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Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions

Regional contribution on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat hereby transmits the input from the seventh meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, held in Santiago from 15 to 18 April 2024, to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

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Regional contribution on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Summary

The seventh meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago from 15 to 18 April 2024. The main objective of the Forum, held under the theme “Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions”, was to provide a space conducive to peer learning through interactive sessions in which participants were able, through discussions on common experiences and goals, to identify good practices that would allow member countries to make recommendations and present them at the high-level political forum on sustainable development, under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as part of the regional contributions to the global follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

An interactive session on the upcoming Summit of the Future, the theme of which is “Multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow”, was held to seek solutions to revive the multilateral system, strengthen international cooperation and global governance, and reflect on humanity’s shared future.

The Executive Secretary of ECLAC presented the report prepared by the secretariat entitled The Challenge of Accelerating the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean: Transitions towards Sustainability, which contained an analysis of the progress and current status of the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17, as well as projections for their achievement by 2030. The presentation was followed by panel discussions on each of the Goals under review and a session on advancing the priorities of Caribbean small island developing States towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.

The official activities of the Forum were preceded by the meeting 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 and the forum of children, adolescents and youth of Latin America and the Caribbean. A total of 34 side events, organized by multiple stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector and entities of the United Nations system, were also held in the framework of the meeting of the regional Forum.

Intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the seventh meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development were adopted.

The present report is based on the summary of the Vice-Chair of the seventh meeting of the Forum.
Introduction

1. The seventh meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago from 15 to 18 April 2024, convened under the auspices of ECLAC. It was open to States members of the Forum, associate members of ECLAC and observers, the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, United Nations resident coordinators, regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, academia, the private sector and civil society. The meeting had high participation from all relevant stakeholders: more than 700 persons attended, including 180 government representatives, more than 200 representatives from civil society, academia and the private sector and 150 representatives from the United Nations system.

2. Preparatory activities for the Forum included a children and youth forum of Latin America and the Caribbean (15 April), which was also a preparatory activity for the Economic and Social Council youth forum, a meeting of civil society from Latin America and the Caribbean, a regional workshop on voluntary national reviews and voluntary local reviews, organized by ECLAC in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (15 April), and 34 side events.

3. The annual meetings of the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations in her capacity as Chair of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean and with all United Nations resident coordinators of the region were also held in the framework of the Forum.

4. At the opening session, the Secretary of the Commission read a note verbale from the Embassy of Argentina in Chile dated 15 April 2024, which stated that Argentina would not serve as Chair of the meeting. The seventh meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was therefore led by Costa Rica, in its capacity as Vice-Chair.

5. Statements were made by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC; the Minister of National Planning and Economic Policy of Costa Rica and Vice-Chair of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, Laura Fernández Delgado; and the Deputy Secretary-General.

6. The Executive Secretary said that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was a space for identifying challenges common to the countries of the region in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda. At the seventh meeting, a detailed analysis would be conducted for Goals 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture), 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts), 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) and 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development). Those Goals would be addressed at the next high-level political forum on sustainable development, to be held in New York in 2024, at which the conclusions and recommendations agreed by the countries of the region would be presented. In the report entitled The Challenge of Accelerating the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean: Transitions towards Sustainability, prepared by ECLAC for the seventh meeting of the Forum, it was noted that only 22 per cent of the targets of the Goals had been met or were on track to be met, while slightly more than three quarters of the targets were not. The report also provided a detailed analysis of the six transitions to sustainability in the areas of food systems; energy access and
affordability; digital connectivity; education; jobs and social protection; and climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The report provided an analysis of the challenges presented by each transition, with a focus on strategies, plans, policies and programmes, institutional arrangements and investment needs. It was also important to examine both domestic and external funding sources, reforms to the international financial architecture, the resolution of sovereign debt, the strengthening of development banks and the reallocation of special drawing rights and to analyse debt sustainability. The call issued by the Secretary-General to redouble efforts to achieve the Goals, through enhanced partnerships and more effective multilateralism, must be heeded; indeed, the theme of the upcoming Summit of the Future, to be held in New York in 2024, would be “Multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow”. ECLAC remained committed to supporting the countries of the region in building a more productive, inclusive and sustainable future and would continue to support countries in implementing the Goals.

