



### **CONCEPT NOTE AND PROGRAM:**

#### **The Big Push for Sustainability for a dynamic, inclusive and resilient recovery**

Thursday, March 18, 2021

12:30h. to 14:00h. (Costa Rica)

15:30h. to 17:00h. (Chile)

In the position paper of the session for its governing council "Building a New Future: A Transformative Recovery with Equality and Sustainability", ECLAC (2020 in <https://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/46227> ) has drawn attention, on the one hand, to the great economic and social impact of the pandemic and, on the other hand, identifies sectors that could be drivers of better development that address the social, environmental and economic dimensions of development simultaneously, based on the available evidence. Yet, there is well-founded concern that the urgency to achieve economic recovery at any cost is leading, in Latin America and the Caribbean, to a reduction in environmental spending by governments, the relaxation of environmental regulations, and insufficient investment in sustainable solutions by both the public and private sectors.

To appreciate the magnitude of the structural change needed to reconcile economy and nature, the drastic drop in global GDP in 2020 reduced greenhouse gas emissions, but still fell short of the 7.6% annual reduction needed to prevent the average temperature from rising above 1.5°C. The pandemic meant a reduction under exceptional, transitory, and insufficient conditions. If investment and spending are not redirected, the recovery of economic growth will quickly offset this drop in emissions.

As the same document indicates, the pandemic is a sign of the increasing presence and invasion of humans in the planet's ecosystems. Emerging zoonotic diseases, such as COVID-19, show the negative consequences of increasing human pressure on nature (UNEP/ILRI, 2020). The frequency with which pathogenic microorganisms jump from animals to humans has increased with forestry and agricultural harvesting (Vale et al., 2019), and urbanization (Shapiro et al., 2013). In addition, global warming favors the development of certain infections (Zhou et al., 2008) and broadens transmission, particularly those transmitted by vectors (Huber et al., 2020; Wells and Clark, 2019). The debilitating effect of environmental pollution on the human immune system, especially in the long term, cannot be neglected either.

For this reason, ECLAC raises the importance of achieving profound transformations to achieve a transformative recovery as a first step towards a progressive structural change, within the framework of the Big Push for Sustainability based on sectors with better environmental and employment performance (see below). The recovery should not follow the previous path but should be based on different patterns of production and consumption, so that growth is decoupled from the environmental footprint.

These two elements -transformative recovery and structural change- depend on the investment path. Our region should bet on sectors and productive chains that will acquire great dynamism in the global economy, associated with green processes, biomaterials, intelligent buildings, renewable energies, electromobility, as well as agri-foods based on traceable productive processes, short circuits and local productive systems. With this in mind, we have made a series of policy proposals expressed in the aforementioned document and in the base document of this Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. (<https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2021/es/documentos/construir-un-futuro-mejor-acciones-fortalecer-la-agenda-2030-desarrollo-sostenible> ), covers fiscal policy, sectoral regulatory policy, social policy and the capacity to make pacts to agree on this better course of development. The modification of consumption and production patterns requires, in turn, the reduction of technological, educational, capacity, opportunity and resource gaps.

ECLAC has identified seven sectors that can be the drivers of the new style of development based on their strategic role in emissions, investment, competitiveness, employment and health, and we have proposed policy lines to boost them. These sectors are linked to **clean energy**, urban electromobility and **sustainable city management**, the **digital revolution**, health and care related sectors, the bioeconomy and **nature-based solutions**, the **circular economy** and **sustainable tourism**.

We see, however, with concern, that the recovery has a traditional approach, where chosen solutions do not articulate between the short term implemented and the medium term declared; that flexibilize environmental standards, that rather deepen the current economic model that has not yielded the necessary results to satisfy the basic needs of our populations and that has inequality and privilege as its hallmark.

This event, also in line with the ECLAC Development Account project "Coordination, Coherence and Effectiveness for the Implementation of the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean", aims to reflect on these tensions between integrative approaches and decisions with partial visions; short-term urgencies and medium-term imperatives; and the role that states and other social actors play and should play in pursuing economic recovery and reactivation. The dilemma is to opt for low-carbon economic sectors that can generate, at the same time, employment, environmental resilience, and prosperity; or to continue along the same path as the one followed so far.

## **PROGRAM**

12.30h. - 12:40h.

Welcome remarks: Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Introduction of participants and moderation: Mario Cimoli, Deputy Executive Secretary, ECLAC.

12: 40h.- 12:50h.

“The Big Push for Sustainability as a contribution to the 2030 Agenda”.

José Luis Samaniego, Director of the Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division ECLAC

12:50h.- 13:50h.

Dialogue with panelists

Moderator: Mario Cimoli, Deputy Executive Secretary, ECLAC.

13:50h. – 14:00h.

Closing remarks: Mario Cimoli, Deputy Executive Secretary, ECLAC

### **Panelists:**

- Andrea Meza, Minister of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica
- Gabriel Quijandría, Minister of Environment, Peru.
- Honourable Orlando Habet, Minister of Sustainable Development, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management of Belize.
- Florencia Gómez, Secretary of Environmental Policy in Natural Resources, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Argentina.
- Jonathan Pershing, Foreign Policy and Climate Advisor, United States of America.
- Luis Felipe López Calva, Regional Representative of the United Nations Development Program.