



Forum of the Countries
of Latin America and
the Caribbean on
**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**
Virtual meeting
15–18 March **2021**

2 March 2021

ORIGINAL: SPANISH

Fourth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

Virtual meeting, 15–18 March 2021

Concept note

Closing round table “Building an inclusive and effective pathway to achieve the 2030 Agenda within the context of the decade of action and post-pandemic recovery from COVID-19”

Thursday, 18 March, 9.45–11.45 a.m. (Costa Rica time, GMT -6)

Introduction

The pandemic has had an enormous health impact in Latin America and the Caribbean since the first case of coronavirus was reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) in early 2020.

Latin America and the Caribbean is also the hardest hit region in the emerging world in terms of the economic, social and environmental effects of the pandemic. Before the pandemic, the region was already showing slow economic growth. In 2020, negative external and internal supply and demand shocks combined with a need to implement lockdown and physical distancing measures and to suspend productive activities. As a result, the health crisis has led to the worst economic, social and productive crisis that the region has experienced in 120 years, with a 7.7% drop in regional GDP in 2020.

The region’s weaknesses and persistent structural gaps, its limited fiscal space, limited social protection coverage and access, high labour informality, uneven production structure and low productivity are key to understanding the magnitude of the pandemic’s effects, as well as the difficulties in implementing policies to offset those effects and the challenges of generating a sustainable and inclusive economic recovery.

Paths must be traced that lead out of this situation, but each country’s path is not predetermined. The region is entering a period of trial and error, of progress and setbacks, driven by social demands and conflict, from which a new pattern will emerge. A way out of the crisis is needed that combines the strengthening of democracy at the national level, multilateral cooperation at the international level, sustainable growth, and equality.

This strategy has the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as its horizon and responds to the call for a decade of action, with measures at the global level to ensure greater leadership, more resources and better solutions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), national actions that entail a transition in

public policies, budgets, institutions and legal frameworks at all levels of government, and actions by people—including youth, civil society, the media, the private sector, trade unions, academia and other stakeholders—to create a movement that drives the necessary changes, such as moving towards more egalitarian, environmentally sustainable societies, in a context of peace and cooperation in the global system.

The goal of this closing round table is to foster multi-stakeholder dialogue, with a comprehensive perspective, on the initiatives that should be part of the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals, to achieve a sustainable and inclusive post-pandemic recovery and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Moderator: Christian Guillermet-Fernández, Deputy Minister for Multilateral Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica

Participants

- Juan Sandoval Mendiola, Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations and Chair of the Group of Friends on Voluntary National Reviews
- María José Lubertino, focal point of the Southern Cone regional group of the mechanism for civil society participation in the Sustainable Development Agenda and in the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development
- Elliot Harris, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
- Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC

Round table format

The closing round table will be multi-stakeholder and will bring together experts and representatives from government, civil society and the United Nations system. The discussion will be moderated by Christian Guillermet-Fernández, Deputy Minister for Multilateral Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica.

The moderator of the round table will give the floor to each of the participants for **10 minutes** to offer their thoughts.