7. The Vice-Chair of the Forum said that it was an honour for her country to lead the activities of the Forum. Since the first meeting of the Forum in 2017, the region had made great strides towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, but many challenges remained. Efforts must therefore be redoubled to step up the pace of progress. The commitment of Costa Rica to the 2030 Agenda was undeniable: in 2024, it would present its third voluntary national review to the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Unfortunately, with the agreed deadline for implementation of the 2030 Agenda just six years away, only 22 per cent of the targets for which data were available were on track to be achieved by 2030; for 46 per cent, the trend was in the right direction but progress was too slow for them to be met; for the remaining 32 per cent, the trend was moving away from the target, making their attainment by 2030 highly unlikely. A greater effort to strengthen multilateralism was therefore needed, and the Summit of the Future would present an opportunity to do so. In conclusion, she hoped that the Forum would enable all stakeholders to be heard, share experiences and best practices and strengthen partnerships so that the best conditions would be in place by 2030.

8. The Deputy Secretary-General underscored the leadership and key role of the countries of the region in renewing commitments and stepping up action on the 2030 Agenda. Amid rising geopolitical tensions, raging conflicts, inequality and ongoing crises, the region and the world were not on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goal targets, but there was hope. The bold political declaration endorsed at the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, in 2023, must be followed by concrete, ambitious and transformative action. She highlighted four areas: coupling climate action with delivering a just and sustainable energy transition; addressing inequalities through food system transformation; transforming education for a better future and thriving in a digital economy; and digital connectivity to drive new economic opportunities, build resilience and reduce poverty. The United Nations development system was a trusted partner and stood ready to help strengthen institutions and governance and rebuild trust in democracy, and it counted on Member States for continued investment, as well as input and ideas for reform of the global governance of the future. The region’s voice and leadership were crucial for the successful outcome of the Summit of the Future and other forthcoming conferences on development. She called upon Governments, stakeholders and other constituencies to seize the moment and the opportunities ahead and to build a healthy, peaceful and prosperous future for Latin America, the Caribbean and beyond.
Interactive session on the Summit of the Future: multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow

9. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC, who moderated the session, underscored the importance of the Summit of the Future, which had been approved by the General Assembly to seek solutions to revive the multilateral system, strengthen international cooperation and global governance and reflect on humanity’s shared future. One of the expected main outcomes of the Summit, the Pact for the Future, was being negotiated by Member States. The Assembly had also decided to organize open, transparent and inclusive intergovernmental consultations on the proposed Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations, which would be annexed to the Pact upon their adoption. Lastly, he emphasized the importance, in the interactive session, of member States and all stakeholders sharing their vision, priorities and hopes for the Summit.

10. The Vice-Chair of the Forum said that her country wished to actively participate in the Summit of the Future, which presented an opportunity to forge a new global consensus on the achievement of a more just and inclusive future. For that reason, the preparations for the event had included various consultations and initiatives. Two of the main themes in which Costa Rica wished to be involved during the Summit were the need for stable, permanent funding for the Sustainable Development Goals and the need to join forces to address climate change.

11. The Deputy Secretary-General said that the Summit of the Future must be an accelerator for achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in full and on time; spur urgent and scaled-up actions, policies and investments; catalyse efforts to ensure that the needs of developing countries were met; and have people at the centre. Countries of the region were showing leadership for sustainable development in many forums; had been actively engaged in intergovernmental negotiations regarding the Pact for the Future, to be agreed at the Summit of the Future; and had spoken about issues such as the need to increase financing for development, strengthening efforts for women’s rights and empowerment, establishing development metrics that went beyond gross domestic product, strengthening climate adaptation and enhancing crisis prevention and management, as well as the need to harness the benefits of digital cooperation for all. The Summit must deliver a clear way forward with concrete commitments in areas including reform of the international financial architecture; the strengthening of digital cooperation that drove development equitably; and the New Agenda for Peace, which took a holistic approach to the drivers of conflict, recognizing the links between sustainable development, climate action and peace.

