment of human rights, address the widespread increase in poverty and hunger, contain the advance of religious and other forms of fundamentalism and guarantee the human right to migration. Organizations also called for financial, political and legal commitments to ensure compliance with the 2030 Agenda and the creation of an environment in which cooperation and solidarity, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda, were given the requisite capacities, policy frameworks and earmarked State resources. They called for the ratification of the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons, to guarantee a dignified old age for the people of the region.

4. Building Forward Better in the Caribbean post-COVID-19: critical issues to keep the 2030 Agenda in sight

In the session, the representatives of the Caribbean countries stated that the measures implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19 had exacted a heavy toll on the economic, social and psychological well-being of Caribbean citizens. Consideration had to be given to how to re-ignite the engine of growth and recover jobs in the Caribbean post-COVID-19, explore options for financial support to prevent a spiral of deepening debt, safeguard the welfare of women and children—who had been disproportionately affected by job losses in the informal economy, in particular, and by school closures—, and how to seize that opportunity to address both new and long-standing issues that continued to compromise the development trajectory of the Caribbean. There was a need for a new deal for human development in the countries of the region, including a change in the educational model. In the Caribbean, the pandemic had highlighted the importance of an innovative strategy for the effective management of non-communicable diseases as, in addition to COVID-19, the region was dealing with chronic non-communicable diseases that had compromised the ability to recover from the pandemic from a health perspective. Human-resource capacity had to be built in terms of people’s resilience, as human resources were the greatest resource in the fight against any disease. With regard to building resilience, consideration had to be given to the kind of communities that the subregion wanted to build. Opportunities had to be created for men and women to own assets, not merely perform income-generating activities.

The pandemic had affected social protection systems and public debt levels, and limited governments’ fiscal space and room for manoeuvre. In addition, Caribbean countries classified as middle-income had difficulty accessing financing, so innovative financing initiatives (such as the debt for climate change adaptation swap, the proposed creation of a resilience fund for the Caribbean countries and the inclusion of clauses for events such as hurricanes and pandemics in loan conditions) were necessary and welcome. A revisioning of the global financial architecture was needed to provide the means of implementation for sustainable development in small island developing States (SIDS). The proposed issuance of new SDRs and reallocation of surplus SDRs from developed to developing countries should be envisaged not only for low-income countries, but also for middle-income countries. The crisis was an opportunity to leverage the global discussion on financing for development, taking into account the context of COVID-19 and the specific needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS and middle-income countries in the Caribbean.

² The text of the declaration figures in annex 1.

Structural problems were compounded by the effects of climate change, which were causing increasingly frequent natural disasters that affected the security of the population and economic growth. Rebuilding after Hurricanes Irma and Maria was still under way. The Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts had not delivered for the most vulnerable countries and regions, so a new mechanism was needed. The representatives of the Caribbean countries stressed the importance of creating new governance models that were inclusive with real involvement of people in public policy and development. Building forward better had to be truly inclusive. It was also important to incorporate into the regional agenda the specificities of the Caribbean, including both challenges and strengths, and the Forum provided a space to advance in the development of those opportunities to build forward better.

Digitalization was key to ensuring that no one was left behind in the Caribbean and there was a need to invest in robust telecommunications infrastructure, reliable and free Wi-Fi for rural areas, digitalization of public services and in better equipping children to compete globally through their digital skills. There was a need for broad investment in technology to facilitate education system reform because, in the future, a resilient economy would need to be sufficiently diversified and would require a skilled workforce that could benefit from the new world of work. Services moved online during the pandemic had to be strengthened and extended to people in crisis, such as mental health and domestic violence services. Food security was fundamental and there was a need to strengthen supply chains, encourage households to grow—thus reducing the food import bill—, create more public-private partnerships for agribusiness and create spaces for small farmers to grow businesses.

The current challenges could only be addressed through transformative solutions. Nature-based solutions were fundamental to consolidate competitive economies in new production and consumption patterns, which were also cost-effective. In the Caribbean, a strategic approach that took into account the region's specificities was important to advance towards the achievement of the SDGs through the development of a blue economy, a green economy and creative industries, which would allow for greater participation in global value chains. It was also crucial to foster greater linkages in terms of trade and investment with the economies of the region in order to strengthen integration and the tools of multilateralism. ECLAC provided a platform for dialogue for the member and associate member States of the Caribbean. Despite the challenges facing the Caribbean because of COVID-19 and climate vulnerability, innovation, new solutions and partnerships could help Caribbean countries achieve the SDGs.

5. Contribution of the United Nations system

In this session, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a pre-recorded statement, said that over the past year, the COVID-19 crisis had dealt a setback to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Governments in Latin America had responded to the health and socioeconomic crisis with urgency, using available tools, and several had showed exemplary leadership in limiting transmission of the virus. The 2020 system-wide results report of the United Nations development system in Latin America and the Caribbean that was being presented showed how the United Nations at the regional level had contributed to the response to the crisis. The report sought to create greater transparency and accountability around the Organization's regional efforts and pointed to the vast potential of the Organization's regional assets. Thanks to the United Nations Secretary-General's reforms, the system was in a better position to support countries in the transition to a better future. The Deputy Secretary-General encouraged partners to continue contributing to the regional architecture and thanked ECLAC and UNDP for preparing the report. The United Nations system in Latin America and the Caribbean, she said, would be a steadfast partner in achieving more equal, just and sustainable economies and societies.

The Vice-Chairs of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean presented the 2020 system-wide results report of the United Nations development system in Latin America and the Caribbean, which aimed to show how the United Nations system had contributed to supporting the response of the region's countries to the pandemic to increasing the transparency, accountability and results-based management of its regional architecture. A summary was provided of the highlights of United Nations system-wide results at the regional level. The basis of the work undertaken came from the agreements reached by Member States on United Nations system reform to optimize structures and strengthen the collaboration of the regional commissions with the regional teams of the agencies, funds and programmes, resident coordinators and country teams. The Regional Collaborative Platform had been launched in November 2020, incorporating the duplicated coordination mechanisms that existed in the region and promoting collaboration among the entities of the United Nations development system that operated at the regional level. The Platform provided those same entities with a space to consolidate an agile and effective structure for development in the region and to engage with other crucial actors, including member States, to learn about their needs first-hand and be able to focus regional efforts and resources on providing context-specific responses. The Platform was chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and its Vice-Chairs were ECLAC and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). A total of 24 United Nations entities collaborated on the Platform, which had six thematic coalitions (climate change and resilience, crime and violence, equitable growth, governance and institutions, human mobility, and most recently, financing for development) and two cross-cutting thematic pillars (one on youth and another on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls).

