



Forum of the Countries
of Latin America and
the Caribbean on
**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**
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Third meeting of the Forum of the Countries of
Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

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SUMMARY OF THE CHAIR



INTRODUCTION

At the thirty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), held in Mexico City from 23 to 27 May 2016, the member States adopted resolution 700(XXXVI), sponsored by Mexico, establishing the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development as a regional mechanism to follow up and review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), its targets and means of implementation, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

The first meeting of the Forum was held in Mexico City, from 26 to 28 April 2017. The meeting was chaired by Mexico, in its capacity as Chair of the Committee of the Whole of ECLAC, and convened under the auspices of the Commission.

The second meeting of the Forum was held in Santiago, from 18 to 20 April 2018, chaired by Mexico, and convened under the auspices of the Commission. The meeting of the Forum was open to member States of the Forum and observers, the United Nations system, regional and subregional bodies, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society.

The third meeting of the Forum was held in Santiago, from 24 to 26 April 2019, chaired by Cuba, and convened under the auspices of the Commission. The meeting was open to member States of the Forum and observers, the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, regional and subregional bodies, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society.

The purpose of the meetings of the Forum is to share experiences and best practices among the Latin American and Caribbean countries regarding actions taken to achieve the SDGs in the region.

1. Opening session

At the opening session, statements were made by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); Carolina Valdivia, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Chile; Rodrigo Malmierca, Minister of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment of Cuba, in his capacity as Chair of the Forum; Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, who conveyed a written statement; Inga Rhonda King, President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (by video message); and Gilda Menchú, youth representative. The speakers agreed that the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development is a space for discussion between governments, the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, civil society, academia and the private sector, that enables the exchange of experiences and good practices for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region. Attendance at the Forum included senior representatives of the United Nations system and stakeholders from civil society, academia and the private sector in more than 50 side events. It was stressed that multilateralism, which has tangible form in the region, is going through complex times. The normative agenda of the Organization has been called into question, but cooperation is the path to making progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Multilateralism is compatible with enhancing democracy at the national level when multilateral agreements give priority to the interests of the many over the interests of the most powerful groups, protect the rights of minorities and the most vulnerable sectors, and strengthen the deliberative capacities of governments, the private sector and civil society, stimulating a debate combining

transparency, diversity of views and analytical capacity, among others. The countries are facing trade and financial imbalances, adjustments in response to external shocks and the consequences of a high-carbon production system. The Forum offers an opportunity to discuss the difficulties in making progress towards fulfilment of the SDGs. The region is diverse, and its national and international processes have their own timing and dynamics. Diversity is the basis for complementing the visions that converge in the Forum, whose work contributes to a fairer society for all. The Forum has become well established and shows that countries can work coherently in an environment of dialogue, with respect for national sovereignty and self-determination, upholding multilateralism aligned with comprehensive development, as proposed in the 2030 Agenda, to overcome inequality, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and deaths from preventable diseases. The impact of climate change particularly affects the Caribbean countries, which must devote scarce resources to mitigating its effects. This situation, coupled with mounting global economic uncertainty, makes multilateralism increasingly necessary, together with an approach that places citizens at the centre of development and takes into account the particular features of the region. The application of unilateral measures, such as the economic, trade and financial blockade on Cuba, a policy that has intensified in recent years, harms the country's relations with the rest of the world. Nevertheless, Cuba has reaffirmed its commitment to continuing to support the countries of the region.

During this session, the speakers acknowledged the work of ECLAC and its leadership in the region, which has helped give birth to the conceptual vision behind the Sustainable Development Goals. Latin America and the Caribbean had demonstrated by theory and practice that alternative economic models are possible. The world is currently losing the race against climate change, and impediments remain to the achievement of the SDGs in general. Inequality in the region limits economic growth, marginalizes individuals and erodes public trust in institutions. The United Nations is reforming to become a better partner for governments and peoples in delivering on the SDGs. Working as one cohesive Organization will enable the United Nations to provide sharper and more integrated policy advice to governments; take action to a greater scale; and better help countries leverage finance and partnerships, which in turn will help better connect global action to results in-country and achieve the SDGs. The region is helping to put three fundamental questions on the global agenda: how to uphold the commitment to leave no one behind amid still-high levels of multidimensional poverty and inequality; how to ensure that women and indigenous populations may participate fully in the economic, social and political lives of their countries; and how to make progress on financing for development. To achieve the SDGs, private and public resources must be combined and synergized; and heightened global cooperation to eliminate illicit flows and tax evasion in order to better mobilize external financing. South-South and triangular cooperation also contribute to the exchange of know-how, technology and expertise. Countries are encouraged to work closely with the resident coordinators and United Nations country teams in order to receive tailored and effective support for national development strategies and plans. The SDGs are central to the development plans of the region's governments and the private sector acknowledges that the SDGs are profitable and sustainable for businesses. Meanwhile, civil society participation ensures that actions to achieve the SDGs improve people's lives. The high-level political forum convened under the auspices of ECOSOC strengthens commitment to the 2030 Agenda by forging strong partnerships at all levels, as well as scaling up good practices through peer learning and fostering cooperation and effective linkages with the regions. The contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean will be much anticipated at the next meeting of the high-level political forum. The Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development is a key platform for reviewing SDG implementation progress in the region and ECOSOC will continue to support regional efforts. Attention was drawn to the participation of young people and their commitment to continuing the progress currently being made regarding the exercise of rights by the most disadvantaged. The Forum is a space for exchanging ideas and finding concrete solutions in this regard. Lastly, the action of the women, many of them migrants, has facilitated progress towards achieving the SDGs in the region.

