

the Humming Bird

CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT

OF DIANE QUARLESS

MIOSOTIS RIVAS PEÑA

STARTS AS DIRECTOR OF ECLAC CARIBBEAN

THE SCHOOL OF

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INNOVATION IN THE CARIBBEAN IS IN SESSION!



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC



inside THIS ISSUE

- 4 Celebrating the Retirement of Diane Quarless – A Champion for Caribbean Progress
- 6 **A HUMMINGBIRD FEATURE:** Miosotis Rivas Peña Starts as Director of ECLAC Caribbean
- 14 The School of Digital Transformation and Innovation in the Caribbean is in Session!

...Policy Makers from 12 Caribbean countries Benefitting



6

ABOUT US

Issued on a monthly basis, The Hummingbird offers insights into the latest projects, publications, technical assistance missions and research carried out by ECLAC Caribbean. In addition to these, sneak previews are provided of the most salient upcoming events, alongside enriching follow-ups to previously covered issues. With a view to featuring a variety of facets of Caribbean life and lifestyle, The Hummingbird also zooms in on cultural activities and landmark occurrences through an eye-opening regional round-up.

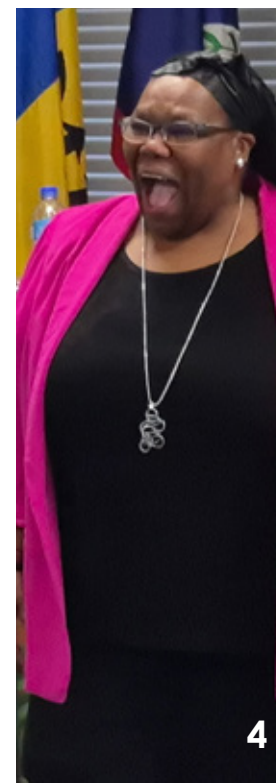
EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor: Jabari Fraser
Publication Design: Liseanne Martin-Subero

Please see our contact details on the back cover of this magazine.



