



Forum of the Countries  
of Latin America and  
the Caribbean on  
**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**  
Santiago  
13-16 April **2026**

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

Santiago, 13-16 April 2026

## 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), 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 ninth meeting of the Forum was held in Santiago, from 13 to 16 April 2026, was chaired by Peru, in its capacity as Chair of ECLAC, and was open to member States of the Forum and observers, the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, resident coordinators, regional and subregional bodies, international financial institutions, the private sector, academia and civil society.

On 13 April, prior to the start of official activities of the Forum, the following events were held: the Forum of children, adolescents and youth of Latin America and the Caribbean; the Interfaith forum of the ninth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development; the meeting 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; and the meeting of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean with United Nations resident coordinators in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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

## OPENING SESSION

**José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**, said that the ninth meeting of the Forum was taking place in a context marked by geopolitical fragmentation, escalating armed conflicts, competition for military, economic and technological supremacy and an open questioning of multilateralism. Amid those significant challenges to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it was essential to strengthen multilateral action, cooperation and partnerships among all those committed to advancing sustainable development. He highlighted the available capacities, assets and tools, as well as the power of civil society, the commitment of various sectors and movements, the will of governments and the presence of the United Nations system. He encouraged participants to approach the meeting with the conviction that meaningful change was possible.

With less than five years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the trend was not promising. At the current pace, the region would meet only 19% of targets, was progressing too slowly towards 42% of them and had stalled or was regressing relative to 2015 for 39%. The major United Nations conferences held in 2025 and the meetings of various ECLAC intergovernmental bodies had generated important declarations and commitments regarding the SDGs. Given the adverse circumstances, action must be decisive. The 2030 Agenda was ambitious, and the SDGs had targets, but above all they charted a course. Development was not a zero-sum game and each step in the right direction made a difference in the lives of millions of people. It was not the time to give up, but to continue the work, and ECLAC remained committed to supporting countries in the pursuit of shared aspirations.

**Jorge Félix Rubio, Director General for Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru, country serving as Chair of the Forum**, said that Peru had been committed to the 2030 Agenda process since its inception. The Forum was a platform for promoting cooperation among countries, along with national capacity-building, identification of shared challenges and goals, and peer learning. It was also a space for forging partnerships. More than 10 years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the outlook was uncertain, yet there was a need to move forward. In that context, Peru reaffirmed its commitment to multilateralism and to promoting an international development agenda centred on social inclusion, sustainability and cooperation among all countries.

**Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations**, said that formidable pressures on development prospects were being compounded by conflict in the Middle East, which constituted a new shock to an already fragile global economy and posed serious risks, especially for countries whose limited fiscal and monetary space and high debt burdens hampered their resilience. Moreover, the US\$ 4 trillion annual SDG financing gap continued to widen even as international cooperation came under increasing strain. Despite consistent structural constraints, the region was a leader in people-centred policymaking, and ECLAC support was pivotal to that leadership role. The Forum discussions should be framed by the Doha Political Declaration and the Sevilla Commitment, key outcomes of the conferences held in 2025 that provided a mutually reinforcing agenda for people and financing.

**Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations** (pre-recorded video), said that after a decade of the 2030 Agenda, the regional picture was uneven but instructive regarding what drove and dampened progress. The region's interconnected structural pressures included poverty, with one third of the population one shock away from falling below the threshold; the burden of care on women; population ageing and the strain on health and social protection systems; and debt burdens. Still, the region was a leader on many aspects of the SDGs, including progress on economic stability, sustained investment in people, green industrial transitions, voluntary national reviews and filling of data gaps for disciplined monitoring. She called for policy coherence, stronger institutions and serious investment in science, technology and innovation, as well as more effective regional cooperation —precisely what the UN80 Initiative was designed to deliver— and she encouraged ambitious action, as there was time yet for Latin America and the Caribbean to change its trajectory.

The **provisional agenda** of the meeting was then adopted.

## **DIALOGUES ON GLOBAL ACTION**

**Session on the follow-up of some major United Nations conferences held in 2025: Second World Summit for Social Development (Doha, 2025), Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (Seville, Spain, 2025) and thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Belém do Pará, Brazil, 2025)**

**The moderator, Jorge Félix Rubio, Director General for Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru, country serving as Chair of the Forum**, referred to the three major United Nations conferences held in 2025 —the Second World Summit for Social Development, in Doha, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville, Spain; and the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Belém do Pará, Brazil— and said that the purpose of the session was to discuss how to generate the necessary momentum to implement the agreements adopted at those three conferences.

**Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations**, said that in the Doha Political Declaration adopted at the Second World Summit on Social Development, Member States had recommitted to earlier agreed principles and recognized poverty eradication, decent work and social inclusion as not just moral imperatives but pillars of stable and prosperous societies. The success of that unifying framework, with its clear milestones and review cycles for inclusive, equitable and rights-based social development, hinged on reflecting people's daily realities and aspirations.

**Michelle Muschett, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, said that despite the lack of binding agreements on the phasing out of fossil fuels, limited progress on deforestation and the absence of leaders from three of the main emitting countries, the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had yielded substantive progress. Multilateralism had also received strong support, with its legitimacy in the face of current pressures seen as hinging on the ability to translate commitments into tangible results.

**Gabriel Ugarte, Undersecretary for Social Evaluation of the Ministry of Social Development and Family of Chile**, said that his country had successfully reduced income poverty in recent decades and had improved poverty measurement by incorporating more demanding standards. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of social protection required fiscal sustainability. It was therefore necessary to return to a path of growth and ensure that public resources generated the greatest possible impact on well-being. The care and support agenda was a State policy in Chile, recognizing care as a public good and a pillar of sustainable development.

**Laura Oroz, Ambassador of Spain to Chile**, said that a clear message had emerged from the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development: closing the SDG financing gap would require the mobilization of all public and private sources of funding. The Sevilla Commitment set out concrete commitments in strategic areas, and the Sevilla Platform for Action provided a flexible and inclusive framework for building transformative coalitions for change. Spain was committed to working with all stakeholders to translate the spirit of Seville into concrete action, with the region playing a key role in advancing efforts in that regard.

**Xóchitl Guadarrama Romero, Director General for Planning, Evaluation and International Cooperation for development of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation**, reaffirmed Mexico's commitment to the outcomes of the Second World Summit for Social Development. The Sevilla Commitment represented a collective decision to update the international financial architecture to respond to current realities and reflected the will to build broad-based consensus. With regard to climate change negotiations, Latin America and the Caribbean should participate with a unified regional voice. She reiterated her country's commitment to working jointly with all countries to achieve meaningful outcomes in that area.

**Paulo Soares Pacheco, Ambassador of Brazil to Chile**, said that the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in his country, had delivered on progress on three fronts: regulatory frameworks, multilateral climate action and political commitments, and innovations in the implementation of climate action. The urgency of the climate crisis had been widely recognized, with 190 countries renewing their commitment to combat global warming, various initiatives had been launched and key discussions had been initiated, including those on reducing fossil fuel use and the need to reverse deforestation.

**Rosario Díaz Garavito, Co-facilitator 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**, said that the international community was facing a geopolitically complex and decisive moment for the future of multilateralism. The agreements adopted at the three conferences provided a comprehensive road map to address current interrelated crises. However,

their implementation had to be grounded in the non-negotiable principle of human rights. The credibility of the multilateral system depended on its capacity to safeguard those rights and civil society remained committed to supporting and monitoring implementation.