2. Presentation of the *Quadrennial report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*¹

The *Quadrennial report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* is the outcome of the work of United Nations agencies together with ECLAC. The world today is not the same as in 2015: profound changes have occurred at the international level, the economy and trade are growing very slowly, protectionism is on the rise, multilateralism has weakened, and inequalities are growing. Risks are looming of a new financial crisis, geopolitical rivalry—in relation to technology more than trade—and climate change. ECLAC has assessed the cost of not cooperating, which is already evident in recessionary stagnation and in the way the highest income percentiles have accumulated the greatest wealth. With regard to the environment, failure to halt global warming will lead to a temperature increase of 4° C in the next generations: the question is how to keep the increase below 2°C in this generation. Concerning the challenge of leaving no one behind, some indicators have been selected to measure progress. First, the region's growth has been lacklustre: from 5.5% before the 1980s it has fallen to averages of 1.3%; stronger growth will be needed to achieve the SDG targets. Secondly, the region's relative productivity has declined and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises have only weak capacities for participating in the economy. The region is being held back by its production specialization and disequilibria and, in the case of South America, by dependence on raw materials. Inequality permeates the entire region, despite the efforts of some countries to reduce it. Strides were made in poverty reduction between 2002 and 2015, but that progress has since stalled and both poverty and extreme poverty are on the rise again, with large disparities between territories and population groups, such as children, women and indigenous populations. Engaging more women in the labour market would help to reduce poverty. All agencies are seeking to disaggregate data to understand gaps by population group, gender wage gaps and the effects of automation on work. The report also discusses the inefficiency of inequality, large gaps in education, child and adolescent labour, violence as a cross-cutting issue that undermines sustainable development in many parts of the region, deforestation and changes in land use and their effects on climate change, as well as the challenge of advancing towards a more sustainable energy mix.

The greatest concern surrounds the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The region has made great efforts in this regard: 29 countries have put in place mechanisms to address the challenges of the 2030 Agenda and many have submitted voluntary national reviews (some of them twice) or are preparing to do so in 2019 and 2020. Several countries have integrated the SDGs into their national development plans and budgets. The 2030 Agenda is also becoming integrated into the private sector. The reduction in the fiscal space and high levels of public debt, particularly in the Caribbean, represent a major constraint. An analysis conducted of public expenditure to see how public resources are being invested shows that total income is at a standstill and total expenditure is low. The debt burden compels countries to allocate a large part of tax revenue to debt servicing, instead of financing public expenditure. Hence the ECLAC proposal on debt relief for the Caribbean, involving devoting these resources to a resilience fund. The culture of privilege and illicit financial flows generates large losses. Solutions must be found for resource mobilization: among the proposals in this regard are four instruments to expand the fiscal space: reducing tax evasion and illicit capital flows; taxing the digital economy and adopting environmental and health taxes; rethinking tax expenditure on incentives; and strengthening taxes on income and real estate. It is also important to reduce harmful tax competition between countries in the region and foster intraregional trade. The context is a difficult one, but the region shows great commitment. In response to the main challenge of mobilizing resources for the 2030 Agenda, ECLAC proposed six pillars of action: an inter-institutional and intersectoral architecture at the highest level; the integration of SDGs into plans and budgets; strengthening of statistical capacities; financing, technology, trade and accountability as means of

¹ LC/FDS.3/3.

implementation; the strengthening of regional architecture through the various observatories; and forums for dialogue between governments, businesses and citizens with regional United Nations entities and development banks. In its first few years, the 2030 Agenda was tackled in a more fragmented manner, but it is now time for a more comprehensive approach. The proposal is an environmental big push, with a new form of production and consumption in the private sector and society. Implementing the 2030 Agenda requires a new multilateralism for the provision of local and regional public goods to enhance resilience and to universalize welfare States and the rights of minorities.

The comments from the floor stressed the importance afforded in the report to the cost of non-cooperation, the links drawn between productivity, inequality and governance, and the institutionalization of the 2030 Agenda. Great strides have been made in the region, but there are heavy lags by comparison with advanced countries. It is necessary to dismantle the myth that being middle-income countries makes the countries of the region middle-class societies, since most of the region remains highly vulnerable and people can easily slip into poverty. The three-lane highway of productivity, inclusiveness and resilience cannot be built without effective governance and without the capacity of governments to demonstrate results. Growth is very uneven and differentiated policies are needed; it is also very volatile and is generally measured in flows, such as consumption, neglecting stocks, such as physical and human capital. The concentration of power in certain groups leads to dissatisfaction, making it necessary to rebuild the confidence in governments' ability to produce results. The 2030 Agenda proposes the same rights regardless of ideology. The proposal was to treat the 2030 Agenda as a tool for generating opportunities for productivity, inclusiveness and resilience from the perspectives of climate change, inequality or migration. Work has been done on mapping the challenges in light of the proposed "five Ps": people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. Meanwhile, work on partnerships has been reflected in the support for countries provided by United Nations agencies and resident coordinators, to deliver more effectively on those challenges and pursue them jointly.

Many of the challenges are interrelated and their causes and impacts transcend borders, requiring cooperation as well as broad reforms in multiple areas, more efficient use of government spending, and new ways of working between the State, civil society and business. The quadrennial report highlighted the need for a new generation of public policies with multisectoral approaches. Strengthening the mechanisms that States are creating around the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is also an important condition for furthering sustainable development. The United Nations, with its joint capacity for analysis and proposals, could be of great assistance to States in this regard. The system is improving and fine-tuning its capacity for working as one, within the framework of the reform spearheaded by the Secretary-General. Resident Coordinators and country teams, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), form part of this capacity to work around common goals in a coordinated manner. The system embeds a great deal of normative knowledge of international standards in relation to the different SDGs and also draws upon the experience and convening power and analytical and statistical capacities of ECLAC.