15



4

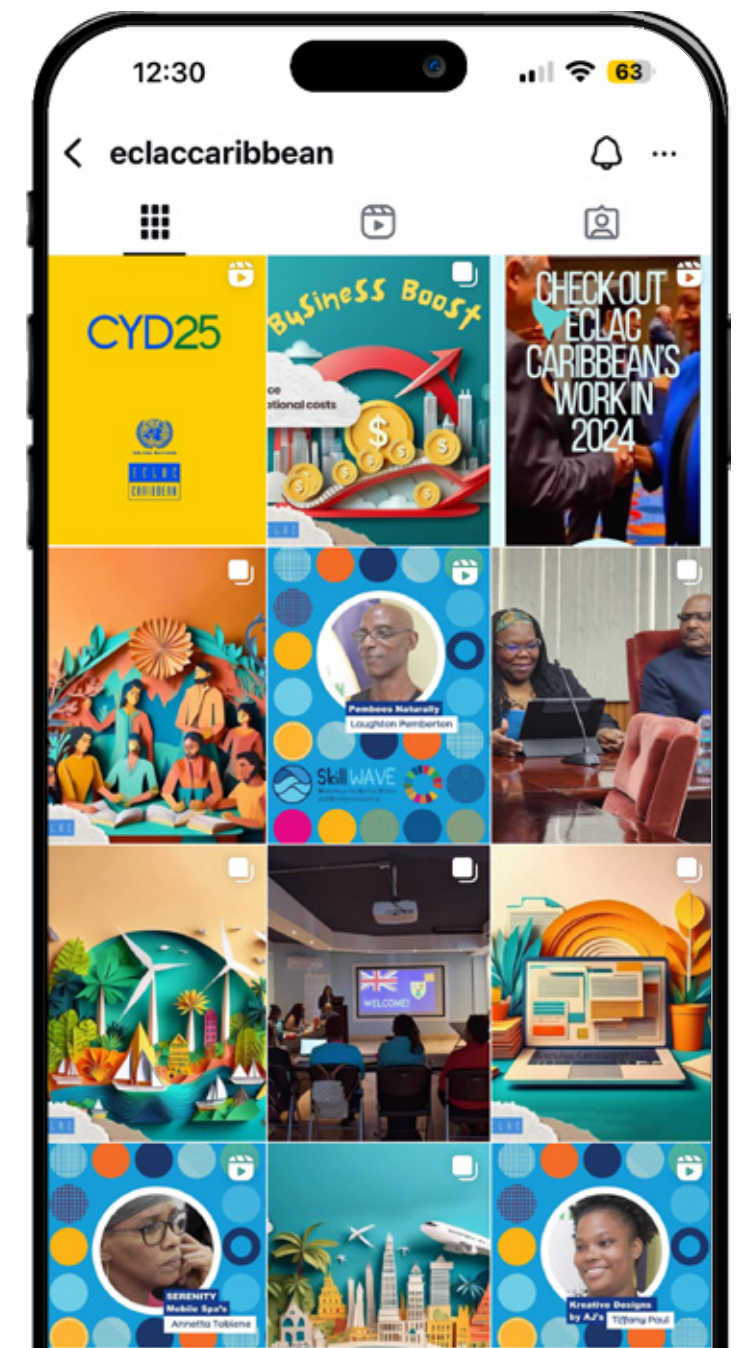
INTERNATIONAL DAYS

- 11 July**
World Population Day
- 15 July**
World Youth Skills Day
- 18 July**
Nelson Mandela International Day
- 30 July**
World Day against Trafficking in Persons

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- 30 JUNE - 4 JULY 2025**
National capacity building workshops in cost benefit analysis - St Lucia
- 9 JULY 2025**
Virtual Expert Group Meeting on Responding to Sargassum Influxes
- 14 - 25 JULY 2025**
National training course in project proposal preparation and effective project implementation - Grenada

JOIN US ON INSTAGRAM





CELEBRATING THE RETIREMENT OF DIANE QUARLESS

A CHAMPION FOR CARIBBEAN PROGRESS

After more than a decade of dynamic leadership, Diane Quarless, Director of ECLAC Caribbean, is retiring. Her departure marks the end of a transformative era that saw ECLAC rise in stock throughout the region.

Quarless, a proud Jamaican and self-proclaimed Caribbean citizen, took the helm of the Port of Spain office in 2011. From the outset, she brought energy and an unwavering focus on people-centered development. During her tenure, Quarless passionately advocated for greater investment in women, youth, small island developing states and

collaborative effort across the Caribbean to tackle development issues. She was especially vocal about preparing Caribbean populations to compete in a global economy through education, innovation, and sustainable development.

A strong believer in regionalism, she worked to strengthen Caribbean integration and fostered greater collaboration among countries and territories with varying development trajectories. This was particularly evident in her work with ECLAC's Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

Quarless retires as a respected diplomat, a dedicated public servant, and a recognized voice for sustainable and inclusive development. Her legacy is one of advocacy, action, and enduring commitment to the future of the Caribbean. As she turns the page on this chapter, we extend heartfelt gratitude and best wishes for her next journey. Thank you, Diane, for your service, vision, and deep love for the region.

Here are some snapshots of her time at ECLAC Caribbean and her retirement celebration.





A Hummingbird
FEATURE

MIOSOTIS RIVAS PEÑA

STARTS AS DIRECTOR OF
ECLAC CARIBBEAN

The United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) is pleased to announce the appointment of Miosotis Rivas Peña as the new Director of its Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, based in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

A national of the Dominican Republic, Rivas Peña is She is an experienced statistician and economist and brings over 20 years of leadership and policy experience in public administration, gender equality, sustainable development, and economic policy. She succeeds Diane Quarless, who led the subregional office with distinction from November 2011 to May 2025, and was widely recognized for her passionate advocacy on behalf of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).





UNITED NATIONS



MIOSOTIS RIVAS PEÑA

Prior to joining ECLAC, Rivas Peña served as Director-General of the National Statistics Office (ONE) of the Dominican Republic from 2020. She was also elected Chair of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC for the 2023–2025 period. Her career spans leadership roles including Executive Director of the Regional Centre for the Promotion of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (CENPROMYPE), National Programme Officer at UN-Women, and Technical Secretary for Women in the Council of Ministers for Women's Affairs of Central America and the Dominican Republic (COMMCA).

“It is an honour to join ECLAC Caribbean at such a critical time for the region, for sustainable development, and for multilateralism”

said Rivas Peña. "I look forward to working closely with our dedicated staff and regional partners to strengthen inclusive development pathways, advance evidence-based policy, and support Caribbean governments in navigating today's complex challenges — from economic resilience to climate vulnerability."