### **Statements by delegations**

The representative of **Costa Rica** referred to the 2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, co-organized by the Governments of Costa Rica and France, during which the Nice Ocean Action Plan was adopted. The representative of **Colombia** highlighted several areas in which her country had played a leading role at the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including the formal recognition of the role of Afrodescendants in climate action and the integration of gender and human rights approaches into the negotiations. The representative of **Cuba** said that progress towards sustainable development required a fair and accessible financing system, and that unilateral coercive measures imposed on his country hindered access to external financing, thereby constraining implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The representative of **Guatemala** reaffirmed her country's full commitment to the Doha Political Declaration of the World Social Summit under the title "the Second World Summit for Social Development", the Sevilla Commitment and the Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T, among other agreements and instruments emerging from the conferences. The representative of the **Dominican Republic** welcomed the outcomes of the three conferences, which strengthened the region's prospects for achieving the SDGs, and referred to the issue of sargassum seaweed, noting its growing severity each year and the need for coordinated action among all countries. The representative of **Panama** explained that his country had undertaken an ambitious energy transition that had enabled the complete elimination of coal from its energy mix. He also called for strengthened international cooperation frameworks to ensure that financing criteria took into account climate vulnerability and efforts towards responsible fiscal management. Lastly, the representative of **Germany** reaffirmed her country's commitment to the strategic partnership between ECLAC and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany, which supported capacity-building in the region and cooperation on key issues related to economic, digital and energy transitions. She also underscored the central role of the care economy as a pillar of development.

### **Session on the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (United Arab Emirates, 2–4 December 2026)**

**The moderator, Juan Diego Ruiz, Head of the Multinational Office for the Andean Region and the Southern Cone of the International Fund for Agricultural Development**, said that, according to ECLAC, Latin America and the Caribbean had made modest progress in access to drinking water and hygiene services and in integrated water resources management. However, significant gaps remained in sanitation, wastewater treatment and reuse, as well as in the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems, with notable territorial and social inequalities. That performance reflected, in part, fiscal constraints and insufficient institutional capacity to expand the reach of water security projects.

**Davis Aracena, Vice-Minister for Soil and Water of the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources of the Dominican Republic**, said that the region was facing a critical situation regarding water resources, driven by increasing climate change pressures, ecosystem degradation, gaps in service coverage and limitations in water resource management. The main challenge lay in translating plans and policies into concrete, sustainable and feasible commitments and investments. There was a need for a new paradigm to strengthen governance and improve the recognition of the value of water, mobilize innovative financing and promote greater cross-sectoral coordination.

**Olga Isaza, Deputy Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)**, structured her presentation around four key ideas: (i) the commitment of UNICEF to ensuring safe and dignified access to water and sanitation for every child; (ii) four structural challenges persisting in the region; (iii) five priority actions to address those challenges; and (iv) three strategic enabling factors required for those actions to generate scalable and tangible impacts on people’s lives.

**Julián Suárez, Manager for Sustainable Territorial Development and representative of the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean in Chile**, said that the region’s main challenge was not water availability, but rather investment, management and governance of water resources. Inadequate management of water resources was a structural constraint to development, affecting health, productivity, social cohesion and competitiveness at the territorial level. He highlighted three priorities: (i) investing more and better; (ii) moving beyond a territorial approach towards integrated water resources management; and (iii) implementing a new financing architecture to scale action at the subnational and territorial levels.

**Antumalen Antillanca Urrutia, Coordinator of the Indigenous Centre for Comprehensive Action in Chile**, underscored the central importance of water in territories and the persistence of deep inequalities in access to drinking water and sanitation, which particularly affected historically excluded groups. The crisis was structural and linked to development models that exacerbated inequality and environmental degradation. Younger generations were putting forward concrete proposals and driving solutions, including community-based water systems, environmental education initiatives and innovative tools for the sustainable management of water resources.

**José Sáez Albornoz, General Manager of Aguas Andinas in Chile**, said that water management indicators in the region showed structural inequality, health risks and constraints on economic development, with sanitation representing an even greater challenge. Referring to the contribution of Aguas Andinas to Chile’s economic development through the establishment of biofactories, he said that universal access and effective sanitation could be achieved when robust institutional frameworks were in place, and that continuous, safe and high-quality service resulted from planned efforts. He identified three priorities: closing the sanitation gap, investing in water resilience and accelerating the transition towards a circular water economy, with governance as a cross-cutting element.

**Flor Emilia Ramírez, Water Superintendent at the Regulatory Authority for Public Services of Costa Rica** (virtual), said that while her country had achieved near-universal coverage of drinking water, sanitation coverage had not kept pace. Centralized regulation had not contributed positively to national development and significant territorial disparities persisted, along with challenges related to priority-setting, planning, inter-agency coordination and resource mobilization. A shift in approach towards territories was required, along with ensuring the sustainability of service access for future generations. The main objective for the coming years was to ensure equitable management of the water cycle across all territories.

**Kaveh Madani, Director of the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health**, highlighted the Institute’s recent report on global water bankruptcy,<sup>1</sup> which signalled a shift to a post-crisis era marked by unsustainable water use, growing system failures and irreversible ecosystem degradation. Water insecurity affected both water-scarce and water-rich regions and there was need of bankruptcy management through enforceable limits, protection of natural capital, strengthened financing, technology transfer and inclusive governance to advance sustainable development and international cooperation.

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<sup>1</sup> Madani K. (2026) *Global Water Bankruptcy: Living Beyond Our Hydrological Means in the Post-Crisis Era*, United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada, doi: 10.53328/INR26KAM001.

### Statements by delegations

The representative of **Mexico** said that her country recognized water as an essential resource for life, health, well-being and sustainable development, and that it was a priority to strengthen international coordination and increase political commitment to water security and water justice, areas in which the United Nations should play a central role. The representative of **Costa Rica** said that there was an urgent need to strengthen the multilateral water architecture through greater coherence, coordination and sustained political attention. His country had promoted a comprehensive, human rights-based approach to water management, establishing a national water governance mechanism with the participation of various sectors. The representative of **Colombia** said that the region did not face a problem of water scarcity, but rather one of governance. Water management was not limited to a single business model and it was important to recognize community-based systems, which had always existed at the territorial level but had remained largely invisible. The representative of **Peru** underscored the need to strengthen the water-energy-food nexus approach, promote the integrated and sustainable management of water resources, improve wastewater treatment, increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and consolidate its contribution to economic and social development.

The representative of **Ecuador** said that her country, which prioritized universal access to drinking water and sanitation, integrated water resources management and resilience to climate change, had established water security as a cross-cutting pillar of public policy and was advancing along several strategic lines to address gaps in water management, investment and governance. The representative of **Uruguay** highlighted his country's long-standing track record in providing quality drinking water and its extensive sanitation infrastructure, where water abstraction was recognized as a public function and its management was carried out under an approach based on watershed protection. The representative of **France** said that the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6, to be held in December of that year in the United Arab Emirates, should serve to build a long-term process for global water governance, with decisive political messages and clear, actionable commitments.

**María José Lubertino, co-facilitator of the Liaison Committee of the Mechanism for Civil Society Participation in the Sustainable Development Agenda, and Juanita Ariza Guzmán, Director of the National Water Network of Colombia and focal point of the ecological and environmental justice group (working group of the Mechanism)**, underscored the need to continue strengthening regional multilateralism. Referring to the region's rich biodiversity, they said that water was not a commodity but a common good, and that instead of merely discussing distribution, the focus should be on the protection of water sources and reserves. Initiatives aimed at privatizing the resource were not conducive, nor should the energy transition put water sources at risk. Water should be recognized as a strategic priority for national and international security, and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean should establish institutions focused on water resources in order to achieve regional coordination on the issue.

In closing, **the moderator** underscored the critical importance of water resources management across multiple dimensions of development, including education, health, climate action, the economy, agricultural and agrifood systems, national security and social empowerment and participation, particularly in rural communities. Efforts should be made to ensure that public policies were not only more effective, but above all, more legitimate and democratic.