The statements made by the countries drew attention to the points raised about digitization and the digital revolution, and the importance of the circular economy as a paradigm shift with respect to the linear economy model. The 2030 Agenda enables planning beyond political cycles and is changing modes of planning and policymaking. It also provides a very valuable dialectic for relations with civil society, governments and other stakeholders, at a time of increasing polarization. The new multilateralism is a prerequisite for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Just as the 2030 Agenda requires systemic change, it also implies a rearrangement of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, which are essential to capacity-building. The challenge for the countries is also a challenge for the system, as an indispensable partner. The discussions in relation to raw materials are important inasmuch the countries of the region, as exporters of commodities to developed economies, have no say in setting their prices or the prices of the resulting processed goods. Along with operational prioritization of the

indicators, a strategic prioritization is required to shape a welfare approach in relation to Agenda 2030. The region needs to resolve development traps and prioritize strategically, cooperating to strengthen the capacity for dialogue between government, the private sector and civil society, to make the country's agendas into genuine agendas of State. The challenges call for coordinated common strategies and a systemic approach, for which the 2030 Agenda provides an excellent opportunity. The Agenda provides guidance through targets and indicators, but action must necessarily be based on local knowledge. This effort must be supported by all agencies and cannot be achieved by a single country. The level of the discussion is very different from three years ago, with new language becoming established and acquiring meaning. This represents a major challenge for the various United Nations agencies, as well as the countries, and everyone must act to catalyse the process. Initiatives are under way in relation to decent work, formalization of employment, poverty reduction, stimulus for innovation and greater coverage of social protection, all of which make contributions to core areas of the SDGs. This is a historic stage in renewing the social contract at the global level, representing a great opportunity for progress towards peace and development, at which institutional strengthening is essential as a basis for governance. Entities that do not work directly on the implementation of the SDGs nevertheless pursue aims and action that are consistent with with SDGs and contribute to them. These include humanitarian organizations that make contributions in areas that are less visible and to which less priority has been afforded.

3. Peer learning sessions

The peer learning sessions addressed the following topics: (i) challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean; (ii) institutional framework, planning and budgeting for the 2030 Agenda; (iii) implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the subnational level; and (iv) statistical capacities, measurement and georeferencing.

With regard to the challenges of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean, the countries drew attention to education, capacity development and a people-centred process to promote equality and inclusion. The very survival of Caribbean countries depends on the success of resilience-building strategies. The main challenges facing the Caribbean subregion include harmonizing new and old paradigms, access to financial resources and technical capacity (an area in which ECLAC and other United Nations entities have made valuable contributions), the need to adapt ideas to the specific characteristics and needs of each country, and competition for United Nations resources. In some Caribbean countries, civil society is not as active as in Latin America. Information on the SDGs must be built into curricula and the tangible benefits of the Goals for society and households must be seen. Although inequality exists throughout the subregion, it varies among countries. High levels of unemployment, particularly among young people, hamper efforts to enhance social cohesion, and the effects of the 2008 financial crisis are still prevalent in some countries of the subregion. Rapid urbanization is putting pressure on planning; cities are plagued by inequality and gaps in access to service and infrastructure, which leads to rising violence. It is essential to reduce gender inequality and policies must focus on empowering women, especially rural women. It is also necessary to encourage production and consumption patterns that do not deplete resources and contribute to climate change, to which the subregion is vulnerable and which is its most pressing challenge. High-income status countries no longer qualify for certain categories of development financing, although they are burdened by limited product diversification and declining energy-sector income. The lack of data and a sound data collection and management system is another challenge that makes it difficult to measure the performance of the initiatives adopted. Building on the region's successes while constraining challenges is key. It is easier to implement an agenda when there is ownership, financing and relevant data. The importance of empowering local communities and including them in

decision-making cannot be overstated. It is hoped that the strong partnership between ECLAC and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in support of small island developing States will continue.

In the session on institutional framework, planning and budgeting for the 2030 Agenda, it was noted that the 2030 Agenda had compelled countries to rethink their planning systems and strengthen tax systems to finance attainment of the SDGs. All countries have to deal with electoral processes and changes of government, since alternation of power is a fundamental part of democracy, without which the SDGs would not be achievable. The SDGs must therefore form part of a long-term strategic plan, as their implementation cannot be dependent on changes in government. An important aspect of planning for the 2030 Agenda is the need to work with subnational levels of government and territory to gain first-hand knowledge of the shortcomings of the different communities and the inequalities they face. This is the only way to ensure that national development plans are aligned with the realities in-country and that public policies are adapted to the needs of the population. The budgetary aspect is essential for adequate resource allocation and, in this regard, countries have made efforts to align the programmatic areas of budgets with each of the SDGs and their targets. Certain countries have adopted results-based planning, a public management model that seeks to ensure transparency in allocation of budgetary resources and that public expenditure is aligned with countries' national development plans. Furthermore, budget monitoring is fundamental, since it helps to understand such issues as sufficiency of the resources invested, appropriateness of their allocation and the need to explore new lines of financing. Adaptation of institutional frameworks to the imperative need to implement the 2030 Agenda presents significant challenges for a region that is not characterized by institutional strength or trust in institutions. Given the enormous inequalities that exist in the region—not only social, gender or territorial, but also those relating to ethnicity or migratory status—there is a great risk of failing to fulfil the main purpose of the 2030 Agenda: to leave no one behind. To address this problem, since very diverse factors interact within the areas of each SDG, it is essential to work with an inclusive and participatory vision, to communicate the benefits of the 2030 Agenda at all levels and to have the commitment of all actors in society. For this reason, most countries have created inter-institutional coordination mechanisms, making all sectors of society and government institutions participants in the process.