12. The Under-Secretary-General for Policy in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General recalled the founding purpose of the Summit of the Future, namely to equip the United Nations to better meet existing and emerging challenges in a rapidly changing world and to render multilateralism more inclusive, more effective and more networked. He described the five chapters of the Pact for the Future, which was being negotiated and was expected to be adopted in September 2024. The themes on which the chapters were focused included sustainable development and its financing; international peace and security; science, technology and innovation; youth and future generations; and transforming global governance. A Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations would be included as annexes to the Pact. The co-facilitators of the Summit had convened permanent representatives of Member States to discuss the road forward for negotiations, which must be strategic and disciplined, with a clear objective to produce a concise, highly ambitious and action-oriented pact. Latin American and Caribbean Member States had tremendous potential as bridge-builders and brokers of the necessary consensus.
Provision had been made for multi-stakeholder inputs at all stages of the process involving the Summit and the Pact for the Future.

13. Statements were made by the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs of Chile, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Belize, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, the Deputy Minister for Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of People’s Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Undersecretary for Multilateral Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador, the Secretary for Multilateral Political Affairs of Brazil, the Secretary for Planning and Programming of the Office of the President of Guatemala, the Director of Social Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru, and the Director of the International Economic Agencies Department of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment of Cuba.

14. Statements were also made by the representative of The Millennials Movement, who underscored the importance of creating spaces for intersectional and intergenerational participation; it was necessary to look beyond 2030 and plan not only for the desired future but also for the present.

15. The Executive Director of The Millennials Movement and focal point of the United Nations Civil Society Conference in support of the Summit of the Future highlighted the role of civil society as an important partner in the effort to build common approaches among all sectors and an inclusive, networked multilateralism.

16. The Director of Research of Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico Internacional (CEPEI) and Co-Chair of the Coalition for the UN We Need said that the Summit of the Future was a unique opportunity and spoke of the need for capacity to innovate and to develop and implement global responses.

17. The President of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session, in a pre-recorded video message, said that the discussions at the Forum and at the first ever General Assembly Sustainability Week would complement each other, highlighting the pressing need to accelerate efforts to get progress on the Sustainable Development Goals back on track to deliver the 2030 Agenda. Regional commissions played a crucial role in forging new consensus and driving multilateral solutions by effectively supporting their member States at the regional level to formulate evidence-based policies and development plans that put people and the planet at the centre. The three documents expected to arise from the Summit, namely the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations, should constitute a formidable outcome, which would define the shared future for decades to come.

18. In closing the discussion, the Under-Secretary-General for Policy in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General highlighted the potential, readiness and willingness of Member States in the region to take on a leadership role in arriving at a powerful Pact for the Future. It was clear that the objectives and desired outcome of the Summit were closely connected to delivering the 2030 Agenda. Development financing was at the heart of realizing the ambitions and objectives of the 2030 Agenda. He was impressed by the number of references to the importance of youth participation and the Declaration on Future Generations and acknowledged the leadership of Jamaica in co-facilitating negotiations on the Declaration. Human rights, gender equality and the rule of law had been identified by the General Assembly as transversal issues to be mainstreamed in the Pact for the Future and were at the heart of the negotiation process. A successful outcome of the Summit, the adoption of a highly ambitious and action-oriented Pact, would contribute significantly to making the future of the world safer, more peaceful, prosperous, sustainable, fair and just.
Presentation of the report entitled *The Challenge of Accelerating the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean: Transitions towards Sustainability*