Rivas Peña has been instrumental in designing and coordinating public policy initiatives to promote gender equity, economic sustainability, and local development. Her work has supported the rights of women and the growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) across Latin America and the Caribbean.

She holds a bachelor's degree in economics and a master's in gender and development from the Santo Domingo Institute of Technology (INTEC), as well as a master's in economic policy from the National University of Costa Rica.

Since assuming her new role, she has spent her initial days engaging with ECLAC Caribbean

staff, immersing herself in the office's work programme, and deepening her understanding of the Commission's ongoing collaboration with Caribbean governments to promote inclusive and sustainable development across the subregion. ECLAC Caribbean is the only subsidiary body of the Commission that has a mandate for a geographical region – the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC). This year, the CDCC, established in 1975, is celebrating 50 years of work promoting and strengthening economic and social cooperation and integration among the countries of the Caribbean.

The ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean continues to serve as a key resource and support partner in sustainable development for the region. Its mission is to advance understanding of the Caribbean's development challenges and provide evidence-based policy advice, technical cooperation, and capacity-building services to support the region's pursuit of growth with equity.

UN OCEAN SUMMIT IN NICE

CLOSES WITH WAVE OF COMMITMENTS

by UN News



Closing the 2025 UN Ocean Conference, over 170 countries adopted by consensus a sweeping political declaration promising urgent action to protect the ocean.

"We close this historic week not just with hope, but with concrete commitment, clear direction, and undeniable momentum," Li Junhua, the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of the summit, told reporters.

Co-hosted by France and Costa Rica, the five-day event brought 15,000 participants, including more than 60 Heads of State

and Government, to France's Mediterranean coast.

With over 450 side events and nearly 100,000 visitors, the gathering, dubbed [UNOC3](#), built on the momentum of previous ocean summits in [New York](#) (2017) and [Lisbon](#) (2022). It culminated in a shared call to expand marine protection, curb pollution, regulate the high seas, and unlock financing for vulnerable coastal and island nations.

Ambitious pledges

The conference's outcome, known as the Nice Ocean Action Plan, is a two-part framework that comprises

a political declaration and over 800 voluntary commitments by governments, scientists, UN agencies, and civil society since the previous conference.

"These range from advocacy by youth to deep-sea ecosystem literacy, capacity building in science and innovation, and pledges to ratify intergovernmental treaties," Mr. Li said.

The pledges unveiled this week reflected the breadth of the ocean crisis. **The European Commission announced an investment of €1 billion** to support ocean conservation, science, and sustainable fishing, while **French**

Polynesia pledged to create the world's largest marine protected area, encompassing its entire exclusive economic zone – about five million square kilometers.

Germany launched a **€100-million programme to remove underwater munitions** from the Baltic and North Seas. In addition, **New Zealand committed \$52 million to strengthen ocean governance** in the Pacific, and **Spain announced five new marine protected areas**.

A 37-country coalition led by Panama and Canada launched the High Ambition Coalition for a Quiet Ocean to tackle underwater

noise pollution. Meanwhile, Indonesia and the World Bank introduced a 'Coral Bond' to help finance reef conservation in the country.

"The waves of change have formed," Mr. Li said. "It is now our collective responsibility to propel them forward – for our people, our planet, and future generations."

A diplomatic stage

The summit opened Monday with [stark warnings](#). "We are not treating the ocean as what it is – the ultimate global commons," said [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#), alongside the presidents

of France and Costa Rica, Emmanuel Macron and Rodrigo Chaves Robles, who called for a renewed multilateralism anchored in science.

On Friday, France's special envoy for the conference, Olivier Poivre d'Arvor, recalled the stakes: "We wanted in Nice... to take a chance on transformative change. I believe we have moved forward, but we can no longer go backwards."

One of the conference's main objectives was to accelerate progress on the [High Seas Treaty](#) – known as the [BBNJ agreement](#) – adopted in 2023 to safeguard marine life in international waters.

Sixty ratifications are needed for it to enter into force. **Over the past week, 19 countries ratified the accord, bringing the total number as for Friday, to 50.**

“This is a significant victory,” said Mr. Poivre d’Arvor. “It’s very difficult to work on the ocean right now when the United States is so little involved.”