With regard to subnational implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and taking into account the diversity of territories in Latin America and the Caribbean, it was stressed that the territorial aspect is crucial for “anchoring” the international agenda to national and subnational development agendas, a process to which ECLAC had contributed significantly, especially through the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES). Obtaining and analysing disaggregated data at the city and municipal levels is essential for concerted territorial development planning, as is transparency, prioritization of projects based on SDG indicators and mobilization of resources. For this purpose, sustainable partnerships with the private sector are required, given the lack of public resources. Cities play an important role in implementing global agendas, not just the 2030 Agenda, and government programmes should treat cities through the lens of a commitment to sustainability and a rights-based approach. It is also necessary to position the subject of cities in global deliberation spaces and in countries' multilateral foreign policy. Meetings such as the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development are essential to include local and regional spaces in the global debate. A paradigm shift is needed in States' views on these issues, while finding creative ways for municipalities' voices to be heard. Communities have the best insight into their own realities; local and subnational governments and communities are called upon to express citizens' needs and dreams in policymaking, taking into account realities that shift over time and based on criteria that transcend national terms of government and even the time frame of the 2030 Agenda.

In the session on statistical capacities, measurement and georeferencing and in the discussion that followed, attention was drawn to the institutional mechanisms that countries have put in place to measure and monitor the SDGs and to prepare voluntary national reviews. In each case, the link between the SDG

monitoring mechanisms and institutional architecture for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was examined. The panellists said that priorities must be established among the indicators according to the needs of each country's specific policies; national statistical offices must be able to collect data from other official sources in order to optimize their work; and collaboration must be fostered among the countries of the region, including the exchange of lessons learned, to achieve greater efficiency. They identified the main statistical challenges in relation to the SDG indicators, which included coordination among the various actors engaged in the follow-up of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Goals; technical or methodological gaps for the measurement of those indicators; the need for greater disaggregation of data; the specific challenges facing small island developing States owing to their size; and the necessary modernization of national statistical systems and updating of legal frameworks. They highlighted the efforts of national statistical offices to produce data for monitoring the SDGs, as well as the important contribution of statistics in general to the implementation of the Goals. As information is key to achieving the SDGs, national statistical systems must be strengthened and require sufficient budgetary resources. In the context of the data revolution, the panellists reflected on the role of non-traditional data sources in the production of official statistics and the mechanisms that could better leverage the wealth of available information. They said that a flexible and experimental approach must be adopted to those new sources and that other actors, in particular civil society, must be involved in the production of statistics, while establishing data rigour standards that do not constitute a barrier to entry. Geospatial information and georeferencing are not merely an input, but vital inputs for producing statistics for monitoring the SDGs and for data dissemination; in this regard, producers of these data are key partners. Participants also commended the role of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC as a regional space that promoted institutional learning through a strategic exchange among countries.

4. Latin American and Caribbean and European interregional dialogue on implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The discussion themes in this session included, in particular, the need for international cooperation to advance in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to change production and consumption patterns. Against the backdrop of uncertainty and transformation in the international environment, Latin America and the Caribbean maintains solid ties and a strategic partnership with Europe in favour of the 2030 Agenda, the road map agreed for the future. Emphasis was placed on promoting multilateralism and access to financing and to technical capacity. Climate change remains an issue of vital importance, especially for vulnerable regions such as Central America and the Caribbean. The Caribbean subregion continues to grapple with challenges and has not recovered fully from the 2008 financial crisis. Its growth has been hampered by debt and natural disasters such as Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Although CARICOM countries are adopting the necessary measures to comply with international banking regulations, the placing of some countries on blacklists and the policy of de-risking continue to have adverse impacts on the region's offshore financial sector. Sustainability requires a cultural change towards a new circular economy, no longer a linear economy that produces and discards. Countries should be classified not only on the basis of GDP, but also of per capita emissions and level of social inclusion. Investment and technological innovation are needed for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The discussions referred to environmental justice and the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement), which provides for public access to information, a human right. The strategic partnership between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean must be renewed, as they face the same challenges, such as the consequences of environmental problems, decent work, the fight against gender-based violence and the preservation of democracy. Sustainable development must serve as a reference framework for foreign direct investment and SDGs should be localized to have an effective impact on territories, both urban and rural. In the relationship between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, which are key drivers of the 2030 Agenda, there should

be no separation into roles of donors and beneficiaries, but rather all countries should interact as equals, within the framework of mutual cooperation which provides a learning experience for all. The importance of triangular cooperation was underscored, as it allows the achievement of goals such as sustainable economic development. Education and governance of education systems are also areas in need of improvement. It is essential to protect the oceans and marine resources —because the threats they face affect us all— and create a sustainable ocean economy through an integrated approach. Moreover, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing must also be tackled, as it robs countries of vast resources.