19. Presenting the report entitled *The Challenge of Accelerating the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean: Transitions towards Sustainability*, the seventh report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Executive Secretary of ECLAC mentioned that, according to ECLAC estimates, 22 per cent of the targets had already been met or would be met by 2030. However, progress towards 46 per cent of the targets, although in the right direction, was not fast enough to meet them, and the remaining 32 per cent of targets would be missed. He then referred to the two major parts of the report: an analysis of the status of prioritized Sustainable Development Goal targets for 2024, and a set of recommendations to accelerate progress towards their achievement. He said that global growth had decelerated between 2023 and 2024, with figures below historical averages. For Latin America and the Caribbean, it was not an isolated incident but rather a continuation of its progressively declining capacity for growth. Boosting productivity was key to achieving sustained growth, addressing other development challenges and accelerating progress towards the Goals. The region had fallen into three development traps: low, volatile, exclusionary and unsustainable growth; high inequality coupled with low levels of social mobility and cohesion; and limited institutional capacity and ineffective governance. To emerge from those traps, the region needed a new model of development that was more productive, inclusive and sustainable.

20. The Executive Secretary stressed that productive development policies were paramount not only for increasing economic growth rates in the region but also for reorienting that growth towards more inclusivity, which would help to reduce poverty and informality, and more sustainability, which would ensure greater respect for the planet. Those policies should be focused on 10 priority areas, which he listed, and should be aligned with the essential dimensions of territory and governance. In addition, 14 sectors had been identified as having significant potential to drive productive transformation. The availability of statistical data was improving year after year, although certain indicators still lacked comparable data to measure progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the latest regional data, just above three quarters of the targets would not be met by the established deadline, which amounted to a slight worsening of the previous year’s outlook. Goal 3, 7, 9 and 15 targets had the highest likelihood of achievement, while Goal 12 and 13 targets had the lowest.

21. Chapter IV represented a new addition to the annual report. It focused on needed transitions in the six policy areas best positioned to simultaneously affect multiple Sustainable Development Goals: food systems; energy access and affordability; digital connectivity; education; jobs and social protection; and climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Policies tended to be designed with a focus on technical expertise regarding the functioning of economic, social and environmental systems, but the focus should be broadened to include other types of expertise, in particular foresight planning and shepherding transformative, collective action towards desired outcomes. Each transition was analysed from that perspective, with emphasis placed on means of implementation.

22. Accelerating the six transitions would require new development strategies, policies, plans, programmes and projects, designed and executed collectively by social stakeholders and in coordination with the State, to determine how and with what resources the transitions should proceed. In that regard, it was necessary to develop institutional capacities for social dialogue and inclusion, governance,
private coordination, multiscale linkages and foresight, to drive initiatives to transform prevailing development patterns. With regard to investment needs, since 2010, national fiscal deficits had been on the rise. Public revenues were insufficient to cover public expenditures, which had diminished public investment in key areas for Sustainable Development Goal achievement. Of all the regions, Latin America and the Caribbean had the lowest levels of public investment, and mobilizing domestic resources was critical to improving that outlook and implementing sustainable fiscal policy for development.

23. Two major obstacles in that regard were elevated debt levels and high effective interest rates on general government gross public debt. Several countries of the region were spending 3–4 per cent of gross domestic product on sovereign debt interest payments alone, which in some cases was more than half of what they invested in education, health and social protection. Official development assistance was insufficient to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The overarching message was that the international financial architecture was inadequate to drive sustainable development. Global financial and tax reform was thus urgently needed, which called for increasing financial resources for development in order to provide lasting solutions for countries in debt distress and encouraging development banks to play an active role in increasing financing for development.

24. Following the presentation of the report, statements were made by the representatives of Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Guatemala, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Costa Rica.

**Contribution of the United Nations sustainable development system in Latin America and the Caribbean: presentation of the 2023 system-wide results report of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean**

25. The session was moderated by the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Development Coordination Office of the Secretariat.

26. The report was presented by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC and the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme, in their capacity as Vice-Chairs of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean.