**Presentation of the document *The 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean: Accelerating Implementation in a New Era of Uncertainty and Geopolitical Fragmentation*, ninth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean**

**José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Secretary of ECLAC**, presented the document<sup>2</sup> and said that the region was implementing the 2030 Agenda amid increasing uncertainty and geopolitical fragmentation, weakened multilateralism, technological rivalry, the advance of protectionism, a shift towards weaponized interdependence, persistent inequality and a worsening climate crisis. Those challenges were compounded by structural gaps in growth, institutional capacities, fiscal space and access to financing. Against that backdrop, at the current pace of progress, the region would achieve only 19% of the SDG targets by 2030; was moving in the right direction, albeit at an insufficient pace, for 42% of them; and had stalled or regressed with regard to 39%. Those estimates were bleaker than those made in 2025.

The Executive Secretary said that accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda would require greater coordination among governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders, as well as strengthened regional and international cooperation. At the national level, such efforts entailed strengthening technical, operational, political and prospective (TOPP) institutional capacities and expanding domestic resource mobilization. Lastly, ECLAC and the United Nations system would continue to support countries in the region in the design and implementation of policies to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Cooperation, pragmatic partnerships and collective action remained essential to advancing towards more inclusive and sustainable development.

**Statements by delegations**

The representative of the **Dominican Republic** said that many of the solutions to overcome the development traps identified in the ECLAC position document lay in the unity of the countries of the region, through cooperation and regional integration. The representative of **Peru** said that social challenges were constraining sustainable development in the region and that the response lay in strengthening productive capacities, mobilizing financing and renewing the commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation. The representative of **Costa Rica** described her country's progress in achieving the SDGs and the difficulties faced by middle- and upper-middle-income countries in accessing official development assistance, despite their vulnerabilities, underscoring the importance of international financing instruments. The representative of **Uruguay** said that the defence of multilateralism was a strategic objective and reaffirmed his country's commitment in that regard. He advocated a vision of development that recognized its multifaceted nature and the importance of access to financing.

The representative of **Ecuador** said that development was a collective achievement and could not be attained without guaranteeing basic conditions and the capacity to address the needs of young people; reaffirming commitments alone was insufficient and material conditions must be created to enable their fulfilment and promote inclusive growth. The representative of **Brazil** reaffirmed his country's commitment to key international cooperation bodies and highlighted the importance of the bioeconomy as a cross-cutting solution with direct impact on several SDGs. He also said that progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda depended on the capacity to act through partnerships and on strong, sustained cooperation, while leaving no one behind. The representative of **Mexico** highlighted the importance of the 2030 Agenda as a road map and an opportunity to build a sustainable development model grounded in the region's own vision, along with the

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<sup>2</sup> See <https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2026/en/documents/2030-agenda-latin-america-and-caribbean-accelerating-implementation-new-era-uncertainty>.

need to strengthen ECLAC and the United Nations and to forge partnerships with the global South. Organized and collective support for multilateralism was critical to ensure that voices in the region were heard.

The representative of the **British Virgin Islands** said that while investment in data access was important, the resources required to achieve the progress that such data were intended to measure were even more important. The current development cooperation model was no longer viable and efforts should instead focus on attracting investment. He described a vicious cycle in which Caribbean economies ineligible for official development assistance must resort to disaster recovery loans to repair infrastructure that had itself been funded by earlier reconstruction loans in the wake of previous disasters. The representative of **Colombia** said that the sustainable development process must include all sectors of society and that decisive and effective action must be undertaken to promote social transformation.

The representative of the **United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)** said that productive development was a driver of growth, essential for generating high-quality employment and fostering innovation, economic diversification and the green transition, and called for integrating the gender perspective into related policies. The representative of the **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** thanked ECLAC for its joint work in linking the SDGs with human rights and said that incorporating a human rights-based approach into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda helped to reduce inequality and combat poverty. The representative of the **Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS** said that although the region had made progress in areas such as increasing access to treatment and reducing mortality and mother-to-child transmission, it was essential to address the challenges of stigma and exclusion. The representative of the **United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)** underscored the importance of breaking the statistical silence, generating robust data to measure progress on the SDGs, in particular Goal 5, and strengthening national statistical systems to ensure the visibility of structural inequalities affecting women. The representative of the **International Organization for Migration** called for recognition of the positive contribution of human mobility and the role of migrants as agents of change and catalysts for sustainable development, and for stronger migration governance and the inclusion of migrants in policymaking. The representative of the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** said that agrifood systems faced structural constraints, such as the high cost of food and healthy diets, and called for strengthened innovation, coordination and resource mobilization. The representative of the **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)** referred to the concerning situation faced by populations living in informal settlements as a result of structural challenges, including housing costs and deficiencies in urban planning.

### **Contribution of the United Nations sustainable development system in Latin America and the Caribbean and presentation of the 2025 system-wide results report of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean**

**José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Secretary of ECLAC, in his capacity as Co-Chair of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean**, briefly described the Platform, whose functions included fostering collaboration to achieve sustainable development and promoting regional alignment with globally agreed policies. He also presented the substantive working mechanisms relating to climate change, equitable growth, human mobility and governance for peace. Lastly, he listed some of the activities carried out in each area, such as updating the website to improve access to knowledge.

**Michelle Muschett, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in her capacity as Co-Chair of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean**, said that the Platform was a flexible mechanism that took countries' diverse needs into account. She listed major achievements in the different areas of work,

especially the support provided to country teams in relation to wildfire management, adaptation and disaster response. She outlined regional priorities in education, health, food systems and the digital transformation, and the importance of coordinated multilateral action.

**Juan Bello, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in his capacity as Co-Chair of the issue-based coalition on climate change and resilience**, said that the coalition's priority had been to support member States in a complex and changing climate context. He spoke of developing joint analytical outputs that underscored the exposure of people and infrastructure to climate risks. To continue meeting growing demand from resident coordinators, the coalition would focus on strengthening regional collaboration, advancing in the climate agenda and providing more support to country teams in the framework of the UN80 Initiative.

**Dalila Gonçalves, Director for the Latin America and the Caribbean Region of the United Nations Office for Project Services, in her capacity as Co-Chair of the issue-based coalition on governance for peace, justice and strong institutions**, said that the United Nations Information Laboratory on Crime and Corruption, which was used to deliver integrated policy guidance on Sustainable Development Goal 16 priorities, was a central tool of the coalition, and provided examples of its practical impact on the Caribbean, Central America and South America.

**Esther Kuisch, Director of the UNESCO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, in her capacity as Co-Chair of the Working Group on Populations Left Behind**, said that the Group had demonstrated its added value by bridging policy gaps through cross-pillar synergies and amplifying invisible voices in global normative spaces. Its aim for 2026 was to move from outputs to outcomes, ensuring that the system-wide approach of the Regional Collaborative Platform translated into measurable reduction in inequalities across the region.

**Roberto Valent, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Development Coordination Office of the United Nations**, underscored the value of regional support for the work of resident coordinators and country teams. With regard to the Platform, it was important to ensure an agile response to emerging needs, strengthen coordination at regional and national level, and continue promoting the coherence of the United Nations system, using the Platform as a tool to bolster regional cooperation. Such collaboration should be encouraged to advance towards inclusive and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### **Statements by delegations**

The representative of **Cuba** thanked United Nations system bodies and gave examples of multilateral cooperation that had supported his country in various instances, such as recovery in the wake of Hurricane Melissa. The representative of the **British Virgin Islands** endorsed the remarks made in the previous session by the representative of Mexico regarding the severe limitations of the existing development system and the need for an alternative model to better serve the region.

**María José Torres Macho, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in Chile**, outlined three themes that her office had been working on: organized crime across the region, wildfires and human mobility.

**Luis Yáñez, Secretary of ECLAC**, said that in spite of the difficulties faced, all the resources of the United Nations system were focused on achieving the 2030 Agenda, and expressed gratitude for the support received in that regard.