5. The regional dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: contributions of the United Nations system

The ongoing process of reform of the United Nations requires close dialogue between member States, funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations, resident coordinators, country teams, governments, academia, the private sector and civil society stakeholders. While the regional dimension of the United Nations, in particular in the development pillar, is not always visible, its value is evident in platforms such as the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, whose convening capacity facilitates multi-stakeholder dialogue. The path to reform calls for a new way of working, offering more integrated and efficient responses to governments based on the needs they themselves express. That will make it possible to translate global initiatives to the national level and enrich national public goods. An integrated approach facilitates the regional and subregional analysis of issues that transcend borders —such as human mobility— or that are not bound by them, such as climate change. Working thematically around the “five Ps” —people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership— requires an intersectoral approach within countries and coordination with the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system in the region. With regard to people, a major issue is human mobility, which exposes migrants to disproportionate risks and host communities to new challenges, and a response based on social and economic inclusion requires a comprehensive approach. Successful examples of coordination between governments and the United Nations system in the area of migration abound in the region, as evidenced by the work done by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Central American Integration System (SICA), the United Nations Development Group for Latin America and the Caribbean and ECLAC. The various forms of violence in the region erode citizen trust in institutions and support for democracy. Moving populations from situations of fragility and eradicating violence against women and children is a matter of urgency. Prevention is not enough: it is time for peaceful but firm action to combat impunity, foster peace education and end hatred. A number of activities carried out by SICA, UNDP and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), in collaboration with the governments of the region, have helped to change violent situations, with successful efforts in the prevention of armed violence or the joint construction of protection mechanisms for survivors of gender-based violence. Achievement of the SDGs will be impossible, however, if the planet continues to be degraded. A paradigm shift such as the environmental big push championed by ECLAC is necessary, as is urgent action to meet the targets of the Paris Agreement. In a region characterized by diverse ecosystems and a heavy dependence on export commodities, nature-based solutions offer environmental and economic co-benefits.

The region’s low growth, inequality and economic vulnerability affect productivity, inclusion and resilience. The plans developed in the Caribbean with respect to the green economy and the blue economy, and partnerships between the private sector and civil society to finance initiatives for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda illustrate the benefits of coordination. Coordination between governments and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations involves greater dialogue with resident coordinators, better knowledge of populations and territories, and improved intersectoral and inter-ministerial

coordination within national governments. It is vital to leverage the comparative advantages of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies and establish joint projects with member States. Country representatives highlighted some of the benefits of inter-agency coordination in the region, including collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNDP and UN-Women to define social protection floors, and the work of UNICEF on early marriage and child pregnancy or the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on disaster risk reduction. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) provides a mechanism to support countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and regional commissions play a leading role. However, countries are the focal points for implementation and it is vital to maintain dialogue between them and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations in the region, in a framework of shared ownership of the implementation process: we are more effective when we work together.

6. Contribution of the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC and relevant intergovernmental meetings to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In this session, representatives of the subsidiary bodies of ECLAC and intergovernmental meetings relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development referred to the activities carried out in fulfilment of their respective mandates.

The representative of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) said that CDCC was uniquely positioned to promote an integrative approach to sustainable development and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Caribbean, and drew attention to the activities carried out by the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean, including three major subregional technical meetings, as well as numerous missions and technical assistance activities in member countries.

The Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean is the main regional forum for addressing the challenges relating to the rights and autonomy of women, and the meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Conference is a space for fruitful exchange on progress related to the Montevideo Strategy and the 2030 Agenda. Since these are areas in which current conditions in the region could lead to setbacks, the Conference proposes women's autonomy in changing economic scenarios as the theme for its next session.

The representative of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC indicated that this body had achieved the objectives set, since the analytical work and prioritization of the SDG indicators had been successfully completed, and the prioritization duly endorsed by the member countries at the seventeenth meeting of the Executive Committee of the Conference. A diagnosis had also been performed of national capacities for producing the indicators, and mechanisms were being sought to strengthen these where necessary. Lastly, the Conference was engaged in reviewing the operating modalities of the working groups of the Conference in order to prepare specific outputs and contributions tailored to the statistical needs of the countries.

The representative of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) referred to the work done by ILPES with governments to improve development plans and strategies in the region, and to the creation of tools —the Regional Observatory on Planning for Development and Planbarometer— that were of great use for ascertaining and assessing progress made by countries in terms of integrating the 2030 Agenda into their planning systems. The Institute had also been tasked with producing a document on territorial development to address the challenges posed by the linking of policies, plans and processes regarding implementation and follow-up at different territorial scales and levels of government.

Regarding the work of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Montevideo Consensus, the most significant intergovernmental agreement in this sphere, complemented the 2030 Agenda on topics not sufficiently covered in the SDGs, such as ageing, international migration and indigenous and Afrodescendent populations. Accordingly, the indicators of the Consensus were instrumental for the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda. At the last session of the Conference, 25 countries presented voluntary national reports on progress made in this area, which served as a basis to produce the *First regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development*.² However, much remained to be done in areas such as territorial inequality, adolescent pregnancy, ageing, migration, gender-based violence and the lack of disaggregated data.

The Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean considers social development to be an inclusive process, in which States must guarantee the full exercise of rights, from the perspective of universalism that is sensitive to difference. This means removing barriers faced by certain populations with regard to access to rights and well-being. Inequalities on the basis of gender, ethnicity and race and stage of the life cycle are the axes that structure the social inequality matrix and should thus also shape the social protection matrix aspired to in the SDGs. In this regard, the Conference has formulated a first draft of the regional agenda for inclusive social development and will shortly embark on a consultation with civil society on the document.

The Committee on South-South cooperation is a forum in which to assess the challenges related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the actions that can be undertaken to address these through South-South and triangular cooperation, which contribute to regional, subregional and interregional integration and collective measures to foster sustainable development. Despite a lack of statistical capacities for evaluating the impact of this type of cooperation and of methodologies to measure and evaluate it and guide efforts, all the countries have successful experiences to share. Accordingly, a Network for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean has been established and will hold its first working meeting in May 2019, at which an assessment of national institutional and statistical capacities will be presented.

In the area of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Latin America and the Caribbean has three fundamental objectives, within the framework of the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean (eLAC2020). First, it urges countries to incorporate ICTs into learning processes from early childhood, in order to promote education and digital skills. Second, it seeks to empower women in all aspects of digital development. And third, it promotes the use of ICTs in business, especially in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), as well as in the work of financial institutions to empower those enterprises. Since the adoption of eLAC2020 in 2018, the Conference has been conducting activities relating to its 30 goals in six areas of action to extrapolate good practices, link entities, expand knowledge and encourage the creation of mechanisms to foster the digital agenda.