27. The Executive Secretary of ECLAC said that the Regional Collaborative Platform had been established in response to the recommendations of the Secretary-General on repositioning the United Nations development system at the regional level to improve support for States in their pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals and ensure that system entities responded as effectively as possible to development challenges. He discussed the Platform’s key functions and described its working mechanisms, anchored by issue-based coalitions and thematic working groups and supported by operational and programmatic working groups, such as the Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals Data and Statistics. The Platform had incorporated into its work and methods of support the six strategic transitions that the United Nations had identified as central to accelerating progress towards the Goals, as each of those areas posed certain fundamental challenges in the region. He presented the most significant outcomes that the United Nations development system, through the Platform, had achieved in 2023 in the areas of knowledge management; increased transparency and results-based management; data and statistics; and regional efficiency. Lastly, he detailed the accomplishments of some of the issue-based coalitions and thematic working groups.
28. The Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme presented the results of the various issue-based coalitions and thematic working groups and their achievements with regard to other regional priorities, such as education, health and food systems, in addition to operational and programmatic support. She shared the Platform’s three priorities for 2024: regional coherence with global priorities to support system-wide efforts in the six transitions, with a focus on leaving no one behind; continued support for resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to tackle gaps in the Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on cross-border and subregional contexts; and partnerships with key regional stakeholders, such as international financial institutions and subregional development actors. Lastly, she listed key factors in the efforts to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including the unique political opportunity that chairing and hosting various international forums would provide the region in 2024.

**Advancing the priorities of Caribbean small island developing States towards achieving the 2030 Agenda**

29. The session was moderated by the Chief of the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean. The panellists were the Director of International Trade in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Immigration of Antigua and Barbuda, Joy-Marie King; the Special Adviser on Climate Change and Environmental Matters in the Office of the Prime Minister of the Bahamas, Rochelle W. Newbold; the Chief Research Officer in the Office of the Prime Minister of Barbados, Shennel Richards; Kennethia Douglas, Project Manager in the Sustainable Development Goals Technical Coordinating Secretariat of the Ministry of Planning and Development of Trinidad and Tobago; the Special Envoy of the Premier of the British Virgin Islands, Benito Wheatley; and the Legal Adviser to the Chairperson’s Committee, Caribbean Regional Youth Council, Jemiah Prince.

30. The moderator recalled the structural and systemic challenges facing the region and said that the promise of the 2030 Agenda would remain a distant dream if Caribbean States and territories were denied the necessary resources. Support through partnerships, especially South-South and triangular cooperation, would help to strengthen institutions, but it was only through access to long-term, low-cost financial resources to invest in technical, institutional and productive capacity that the range of policy imperatives to achieve sustainable development in the subregion could be implemented and sustained.

31. The Director of International Trade of Antigua and Barbuda said that her country would soon host the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which was expected to adopt a plan to succeed the current SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. The draft plan focused on resilient economies, strong health and social protection systems, a secure future and planetary sustainability.

32. Panellists mentioned that access to international resources in line with the Bridgetown Initiative for the Reform of the Global Financial Architecture was important for closing gaps in Sustainable Development Goal financing. Transition to green and sustainable energy, support for digital transformation, innovation and data strengthening were also key issues. The representative of the British Virgin Islands raised concerns about the need for associate members of ECLAC to obtain access to financing for development and other forms of assistance to strengthen sustainable development and climate resilience.
33. In the discussion that followed, statements were made by the representatives of Cuba, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Brazil. The representatives of the World Food Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) also made statements.

**Panel discussions**

34. Pursuant to the wish expressed by the countries that the Forum should provide useful opportunities for peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, the sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets, five panel discussions were organized to allow the member countries of the Forum and other stakeholders to report on and share their experiences and challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

35. Panel 1, on Goal 1, was moderated by the Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean of UN-Women, and the panellists were the Executive Secretary of the National Council for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Chief of the Global Economic Intelligence Unit of the Ministry of Economic Affairs of Mexico, Irais Graciela Barreto Canales; the Mayor of Tegucigalpa, Jorge Aldana; the President of Fundación Nacional para la Superación de la Pobreza (Chile), Andrea Repetto; Elbert Ellis, Senior Operations Officer at the Caribbean Development Bank; the Minister of Development and Social Assistance, Family Affairs and the Fight against Hunger of Brazil, Wellington Dias; the Global Director of the Poverty and Equity Global Practice at the World Bank, Luis Felipe López-Calva; and the Coordinator for Institutional Relations of Instituto Cidades Sustentáveis (Brazil) and representative 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, Igor Pantoja.