## **Implementing the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States through South-South cooperation**

**The moderator, Benito Wheatley, Special Envoy of the Premier of the British Virgin Islands**, said that the task at hand was to accelerate more practical, strategic and responsive implementation of the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda, including through cooperation between countries of the global South and between small island developing States (SIDS), improved data, institutional capacity-building and regional coordination, while recognizing not just the Caribbean's vulnerability but also its strategic relevance, innovation and value.

**Joy-Marie King, Director of International Trade in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Barbuda Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda**, recalling the existential threats to SIDS, said that the success of the important road map provided by the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda depended on one critical factor: acceleration. The Caribbean's long history of advancing SIDS priorities globally was reflected in the many instances of regional cooperation established and in the piloting of practical, scalable solutions as well as climate and resilience initiatives that addressed the region's vulnerabilities and generated knowledge that could benefit others. However, ambition without financing was futile; access to concessional financing, global financial architecture reform and innovative financing mechanisms were thus essential. Also key to accelerating implementation of the Agenda were people-centred investment, capacity-building and the digital transformation, which required urgency, partnership and accountability. The Caribbean was ready to lead by example to translate vision into action and commitments into tangible sustainable development gains for all.

**Carlos Applewhaite, Development Analyst in the Sustainable Development Goals Secretariat at the Planning Institute of Jamaica**, thanked ECLAC for conducting its rapid damage and loss assessment immediately following Hurricane Melissa. Damages had exceeded 50% of Jamaica's GDP in 2025, but the storm had also imparted lessons, such as the need for layered disaster risk financing; the inability of such financing to replace resilience-building; and how implementation, operational and social gaps hurt outcomes.

**Mildred Martínez, General Director of the National Office of Statistics (ONE) of the Dominican Republic**, on the topic of leveraging partnerships for the production of official data for disaster risk management, shared the results achieved and challenges encountered with regard to the project on administrative data for disaggregated SDG indicators, funded under the thirteenth tranche of the United Nations Development Account. For a country as vulnerable to extreme weather events as hers, data were essential for decision-making and planning. The main challenge was to transform available data to produce comparable and high-quality official statistics.

**Elizabeth Bradley, Permanent Secretary for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation of Suriname**, said that the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda mattered because no country in the region could build resilience alone. Citing Suriname's efforts in disaster data collection and management, resilience and green development, she referred to active cooperation with subregional institutions as well as triangular cooperation and partnerships with Brazil and French Guiana, which had yielded technological advances and strengthened disaster preparedness and response. Similarly, sharing knowledge gained through national efforts benefited the wider region. Institutional capacity was key to implementation, and ECLAC had provided valuable technical support in that regard. She closed with five key messages: South-South cooperation was not optional, but foundational; regional platforms turned shared vulnerability into shared resilience; data, planning and financing must work together; measurable results built trust and strengthened accountability; and resilience was built before disasters occurred, not in the aftermath.

**Carla Barnett, Secretary General of CARICOM**, said that operationalizing the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda could not rely on traditional modalities, and that South-South and SIDS-SIDS cooperation was uniquely positioned to fill that gap. CARICOM was supporting cooperation in several areas, including through regional training hubs and disaster response networks. She called for an exchange of best practices between SIDS from all regions to replicate and scale up proven solutions.

### **Statements by delegations**

The representative of **Cuba** said that international cooperation was important to ensure the sustainability of Caribbean countries' development strategies. He called for concrete commitments to support SIDS, which needed specific financing that was accessible and adapted to their vulnerability to climate change and economic crises. He also referred to unilateral blockade measures imposed on his country. The representative of **Curaçao** said that SIDS-SIDS cooperation created valuable opportunities to share good practices and unique challenges, and peer-to-peer learning was essential to build resilience and inclusion and address shared vulnerabilities. Her country was committed to South-South cooperation for delivering practical and sustainable solutions to Caribbean communities. The representative of the **British Virgin Islands, speaking in his national capacity**, thanked ECLAC and the United Nations system for their unwavering support. The future of development cooperation rested on two pillars: the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda (created by SIDS for SIDS) and South-South cooperation adapted to the needs of developing countries, as the global North had the international financial architecture in a chokehold. Barriers to regional collaboration —chief among them, language— must be overcome, and greater effort was needed, given that the Caribbean's small size limited its influence over the external factors affecting the subregion.

The representative of **UNEP** welcomed strong Caribbean leadership in the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly for 2026. He cited several UNEP efforts in various regional bodies on issues affecting Caribbean SIDS, and remarked on the fact that all the panellists had stressed the importance of data and information for implementing the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda. The representative of **FAO** said that her organization's dedicated office and programme of work for supporting agrifood system transformation in SIDS demonstrated the emphasis that it placed on that issue. The Action Plan 2026–2027, focused on providing support for SIDS, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, outlined the FAO commitment to strengthening resilience and accelerating SDG achievement. The representative of **UNIDO** said that her organization supported Caribbean resilience and prosperity through initiatives on economic diversification, sustainable industrial development, renewable energy and the blue economy. She highlighted the UNIDO SIDS Hub, which provided technical assistance and regional efforts tailored to local needs, and expressed a belief in the untapped potential of South-South and triangular cooperation as a concrete and practical avenue for inter-agency cooperation, especially in the subregion. The representative of **UN-Women**, recalling that gender equality must be placed at the centre of South-South cooperation, delivered three key messages: vulnerability was structural, not natural, the climate crisis was also a gendered economic crisis, and resilience came from investing in women, not just protecting them.

### **Panel 1. Goal 6 – Clean water and sanitation**

**The moderator, René Orellana Halkyer, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean of FAO**, said that water was not an ancillary issue, but a structural one. Without water, there could be no public health, food production, energy security, functional ecosystems or resilience. He highlighted existing inequalities and challenges in terms of access, quality, affordability, governance, financing and capacities. Water management required progress towards governance based on the interdependence between water, agrifood systems, energy, ecosystems and territorial cohesion. He offered several guiding elements for discussion, emphasizing the need to increase the scale, speed and consistency of action.

**Ruth Quevedo, Vice-Minister for Water and Basic Sanitation at the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory of Colombia**, presented her country's vision of the water transition, which was aimed at closing gaps, promoting democratic water governance and advancing territorial planning centred on water. Goal 6 should not address only technical or infrastructure-related aspects, but also the social relations surrounding water. The concept of water justice proposed by Colombia raised challenges such as restoring the role of the State, strengthening regional collaboration, promoting innovation and science, recognizing traditional technologies and increasing North-South financing.

**David Fariña, Director General for Protection and Conservation of Water Resources, Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development of Paraguay**, referred to the management of surface and groundwater flows and said that the Guaraní Aquifer was one of the few with a governance system established through an international agreement among four countries. The country's strategy for managing the aquifer was based on information-sharing, the automation of monitoring stations and the updating of governance arrangements in coordination with relevant institutions.

**Hernán Chiriboga, Representative of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture in Chile**, said that there were numerous technologies to optimize water use in agriculture in the region. He referred to low-cost initiatives developed at the regenerative agriculture demonstration site in Cuncumén (Valparaíso Region, Chile); rice production using irrigation instead of field flooding, which reduced both water consumption and methane emissions; and the development of a microporous vessel for micro-gardens and urban agriculture with low water use.

**James McPhee, Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Chile**, said that the slow progress towards Goal 6 was a result of political factors, as efforts and resources needed to be prioritized in that direction. Water-related issues were not given sufficient priority or urgency, and the scientific community must better define those challenges, including their time frames and scale, in order to inform public policy decisions. The role of academia in that area should be strengthened and closer engagement and dialogue with the academic community was needed.