Key United Nations system-wide results at the regional level included the support provided to Member States, United Nations country teams and United Nations resident coordinators in their response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, through evidence-based policy guidance, capacity-building support and establishment of regional knowledge-sharing and communication platforms. Inter-agency initiatives had been launched to provide integrated responses to the challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Joint actions had been taken to address the structural causes of inequality and promote a transformative recovery with equality and sustainability in line with the SDGs, as well as actions to foster cooperation and partnerships, to accelerate SDG implementation. A number of countries highlighted the contribution of the United Nations system during the pandemic. The only way to address global challenges comprehensively and inclusively was through strong and effective multilateralism, and a global crisis required interlinked global responses, through the multilateral forum par excellence that was the United Nations. In that regard, the United Nations system was a great ally of the countries of the region, and had redoubled its efforts to support them, showing efficient coordination among entities, organizing the use of available resources and offering tailored assistance based on a comprehensive vision of the region's challenges. The representatives also expressed their satisfaction with the process of reforming the system—given that there was always room to improve processes and increase efficiency—and their wish that the Regional Collaborative Platform continue to grow stronger and contribute to the needs of countries, in line with national priorities and in support of achievement of the SDGs.

6. Panel 1: Health and the economy—a false dichotomy?

Panel 1 was moderated by Alberto Arenas de Mesa, Chief of the Social Development Division of ECLAC and the panellists were Carissa F. Etienne, Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); Joy St. John, Executive Director of the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA); Alejandro Werner, Director of the Western Hemisphere Department of the International Monetary Fund (IMF); Blanca Margarita Ovelar de Duarte, National Senator of Paraguay and President of ParlAmericas; Mónica Jasis, focal point of the group on migrants and persons displaced by disasters or conflicts of the mechanism for

civil society participation in the Sustainable Development Agenda and in the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development; Román Macaya, Chair of the Board of the Costa Rican Social Security Institute; Daniel Innerarity, Director of the Institute of Democratic Governance of Spain; and Martha Delgado Peralta, Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs of Mexico.

Panellists stated that health was a human right and a fundamental public good, which must be guaranteed by the State. The pandemic had made it clear that full access to quality health-care systems was essential for inclusive and sustainable economic development. However, the ongoing health crisis had left the region with weak, fragmented health-care systems hampered by partial coverage, difficulties relating to access and inadequate human resources, technology and infrastructure, along with social protection systems hindered by significant gaps in coverage, insufficient benefits and financing problems. The region's economic performance in 2020 had been one of its weakest and although a recovery was expected in 2021, a return to 2019 activity levels was unlikely by the end of the year. Social gaps appeared to have widened considerably. With regard to the economic policy response, fiscal support in the region was much greater than expected based on the countries' fiscal space. The decline in international interest rates, the fall in investment and the increase in households' savings created space for greater deficit financing. In 2021, even if output recovered, employment would still show gaps and the hardest-hit households and small and medium-sized enterprises would continue to need support. It was important to ensure the soundness of public finances for the future, but there also had to be room to support families, businesses, and the health and education sectors.

Parliaments had a crucial role to play in exercising political oversight of pandemic responses, passing emergency legislation and promoting transparency around the measures implemented, in a scenario where it was important to maintain public confidence in government action and to have the necessary information. They also had a key role to play in a green recovery, for example through the approval of budgets. In the region, there were inadequacies in relation to health infrastructure, education services, connectivity, access to services and policies by women and informal workers, lax implementation of measures, increased workloads for women and gender-based violence. There were also opportunities, such as the strengthening of existing programmes, the good performance of consolidated health networks in some countries and the maintenance of food programmes.

Crises of various kinds were commonplace around the world and political systems did not have the capacity to recognize, manage and anticipate them, because they only dealt with the urgent issues, focused more on the symptoms than the causes, and were concerned with the voters of the present and not those of the future. Societies were not prepared for "anticipatory governance". A system was needed to manage future crises, in areas such as pensions, health and climate, in order to anticipate them and act in a timely manner. The aim was to improve the strategic coherence of actions, with more information on the long-term effects of decisions and on the type of risks faced. Only then would there be a shift in the focus of policymaking, from repairing to shaping. Drawing on best practices and past experiences was not enough. The future had to be incorporated into analyses, so that policy responses were not belated and weighed down by the cost of remedial measures, which was always higher than that of anticipatory measures. Preparations had to be made for a world in which crises were not just one-off events, with policymaking capable of reinventing itself and adapted to an increasingly unpredictable reality. The multilateral arena offered many areas of opportunity for building back better, with more resilient, just and inclusive systems. In light of the fact that available vaccines were highly concentrated in some countries, there was need of a spirit of multilateral defence, based on the understanding that the safety of everyone depended on the safety of all. Human health and the economy were closely linked to the environment, biodiversity and the fight

against climate change, and in the future it would be necessary to analyse how those factors influenced the emergence of pandemics.

Human life was critical and there should never be any question of choosing between economic activity and saving lives. Sustained and collective action was a challenge in a pandemic that had claimed 1.27 million lives in the region and impacted all, wreaking havoc on economies, jobs, lives and livelihoods, and stretching systems to their limit. The evidence of the past 12 months was clear: there was no substitute for effective leadership and science-based public health measures to control the pandemic, save lives and support economic activity. To end the pandemic and accelerate inclusive and sustainable recovery to achieve the SDGs, four critical actions had to be prioritized: (i) sustained and continued intervention by countries in public health; (ii) the reduction of inequality, a central linchpin for action during the pandemic and economic recovery, (iii) public investment in resilient, responsive and adaptive health systems based on the guarantee of rights, protection and universal access to health, and (iv) the production and availability of and equitable access to pharmaceutical products, vaccines, medical supplies and diagnostics in a region characterized by low production of vaccines and little private sector participation in that area. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) was working with ECLAC and other partners to support the health, science and technology sectors to increase health product manufacturing capacity in the region. There had also been a proposal to convene a meeting of health ministers of the region in 2021 to discuss the issue and to ensure that the region had the necessary medical supplies to meet current and future needs. The region could not afford to merely react to the current pandemic, but needed to anticipate and plan well into the future to be better prepared for the next pandemic.

In the Caribbean countries, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic had been managed with the support of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat. The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), which had built on the foundation of functional cooperation in health, had been given specific mandates and interpreted the global and regional guidelines of PAHO in the Caribbean context and reality. A lot of activities were strongly supported through international development partners. Various organizations, such as the Regional Health Communications Network, had helped tailor communication to counteract social media pushing vaccine hesitancy. The Caribbean Regulatory System was being used to ensure the availability of quality vaccines in the CARICOM market.

