

POLITICAL DECLARATION
ON AN SUSTAINABLE, INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT RECOVERY
IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

We, the Foreign Ministers and high representatives of Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered virtually on the occasion of the thirty-eight session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), under the presidency of Costa Rica, from 26 to 28 October 2020, considering the unprecedented effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on sustainable development in its three dimensions -economic, social and environmental, leading to the most severe contraction in economic activity in the history of the region;

1. Express solidarity with all people and countries affected by the pandemic, and condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims of COVID-19 and those whose lives and livelihoods have been affected by the pandemic.
2. Recognize with deep gratitude the competence, generosity, solidarity and personal sacrifice of health-care professionals and services in Latin America and the Caribbean in the exercise of their duties to contain the spread of the pandemic.
3. Reaffirm our commitment to international cooperation, multilateralism and solidarity in the global response to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic and its consequences.
4. Reaffirm also our commitment to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs, which are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development, economic, social and environmental.
5. Reaffirm that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which builds on the 2002 Monterrey Consensus and the 2008 Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, provides a global framework for financing sustainable development, as an integral part of the 2030 Agenda; call for the swift and efficient mobilisation of resources to tackle development challenges, emphasize the need to strengthen international development cooperation, calls upon donors that have not done so to fulfil their respective official development assistance (ODA) commitments; and recognize the synergies of this agenda with relevant instruments, in particular the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the New Urban Agenda adopted in Quito, Ecuador, the SAMOA Pathway, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries and the Outcome document of the Second United Nations High Level Conference on South-South Cooperation.
6. Take note of the reports produced by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on COVID-19 and acknowledge their recommendations.
7. Express profound concern about the devastating impact of the pandemic on health and the loss of life, mental health and well-being, as well as on the fulfilment of sustainable development and humanitarian needs, the enjoyment of human rights and across all spheres of society, including on poverty eradication, ending hunger, food security and nutrition, education, livelihoods, environment and the exacerbation of inequalities within and among countries, which is reversing hard-won

development gains and hampering progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all its Goals and targets.

8. Emphasize with deep concern the special challenges facing developing countries in this crisis, including small island developing States, landlocked developing countries, as well as the specific challenges facing middle-income countries and the challenges faced by developing countries graduating to higher income per capita status and underlining the need to give particular attention to their concerns and specific challenges.

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

10. Recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic has a disproportionately heavy impact on women and girls, older persons, youth, children, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, indigenous peoples, persons of African descent, migrants, internally displaced persons and refugees, as well as the poor, deepening existing inequalities for persons in vulnerable and marginalized situations; and that responses to the COVID-19 pandemic need to take into account multiple and intersecting forms of violence, discrimination, stigmatization, exclusion and inequalities; as well as the increased demand on women for paid and unpaid care and domestic work and the reported surge of sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence during confinement, all of which are deepening already existing inequalities and risk reversing the progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

11. Recognizes further that the pandemic has disproportionately affected people of all ages with preexisting medical conditions, showed a higher mortality rate in men affected by COVID-19, and elevated the risks of frontline and health care workers;

12. Recognize further that inequalities, or even widening gaps in inequalities, remains pervasive in countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, even in those with high levels of economic growth, and that further investment in social services, including social protection services, and economic opportunities are needed in order to reduce inequalities and that economic growth needs to be sustained, inclusive and equitable.

13. Reaffirm the right of every human being, without distinction of any kind, to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; and call for an effective public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the sustainably strengthening of the health system, including community based-services and psychosocial support programs in primary health care, integrated people-centred health services, and equitable and social care and support systems, in the context of achieving universal health coverage.

14. Urgently call for intensified solidarity, multilateralism and international cooperation at all levels, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation, bearing in mind that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation, as well as public-private partnerships, to contain, mitigate and overcome the pandemic and its consequences through responses that are people-centred, gender-responsive, with full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

15. Call for bold and concerted actions to address the impacts on sustainable development of the COVID-19 pandemic and the policies necessary to address the economic crisis and depression, begin economic recovery and minimize the negative effects on livelihoods, while striving to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and avoid new pressures on the global trend of loss of biodiversity by designing recovery strategies out of the crisis to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including gender-sensitive targeted measures for poverty eradication, social protection for formal and informal sector workers, increased access to finance and capacity-building for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, financial inclusion mechanisms, strong fiscal stimulus packages and supportive monetary policies, and calls upon donors and other stakeholders to support countries that lack the capacity to implement such measures.

16. Urgently call for universal, unhindered, timely, inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory access to, and fair distribution of all quality, safe, efficacious and affordable diagnosis, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines, as well as health technologies and products, including their components and precursors, that are required in the response to the COVID-19 as a global priority; encourage strengthening of scientific international cooperation necessary to combat the pandemic and support initiatives in this regard, such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP), and relevant pledging appeals; and recognize the COVID-19 vaccine as a global public good.