### **Statements by delegations**

The representative of **Brazil** referred to the country's legal framework, which recognized access to water as a fundamental right. She cited various advances, but also the persistent challenge of reaching traditionally excluded groups. The country collected disaggregated data for Goal 6, enabling the identification of existing gaps. The representative of **Ecuador** referred to some of her country's achievements related to Goal 6, including progress in the legal framework to ensure the right to water and in the productive sphere to strengthen food security, from a human rights-based approach. She also noted the persistent challenge of reducing gaps. The representative of **Suriname** said that, despite her country's abundant water resources, access to safely managed drinking water and sanitation services remained uneven, with significant gaps in coverage and wastewater treatment. Efforts were under way to expand infrastructure and protect ecosystems, but progress was constrained by climate pressures and limited financing and capacity. The representative of **Panama** reiterated that access to water was a right and referred to progress in closing access gaps through the construction of water treatment plants, the drilling of new deep wells and water purification and storage, while also acknowledging the challenge of sanitation coverage, particularly in rural areas. The representative of **Mexico** said that progress on water issues was driven by partnerships between government and other sectors, which only gained meaning when translated into action. Sustainability was not merely rhetoric but was closely linked to policy. When water was lacking, many rights were undermined, and ensuring access to water meant ensuring life itself.

The representative of **UNEP** referred to the loss of biodiversity, ecosystems and water resources in the region. At the XXIV Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Lima from 30 September to 2 October 2025, participants had underscored the need to place water at the centre of all discussions in that field and had agreed on several related initiatives. The representative of **FAO** said that the agricultural sector was central to addressing the water crisis. FAO emphasized the need for sustained high-level political attention, investment in sustainable water management and inclusive water governance with the equitable participation of all relevant sectors. The representative of **UN-Women** said that water was not only a resource but also an enabling condition for equality, health and the broader sustainable development agenda. Investing in water and sanitation with a gender perspective had multiplier effects for women and girls, as well as for communities.

**Juanita Ariza Guzmán, Director of the National Water Network of Colombia and focal point of the ecological and environmental justice group of the Mechanism for Civil Society Participation**, referred to the need to implement measures at all levels, as well as plans, projects and policies to establish a road map for achieving the SDGs by 2030. She also underscored the need to recognize water as a matter of international strategic security.

## **Panel 2. Goal 7 – Affordable and clean energy**

**Andrés Rebolledo, Executive Secretary of the Latin American and Caribbean Energy Organization (OLACDE)**, speaking as moderator, said that the panel would focus on the energy situation in Latin America and the Caribbean, as energy was at the centre of geopolitical debate. It was important to take into account the international context, as pressure was mounting for progress to be made on Goal 7 targets and indicators; although the region had an energy sector with a strong focus on renewables, it also exported crude oil and continued to import petroleum products. He also said that electricity played a central role in the energy transition, particularly because of its ties with industry and transport. Steady progress had been made on renewable energy indicators: electricity coverage in the region was close to 98% and it was important to also focus on availability, losses in electricity systems and energy efficiency. In that regard, he underscored the need for greater efforts in stakeholder coordination and financing. Supply needed to be increased, as demand was growing at a much faster rate.

**Mauricio Bejarano, Deputy Minister of Mines and Energy of Paraguay**, said that his country had a competitive advantage on Goal 7, particularly with regard to electricity, as 100% of its energy was from renewables and its abundant hydroelectricity generation surpassed domestic needs. However, despite that surplus, rising electricity demand posed an increasing challenge against the backdrop of the global and national energy transition. One of the aims was to increase coverage to 100%. Affordability remained a key issue and Paraguay sought to increase both new sources of energy generation and the number of megawatts generated without compromising affordability; to that end, legislation promoting renewable energy, particularly photovoltaic energy, had been introduced. The country's abundance of energy left it lacking a culture of energy efficiency, so educating the public would be necessary to maintain a balance between supply and demand. Lastly, the country was attractive to major energy consumers, but the greatest challenge remained its dependence on imports of refined hydrocarbons.

**Javier Tapia, Executive Director of Transmisoras de Chile**, said that concern was shifting from installed capacity and generation to adaptability, in a context where the role of electricity was increasingly associated with growth and development, as well as climate targets. Although Latin America and the Caribbean had a high share of renewable energy in its energy mix, that did not necessarily translate into lower costs for end users and the challenge remained to design secure and resilient energy systems in the light of accelerating climate change. Adequate transmission and distribution networks were lacking to fully harness generation potential. Demand was growing and society expected higher levels of reliability, which required effective planning and sound regulation. Energy security was of critical importance, and the region had a historic

opportunity, given its experience in renewable energy and regional integration. However, to meet climate and electrification goals, it would be necessary to increase investment in electricity networks, double transmission capacity by 2040 and place the issue at the centre of development and economic growth.

**María José Lubertino, representative of the LAC Ecofeminist Network and Asociación Ciudadana por los Derechos Humanos**, said that the achievement of SDG 7 must be cross-cutting with other Goals, particularly those related to climate action, and that access to energy must be recognized as a basic human right. The expansion of global energy demand was intensifying extractivist patterns and the expropriation of common goods, while progress towards SDG 7 remained slow and deeply unequal in a region where 19 million people still lacked electricity. The great distance between generation sources and centres of consumption increased costs. Civil society denounced that precarious situation, which disproportionately affected women, and called for regional policies to ensure sustainability through productive transformation that placed human and labour rights and community ownership at the centre. She called on countries of the region to ratify the Escazú Agreement, since there would be no energy transition without protection for human rights defenders in environmental matters, and called for increased investment in sovereign research, technological transition through South–South and triangular cooperation, and the strengthening of publicly owned assets within the framework of a just, ecofeminist and people-centred energy transition.

**Astrid Puentes Riaño, Special Rapporteur on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment**, by video link, said that Goal 7 must be addressed as a whole and from a human rights perspective. She also referred to the right to a healthy environment, encompassing ecosystem and biodiversity protection, clean air and a safe climate. While some countries were reducing their dependence on coal, others were expanding the use of highly polluting energy sources and thermoelectric generation. Meeting demand required learning from past mistakes, taking into account the impacts of the climate crisis and seeking alternative energy sources. Lastly, she warned of insufficient regulation and underscored States’ obligations to carry out independent and transparent project assessments ensuring access to information, public participation and justice, to regulate and oversee public and private business activities, and the responsibility of the business sector to prevent further environmental impacts and respect human rights.

**Francesco La Camera, Director General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)**, said that significant growth in solar and wind power in 2025 had resulted in the largest increase in global renewable energy capacity. Renewables were no longer an alternative, but the backbone of energy generation. The uptrend in the region’s installed capacity across all technologies was a springboard for decarbonization and sustainable growth, as evidenced in an IRENA report<sup>3</sup> showing that the target of 98% of renewables by 2050 was technically achievable and could create millions of jobs and deliver socioeconomic benefits. However, significant investment was required. The region’s leadership was key to achieving installed capacity and energy efficiency goals. To unlock its immense potential, action was needed on several fronts: from infrastructure and supply chains to technical skills, innovation and the use of technology in energy systems, all supported by accessible financing and international cooperation. Countries must reinforce their energy strategies and adopt the most resilient and economically sound pathway for development, energy security and decarbonization. Success would be measured not in gigawatts, but in the benefits to the people.

### **Statements by delegations**

The representative of **Peru** said that the energy transition was a prerequisite for moving toward more sustainable, inclusive and resilient development. Despite the progress made, Peru still faced challenges in integrating renewable energy and improving energy efficiency throughout the country. The representative

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<sup>3</sup> IRENA (2025), *Regional energy transition outlook: South America*, International Renewable Energy Agency, Abu Dhabi.

of **Mexico** said that the energy transition was an opportunity to transform energy production and consumption and to adopt a people-centred approach. There could be no sustainability without well-being, nor growth without inclusion. The representative of **Panama** said that his country had been officially recognized as carbon-negative and called for regional cooperation through the establishment of a renewable energy surpluses market, enabled by improved regional electricity interconnection.