36. Latin America had made progress in reducing extreme poverty and poverty between 2000 and 2010. Subsequent setbacks had lowered the likelihood of the subregion achieving Goal 1. Almost a third of Latin Americans lived in poverty: more than 180 million people did not have sufficient income to cover their basic needs and, of those, 70 million did not earn enough to buy a basic food basket. The highest incidence of poverty was found among children and adolescents, women, Indigenous Peoples, and people living in rural areas. Poverty went beyond lack of income and resources; its manifestations included hunger and malnutrition; limited access to education, social protection and other basic services; vulnerability to disasters and climate change; discrimination; and social exclusion. To address the structural problems of poverty and inequality, the countries of the region had made efforts in recent decades to strengthen their social protection systems through policies to expand benefit coverage and levels, as reflected in higher percentages of the poor receiving cash transfers or non-contributory pensions. Despite those efforts, there were still wide gaps in access to social protection, and the coverage and scope of social protection remained insufficient.

37. The moderator said that poverty heightened the vulnerability of women and girls to violence and that reducing poverty lowered their risk of becoming victims of violence. Poverty was multidimensional and included the time poverty that women experienced; this was why the establishment of care systems was being promoted.

38. The panellists mentioned that poverty was multidimensional and should be addressed using a variety of instruments and through cross-sectoral partnerships to address both immediate needs and long-term impacts. Poverty was not simply a lack
of money; it was also a lack of adequate government policies for the well-being of the population. It was important to update how poverty was measured.

39. In the ensuing discussion, statements were made by the representatives of Panama, Paraguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Colombia. Statements were also made by the representatives of UN-Habitat, the United Nations Population Fund and FAO.

40. Panel 2, on Goal 2, was moderated by the Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean of FAO, and the panellists were the Executive Director of the Ministerial Office in the Presidential Secretariat of Honduras, Jimmy Eduardo Bermúdez Perdomo; the National Director of Follow-up and Evaluation of the National Centre for Strategic Planning of Peru, Amaro Angel Rivadeneira; the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the World Food Programme, Lola Castro; Hernán Chiriboga, representative of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture in Chile; the Fundraising Director of Red de Alimentos Compartidos (REDALCO) in Uruguay, Yamandú Plada; and the Education Coordinator of Fundación Sustentabilidad, Educación, Solidaridad (Fundación SES) and Secretary of Campaña Argentina por el Derecho a la Educación, and representative 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, Marcela Browne.

41. In Latin America and the Caribbean, although the latest estimates showed that the prevalence of hunger and food insecurity showed no increase in 2022 compared with 2021, the figures remained above pre-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic levels. Progress in the region, on average, appeared sufficient to achieve the global target of reducing the number of stunted children under 5 years of age by 40 per cent by 2025, which was the most common manifestation of chronic undernutrition; however, the prevalence of overweight in that population had followed a marked upward trend over the past two decades. In addition, the region had made significant progress in food production in recent decades, thanks to technological change and investments in infrastructure, especially in recent years.

42. The moderator emphasized that, in order to achieve food and nutrition security in the region, concerted action on multiple fronts and with the participation of all stakeholders was imperative.

43. Panelists highlighted the need to adopt a holistic approach focused on all stages of the food chain and on fostering effective vertical governance to improve collaboration with local governments. With regard to the effects of disasters on food security, the provision of subsidies, the protection of biodiversity, and micro- and macroinsurance, as well as school feeding programmes, were identified as good practices.

44. In the ensuing discussion, statements were made by the representatives of Panama, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mexico, Brazil, Paraguay and Chile. The representative of UN-Women also made a statement.

45. Panel 3, on Goal 13, was moderated by the Chief of the Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the panellists were the Minister of National Planning and Economic Policy of Costa Rica; the Minister of the Environment of Chile, Maisa Rojas; the Director General of Public Investment in the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic, Martín Francos; María José Lubertino, representative of Asociación Ciudadana por los Derechos Humanos, Red de Defensoras del Ambiente y el Buen Vivir and Red Ecofeminista LAC, and 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; and the Secretary for Climate, Energy and Environment of Brazil, André Aranha Corrêa do Lago.