Health was a human right and not a commodity, but access to the vaccines had become an auction, which was why there was need of a fund within the United Nations system that could provide access to vaccines. Latin America and the Caribbean had to weigh in on multilateral discussions, especially on health issues, multilateral investment and climate change. The pandemic would reduce countries' per capita income and increase poverty and public debt, so local and national consensus would be essential to carry out the necessary reforms. Two subregions faced particular challenges: in the Caribbean, vulnerability to the effects of climate change; in Central America, migration processes. Trust had collapsed in the countries of the region and the low credibility of politicians would hinder the recovery. Once herd immunity had been achieved, social, political and educational "immunity" had to be addressed in order to be prepared for serious multifactor crises. The instruments used to assess the situation were outdated and unsuited to the complexity of today's world, and possible futures had to be anticipated.

The pandemic had highlighted the serious global asymmetries in the areas of finance, climate, health and access to vaccines in a world where "islands of immunity" seemed to be emerging because of limited access. IMF was making significant efforts and considering issuing new SDRs to support all countries. The region had to think collectively, and the initiatives of Argentina and Mexico with regard to vaccines, as well as the efforts of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), were commendable. Support was needed for the building of a health-care manufacturing industry in the

region. Examples of much needed multilateralism were the support for PAHO in the implementation of the COVAX Facility and the dialogue that had to be maintained with countries in the hemisphere and with countries with a surplus of vaccines. At the country level, the pandemic showed that countries with social protection and primary health-care systems were the best performers; the only solution was to create care societies that gave priority to social protection and the management of public goods, and to build new social compacts.

7. Panel 2: Crisis, recovery and transformation in the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals

Panel 2 was moderated by Mario Cimoli, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECLAC, and the panellists were Cristina Gallach Figueras, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and for Ibero-America and the Caribbean of Spain; Camillo Gonsalves, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning, Sustainable Development and Information Technology of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC); André Lara Resende, Adjunct Senior Research Scholar at the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) of Columbia University; José Francisco Pacheco, Member of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Costa Rica; Maurizio Bezzeccheri, Director for Latin America of Enel; and Laura Becerra Pozos, deputy focal point of the NGO networks, groupings, organizations and platforms group of the mechanism for civil society participation in the Sustainable Development Agenda and in the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.

The panellists said that although achieving the SDGs by 2030 now seemed difficult, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would remain the basis for reflecting on the development model. In that regard, it was proposed that discussions take place, in this and other forums, on the possibility of adjusting some of the SDG targets, to avoid the frustration of not achieving them by the agreed deadline. The relationship between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean could contribute to implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In the first few years following adoption of the Agenda, Europe had focused on the environmental aspect, while in Latin America and the Caribbean there had been great progress on planning of public policies in various areas. Europe had moved to a more global vision of the Agenda only when the European institutions underwent a renewal at the end of 2019 and a major project of modernization, digitalization and inclusion policies was launched. However, the two regions were the most affected by the pandemic and the Agenda was at the heart of the European economic recovery plan, through the allocation of public resources for employability, digital transformation and equality. Europe should provide decisive support to Latin America and the Caribbean, which had fewer resources to overcome the crisis, by speeding up the signing of trade agreements between the two regions, strengthening the European presence in the region's business fabric in order to be part of its socioeconomic and industrial development and consolidating social, business, political and other ties.

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean faced great difficulties in accessing the financial resources needed to implement social, industrial development, education, ecological transition and energy policies, among other areas, that were necessary to implement the sweeping changes required by the 2030 Agenda. Although it was positive that the major economic and financial organizations were considering issuing new special drawing rights for the least developed countries, the "middle-income" label given to some countries should be removed, as it made access to financing more difficult and did not reflect the reality of the countries.

The pandemic had shown that all countries were vulnerable to risk and that it was important to envisage, beyond policies to fight poverty, welfare states in which everyone had at least access to health and food. The debate about the size of the State no longer made sense; in mature and democratic societies, an adequate social compact could not be maintained by cutting back on the functions of the State, which should make life easier for citizens and provide services. Funding should be the product of long-term planning and budgets should be results-oriented. The institutional capacity of governments to execute such financing was also very relevant. It was vital to strengthen budget execution mechanisms, to improve the capacity to transform funding into goods and services for society, and to ensure that funds contributed to meeting the goals to which they were allocated. Regarding the role of the private sector in development, there were increasingly interesting examples of the private sector implementing development programmes with good results for the population, without excessive profit. The debate on the transformation of the State needed to take into account the new role of the private sector, and diversified financing had to be sought that provided a response to countries' main problems and did not drive away private investment.

The implementation of innovative financing instruments such as green sovereign bonds could be extremely effective in enabling States to make progress towards the SDGs and fulfil their nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. The energy transition could generate many stable jobs and increase competitiveness. The COVID-19 pandemic had transformed the world of work, creating a need for greater flexibility and accelerating the need for new types of training and skills, as well as driving tremendous innovation in production and distribution. Governments should be guided by the 2030 Agenda to design measures and programmes with a more holistic, cross-cutting and multidimensional vision, and dialogue with civil society was important for this. Participants were called on to recognize civil society actors as development actors and to include them in decision-making processes, not merely consult or invite them to participate. Multilateralism and cooperation in the international system both urgently needed to be strengthened, to be able to address the pandemic in better conditions.

The countries of the Caribbean had done reasonably well in minimizing loss of life and severe infection from COVID-19; economically, however, they had been greatly affected. Most Caribbean countries had experienced double-digit economic declines in 2020 and a return to some semblance of normalcy required vaccines and jobs. The contribution of business owners was critical in the pandemic and in the recovery phase, so to keep businesses afloat they had been granted moratoriums on loan repayments and utility charges. In addition, small community infrastructure projects could create temporary construction jobs and contribute to the long-term resilience of communities. Transformative sustainable development was not possible without additional fiscal space, but Caribbean countries would not have that space without debt relief. Added to this were the costs of the hurricane seasons, which Caribbean countries had to cover with reconstruction loans. The debt burden of these countries was not due to bad economic planning, but to the catastrophes that hit them periodically. The Caribbean was trying to borrow its way out of this crisis as it had with all previous crises caused by external factors such as extreme weather events or the global financial crisis. A decade of growth had been lost after the global financial crisis. Because of the pandemic, there was an increasingly real possibility of another period of decline. Therefore, despite the start of the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals, there would be a lost generation in the Caribbean. Unless it was accepted that achieving the SDGs was impossible, it would be necessary to think about how to accelerate their implementation, as most Caribbean countries would not return to 2019 levels of activity until 2023, once the pandemic was over. As a result, there would not be a decade to achieve the SDGs, but just seven years. Neither recovery nor acceleration of SDG implementation would be possible without increased fiscal space, which in turn was impossible without debt relief. All initiatives (climate finance, debt for climate adaptation swaps and debt relief) needed to be put in place immediately if a lost decade in the Caribbean was to be avoided.

