



Forum of the Countries  
of Latin America and  
the Caribbean on  
**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**  
San José  
7–9 March 2022

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

San José, 7-9 March 2022

### Concept note Panel 4

## Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for sustainable recovery: challenges and opportunities for Latin America and the Caribbean

**Tuesday, 8 March, 2.30–4.30 p.m.**  
**(Crowne Plaza San José Corobicí, Costa Rica time, GMT-6)**

### Context

It is estimated that almost 50% of GDP of the world<sup>1</sup> depends on nature and its services. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 19% of jobs in the region are closely linked to biodiversity<sup>2</sup>. Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta has said that the invisibility of the true value of nature, without production including the costs of negative externalities, has resulted in the poorest economies such as those of Latin America and the Caribbean practically subsidizing more developed countries, without receiving payment for the costs or impacts on nature, exporting wealth “cheaply” and being left with the damage.

There is no sense in studying poverty without studying nature, since nature provides a variety of goods and services that are vital to people’s survival and livelihoods (such as food, energy and water), especially to the most vulnerable and poorest groups in society<sup>3</sup>.

Environmental processes are highly interlinked and changes or alterations in one of the services provided by nature can have drastic effects on another, as well as impacts on the well-being of the people who depend on them.

Globally, governments channel approximately US\$ 500 billion a year<sup>4</sup> into projects that are potentially harmful to biodiversity, a figure that dwarfs investment in natural capital.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Russo, “Half of World’s GDP Moderately or Highly Dependent on Nature, Says New Report”, World Economic Forum [online] <https://www.weforum.org/press/2020/01/half-of-world-s-gdp-moderately-or-highly-dependent-on-nature-says-new-report>

<sup>2</sup> Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/International Labour Organization (ILO), “Environmental sustainability and employment in Latin America and the Caribbean”, *Employment Situation in Latin America and the Caribbean*, No. 19 (LC/TS.2018/85), Santiago, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> See Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), “Webinar: La Biodiversidad como catalizador de una recuperación verde y justa en América Latina y el Caribe” [online] <https://www.cepal.org/es/notas/webinar-la-biodiversidad-como-catalizador-recuperacion-verde-justa-america-latina-caribe>

<sup>4</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *A comprehensive Overview of Global Biodiversity Finance. Final report*, 2020.

Macroeconomic analysis tools, such as the Integrated Economic-Environmental Model (IEEM) platform, are available to help merge natural capital into policy and investment decision-making. This type of model should be applied more frequently. There is growing interest in governments re-evaluating economic indicators of well-being. To complement national accounts in a way that reflects the value of biodiversity as both a stock and flow of ecosystem services, the United Nations Statistical Division adopted the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting - Ecosystem Accounting at its fifty-second session in March 2021.<sup>5</sup> An economy could record high GDP growth rates but at the same time damage its natural asset base, hindering its future well-being.

To boost the contribution of biodiversity to a sustainable and inclusive recovery, it is important to balance the three key objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): “the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to those technologies, and by appropriate funding”. It is also vital that national sustainable development policies promote synergies between CBD, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

### **Guiding questions**

1. What needs to be done, politically speaking, to ensure that society and decision-makers adequately consider the value of biodiversity for human well-being?
2. Given the historical trend of overexploitation of natural resources in the region, which is an exporter of commodities, how can we avoid such overexploitation during the economic recovery that is required following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. What role can ministries of agriculture, finance, economy or transport play in conserving biodiversity?
4. Given the evidence that local communities have been key players in conservation of ecosystems, how can their role in sustainable ecosystem management be strengthened?
5. What measures can be taken to address relative food shortages in some countries arising from lockdown measures (among other factors) without degrading ecosystems? How could the post-2020 global biodiversity framework contribute to this goal?

### **Other questions**

6. Given the heterogeneity of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in terms of their societies, economies and ecosystems, and the fact that regional efforts to date have not been sufficient to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 or Goal 15, what effective biodiversity policies could enable the region to meet those Goals?
7. What have we learned from the Aichi Targets that could support a new global biodiversity framework that promotes improvements not only in biodiversity but also in economic sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean (win-win scenario)?

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<sup>5</sup> Statistical Commission, “Decision 1: Data and indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Item 3a)” [online] <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/52nd-session/documents/decisions/Draft-Decisions-Final-5March2021.pdf>.

8. How can we help to include biodiversity considerations in national policies, strategies and practices of key private and public actors that impact or depend on biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean, given that decisions are conditioned by national and international policies on areas such as development cooperation, trade, climate and by the policies of international financial institutions?
9. How can the private sector, including the financial sector, be better leveraged in biodiversity conservation within the production horizons of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean? How can better decisions be incentivized, based on more than short-term gains and GDP?
10. The Business Call to Action brings together the combined work of UNFCCC and the SDGs, through the Paris Agreement, to provide key indicators for businesses. How can we work to ensure inclusion of corporate responsibility in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?
11. When formulating sustainable development policies, it is important to foster synergies between the themes of CBD and UNFCCC. What examples can you give of innovative initiatives for fostering synergies between CBD, UNFCCC and UNCCD?
12. CBD has three key objectives: (a) conservation of biological diversity; (b) sustainable use of its components; and (c) fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. To what extent have national biodiversity policies hit the mark in terms of fulfilling those objectives?

## **Panel**

Moderator: Jeannette Sánchez, Chief of the Natural Resources Division of ECLAC

See the full preliminary programme at [online] <https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2022/en/programme>

Closing remarks: Joseluis Samaniego, Chief of the Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division of ECLAC

## **Panel format**

This multi-stakeholder panel will bring together experts and representatives from the public and private sectors, and the governmental and intergovernmental spheres, as well as from the United Nations system in the region.

The moderator will invite the panellists to provide their thoughts on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity for sustainable recovery and the related challenges and opportunities for Latin America and the Caribbean, through an initial seven-minute statement.

Once all the panellists have made their initial statements, the moderator will open the floor for statements on the subject of the panel from the members of the delegations of participating countries, for up to three minutes each. Once all the delegation members have made their statements, the floor will again be given to the panellists for three-minute closing statements.

José Luis Samaniego, Chief of the Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division of ECLAC, has been invited to give seven-minute closing remarks at the end of the panel.