46. The Latin American and Caribbean region was committed to climate action, had relatively clean energy and electricity mixes and considerable renewable energy potential, and had the strategic minerals and key sectoral mechanisms necessary for the energy transition and the transition to carbon neutrality, respectively. Even against that favourable backdrop, however, the region needed to increase the rate of decarbonization by four to five times in order to meet the emissions reduction commitments set out in nationally determined contributions. Despite generating only 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, Latin America and the Caribbean was highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, mainly on account of its geographical location and socioeconomic characteristics. The region’s efforts to adapt and reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change were concentrated in sectors that were highly sensitive to changes in climate, such as those linked to water resources, biodiversity, coastal zones, agriculture and health. Significant progress had been made in terms of disaster risk reduction. All countries in the region had some form of early warning system, 21 had a national disaster risk reduction strategy, and there was more adequate funding to respond to emergencies. However, gaps remained in terms of investment in disaster risk reduction, particularly in reconstruction processes, territorial coverage and hazard mainstreaming. There was a need to urge better coordination of climate change, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction agendas in the region.

47. The moderator referred to the regional context of limited fiscal space for investment in climate change adaptation and resilience and the insufficient investment and lack of national funding plans for disaster risk reduction and said that there was an urgent need to raise awareness of the costs and benefits of investing in prevention and resilience. He underscored that disaster risk reduction and climate action must be mainstreamed as central components of investment for sustainable development and that significant transformations must be made in the productive structures of the economies of the region to be able to address climate change.

48. Panellists agreed that the countries of the region were facing high levels of risk and destruction related to climate change and that there was a need to take decisive action and make commitments at the national, regional and local levels. There was an increase in climate ambition compared with the first nationally determined contributions that countries submitted in 2015. The region’s 2030 climate targets reflected emission reductions of between 24 per cent and 29 per cent compared with the business-as-usual scenario and prioritized such sectors as energy, land use, land-use change and forestry, transport, agriculture and waste.

49. Statements were made by the representatives of Barbados, Paraguay, Peru, Panama and Mexico. The representatives of UN-Women and UN-Habitat also made statements.

50. Panel 4, on Goal 16, was moderated by the Chair of the Committee to Support Implementation and Compliance of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement), Patricia Madrigal, and the panellists were the Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; the Regional Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for the Andean Region and the Southern Cone; an academic in the Department of Political Science at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) in Ecuador, Fernando Carrión; the Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), Marcela Ríos Tobar; the Dean of the Faculty of
Social Sciences and Director of the Centre for Leadership and Foresight of the University of Salvador in Argentina, Gabriela Agosto; and the Co-Director of Centro Mujeres, AC (Mexico), and representative 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, Mónica Jasis.

51. Homicide rates in Latin America and the Caribbean had been elevated since the 1990s and were currently the highest in the world. Although the region was home to only about 9 per cent of the world’s population, it accounted for almost a third of all homicides, which had been attributed largely to violence associated with conflicts between organized criminal groups competing for control of illegal markets. A number of structural problems persisted in the region, such as weak rule of law, social inequality and youth unemployment, as well as short-term problems such as drug production and trafficking and the possession and use of firearms. While countries were taking steps to address violence, the strategies implemented to do so varied, as did patterns and trends of reduction, reflecting the complexity of the situation in each country. There was little statistical information on trends in illicit financial inflows and outflows and the seizure, surrender or legalization of illicit arms. The region was far from guaranteeing a high standard of transparency and accountability, which translated into very high levels of distrust and perceived corruption. Vulnerable populations faced more obstacles when it came to exercising their right to informed and effective participation in public life and policymaking. However, there were notable efforts to ensure equal access to justice; inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making; and public access to information.