8. Presentation on the Regional Knowledge Platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean (SDG Gateway) and on issue-based coalitions and working groups, by the Vice-Chairs of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean

In this presentation, the Vice-Chairs of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean said that the Regional Knowledge Platform on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean (SDG Gateway) was the fruit of collaboration among all the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations in the region and responded to the Secretary-General's request to present transformative proposals to establish regional knowledge management hubs. It was developed in a joint effort, with coordination and technical support from ECLAC and UNDP. A reference entry point for all information on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in the region, it aimed to provide countries and United Nations country teams with specialized information to respond to the national needs related to the 2030 Agenda. It facilitated the monitoring and follow-up of progress towards the SDGs at country and regional levels, and fostered collaboration on sustainable development across all United Nations development system entities. The Platform provided an overview of the 2030 Agenda, the related institutional architecture, the SDGs and their targets, and the indicators for measuring progress on each of them; information on the countries of the region, their institutional frameworks for the SDGs and national statistical follow-up of the SDGs; data for global, regional and national statistical follow-up; and information on each of the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations and their work in relation to the 2030 Agenda. Other resources included global data from the United Nations Statistics Division and data from the CEPALSTAT database that could be used for geographic visualization, as well as information from academia, civil society, local governments, parliaments and the private sector pertaining to the 2030 Agenda.

Issue-based coalitions constituted a form of inter-agency coordination to work more effectively in support of country teams. The agreed principles in that regard were recalled and contextualized, with policies relating to transforming the production matrix, effective governance, social protection based on a universal approach, more flexible and sustainable access to financing for development, protection of vulnerable populations and systemic risk management. The aim of this coordination mechanism was to respond to challenges in an organized and effective manner, supporting country teams in the short term with a view to rebuilding towards a "normal" far better than the pre-pandemic one, but also addressing the structural causes behind the weaknesses that needed to be addressed. Coordination among United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to respond the challenges was based on a set of issue-based coalitions on climate change and resilience, crime and violence, equitable growth, financing for development, governance and institutions, and human mobility, each of which included thematic areas, with gender and youth as cross-cutting areas. It was a coordination mechanism for a new, more effective and agile approach to inter-agency work that would better respond to a changing reality.

In the discussions following the presentation, representatives noted that the Regional Knowledge Platform would improve the coordination between regional initiatives for the development of indicators and the implementation of the SDGs. One such initiative was the Statistical and Geospatial Framework for the Americas (MEGA) that was being implemented in collaboration with ECLAC as the cartographic base of CEPALSTAT to introduce a geospatial component, which was critical for decision-making. Geospatial tools could enrich and reinforce the platform by providing a space for sharing experiences, strengthening national and regional capacities, and narrowing gaps in countries' technical development. The information presented in the Regional Knowledge Platform could serve as a bridge between national and regional levels to foster dialogue, leverage experiences and good practices, and avoid duplication of effort. As a permanent reference tool, it would facilitate the follow-up of the Goals with a view to providing more effective public policy recommendations. The Regional Knowledge Platform was the manifestation of the concept of a

regional public good, offering an opportunity for dialogue between producers and users of information, as well as a space for capacity-building in the production of statistical information. Collaboration was required not only among national statistical offices but also with new stakeholders. The Platform helped to close gaps because not all countries had the capacity to develop their own. For national statistical offices, it could constitute a space for learning and innovation, as part of their commitment to information-sharing and public policy guidance, by providing information that would increase equality for vulnerable populations, and in particular data that was sufficiently disaggregated to reflect the heterogeneity of the region and leave no one behind.

9. Intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

The intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development were adopted. These had been previously submitted to the countries for a series of consultations facilitated by Costa Rica, the country serving as Chair of the Forum, through the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations in New York. On the adoption of the conclusions and recommendations, the Chair underscored that the document struck an important balance between the ongoing implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and thanked delegations for their participation and flexibility in the consultation process.

10. Closing round table “Building an inclusive and effective pathway to achieve the 2030 Agenda within the context of the decade of action and post-pandemic recovery from COVID-19”

The participants in the round table “Building an inclusive and effective pathway to achieving the 2030 Agenda within the context of the decade of action and post-pandemic recovery COVID-19” agreed that there was a need for immediate action and unified efforts for the decade of action and to meet the challenges of the pandemic. Latin America and the Caribbean had to seize that opportunity to strengthen regional integration once and for all. Universal, timely and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines was critical to the global recovery and, as a global public good, had to be incorporated into the themes of the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals. On the road to building forward better, efforts had to be anchored in human rights, which represented the best vaccine against hunger, poverty, inequality, and many other ills facing humanity. A new social contract with opportunities for all was also required. The experience of the pandemic provided countries with an opportunity to implement policies for progressive social equality and to make progress in relation to one of the main challenges facing the region: reducing inequality (SDG 10). Equality was a prerequisite for economic growth. The welfare model had to be broader and multisectoral, and to incorporate equality and sustainability. Sectors that could drive growth with sustainability included the energy transition, sustainable mobility and urban planning, sustainable tourism, the circular economy, the digital revolution, the health-care manufacturing industry and the care economy. The importance of full and equal access to health, education, nutrition, digital technologies, drinking water and other public services was highlighted. The pandemic had shown that countries with stronger health and social protection systems were more resilient to such crises. The decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals had to be accompanied by more efficient coordination among all entities of the United Nations system. There was a need for effective multilateralism that actually improved the living conditions of people on the ground. The contribution of voluntary national reviews to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, by linking national actions with global multilateral policies and aligning the efforts of different actors within each country, were underscored. Countries were already off track from achieving

the 2030 Agenda before the pandemic, and there were five areas that had to be the priorities of the recovery: SDG alignment of public policy, job creation, private sector collaboration, social protection and domestic finance. With regard to debt, political consensus must be forged for a comprehensive solution, working through subregional and regional organizations to support what was already happening at the global level, and engaging with private sector creditors and debtors.