The representative of **Saint Kitts and Nevis** said that the country had bold ambitions: near 100% renewable energy from geothermal and solar energy by 2030, a grid upgrade to underground networks and submarine connection to move energy from Nevis. Innovative and donor-based financing, public-private partnerships, knowledge exchange and technology transfer were essential. It was important to remember that the objective of the energy transition was to provide for the most vulnerable and protect lives, livelihoods and the environment. The representative of **Suriname** said that to diversify the energy supply, renewable solutions were being introduced to complement existing generation and strengthen resilience in remote areas where traditional grid expansion was difficult and costly; that was not only environmentally responsible but also a practical solution. Disciplined action was required in energy efficiency in all sectors, as that reduced operational costs, strengthened national energy security and stretched scarce resources in a context of increasing investment demands.

The representative of **Brazil** reaffirmed his country's commitment to clean, strategic and inclusive energy transitions and said that the transition towards a sustainable future could not replicate past patterns of exclusion or territorial conflict. The representative of **Cuba** said that affordable and non-polluting energy was the foundation for climate justice, sustainable development and the dignity of peoples, and recalled that climate action must recognize the specific realities of each country. The representative of **Ecuador** said that her country had advanced in diversifying its energy matrix, with a high share of renewable generation, but faced challenges related to heavy reliance on hydropower and exposure to climate variability risks. The representative of **Colombia** said that, for her country, a just transition entailed systemic transformations that went beyond the energy sector and integrated social, economic and territorial dimensions to ensure equality, inclusion and social protection.

The representative of **FAO** said that there was an urgent need to scale up the generation and use of renewables in agrifood systems to ensure access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy for all. The representative of **OHCHR** said that, from a human rights perspective, the aim was to facilitate a just energy transition for sustainable economies and societies by integrating human rights considerations into policies, planning and implementation.

### **Panel 3. Goal 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure**

**The moderator, Ludmila Diniz, Chief of Partnerships and External Relations of the Latin America and the Caribbean Bureau of UNIDO**, said that the region was laying the groundwork for accelerated implementation in pursuit of Goal 9 and that, despite persistent gaps in road and logistics infrastructure, international support for infrastructure investment had increased notably. Five megatrends were reshaping the future of industry: the green energy transition; the acceleration of artificial intelligence and the digitalization of production; the reconfiguration of global value chains; changing demographics; and the transformation of food systems.

**Hugo Rivera, Vice-Minister of Economic Affairs and International Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic**, discussed industrial changes in his country, described the differences between the region's productive linkages and those in other parts of the world, and said that building new trade capacities required access to new sources of financing. He called for a focus on accelerating industrialization, which was a source of capacity-building and direct job creation, and on increasing investment in the industrial capacities of the countries of the region. He said that there was no

communication between economic blocs such as CARICOM, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) and, consequently, the regulations of the countries of the region were not harmonized, which affected the food and beverage and pharmaceutical industries. Greater regional integration would foster greater industrialization in the region.

**Joyelle Clarke, Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment, Climate Action and Constituency Empowerment of Saint Kitts and Nevis**, said that Goal 9 was the brick and mortar of development, the scaffolding of progress and the engine of institutional capacities, foresight and strategic investment. Her country was focused heavily on sustainable industries and climate-resilient infrastructure. After highlighting several successful public works projects, especially on accelerating the transition to low-carbon energy and transport systems, she said that countries like hers must resource their own successes.

**Rodrigo Bustos, Chief Executive Officer of Banca Ética Latinoamericana**, said that his organization, which would soon enter its tenth year and had offices in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, was a financial group focused on investment and lending for positive-impact companies. The purpose of an ethical bank was to promote the conscientious use of money, given its power to shape societies and economies through either value creation or destruction. Encouraging the conscientious channelling of money to positive-impact sectors (e.g. culture, audiovisual production, environment, housing and health) could bring Goal 9 within reach.

**Marco Antonio Moreno Ibarra, Director General of Development, Technology Transfer and Innovation in the Ministry of Science, Humanities, Technology and Innovation of Mexico** (virtual), said that his government supported technological sovereignty through a range of strategic import substitution projects in areas including semiconductors, artificial intelligence, vaccines and food. The focus was on national laboratories and fiscal incentives to foster the development of different technology projects and build trust among sectors.

### Statements by delegations

The representative of **Brazil** said that his country was working on decarbonization, the bioeconomy and the digital transformation. Building resilient infrastructure and boosting industry should be consistent with the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and technology and industry should serve as instruments to reduce inequalities and protect the most vulnerable. The representative of **Peru** said that her country had made progress on infrastructure, industrialization, innovation, transport, financing for small and medium-sized enterprises, and scientific research, but stronger investment was needed in industrial research, technology and development. The representative of **Mexico** said that despite persistent challenges, the region had demonstrated progress on Goal 9. Industrial development was essential for creating economies resistant to unforeseen events (including weather events), as it stimulated growth, generated employment and improved wages and living conditions. The representative of **Ecuador** said that financing had transformative potential in terms of funneling resources towards high-impact projects, and noted her country's progress on digital connectivity and technological inclusion, access to productive knowledge and the modernization of the regulatory framework.

The representative of **UNIDO** said that Goal 9 progress was uneven globally, but only Latin America and the Caribbean—which was not only growing slowly but also losing industrial capacities—had a declining industrial index. The representative of **FAO** highlighted four key action areas: fostering inclusive and sustainable industrialization in rural settings; improving value chains; closing digital and infrastructure divides; and expanding access to inclusive rural financial services.

**A representative of civil society** said that cooperatives were an important means of absorbing unemployment in the region, where there were already examples of community management, for instance regarding the devastation left behind by wildfires and the closure of large firms.

**The moderator**, in closing, said that 21 April would mark the first International Day of Women in Industry, and stressed the importance of the financial sector in transforming production and of industrial policies for technological sovereignty, along with the need to strengthen multilateral partnerships. Green industrialization presented an economic opportunity to diversify exports, create jobs and attract higher-value investments.

#### **Panel 4. Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities**

**The moderator, Elkin Velásquez, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of UN-Habitat**, said that Goal 11 was the one for which the least data were available for continuous monitoring and thus greater efforts were required to understand city trends and performance. Figures on informal settlements had remained stable over the past five years and the region offered good examples of how to address the issue, which could help to further strengthen multilateral spaces for exchange and the collective development of solutions. He underscored the region’s capacity to generate responses, as well as the commitment of young people to urban transformation. Lastly, he highlighted a key regional asset: the 18,000 local authorities and subnational entities that worked on a daily basis to address challenges and drive innovation for the benefit of their cities.

**Tamara Paseyro, Minister of Housing and Land Management of Uruguay and Chair of the Forum of Ministers and High-level Authorities of Housing and Urban Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (MINURVI)**, referred to her country’s long-standing tradition of territorial planning. For decades, cities had been treated as the sum of their parts and policies had been fragmented. Goal 11 called for a systemic approach, which required new policies and different measurement frameworks. Uruguay had addressed that challenge and had undertaken the voluntary national review as an exercise not only in statistics but also governance. The lessons learned included methodology as a collective construction, data as an instrument of justice and that cross-cutting approaches were essential. Emphasis was placed on the importance of the subnational level and the urgent need to bridge the gap between national and subnational governments. Lastly, she said that exchanges between countries were among the most valuable tools for identifying responses tailored to the realities of each territory in the region.

**Claudio Orrego, Governor of the Santiago Metropolitan Region**, said that the time had come to shift the debate in Latin America and the Caribbean and to place the right to the city at the centre of the agenda. Santiago faced deep inequalities, environmental challenges, insecurity and fragmentation, as it was composed of 52 municipalities, each with its own agenda. The key question was how to move towards a city with a shared vision and renewed governance. The challenge facing cities in the region was not one of diagnosis, but of governance and implementation. He was confident that the decentralization process would continue in his country and noted that the right to the city, metropolitan governance and climate change required State policies, continuity and sustained perseverance and innovation. Without the partnership with and empowerment of subnational governments, particularly in metropolitan areas, the achievement of Goal 11 would not be possible.