17. Encourage Member States and other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and international financial institutions, to mobilize a large-scale, coordinated and comprehensive global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences; call for a global coordinated multilateral response, and in this regard take note of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Shared responsibility, global solidarity: responding to the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19”, in which the need for a multilateral response amounting to at least 10 per cent of global gross domestic product is highlighted;

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

19. Call upon Member States and other relevant stakeholders to keep food and agriculture supply chains functioning, ensure the continued trade in and movement of food and livestock, products and inputs essential for agricultural and food production to markets, minimize food loss and waste, support workers and farmers, including women farmers, in agriculture and food supply chains to continue their essential work, including cross-border, in a safe manner, mobilize and allocate adequate resources and enhance institutional capacities for an accelerated implementation of sustainable agriculture and food systems, provide continued access to adequate, safe, affordable and nutritious food.

20. Express concern that the region is highly vulnerable to climate change owing to its geography, climate, spatial inequalities, socioeconomic conditions and demographic factors, and in this regard, underscore the need to urgently increase the importance of promoting policies and planning that build resilience and reduce displacement risk in the context of disasters and the ambition for climate action in order to achieve the long-term goals of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement and fully implement its provisions.

21. Emphasize the need of significantly increasing international climate finance, which is additional to ODA, and ensure enhanced access to it in order to support mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries, especially those that are particularly vulnerable, and to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change in the context of a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery, consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development that leaves no one behind.

22. Emphasize also the need to increase access to concessional finance, especially in the context of the global pandemic, including by the creation of new financial mechanisms or funds to support countries facing fiscal pressures and consider offering low-interest loans to open up the fiscal space and, in this regard, welcome regional and global proposals including the creation of the Fund to Alleviate COVID-19 Economics (FACE).

23. Welcome the steps taken by the Group of 20 and the Paris Club to provide a time-bound suspension of debt service payments for the poorest countries and by international financial institutions to provide liquidity and other support measures to ease the debt burden of developing countries; further encourages all relevant actors, including private and commercial creditors, to address risks of debt vulnerabilities, through existing channels, in developing countries due to the pandemic, and call for an expansion of these kind of measures through 2021 and to countries of the Latin American and Caribbean region.

24. Call upon Member States and international financial institutions to provide more liquidity in the financial system, especially in all developing countries, including by the implementation of instruments such as a Liquidity and Sustainability Facility to inject liquidity into developing economies and support sustainable investments and supports the continued examination of the broader use of special drawing rights to enhance the resilience of the international monetary system.

25. Welcome innovative financing mechanisms such as the Debt Relief/Swap for Climate Adaptation for the Caribbean; as well as ECLAC “Caribbean first” initiative.

26. Also emphasize that illicit financial flows, in particular those caused by tax evasion, corruption and transnational organized crime, reduce the availability of vital resources for responding to and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and financing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and calls upon Member States to recommit to addressing the challenges of preventing and combating illicit financial flows and strengthening international cooperation and good practices on this regard.

27. Strongly urge States to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries.

28. Stress that recovery from the pandemic should be an occasion to enhance and support the development policies of Latin America and the Caribbean while strengthening democracy and fulfilling human rights; and recognize the importance of developing recovery plans that promote sustainable development and drive transformative change towards peaceful, just and inclusive societies, including by empowering and engaging all women, adolescents and girls.

29. Stresses that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to reduce the risk of the economic, social and environmental impacts of disasters, many of which are exacerbated by climate change, desertification and biodiversity loss, and urge Member States to adopt a climate- and environment-responsive approach to COVID-19 recovery efforts, including by aligning investments and domestic policies with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement, as well as the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework; in this regard, we welcome the convening of a Summit on Biodiversity on 30 September 2020 at the level of Heads of State and Government, to highlight the urgency of action at the highest level in support of a global biodiversity framework post-2020 that contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

30. Urges Member States and other relevant stakeholders to accelerate the catalytic role that digital technologies play in reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, health, communication, commerce and economic recovery and ensure a path towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, while striving to address the digital gap, including the gender digital divide.

31. Emphasize the need for the international community to strengthen its capacities of prevention, preparedness and multidimensional response in the face of future pandemics and look forward to the results of the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response and the Review Committee on the Functioning of the International Health Regulations (2005) during the COVID-19 Response, and to identifying concrete measures towards this end.

32. While recognizing that substantial digital divides and data inequalities exist within and among countries and regions, and between developed and all developing countries, and that many developing countries lack affordable access to information and communications technologies, calls upon States and all relevant stakeholders to reaffirm their commitment to bridging digital and knowledge divides to promote research and capacity-building initiatives, as well as to enhance cooperation on and access to science, innovation, technologies, technical assistance and knowledge-sharing, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, especially with developing countries, in a collaborative, coordinated and transparent manner to help bridge those digital divides.

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