The need for useful and relevant data to better assess the situation of the countries was underscored; more sophisticated and multidimensional measurements of poverty were needed. Middle-income countries had to have access to international financing on more favourable terms in order to address the urgent need for liquidity to meet the challenges imposed by COVID-19. The debt levels of the Caribbean countries were unsustainable. Those countries needed debt relief urgently, and for many of them the only way forward was through investment in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Nature-based solutions were not only good for society, but could also be cost-effective. Civil society was calling for a paradigm shift: more citizen participation, more democracy and human rights, more equality and harmony with nature were needed. Human rights and environmental defenders were also in urgent need of protection. In that regard, the ratification of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) was important. Partnerships such as the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean aimed to maximize the capacities of each member and thus support countries, for example, in the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In a video message, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, said that leaders of countries around the world faced the immense and demanding task of addressing the multiple challenges of COVID-19, a virus that could not be met with denial or misinformation, a health emergency, a socioeconomic crisis not seen in generations, the ultimate revelation of an unacceptable pandemic of inequality and discrimination. The crisis had hit Latin America and the Caribbean particularly hard, with a disproportionate impact on groups experiencing marginalization and discrimination. Even before the crisis, the socioeconomic determinants of health were the main reasons for the lack of access to quality services for millions of people. In recent years, many countries in the region had experienced growing protests that generally focused on inadequate access to economic, social and cultural rights, discrimination, impunity and allegations of corruption. The socioeconomic and humanitarian crisis unfolding in the wake of the pandemic could further deepen that discontent and trigger a new wave of social unrest. Overall, the COVID-19 crisis could mean a reversal of hard-won gains in women's health, economic participation and equal rights. Data were more than numbers, they represented people, their families, their stories and their dreams, —and, in the present situation, they represented millions of people being left behind.

In order to truly to build back better, there was only one way forward: anchoring efforts in human rights and in building a new social contract with opportunities for all, as the Secretary-General had encouraged in his call to action for human rights. That was precisely the message that the regional Forum had to convey to the high-level political forum on sustainable development of the Economic and Social Council: people and human rights had to be at the centre of sustainable development and at the centre of the response to the pandemic.

Building back better meant taking action against inequalities through a commitment to economic, social and cultural rights, and ECLAC had made several very important proposals in that regard. Universal health coverage was a priority. Rights had to be realized gradually and that had to be reflected in the budget and in efforts to make the best use of available resources. Building back better was impossible with austerity measures or economic policies that further concentrated wealth, and progressive tax systems were crucial so that those who had more would contribute more to the recovery of all. The world needed new levels of

global cooperation and international solidarity, as well as a fairer globalization model. Everyone had a role to play and people's participation was not only a right, it was key to an inclusive and sustainable recovery. In 2020, there had been serious restrictions on civic space and civil and political rights such as freedom of movement, association and assembly, and freedom of expression and opinion. Some emergency measures had been necessary to curb the spread of the virus, but in some cases States had unnecessarily and disproportionately restricted fundamental freedoms and civic space and undermined the rule of law. Attacks against human rights defenders and journalists continued, including through smear campaigns on social networks, and there were cases of arbitrary detention for curfew violations affecting the most vulnerable segments of the population. The capacity and willingness of States to investigate environmental crimes and to protect nature and indigenous lands and territories had declined. Indigenous peoples had reported the invasion of their lands by actors from extractive industries, who carried out illegal logging and drug trafficking activities. Building back better meant protecting the right of all people to a healthy environment. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights warmly welcomed the forthcoming entry into force of the Escazú Agreement, which aimed to guarantee the right of all people to a healthy environment and to protect human rights defenders in environmental matters, and encouraged countries that had not yet ratified it to do so promptly. Historical inequities within or among countries were being repeated in the distribution of vaccine. The pandemic had made it clear that people would only be safe when everyone was safe. Vaccines had to be accessible to all, and not just the vaccine against COVID-19, but the vaccine against hunger, poverty, inequality, lack of universal health care and a social protection system capable of dealing with future crises for so many other ills facing humanity. It was a vaccine developed from previous crises, including two world wars, and the name of that vaccine was human rights.

In her concluding remarks, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that the regional consensus reached at the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development supported the urgent need to build fair and sustainable societies that addressed inequality and guaranteed citizenship and rights, as well as the undelayable urgent need to act together as a region to ensure access to COVID-19 vaccines and to share capacities and experiences so that the entire population was vaccinated. The Forum was a space that allowed the region to speak with its own identity about its realities and specificities, to recognize its rich diversity, and to encourage and align shared aspirations. Once again, Latin America and the Caribbean had demonstrated its enormous commitment to unity, cooperation, multilateralism and transformative recovery, which was key to implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The region had committed itself to overcoming inertia, to not returning to a pattern of development with slow growth, low productivity, insufficient employment, poverty, inequality and acute environmental and social crises, because there was nowhere to go back to: the world had changed.

It had been said loud and clear that equality was not the result of economic growth; it was a necessary, indispensable prerequisite for efficiency and for growth itself. The region had reiterated the urgency of moving towards a care society and had firmly recognized that when one woman advanced and transformed, everyone advanced, because when women advanced, society advanced. The pandemic had taught very important lessons: there were severe global asymmetries that had become even more evident because of the pandemic. The world had already seen financial and climate asymmetries; now, it was witnessing asymmetry in access to health and vaccines. It was experiencing new geopolitics of creation, production and distribution of vaccines. That is why the challenge of vaccination was at the heart of the current situation. Although the COVAX Facility was not a complete solution for the region, PAHO needed to be supported in the implementation and expansion of that initiative, and there had to be dialogue with the countries in the hemisphere that would have surplus vaccines and a mechanism for these vaccines to be distributed in the hemisphere. In that scenario, it was time for Latin America and the Caribbean to act collectively and seize the opportunity to achieve regional integration without further delay. ECLAC had proposed strengthening regional coordination mechanisms for acquiring vaccines, promoting the full functioning of the COVAX

Facility, conducting awareness-raising campaigns for those who did not want to be vaccinated, pursuing negotiations with countries that would have a surplus of vaccines, exchanging information on best practices in the vaccination process and promoting the flexibilization of intellectual property systems.