**Joanna Fischer Battistini, Chief of Cabinet Advisors in the Ministry of the Environment of Peru**, referred to the common challenges highlighted during the panel discussion, in particular the difficulties in establishing effective coordination between metropolitan municipalities such as Lima and smaller municipalities. The Ministry of Environment played a valuable role in enabling the development of public policies aimed at reorganizing cities and promoting land-use planning grounded in environmental policy. Interlinkages between municipalities, regional governments and the executive branch were essential. Peru

had made progress in adopting a territorial approach to sustainable planning, including local climate change plans; innovation in financing through Compensation Mechanisms for Ecosystem Services to strengthen urban-rural co-responsibility; natural infrastructure and preventive risk management; efficient solid waste management; and a transition towards low-carbon cities. Without cooperation among countries, the Latin America and Caribbean region that all aspire to would not be achievable.

**Mauricio Fuentes, Coordinator of the Volunteering and Civic Participation Unit of the National Youth Institute of Chile and focal point for the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development**, said that progress towards more sustainable cities depended not only on infrastructure and planning, but also on strengthening the social, civic and community fabric. Volunteering was an organized form of citizen participation that strengthened social cohesion and inclusion while fostering networks of collaboration, and therefore represented a form of social infrastructure. He noted its vital role in disaster resilience, particularly through coordination between institutions and communities, and referred to the *Chile se Prepara* initiative, which focused on strengthening population capacities in disaster risk management. Young people also played a role as key agents in transforming their communities and building more inclusive and sustainable territories. Sustainable cities depended on active communities and collaboration between the State and civil society was essential for advancing the achievement of the SDGs.

### **Statements by delegations**

The representative of **Mexico** said that his country's national development plan promoted a people-centred strategy, and that mobility and connectivity projects stemmed from urban planning aimed at closing gaps, creating opportunities and strengthening the social fabric, with sustainability criteria and a gender perspective. The representative of **Brazil** said that urban governance should be based on human rights, with inclusive territorial planning and recognition of the disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations, such as homeless persons or persons with disabilities. The representative of **Saint Kitts and Nevis** said that her country was advancing Goal 11 through a people-centred approach, expanding access to land and secure tenure, regularizing informal settlements and investing in climate-smart housing, resilient infrastructure, urban renewal and integrated social services. The representative of **Curaçao** said that the 2025–2029 national strategy focused on resilience, governance and sustainable development, and reaffirmed commitment to Goal 11 through stronger data systems and inclusive reforms, while further integrating the SDGs into national development planning.

The representative of the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** thanked cities of the region for their support, which provided protection, reception and integration and demonstrated solidarity on a daily basis, and referred to various mechanisms established by cities and municipalities to support the inclusion of refugees, displaced persons and stateless persons. The representative of **FAO** referred to the global programme to leverage urban and local agrifood systems for sustainable transformation, which recognized territories surrounding cities as living spaces that sustained food flows into urban areas, a particularly important issue in an increasingly urbanized continent. The representative of **UNICEF** referred to initiatives to integrate children's needs into urban planning and recommended, among other measures, the institutionalization of local governance frameworks for children and investment in community-based care services and local social protection systems. The representative of **OHCHR** said that Goal 11 was intrinsically linked to fundamental rights and called for closer engagement with local governments, whose proximity to communities placed them in a privileged position to translate international human rights standards into practical local solutions. The representative of **UN-Women** focused on two key dimensions of gender equality and urban sustainability: safe cities and caring cities. She highlighted the need for urban planning, regulatory frameworks and the transformation of social norms, as well as the recognition of care as a pillar of sustainable development.

### **Panel 5. Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals**

**The moderator, Héctor Francisco Ochoa Moreno, Director General of the National Council for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of Mexico**, called for reflection on whether efforts to achieve sustainable development were translating into concrete results in people's lives. Weakening multilateralism, geopolitical tensions and changes in the rules of trade weighed on international cooperation and curbed the capacity to address common challenges. Less than five years from 2030, more strategic partnerships that connected the local and global dimensions, coordinated different sectors and aligned resources with clear priorities were needed, as well as public policies that better incorporated instruments.

**Enrique O'Farrill, Executive Director of the Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AGCID)**, said that it had already been reaffirmed at the eighth meeting of the Forum that multilateralism was a necessity, not an option. In a scenario that was now even more complex, Chile proposed advancing in four areas: repositioning South-South and triangular cooperation as a strategic pillar; accelerating reform of the criteria determining eligibility for international cooperation; fully activating innovative financing instruments that did not depend solely on the political will of traditional donors; and strengthening national statistical capacities for fostering partnerships and accountability.

**Martín Francos, Deputy Minister of Planning and Public Investment in the Ministry of Finance and Economy of the Dominican Republic**, said that regional challenges in resource mobilization included financing gaps, insufficient revenue, high public debt and tax evasion, and weak participation in global trade. For efforts in that regard to lead to lasting outcomes, gaps in data quality must be overcome and solid and equitable institutions, as well as cooperation among countries, were essential.

**Héctor Javier Guzmán, Secretary of the Central American Bank for Economic Integration**, said that partnerships were crucial to close financing gaps, strengthen institutional capacities and support international cooperation. The transformations called for in the 2030 Agenda required cooperation, coordination and trust among institutions, and the ability to leverage those partnerships to obtain tangible and scalable solutions. He referred to the role of development banking and of the Bank in achieving Goal 17 and said that cooperation enabled transformation of commitments into concrete results.

**Iván Flores García, Senator of Chile and President of ParlAmericas**, said that some entities were deeply concerned about the minimization of democracy and that Goal 17 was becoming even more crucial amid the currently complex international conditions. Parliaments fulfilled an essential role in multilateral spaces, where international commitments must be translated into regulations and required budgetary support, institutional monitoring and continuity in political decisions. He underscored the strategic value of interparliamentary cooperation and referred to the work of ParlAmericas through its networks in gender equality, transparency, climate change and sustainability, and security.

### **Statements by delegations**

The representative of **Panama** said that order and trust could help to secure regional financing. Panama proposed that middle-income countries should form a coalition to enable them to secure financing from multilateral bodies and that the achievement of climate and social goals should carry the same weight as GDP. The representative of **Suriname** said that financing partnerships remained too limited; capacity-building efforts continued to focus excessively on individual activities; and technology and knowledge partnerships remained uneven, with barriers in accessing digital tools, innovation platforms and technical expertise. A representative of civil society said that partnerships should be inclusive, equitable and sustainable, and ensure the participation of all stakeholders. He reaffirmed the commitment to social causes, young people, persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS, LGBT persons and women.

The representative of **Guatemala** said that Goal 17 enabled coordination of policies, harmonization of criteria and strengthening of monitoring mechanisms that increased the impact of national commitments, and described the impact of the country's 2025 voluntary national review as a strategic tool for planning and accountability. The representative of **Peru** said that the primary challenge remained effective coordination of partnerships, national priorities and territories' needs. She reaffirmed the importance for her country of strengthening international cooperation and fostering inclusive, effective and results-oriented partnerships. The representative of **Brazil** said that the success of the 2030 Agenda depended on revitalizing means of implementation and solidarity-based collective action. He described the country's equal-representation mechanism to advance the 2030 Agenda that ensured dialogue between the State and civil society, and joint work at the federal and local levels.

The representative of **Colombia** referred to the currently complex and historic environment and the crisis of multilateralism, along with the region's wealth of resources, capacities and diversity, and the importance of calling for respect for the sovereignty of States and peoples. The representative of **Ecuador** said that Goal 17 strengthened cooperation in key areas such as financing, technology, trade and capacity development, which were essential to address global challenges including poverty, inequality and climate change, and discussed the country's efforts in that regard. The representative of the **British Virgin Islands** said that although a lot of work had gone into the multidimensional vulnerability index, it had apparently been cast aside as donor countries focused on national security, which left few options for middle-income countries to finance their recovery from crises caused by climate change.

