

Please accept warmest greetings from Mr. Leo Heileman, United Nations Environment Programme Regional Director and Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean. Our regional office is honored to be part of this period of sessions, and we would like to congratulate the Government of Mexico and ECLAC for this excellent gathering, along with our appreciation for the outstanding work of the last two years and the launch of Horizons 2030.

Mr. Heileman was not able to attend this meeting personally, because this same week is taking place in Nairobi the second session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly. UNEA 2.

The overarching theme of the UNEA is “Delivering on the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” Under the Presidency of our region, the Assembly will culminate in resolutions on key issues and a global call to action to address the critical environmental challenges facing the world today.

The Rio+20 decision to establish the UNEA as the world’s highest level decision-making body on the environment, marked a coming of age for global environmental governance, and it was testimony to the growing recognition that without careful management of the environment we will not succeed in our efforts to reduce poverty, improve global health and secure enduring peace and stability. As the Secretary General expressed, after the adoption of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the historic signing of the Paris Agreement on climate change, UNEA-2 is an important early way station on the journey we must undertake to implement these landmark investments in a sustainable future for all.

In preparation to UNEA 2, the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean met in Cartagena last April. Through its thirty years of existence, the Forum has consolidated as the leader political voice for environmental sustainability and promotion of an integrated approach towards decision making processes that recognize and take into consideration the three dimensions of sustainable development, as it is expressed in the ILAC, the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development

Conscious of the environmental community responsibility in leading the process towards full incorporation of environmental sustainability in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and acknowledging the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development, the Ministers reaffirmed that the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean constitutes one space for regional dialogue, exchange of good practices and experiences and follow-up of public policies, inter alia, the integration of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda implementation and its relationship with poverty eradication, as well as the challenges that the region faces in this regard. Therefore, the Forum will provide leadership, relevant inputs and contributions on the environmental dimension to the regional follow-up mechanisms of the implementation of 2030 Agenda in the region, as well as to the UNEA.

Along with this decision, which was transmitted to the Regional Commission, the United Nations Environment Programme, as the Forum Secretariat and the entity that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations System, renew its commitment to continue supporting regional dialogue and cooperation, working in coordination and hand in hand with ECLAC and all partners, in the implementation and follow up of the sustainable development agenda in the region.