The region had to support CELAC. The Government of Mexico had made an earnest effort to change the conversation about vaccines. As the Pro Tempore Chair of the Community, it had spoken to the world and has presented to the United Nations an initiative for equitable access, not only to vaccines, but also to medicines and supplies. In addition, initiatives such as the joint production of vaccines between Mexico and Argentina should lead to better regional integration to create a health-care manufacturing industry. That required more equitable multilateralism. Those efforts should draw on the synergies provided by integration systems such as CARICOM and the Central American Integration System (SICA). Societies in the region needed to build resilience to absorb change and to revitalize and recreate themselves. The only way out was towards a care society, a society that espoused social protection, health care, universal access to public services (such as Internet and drinking water), and stewardship of the planet. Regarding this point, there were two different aspects: on one hand, supporting Caribbean countries on issues such as debt relief, going beyond the classification of countries by per capita income, and on the other hand forging new political and social compacts and coalitions that promoted a protective care society in which women would no longer shoulder the burden of care.

Value and wealth needed to be generated, not just extracted without innovation and only scarce job creation. Hence the concern over the tendency towards reprimarization of the economies. To boost sectors that supported a transformative recovery, there needed to be industrial and technological policies that met environmental criteria. Even in the midst of the crisis, it was imperative to return to the path of sustainable development and to ensure that the transformative reconstruction had environmentally sustainable foundations. The scientific community had repeatedly warned about the seriousness of the environmental issue. Critical planetary thresholds had been breached, and the natural environment that sustained humankind could bear no more. ECLAC had insisted that the environment was crucial to connect the emergency with the recovery and with the decade of action, to address the planet's major challenges. An economic recovery with environmental sustainability and equality allowed for a faster resurgence from the recession, with substantial improvements in quality of life and health. That required policies that were aligned with the 2030 Agenda, new domestic and international political coalitions, and new forms of international cooperation to support the change in the development pattern. The arduous but successful process of adopting and implementing the Escazú Agreement testified to this being possible. Continuing to do the same thing could not be expected to produce different results. Therefore, it was crucial to resume actions to meet the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Middle-income countries urgently needed access to international financing on more favourable terms, to meet their pressing need for liquidity to address the challenges created by COVID-19. Without exception, all countries in the region had experienced a deterioration in their fiscal situation and an increase in general government debt. It bore repeating that the debt levels of the Caribbean countries were unsustainable. They already had been beforehand, but the slump in tourism had increased the urgent need for debt relief for the Caribbean, without further delay. Latin America had to show solidarity and contribute to overcoming the double asymmetry faced by Caribbean countries: they did not pollute, but they suffered enormously from the effects of pollution in other countries. Latin America and the Caribbean could not continue to tolerate its hitherto hallmark structural injustice. It was time to put an end to the culture of privilege and inequalities and to eradicate poverty in all its forms. The inefficiency of unsustainability and inequality was concerning. The fact that there was no full access to health, to education, to nutrition or to digital technologies was inefficient now and would be even more inefficient in the future. The world had changed, but not for the better: national, regional and global asymmetries had worsened.

Christian Guillermet Fernández, Deputy Minister for Multilateral Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, as Chair of the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, noted that the text of conclusions and recommendations was a clear road map for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and a common regional position for the high-level political forum. He also noted that there was a consensus on the region's priorities in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, as reflected in the Political Declaration on a Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean, adopted at the thirty-eighth session of ECLAC, held under the chairship of Costa Rica in October 2020. In closing, he urged the countries of the region to act with a united voice in the multilateral system to achieve a different future for the region.

Annex 1

CIVIL SOCIETY DECLARATION

Mecanismo de Participación
de la Sociedad Civil de América
Latina y el Caribe para el
Desarrollo Sostenible - MeSCALC

**The Organizations of the Society Civil Latin America and the Caribbean before the decade of
action for the implementation of Agenda 2030
Message to the IV CEPAL Forum- March 2021**

The constitution of the Civil Society Participation Mechanism in the III Regional Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Countries on Sustainable Development in 2018 was an important advance, but still not enough to ensure dialogue in a meaningful way between government representatives and civil society in the Regional Forums. The governments of Latin America and the Caribbean in the current context of COVID-19, have moved further away from complying with the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. The serious situation generated by the pandemic in our peoples is not reflected in most of the countries, in an attitude of dialogue and exchange with civil society, who are the urgent gaps that they must address in order to advance in the 2030 Agenda and reduce the negative impact of the pandemic. According to ECLAC scenarios, the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean judged a fall in domestic product (GDP) of -9.1% in 2020, with decreases of -9.4% in South America, -8, 4 % in Central America and Mexico and -7.9% for the Caribbean excluding Guyana, whose strong growth leads the subregional total to a smaller contraction (-5.4%).¹

Five years after the approval of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, our region shows acute economic stagnation, aggravated by the COVID 19 pandemic that increased poverty, structural inequality and the gap towards the interior of the countries to exorbitant levels and between nations, the regressive distribution of income simultaneously with the fall of the GDP, the increase of the foreign debt, the dismantling of public services and their privatization; coexisting with high levels of corruption in an environment of impunity; with human rights violations, the increase in authoritarian tendencies, the persecution and criminalization of human, economic, social, environmental, cultural and labor rights defenders; the repression and criminalization of citizen protest, as well as the advance of lawfare that promotes polarization and political violence.

The neoliberal policies adopted by the majority of the countries of our region that hinder the achievement of the SDGs, which is why today a radical change in the action of governments is even more urgent, and the implementation of a New Social Contract for the implementation of

¹ [Contracción de la actividad económica de la región se profundiza a causa de la pandemia: caerá -9,1% en 2020 | Comunicado de prensa | Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe \(cepal.org\)](#)

new models of production and development, which guarantee the realization of human rights and the acceleration of the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda. Now is the opportunity for governments, together with civil society, to consider the changes necessary to avoid deterioration of the planet and recognize the protection of life and the guarantee of human rights, as State policies. From the civil society organizations of Latin America and the Caribbean, through the Participation Mechanism before the Sustainable Development Forum, we hope, based on a horizontal and transparent dialogue, better accountability and democratic ownership of the Agenda. 2030, to launch the true and necessary political and social transformations and changes in the development paradigm, the starting point for the progress of sustainable development.