The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) is a pioneering instrument, since it is the first binding treaty negotiated under the auspices of ECLAC and the first in the world to include provisions on human rights defenders in environmental matters. The Agreement speaks directly to many of the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, since both instruments seek to build equitable models, promote democracy, call for action, and require the commitment of countries to reduce inequality and poverty, conserve ecosystems and promote peaceful societies. The Agreement must be ratified by 11 States to enter

² LC/CRPD.3/6.

into force; accordingly, the countries were encouraged to sign and ratify it as soon as possible. At this third meeting of the Forum, a side event had been conducted on the Agreement, in which all the member States participated.

Given that Latin America and the Caribbean is a predominantly urban region, the work of the Regional Meeting of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI) is particularly important. Cities are hubs of opportunity, growth and value generation, but they are also the scene of precarious conditions and inequality. In 2016, the States members of the United Nations adopted the New Urban Agenda, recognizing the importance of urbanization in the effort to achieve sustainable development. It is crucial to strengthen the synergies between the implementation frameworks of the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, as well as between different levels of government and stakeholders.

Since the fourth meeting of the Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean adopted the Asunción Declaration, which urges governments to build the issue of ageing into their development policies, plans and programmes in a cross-cutting manner, the Conference has held three events in fulfilment of its mandate: two expert meetings in October 2018 and March 2019 and a side event on older persons in the framework of the 2030 Agenda at this third meeting of the Forum. These events helped to strengthen the technical capacities of the countries and foster collaborative work, and convened broad participation by older persons in developing proposals. Latin America and the Caribbean was the first region to discuss the issues of older persons from a human rights perspective in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. The outcomes of this work are being widely disseminated, to enable access for all actors to the knowledge and experience of the leading institutions in this sphere.

7. Dialogues on multi-stakeholder contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

There was consensus on the need to work collectively on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs. From the academic point of view, it was noted that the 2030 Agenda acts as a facilitator of multi-stakeholder dialogue. One of the contributions of the academic sector is made through the analysis and proposal of solutions to issues such as potential contradiction between certain economic or social goals and environmental goals. Universities can help develop new approaches and provide relevant and timely applied research that is connected to the region. They can also contribute by acting as agents of social change through training, interdisciplinary knowledge and provision of environmental courses. Power generation companies contribute through the development of renewable energies that advance decarbonization and efficient and innovative solutions that enable people and industries to use energy more sustainably. In particular, distributed generation allows end users to add to power generation, for example using photovoltaic sources, and feed unused surpluses into the system, thus achieving a twofold economic and environmental gain. The production and use of clean energies also give companies in other sectors access to a sustainable production seal that testifies to their commitment to sustainability. In the mining sector, the business case for commitment to the environmental agenda is increasingly clear, with user pressure playing an important part. As a result, convergence is occurring between the demands of consumers and companies' actions, which has the effect of mainstreaming sustainability. Collaborative work with civil society, governments and other firms is essential, for example, to address the proper use of water for different purposes. A set of performance expectations has been designed together with NGOs and academic entities, as a set of commitments by the mining industry that will bring accountability and transparency, maintain legitimacy and demonstrate to users that work is proceeding responsibly. For their part, supreme audit institutions (comptrollers and audit courts) in the region have assumed the role of

monitoring fulfilment of the SDGs as part of their strategic plan. An analysis of the readiness of the governments of the region to implement the 2030 Agenda identified weak planning and risk management in this area, poor integration of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and a need for better coordination, monitoring and transparency mechanisms and strategies for effective implementation. Audit institutions can contribute to achieving a long-term perspective; thus, oversight should be seen not as a burden, but as offering an opportunity to develop public policies that represent long-run commitments. Parliamentary work at the regional level has taken on board the need to incorporate the SDG approach into strategic planning. PARLACEN adopted a decision that all parliamentary initiatives must incorporate the SDG approach as a requirement for discussion of the respective project. Oversight is also conducted of certain regional bodies with regard to the SDG approach but, while there are guidelines to that effect, there is no mechanism for follow-up and monitoring to assess progress on the SDGs. There is interest, therefore, in considering the creation of a monitoring mechanism to contribute systemically to this process.

8. Briefing by Luis Alfonso de Alba, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the 2019 Climate Summit

The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the 2019 Climate Summit referred to the organization of that event, which would focus not only on efforts to mitigate climate change, but also on adaptation and resilience-building. The events would not revolve around negotiation, but dialogue, collaboration and discussion, in order to focus attention on the issues at hand and move from agreement to action.

9. Statement on trends in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

The Executive Secretary of ECLAC gave a presentation on SDG implementation trends in the region, which focused on three key topics: multilateralism; fragmentation in the face of implementation; and possible risks to implementation. On the one hand, countries had agreed to end poverty and hunger, universalize rights and protect the ecological integrity of land and the oceans, and they aspired to a system of global governance to create global public goods and multilateral cooperation to address asymmetries. On the other hand, however, the current context was characterized by fragmentation, trade and technological tensions, a trade and economic slowdown, greater financial uncertainty, the disruptive impacts of the technological revolution, climate change and global inequality, in a climate where public confidence and the social contract was being eroded. While significant progress had been made, such as improvements in national inter-institutional and intersectoral architecture, the integration of the SDGs into national development plans and national budgets and the recognition and strengthening of statistical capacities, concerns persist about preserving the integrated nature of the Agenda, financing its implementation and technological gaps, among other things, as well as the need to change the conversation with civil society and the private sector. The greatest risk is that indifference will give way to paralysis; efforts must be pursued despite the difficulty in achieving some Goals. A cooperation strategy should therefore be adopted within the region, macroeconomic policies should be coordinated and a new generation of public policies should be designed collectively. A new form of multilateralism was also needed to boost confidence in international cooperation and collective action; build resilience to financial, trade and technological shocks; universalize the welfare State; protect the interests of the majority and not the few; promote transparency and informed debate; and strengthen the deliberative capacity of all citizens.