The French envoy was alluding to the absence of a senior US delegation, as well as President Donald Trump’s recent executive order advancing deep-sea mining. “The abyss is not for sale,” he said, echoing remarks made earlier in the week by President Macron.

Still, Mr. Poivre d’Arvor emphasized the broad agreement achieved at the summit. “One country may be missing,” he said. “But 92 per cent of the ‘co-owners’ were present today in Nice.”

His counterpart, Arnaldo André-Tinoco, the Foreign Minister of Costa Rica, urged other nations to accelerate financing for ocean protection. “Each commitment must be held accountable,” he said at the conference’s closing meeting.

Momentum – and a test

For Peter Thomson, the UN’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, Nice marked a turning point. “It’s not so much what happens at the conference, it is what happens afterwards,” he

told UN News, recalling the early days of ocean advocacy when Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG14), on life below water, was first established.

“From the desert we were in back in 2015... to where we are now, where you see this incredible engagement.”

Looking ahead, attention is already turning to the Fourth UN Ocean Conference, slated to be co-hosted by Chile and South Korea in 2028.

“We’re going to again see a big surge upwards from here,” Mr. Thomson predicted. He expressed hope that major global agreements — including the BBNJ treaty, the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, and the future Global Plastics Treaty – will all be ratified and implemented by then.

The 2028 summit will also mark a moment of reckoning, as SDG 14 approaches its 2030 target.

“What do we do when SDG 14 matures in 2030?” Mr. Thomson asked. “Obviously, it’s got to be raised ambition. It’s got to be stronger.” He emphasized that while SDG14 had aimed to protect 10 per cent of the ocean by 2020 – a target the world failed to meet – the new benchmark is 30 per cent by 2030.

Wearing a shell necklace gifted by the Marshall Islands, the Fiji native praised small island nations and atoll



collectives for setting ambitious marine protections.

“If small countries can make big measures like that, why can’t the big countries follow suit?” he said.

He also saluted the 2,000 scientists who gathered for the One Ocean Science Congress ahead of the summit. “What a great way to run things,” he said.

A show of unity

Despite the celebratory tone, tensions lingered. Small Island Developing States pushed for stronger language on [loss and damage](#) – harms inflicted by climate change that go beyond what people can adapt to. “You cannot have an ocean declaration without SIDS,” one delegate warned earlier this week.

Others, including President Chaves, of Costa Rica, called for a

moratorium on deep-sea mining in international waters until science can assess the risks – a step not included in the final declaration.

Still, the political declaration adopted in Nice, titled Our ocean, our future: united for urgent action, reaffirms the goal of protecting 30 percent of the ocean and land by 2030, while supporting global frameworks like the [Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Agreement](#) (adopted in 2022, committing nations to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030 through ambitious conservation targets and sustainable biodiversity management) and the UN [International Maritime Organization’s](#) (IMO) climate goals.

“The real test,” Mr. Li said, “is not what we said here in Nice – but what we do next.”

As the sun dipped behind the Promenade des Anglais and the conference’s final plenary

adjourned, the sea – ancient, vital, and imperiled – bore silent witness to a fragile but shared promise.

THE SCHOOL OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INNOVATION

IN THE CARIBBEAN IS IN SESSION!

...POLICY MAKERS FROM 12 CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES BENEFITTING



Scientists, researchers, digital and administrative professionals from 12 countries around the Caribbean are gathered in Port of Spain, discussing important issues and sharpening their skills and understanding of digital transformation and artificial intelligence in the Caribbean context. With the theme Advancing Digital Transformation in the Caribbean: Meaningful connectivity, AI Governance, and Innovation, this second School of Digital Transformation features case studies, panel discussions and peer-learning exercises on emerging technologies, digital governance and regulatory best practices.

In a panel on AI and Productivity Development, Chief of ECLAC Caribbean's Knowledge Management Centre Dale Alexander made the point that in the Caribbean, we need to see ourselves as sources of transformation, encourage and support innovation through national strategies. "Transcending a single term of government... and outside of the politics are the public administrators, who are going to have



to find a way to continue beyond that four, five or six years. Because if there's going to be change, it is not going to happen within one or two years. Somehow, we need to navigate and encourage our politicians to really take a stance and not have a situation where government changes and you set aside policies, not if we want to really to advance." Alexander also made the point that adopting artificial intelligence and digital transformation requires changes to mindsets.

