39th Session of ECLAC
Dialogue of Foreign Ministers and High-Level Authorities
(26 October 2022, Buenos Aires)

Mr. President,
Esteemed Foreign Ministers,
Mr. Executive Secretary,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

- On behalf of the Government of Türkiye, I would like to start by thanking Argentina and H.E. Minister Santiago Cafiero for hosting the 39th Session of ECLAC and the Dialogue of Foreign Ministers and High-Level Authorities.

- Allow me to congratulate Mr. Jose Manuel Salazar and wish him success as our new Executive Secretary.

- We have left behind two turbulent years under the effect of the pandemic, which added more challenges to the existing ones shaking our economies and costing millions of lives.

- In the post-pandemic era, the international geopolitical system is still undergoing an unprecedented set of challenges unleashing the necessity of multilateralism and international cooperation even more.

-Today, unfortunately we face:

- higher poverty levels,
- rising inflation,
- food and energy insecurity,
- refugee flows,
- health crises,
- increased violence and wars
- and extreme weather events starting from the climate change,

- However, there is not a joint response to overcome these challenges. Unfortunately,

- Multilateralism is under serious stress.
- Protectionism is back.
- Respect for international law is eroding.
- Global governance is not as effective as it should be
- ECLAC constitutes a well-preserved and sustained mechanism to come up with solutions to these pressing challenges at the regional level.

- Yet, before we even begin to solve these problems, we need to diagnose their root causes.

- At the international stage, we see a recently emerged discourse that blames globalization for all these problems.

- It is true that globalization has taken resources from poorer states to richer states at the expense of the former.

- It has produced as many losers as winners.

- So, we need to see how we can reform the remains of an outdated system benefiting a few, rather than all.

- Our first step must be to ensure genuine international cooperation and effective multilateralism.

- For this, we first need to re-organize ourselves both institutionally and intellectually.

- As the co-chair of Friends of Mediation group at both the UN, OSCE and OIC, Türkiye is working hard towards this.

- Secondly, in this greater interdependence, maintaining free and fair international trade is key.

- Unilateral sanctions and protectionist tendencies are not helpful.

- Lastly, geography is no longer a shield. What happens in one part of the world affects everyone, everywhere.

- The war in Ukraine is a case in point.

- From Africa to Latin America, there is a growing concern about rising food prices.

- The İstanbul Grain Deal that we facilitated with the UN was a significant step towards ensuring global food security.

- With the signing of the agreement, there was global relief.

- According to the FAO (Ef-Ey-O), the Food Price Index fell by 9 percent. (Its biggest decline since 2008.)

- So far more than 8 million tons of Ukrainian grain were exported through Turkish Straits.

- Now our efforts focus on extending this deal beyond its initial 3-month period.

- We are also working to put in place a similar plan to export Russian fertilizer, which is especially important for Latin America and the Caribbean.

- At the same time, we are trying to bring the parties to the negotiating table.

- These principles of free trade, effective multilateralism and awareness of our interdependence define our approach to the Latin American and the Caribbean region.

- Türkiye has developed a strategic “outreach” policy towards the region since the beginning of 2000s.
- In this context, our diplomatic network in the region has reached up to 18 missions.

- Such policy had a direct impact on our commercial relations.

- Through our newly announced “Far Countries Strategy” we will expand our trade even further.

- We have FTAs with Chile and Venezuela and working on negotiations with Mexico, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and MERCOSUR.

- Our development agency TİKA has undertaken more than 500 projects in Latin America and the Caribbean region in the fields of development assistance, education, health, technology and so on.

Distinguished Participants,

- Thousands of kilometers separate Türkiye from the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

- But thanks to our deepening cooperation, we feel closer than ever to our Latin American and Caribbean partners.

- The current global system is far from ideal in responding to the challenges we are up against.

- Transforming our approach to global development and governance is no longer a choice, but a necessity.

Thank you.