In this context, we reiterate the need to:

- 1) Strengthen our democratic systems and face the coronavirus crisis from a human rights-based approach, establishing progressive economic policies, with systems that guarantee prevention measures, without deepening economic deterioration, as is recorded in most countries in the region. For this, national strategies are needed that effectively incorporate non-governmental actors, trade unions and social movements, particularly civil society organizations and the most vulnerable populations. We note with concern that most of the countries in the region are not modifying tax systems to transform them into comprehensive, equitable and transparent progressive systems, or establishing mechanisms to avoid tax evasion and avoidance, capital flight, opacity and indebtedness. Several developed countries have debated and approved taxes on large fortunes, some in extraordinary ways such as Argentina, to compensate for the unequal distribution of wealth, whose gap between rich and poor is widening during the pandemic. The opposition to these advances is still very strong. We are particularly concerned about the setback in relation to past health cooperation, particularly in the distribution of vaccines against COVID 19. With more than four months of approval of more than seven vaccines worldwide, 90% of the Vaccines were distributed among the ten richest countries on the planet and many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have not yet received any doses. The WHO COVID 19 Response Fund has failed to provide effective samples for the most vulnerable countries.
- 2) Promote decent work, which is a demand not met by the governments of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. The ILO has described the employment crisis in the region as a tragedy, observing the loss of 34 million jobs in 2020. The crisis generated by the pandemic was preceded by multiple crises that caused a situation of vulnerability for millions of workers affected by unemployment, employed in informal and precarious conditions in multiple ways. Communication and information technologies, teleworking, platform work and care work have been fundamental to provide societies with substantial services in the midst of the health emergency. However, the people who work in these jobs were always ignored and their rights were ignored. But the pandemic has also destroyed millions of formal jobs, affecting collective bargaining and weakening the

already fragile social dialogue in the region. The ravages of neoliberalism in our countries are as strong as the virus in people's bodies.

The appreciable gap between the performance necessary to achieve the goal of eradicating extreme poverty and the situation in the region in recent years - affirms ECLAC - is a call for attention, that if current trends are maintained, it is not possible that the region as a whole will meet SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth). Therefore, strengthen GDP growth and investment policies, as well as proactive policies in the labor market.

It is urgent to promote decent work, as well as social protection policies aimed at avoiding unemployment, reducing informality and job insecurity and the failure of small and medium-sized enterprises, and mechanisms to guarantee a minimum income to the most vulnerable population in times of crisis like the ones we are experiencing, avoiding a further increase in poverty. The non-recognition of informal workers left them outside the containment policies, forcing them to not respect isolation, with the risks that this implies. Today more than ever, "leaving no one behind" and a New Social Pact -as the ILO proclaims- depends on achieving a development model that contains all of us and that, without privileges, allows all sectors of society to contribute with equity.

Despite the evidence of an increase in violence, especially against women and children in the context of COVID19, governments did not take significant measures to stop it. In a few cases, alternative reporting channels for women and girls were strengthened but their reduction was not achieved; rather, progressive and alarming increases were observed in the statistics of violence suffered by women, youth and children in the region.

It is urgent, the protection, promotion, respect and guarantee of human rights to a life free of violence, as well as the sanction and effective enforcement of laws and policies that meet the needs of the most vulnerable groups and ensure the eradication of any type of violence and / or discrimination.

3) The civil society of the countries warns about human rights that are not being respected for all groups placed in vulnerable situations such as in Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Honduras and Guatemala. There are evidence and complaints of violation of rights such as housing, education, access to water, free movement, to land and territory, and a life free of violence. It is worrying that in many countries the impunity of those responsible for human rights violations continues. Without work, education and social security, violence grows. The standards implemented by governments that guarantee the well-being and respect for the dignity of the elderly, another of the groups most vulnerable in the context of COVID19, has consisted of promoting social and mandatory isolation as the only preventive health measure. In many countries, the information disseminated reinforces the need for social distancing among this population. However, there is great concern about the increase in violence against older people.

It is imperative to stop the generalized violence, mainly towards children, adolescents, youth, the elderly, women, the LGBTQI + population, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, migrants, informal workers, such as street vendors, workers / sexual relations, people with disabilities and people living with or affected by HIV / AIDS, which must change to avoid further deterioration of our populations.

4) The protection of defenders of land and the environment, journalists and human rights defenders is worrying due to the increasing criminalization, persecution, penalization and violation of fundamental rights that is exercised on defenders, a situation that it was exacerbated in the context of a pandemic. Latin America is the most lethal region for land and environmental defenders, with Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala being the countries with the highest number of murders in 2019 according to Global Witness. This problem is particularly observed in Colombia where social leaders have been assassinated. The case of Brazil is very serious, given that it is the fourth country with the largest number of human rights activists. The Brazilian government is at war against the indigenous peoples and the Quilombolas, promoting the attack on their lands. It is urgent that measures be established for the protection, promotion, respect and guarantee of human rights, of human rights defenders, ensuring the well-being of the entire population, with laws and policies that meet the needs and ensure the eradication of any kind of discrimination. It has never been so important to have comprehensive and coordinated responses that reinforce the territorial anchoring of policies to expand their coverage, relevance and effectiveness, while responding to the multiple needs and demands of all people, in all their diversity and in all stages of its life cycle.

5) The absence of disaggregated data in the countries of the region on human rights to plan concrete and inclusive responses from a perspective of interculturality and intersectionality is constant, with some exceptions of national governments such as Argentina, but whose policy does not reach the governments provincial and / or local. In Brazil, studies to map the profile of people impacted by COVID19 were prepared by other actors, not by the government. The poorest people, especially people of African descent and indigenous peoples, are the most impacted there. It is necessary to implement concrete actions based on disaggregated data, by ethnicity, race, disability, to plan responses from the perspective of intersectionality and interculturality, as well as programs and services to reduce inequalities that benefit us equally. Especially when ECLAC has warned that the number of poor in the region would rise from 185 to 220 million and that extreme poverty would rise from 67.4 to 90 million people in the context of the coronavirus.

6) ECLAC, the World Bank, FAO, OXFAM and other international organizations have presented evidence on the widespread and worrying increase in hunger and poverty in the region, a serious problem to which governments have not responded. The World Bank estimates that poverty in Nicaragua has progressively increased by more than 3% between 2016 and 2019 and the figures for 2020 are still unknown. In Honduras, it is estimated that 75% of the population will fall into poverty in 2020. In El Salvador, there is evidence of a reduction in family income, and the living conditions of the most vulnerable groups deteriorate and 1% of

Salvadorans will fall into poverty, particularly affecting women the most. In Guatemala, according to OXFAM, there will be five million people without food security, doubling the number of people in that situation before the pandemic. According to ECLAC / FAO, extreme poverty in Guatemala will increase in the country by 3%. The Bank of Mexico declared that this year, 9 million people will fall into poverty in Mexico, amounting to 70 million Mexicans. In Argentina, according to September data from the Census Institute, 47% of the population is below the poverty line and 14% is in a situation of indigence. In Brazil, the Civil Society Report on the 2030 Agenda, which has been monitoring compliance with the SDGs since 2017, denounces the deterioration of indicators on hunger.