10. Round table – Integrated vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: critical links and means of implementation

All areas of our lives —from university degrees to the business world— are organized by sector. Consequently, adoption of an integrated vision of the 2030 Agenda appears a somewhat complex undertaking. Nonetheless, knowledge must be garnered on how to achieve integration, with a view to incorporating it into our visions for the future. At this round table, experts from different fields shared their experience on how integration is addressed in their respective areas of work. Climate change, for example, affects fulfilment not only of SDG 13, but of the 2030 Agenda as a whole, since it has the capacity to worsen all the problems afflicting humanity: it can destabilize the global economy, increasing poverty; generate conflicts related to migration and shortages of resources; and affect the health of millions of people, among many other consequences. However, in many countries, the environment portfolio is not at the highest level of the institutional mechanisms for national implementation of the SDGs and some do not even refer to the Paris Agreement or other environmental accords in their voluntary national reviews. Actions to address climate change can be used to drive positive systemic change. Such actions must be multilateral and coordinated and must be implemented at all levels; inclusive multilateralism is the only way to curb climate change and achieve the SDGs. International trade was identified by several countries as another key element for implementation of the SDGs, given that it is a fundamental to growth, increasing income and reducing poverty. Therefore, if international trade is accompanied by inclusive policies that ensure opportunities for large sectors of the population, it will contribute to sustainable development. The exclusion of territories from trade and financing for whatever reason impairs their capacity for growth; this is particularly serious in the case of small island developing States. One of the major obstacles to successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in addition to financing problems, is a lack of awareness of the Agenda itself. In some countries, there is even reluctance among officials at different levels of government, who perceive the 2030 Agenda as an imposition. It is essential to persuade economic actors of the need to think about environmental and social issues and to convince the social sector not to neglect the environmental sphere. There is also an urgent need to improve consultation processes, participation mechanisms and representativeness, to include all stakeholders in the process. Coordination and communication are also needed, to make efficient use of resources and avoid duplicating efforts, and it is essential to eradicate corruption in the region's societies.

Another issue of particular importance is capacity-building for grass-roots governance; in other words, for the collectively organized population to contribute to the decisions of the State with a view to developing effective government policies and institutions, and for the population to manage its resources autonomously, thus facilitating inclusion of all social groups. Campesinos and indigenous peoples can contribute in this regard, but their insight into resource use has not been sufficiently recognized. In addition, instead of talking about “different styles of development”, the discussion should be shifted to “different lifestyles”. The difference between the two concepts is akin to the difference between the prevalence of economic issues and the integration of social, environmental and economic issues into decision-making and policy shaping. In the discussion, informed social dialogue was mentioned as a fundamental tool for implementation of 2030 Agenda, to change the behaviour of individuals and businesses, in addition to localization of the Agenda. The development traps faced by middle-income countries can be transformed into strategic shortcuts to advance the Agenda, while the circular economy can contribute to a change in productive development patterns. It is important to build, as a region, a common purpose around the 2030 Agenda. For Caribbean countries, climate change issues are crucial, as natural disasters can devastate their economies and affect the subregion as a whole. It is essential that these countries do not face restrictions on international financing.

Also essential is the transformation of information into knowledge, because knowledge creates the awareness required to drive the necessary cultural and paradigm shift. Awareness leads to commitment and commitment leads to action. As regards integration of the economic, social and environmental aspects, localization in the region must take its diversity into account and have a method for structuring and building in the different components. In response to unawareness of the Agenda, or indifference to it, new SDG narratives must be created that make sense to people and show what the Agenda will mean in communities' lives. An integrated vision of the Agenda entails an integrated vision of people and knowledge of who is being left behind; census processes are a key instrument in this regard. Public policies should be intercultural and non-discriminatory and incorporate approaches such as gender. Multilateral cooperation is essential, with a focus not only on multiple stakeholders, but also on multiple levels of governance. Between the national and local levels, subnational coordination mechanisms should not be overlooked, as they should also have a view on the SDGs and benefit from sharing of good practices. Work is a critical link for the advancement of economies and of households' circumstances, and in this area diversity must be considered alongside efforts to universalize policies. One of the most unjustifiable inequalities is gender inequality, since the wage gap is no longer explained by productive characteristics but rather by cultural factors. Differences exist both in the market and in households, as shown by surveys of men's and women's time use, underscoring the importance of a cultural shift. As regards resource use, priority should be given to indicators of spending efficiency and quality; in this respect, integration between sectors could be an important indicator, with a view to its promotion. The importance that governments in the region have attached to financial, political, social and cultural investment in early childhood development and education was highlighted, as was the importance of governance systems that allow State institutions at all levels to organize themselves to face the challenges of the 2030 Agenda, of sustainable development plans at the national and local levels, and of strengthening capacities to measure progress through new tools such as the multidimensional poverty index. Lastly, the importance of meaningful dialogue and global partnerships was reaffirmed. Regarding participation of civil society, the voices and proposals of organizations with extensive experience in their respective fields, such as pensioners' groups, feminist groups and young people's groups, must be brought into the discussion. A cultural shift is required, not only in society, but also in institutions and in all stakeholders. An integrated vision and clear rules are needed, in an enabling environment that includes the different stakeholders in development.