The workshop aims to improve policy makers' abilities to advance policy development, promote equitable digital inclusion, develop resilient digital infrastructure, promote ethical AI and data governance, and strengthen regional cooperation in digital transformation. Sessions include presentations on emerging global trends in AI governance, case studies of the impact of AI on productivity from Latin America, gender gaps in digital technology, among others.

ECLAC Caribbean's Lika Døhl Diouf moderated a panel entitled Digital Public Infrastructure and Decentralized Digital Identity. That panel featured presentations from specialists from the University of Massachusetts and CAF - Development Bank of Latin America. ECLAC Caribbean's Caribbean Knowledge Management Centre has been producing research on digital transformation and AI in the region that supports governments' efforts at ensuring effective governance and innovation – some of our latest public work on the topic can be found in the Focus Magazine – The Caribbean and Artificial Intelligence: Past, Present and Future.

The School of Digital Transformation and Innovation in the Caribbean is a joint venture by the Caribbean Telecommunications Union, UN ECLAC, CAF – Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, among others. The School welcomed participants from Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Sint Maarten, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

Director Rivas Peña's First Assignment

As one of her first public appearances, Miosotis Rivas Peña delivered closing remarks at the School, saying that the opportunities and connections made were vital to build regional cooperation in digital transformation. "You are now the leaders who will translate this idea into action. We look to you to drive this agenda in your countries with renewed vigor, and a powerful network of allies on your side. You need to take advantage of your network of all the partners and participants that you met here. Let this not be a conclusion, but an invitation to leverage the network you have established."

She stressed the importance of a collaborative approach. "Caribbean SIDS cannot advance on our own. We need each other and we have the opportunity here to leverage power at an event to build a regional approach for digital development, ultimately ensuring that we leave no one behind. I thank you for your commitment to build a more inclusive, resilient and digitally sovereign future for our region."

THE Hummingbird KITCHEN

DAIRY-FREE SOURSOP ICE CREAM

What you will need:

- 2 cups fresh or frozen soursop pulp (de-seeded)
- 1 (13.5 oz) can full-fat coconut milk
- 1/2 cup coconut cream (or the thick part from the top of a chilled can of coconut milk)
- 1/2 cup raw cane sugar or maple syrup (adjust to taste)
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp freshly grated nutmeg (optional, for Caribbean flair)
- Pinch of sea salt
- 1–2 tbsp lime juice (optional, to brighten the flavor)

Instructions:

1. Prepare the Soursop Pulp:

If using fresh soursop, peel, de-seed, and puree the pulp until smooth. If using frozen pulp, thaw completely before blending.

2. Blend the Base:

In a blender, combine the soursop pulp, coconut milk, coconut cream, sugar (or maple syrup), vanilla extract, nutmeg, lime juice (if using), and a pinch of salt. Blend until smooth and creamy. Taste and adjust sweetness or acidity if needed.

3. Chill the Mixture:

Pour the mixture into a bowl or container, cover, and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight. The colder the mixture, the better it will churn.

4. Churn:

Pour the chilled mixture into your ice cream maker and churn according to the manufacturer's instructions (usually about 20–25 minutes).

5. Freeze to Set:

Transfer the churned ice cream into an airtight container. Press parchment paper on top to prevent ice crystals and freeze for at least 2–4 hours until firm.

6. Serve:

Let the ice cream sit at room temperature for 5–10 minutes before scooping. Garnish with grated nutmeg, shredded coconut, or fresh mint if desired.

Notes:

No Ice Cream Maker? Pour the mixture into a shallow container, freeze, and stir vigorously every 30–60 minutes for about 3–4 hours to break up ice crystals.

Soursop Substitution: If you can't find soursop, cherimoya or guanabana pulp can be used, though flavor will vary slightly.

CONTACT US

ECLAC Subregional Headquarters
for the Caribbean,

1 Chancery Lane, P.O. Box 1113,
Port of Spain,
Trinidad and Tobago.

MEDIA CONTACT

Tel.: 1 868 224 8067

E-mail: eclac-media-pos@eclac.org



SOCIAL MEDIA



[CLICK HERE OR SCAN THE QR CODE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE...](#)