The current crisis requires putting the State as a fundamental development axis to end hunger and reduce poverty. The few attempts to guarantee a minimum income for all people only apply to some groups, so social protection is necessary for all groups, including informal workers, such as programs with subsidies that currently only exist for those who are at higher risk, they are not universal and, in many countries, they have not yet been met. We advocate for universal social protection that allows a sufficient income floor and simultaneously active decent work programs for social inclusion through employment and equal opportunities.

Although in many of the countries there is a constitutional right to free, universal and quality public health services, they have suffered a wide deterioration and lack of budget for years, boosted by increasing privatization. In the face of the pandemic, health care services have only been improved in cases of COVID19. Free, secular, public education in many of the countries such as Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico among others, is not universal and its quality has deteriorated. The virtual modality, in many countries of the region, shows the existing digital divide due to lack of access to technology, which affects the majority of children and adolescents who will have great difficulties in continuing their schooling and which will be very difficult to get them back. For example, in Guatemala, access to technology resources only reaches 30% of the population concentrated in the Guatemalan capital. In Mexico, the dropout figures are alarming and unprecedented: it is estimated that 2.5 million children and young people will definitely drop out of school due to the pandemic; 800 thousand adolescent students between 15 and 17 years old who are in the third grade of the intermediate level will not be able to finish their schooling and a figure of 593 thousand young people of the higher level. This situation disproportionately affects virtual education for children in rural areas of the countries of the region. The health crisis will continue to show us the turning point on the laziness and absence of public educational and health policies, and the supremacy of the deregulated market in the production and distribution of wealth and the depredation of our environment for the benefit of economic interests. private.

7) The advancement of religious fundamentalisms and of any kind in political spaces, denies scientific evidence, fostering hatred and discrimination, and making it difficult to implement policies with a rights perspective. Governments do not fight these groups; balancing with Catholic religious groups, new Pentecostals and others that have penetrated the popular sectors. Therefore, we demand that the advance of the growing influence of religious

fundamentalisms and of any kind in political spaces, including health and education, that deny informed scientific and political evidence, that promote inequalities, promote hatred, heteronorm, be contained, the schism and make it difficult to implement public policies that guarantee the full exercise of rights, such as comprehensive sexuality education and other policies that defend and support sexual autonomy and the emancipation of the most marginalized populations.

8) We demand that the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons be ratified and that they guarantee a dignified old age; that the Program of Action for the OAS Decade be adopted; the ratification and compliance with the fundamental ILO conventions such as Convention 169 and the application of the Earth's Guidelines on World Food Security (UN); that a plan be expedited to implement the UN Decade of Family Farming and Peasant Rights and the International Decade for People of African Descent; that the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean be ratified, and the Declaration of Incheon, of the World Education Forum in 2015, and that they address to the demands of the 2019 High Level Political Forum and the ALC 2030 Youth Forum.

9) In the countries of the region in general, the human right of people to migrate is not being guaranteed. Public policies do not respect security or allow regular migration. The rights of migrants are not respected, regardless of their migratory status as refugees and / or displaced persons. There are multiple discriminatory practices against migrants, as well as situations of extreme racism, xenophobia, restrictions and serious discrimination, especially against migrant women. The situation is especially dramatic in Mexico, a host country for Central Americans through the Remain in Mexico (Stay in Mexico) program, but which does not offer decent living conditions, leaving a large number of migrants in precarious and threatened conditions, even, at the mercy of organized crime in the border areas. Almost 50% of the Central American migrants who pass through Mexico have suffered violence and even kidnappings. The southern border of Mexico concentrates a large number of Central Americans and other nationalities detained for lacking legal residence permits and pending deportation to their countries of origin. The migratory stays are exceeded in their capacity, with migrants in overcrowded conditions, without access to health services or information on legal procedures. Government institutions have prohibited access to organizations that work for the human rights of migrants. In Chile, the situation of migrants is alarming due to the multiple intolerances and discrimination increased by the COVID19 crisis. The Chilean government recently forwarded a Migration Law Project to the National Congress for its review by the Human Rights Commission, which does not respond to minimum standards that are consistent with International Human Rights Conventions, such as the Convention for the Protection of Migrant Workers and their Families (CMW). Migrants in Chile continue to suffer violence at all levels and ages, criminalization by state agents reproduced by the media, which allow multiple forms of vulnerability and violence. Since 2019, Brazil has received serious complaints in international forums for systematic violations of fundamental rights, which has prompted recommendations from the United Nations Special Rapporteurs. Goal 10.7 of the SDGs has receded as the country has reduced its support for immigrants and

refugees. Most are concentrated in the southeastern and southern regions of the country, until 2018, those from Haiti predominated, since 2018, Venezuelans represent 39% of immigrants. The hate speech and xenophobia of the current Brazilian government generate great concern in civil society.

10) We reiterate and demand financial, political and legal commitments to ensure full compliance with the 2030 Agenda, especially that the right to health is a reality for all people and guarantee full compliance with goal 3.8. "Achieve universal health coverage, in particular protection against financial risks, access to quality essential health services and access to safe, effective, affordable and quality medicines and vaccines for all people." It is an ethical duty and humanitarian to consider all the most vulnerable groups in the face of the COVID19 crisis, such as migrants, displaced people and refugees, people living with HIV / AIDS and chronic diseases, with disabilities, workers with daily pay unable to work (including sex workers), health workers, caregivers (mostly women) and essential services, indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, girls and boys and especially older people also to the situation of women, girls and LGBTIQ+ with the increased risk of suffering from multiple forms of gender violence due to confinement for forced quarantine.

11) We consider that the main response is to create an environment where cooperation and solidarity, within the framework of the 2030 Agenda, have adequate capacities, regulatory frameworks and defined state resources to deal with them. All of this implies demanding that the commitments assumed by international development cooperation, and in particular South-South cooperation, between developed countries and those with low or middle income are reviewed and activated to respond effectively to the current scenario of development. generalized crisis in the region, without abandoning the Objectives of the 2030 Agenda and recognizing the effective participation of civil society.

In most countries, the SDG targets are far from being achieved or have been set back. Historical inequalities require structural changes, with more and better public policies considering the impacts of the pandemic. In a context where governments have not yet shown themselves to be effective in responding to the negative effects of the socio-economic situation, without betting on a new development paradigm, based on freedom and democracy, solidarity, and human development in harmony. with our planet, decent work, social justice, happiness and the integral well-being of all.

The situation facing our region is extremely serious and indicates that the recommendations of civil society were not listened to, so in this IV Forum we hope to discuss our complaints, diagnoses and demands.