52. The moderator said that regional progress on Goal 16 was insufficient; in fact, there had been setbacks. High levels of violence were attributed to conflicts between organized criminal groups, as well as structural problems such as weak rule of law, social inequality and youth unemployment. There were also obstacles to citizen participation in decision-making and access to information.

53. Panellists highlighted the need to promote open justice policies and take advantage of digital tools to strengthen internal and external oversight systems that provided greater transparency and accountability for cases handled by different judicial bodies. It was essential to have a solid institutional framework that depended both on the financial resources invested in public action and on legal frameworks in harmony with the main international instruments. More and better access to public information should be made available to citizens in order to facilitate collaboration.

54. In the discussions, statements were made by the representatives of Brazil, Cuba, Honduras, Mexico and Peru. The representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN-Women and the International Labour Organization also made statements.

55. Panel 5, on Goal 17, was moderated by the Senior Manager for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Global Compact, and the panellists were the Director of the Committee on Agreements, International Treaties and Statistics of the National Council of the Maquiladora and Export Manufacturing Industry (INDEX) of Mexico, Israel Mario Morales; a consultant with the International Finance Corporation, Elkin Echeverri; the Lead Officer of the Resource Mobilization and Global Partnerships Department, Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, Patricio Scaff; the Chief of the Support and Coordination Unit of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), Montserrat García Villanueva; the founder of Consorcio de Organizaciones Juveniles LAC and coordinator of Red de Jóvenes y Adolescentes VIH Positivos de América Latina y el Caribe Hispano (J+LAC), Sara Hernández Cepeda; the Director of Operations of the Mexican Foundation for Family Planning (MEXFAM) and representative 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, Lorena Santos; the Head of Operations at the Inter-American Development Bank, Pablo Angelelli; the Director General of the French Development Agency, Rémy Rioux; the President of the National Bank for Economic and Social Development of Brazil, Aloizio Mercadante; and the Director of the Development Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Ragnheiður Elin Árnadóttir.

56. The outlook with regard to achieving the goals associated with financing for sustainable development in Latin American and Caribbean countries was less than promising. Domestic resource mobilization was constrained by a number of factors, including low growth, high debt levels and a low tax burden. International resources were also limited because of the middle-income designation assigned to most countries in the region. The complex, changing context of international trade also had an impact on the region’s situation, as did the narrowing of fiscal and monetary policy space and the growing level of public debt, all factors that challenged the ability of countries to mobilize, both domestically and from abroad, the financial resources needed to enable the Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030. Most of the region’s countries were considered to be in the upper-middle income bracket, which had led to a stagnation of grants and an increasing emphasis on concessional lending as a mode of financing.

57. The moderator mentioned that there was a significant willingness to cooperate on the part of private sector organizations, from small and medium-sized enterprises to chambers of commerce, large corporations and multinational companies. There was a need to help firms to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals in order to achieve societal impact. Partnerships were fundamental, and key work areas had been identified for the six priority transitions in order to broaden their reach.

58. Panellists agreed that the mobilization of funding through international, South-South and triangular cooperation should be sustained and enhanced in order to formulate transformative alternatives and initiatives that enabled inclusive, sustainable development and raised living standards in the region. Through such cooperation, spaces should be created for countries to continue to share experiences, learn from success stories, facilitate policy dialogue, provide technical assistance, strengthen partnerships and exchange knowledge, as well as undertake multilateral and multilevel actions. Key challenges remained in implementing the 2030 Agenda in the region, given its tight fiscal environment and uncertain economic outlook: it needed to attract more private finance, including through public-private partnerships, and strive for a more equitable regional distribution of foreign direct investment for the green transition; it needed to improve its use of public funds, including through tax reform; and it needed greater policy coherence and the support of coordinated international frameworks.

59. In the ensuing discussion, statements were made by the representatives of Cuba, Paraguay, Peru, Honduras, Panama and Brazil.

Civil society statements

60. A representative of the children, adolescents and youth 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 read a statement.

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1 The full text of the statements is available at https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2024/en/programme/reading-civil-society-statement.
61. The representatives 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 read a statement to the Forum.

**Adoption of the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations**

62. The intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the seventh meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development² were adopted.