11. Conclusions and recommendations

The intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the third meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development were adopted.

12. Special session: towards the General Assembly 2019

At the special session statements were made by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Carolina Schmidt, Minister of the Environment of Chile; Luis Alfonso de Alba, Special Envoy of the Secretary General for the 2019 Climate Summit; Ruben Armando Escalante Hasbún, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations (video message); María Fernanda Espinosa, President of the seventy-third session of the United Nations General Assembly (video message); Gweneth Sheila Carey, Permanent Representative of the Bahamas to the United Nations, in her capacity as co-facilitator of the political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and Rodrigo Malmierca, Minister of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment of Cuba, in his capacity as Chair of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.

The Executive Secretary of ECLAC opened the session by highlighting the valuable input that would be provided in the presentations to be made.

The Minister of the Environment of Chile underscored the importance of SDG 13 and, in this regard, remarked that Chile was to serve as Chair of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP25) at a particularly critical time, given the potentially irreversible effects of climate change worldwide. The participation of more stakeholders—such as scientists and members of the private sector—in discussions would facilitate more ambitious action. Chile's proposal for climate action focuses on four areas: the oceans, the circular economy, e-mobility and clean and renewable energy. There is a need for a multi-stakeholder, climate-focused institutional framework capable of transcending government terms, and for means of recording progress. COP25 would have a Latin American and Caribbean seal and would reflect the will to combine efforts in pursuit of sustainable development.

The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Climate Action Summit 2019 agreed on the need for ambition and for a shift from negotiation to action, a deliberate request of the Secretary-General, who had also asked governments to propose concrete action plans. The Paris Agreement was the regulatory framework for climate action and full advantage should be taken of the time frame it outlined. The United Nations system had to commit to the priority of moving from negotiation to action and meet countries' needs. In light of insufficient central government resources, civil society involvement and private financing were crucial. Specific reference was made to the need for balanced climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, which required international cooperation. The speaker recognized in particular the contribution of ECLAC to progress in achieving all those goals.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations conveyed a video message in which he summarized the activities being undertaken in preparation for the Climate Action Summit to be held in New York in 2019 and the various meetings that would be held on that occasion. Among the themes to be addressed, he highlighted the megatrends relating to climate issues, specific problems that affected the most vulnerable countries, the internationalization of the 2030 Agenda at different governmental and territorial levels, and the actions needed to advance towards the achievement of the Goals by 2030.

The President of the seventy-third session of the United Nations General Assembly highlighted the role played by the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development in multilateralism. Regional commissions should play a stronger role in the implementation of global agendas as they were fundamental to cooperation among the countries. The gaps facing small island developing States and landlocked developing countries had to be closed, and political will was needed to mobilize financial resources. Building a more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable region required a combination of tax redistribution policies and external financing. COP25 and the Climate Action Summit 2019 were opportunities for strengthening the mechanisms adopted in the Paris Agreement and the ambition to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Firm steps were needed to change the reality of the Latin American and Caribbean region and make it fairer and more equitable, united and prosperous. In conclusion, the outcomes of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development would be crucial to progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The Permanent Representative of the Bahamas to the United Nations, in her capacity as co-facilitator of the political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, remarked that, although the implementation of the 2030 Agenda was mainly a country-driven process, it needed the active participation and commitment of all stakeholders and multilateral cooperation. The SDG

Summit to be held in New York under the theme “Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, would be the first meeting at the level of Heads of State since the adoption of the Agenda. On that occasion, world leaders were to meet to provide guidance, identify challenges and mobilize action to accelerate implementation. The Summit must send a strong message that although multilateralism is under attack, world leaders are still committed to the 2030 Agenda; this is the purpose of the political declaration, which has been negotiated in a highly participatory manner, with many voices heard, including from regional forums such as the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. The declaration must be robust, concise, action-oriented, ambitious and evidence-based, focused on major development issues; it must send a strong message of commitment to the 2030 Agenda and its acceleration, stress the indivisibility of the SDGs and be adopted by consensus. A call was made for the highest level of participation in order to keep momentum alive and inspire further action towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The Minister of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment of Cuba, in his capacity as Chair of the Forum, remarked upon the profound and frank discussion of issues during the Forum. The side events that expanded the scope of the Forum allowed other voices to be heard. The exchange of experiences and ideas and the participation of various stakeholders helped to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Forum had fulfilled the purpose of discussing the principles of the Agenda in its various aspects and the region’s governments had reaffirmed their commitment to its implementation. The Chair highlighted the work done by ECLAC to achieve the 2030 Agenda and foster integration, in particular its focus on the Caribbean. It was vital for more countries to submit voluntary national reviews to the high-level political forum, which would address fundamental issues such as the need to strengthen the means of implementation and mobilize new, regular and predictable resources, as well as to advocate for the implementation of the Agenda at all levels. He concluded by inviting representatives to participate in the fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development in Havana in April 2020.

The Executive Secretary of ECLAC expressed thanks for the numerous attendance of the various stakeholders at the meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development. Attendees included representatives of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and Resident Coordinators in the countries of the region, as well as country representatives from the region and beyond responsible for implementing the SDGs. The 54 side events held had generated a fruitful exchange of ideas and experiences. She also underscored the commitment to work towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda, an indivisible purpose. She reiterated the need to change development patterns and lifestyles, and to widen spaces for participation, which would enhance knowledge of the territories and thus make the SDGs accessible to all, including children, adolescents and indigenous peoples. She highlighted in particular the importance of the “Caribbean first” initiative, remarking that the subregion was a key contributor to the thinking of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was a civilizing agenda of which the region had taken ownership; the scale of the undertaking must not be a deterrent to its full implementation.