The representative of **UNEP** spoke of the work of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, the primary forum for political dialogue and cooperation on environmental matters in the region, and its various partnerships and working groups in areas including environmental pollution, pollutants and waste, and the circular economy. The representative of the **United Nations Population Fund** said that demographic change had far-reaching implications for sustainable development and that the Fund was committed to supporting countries in strengthening partnerships with respect to the interdependent dimensions of population dynamics and demographic change, and in the generation and use of demographic data for policymaking. The representative of **FAO** said that the only acceptable figure relating to hunger was zero. There was a need to strengthen the link between science and politics, close gaps in access to innovation, ensure an open, inclusive and rules-based trade system, reinforce value chains and support micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises.

A **representative of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas** said it was important to promote inclusive and results-oriented partnerships that included governments, communities, the private sector, trade unions and civil society, ensuring alignment with international regulations on human rights and labour rights.

### **Readings of statements by stakeholders**

Statements were read by the representatives of civil society, the Forum of children, adolescents and youth of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Interfaith forum of the ninth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2026/en/programme/reading-statements-multiple-stakeholders>.

## DIALOGUES ON NATIONAL ACTION

### **Session on successful national experiences in accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals**

**Roberto Valent, Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Development Coordination Office (DCO) of the United Nations, speaking as moderator,** said that the region had artificial intelligence initiatives, including those under the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Observatory on Artificial Intelligence in Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, launched by UNESCO in the framework of the Forum. The challenge was to connect those initiatives and enhance their collective impact. Artificial intelligence could support public policymaking and enhance the capacity to anticipate future scenarios, but was hindered by institutional capacity gaps, ethical and transparency risks and linguistic constraints.

**Lisa Kurbiel, Head of Secretariat of the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund,** said that artificial intelligence was no longer a future capability, but was already reshaping how public services were delivered, financed and monitored. The question was how the international community could deploy it responsibly and deliver at scale while strengthening national ownership and regional cooperation and avoiding silos. Multilateralism served to leverage regional integration and the Fund was established as a tool to support transformation and fill gaps in areas such as policy and institutional fragmentation, risk analysis and tolerance, and capacity. One benefit of joint programming was in derisking early experimentation and helping governments to move from piloting to practice. The region had much to gain from recognizing artificial intelligence as a regional public good. A regional initiative in that area could be supported by the United Nations system to accelerate the SDGs. The benefits of joint testing and development of artificial intelligence-enabled services were threefold: faster learning and scaling, lower costs and reduced regulatory fragmentation.

**Marco Llinás, Chief of the Division of Production, Productivity and Management of ECLAC,** said that digital transformation initiatives and artificial intelligence could help to overcome development traps, citing the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean as a tool to advance the effective use of digital technologies in the region. He referred to its three areas of action —knowledge and monitoring, policy dialogue, and tools and technical assistance— and called on countries to fully leverage the instruments under the Agenda and coordinate positions at the regional level.

**Esther Kuisch Laroche, Director of the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNESCO,** said that artificial intelligence was having a significant impact on education and, while it offered many opportunities, including for the inclusion of children with disabilities, it also exacerbated existing challenges such as teacher shortages and school dropout. In that context, she outlined the main features and objectives of the Observatory on Artificial Intelligence in Education and invited stakeholders to build it as a joint effort, based on the realities of each country.

**Sergio Scarabino, Representative for South America of ITU,** said that AI for Good, the United Nations' flagship artificial intelligence platform established by ITU, was already being applied in water management, energy efficiency and the development of sustainable cities. It offered advantages derived from the normative role and technical expertise of ITU, as well as the ability to connect the global and local levels. Artificial intelligence could be a powerful accelerator for achieving the SDGs, particularly in developing countries, subject to adequate capacities, infrastructure, governance frameworks and international cooperation.

**Bibiana Aído, Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean of UN-Women**, said that technology could accelerate progress towards the SDGs if designed with a rights-based and gender approach and with the participation of women. However, gaps persisted in women's participation in the artificial intelligence workforce, their access to the Internet and addressing gender bias in artificial intelligence systems. She referred to the WhatsApp-based artificial intelligence tool JULLA, which provided financial education assistance to rural women aged 60 and over, and the “Budgets for Equality” project chatbot for officials responsible for gender-responsive budgeting.

**Pablo Salazar, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in Costa Rica**, and **Paula Bogantes, Minister of Science, Innovation, Technology and Telecommunications of Costa Rica**, presented the country's vision on artificial intelligence, which framed digital transformation as an enabling condition and international cooperation as a shared strategic responsibility. Talent, infrastructure and enabling mechanisms were the foundations of digital transformation. They highlighted the role of the United Nations as a strategic partner in advancing the application of artificial intelligence at the national level.

**María José Torres Macho, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in Chile**, and **Rodrigo Durán, General Manager of the National Center for Artificial Intelligence (CENIA) of Chile**, presented the Connected Communities joint programme and coordination with CENIA to ensure that artificial intelligence served people. They referred to gaps in access to digital resources for education and to digital exclusion, which hindered development and deepened inequalities. The importance of building digital skills among Indigenous Peoples, older persons, women and children was emphasized, as was the potential of artificial intelligence to accelerate project impacts and drive transformative change.

**Julia Sánchez, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in the Dominican Republic**, and **Martín Francos, Deputy Minister of Planning and Public Investment in the Ministry of Finance and Economy of the Dominican Republic**, shared the country's experience and stated that greater availability of information and decision-making tools would enable better identification of gaps and more effective responses to the needs of the most vulnerable populations. In that context, they referred to the tool for tagging the State budget with SDG targets, which aimed to assess the extent to which public expenditure contributed to the achievement of the Goals.

**The moderator** said that the value of artificial intelligence lay in its ability to address specific problems, its integration in public policies and its delivery of sustainable outcomes. He also underlined the importance of networking to promote coordination, avoid duplication, build capacities and provide countries with more coherent and equitable artificial intelligence solutions.

### **Statements by delegations**

The representative of **Mexico** said that his country had aligned its projects, plans and budgets with the SDGs and the National Council for the 2030 Agenda helped to strengthen inter-agency collaboration and provided technical advice on the design of policies and strategies in line with the SDGs.

**Lisa Kurbiel, Head of Secretariat of the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund**, referred to the European Union-funded UNESCO initiative in Jamaica on ethics of artificial intelligence, which provided teachers with the skillset to support artificial intelligence responsibly in classrooms, reinforced national ownership and translated regional and global standards to national level. In Guatemala, artificial intelligence was deployed at municipal level to territorialize the digital transformation and used through inclusive programming, with a focus on building local level skills to strengthen State systems. Going forward, a regional artificial intelligence platform could serve as a mechanism for funding, information sharing and expertise on demand, and she challenged the region to seek buy-in from trusted partners to ensure tools were automatic in all countries by 2030, and countries like Mexico to leverage its leadership and private sector to guide others in the region.

**Pablo Salazar, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in Costa Rica**, invited participants to reflect on coordinating efforts and seeking convergence among artificial intelligence initiatives and tools, identifying fit-for-purpose instruments to that end.

**Julia Sánchez, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in the Dominican Republic**, recalled that the tagging project presented was available to countries and had proven to be highly effective and easily adaptable to each country's specific circumstances.

**María José Torres Macho, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system in Chile**, said that it was important to have strong regional leadership and policies and regulatory frameworks for artificial intelligence that benefited end-users, including rural Indigenous women, small-scale producers and teachers, among others.

In closing, **the moderator** said that artificial intelligence was a key tool for improving the quality of public policies and making a tangible impact on people's lives. It also enabled the achievement of sustainable development by linking initiatives and solutions. Lastly, he referred to challenges that required robust governance frameworks and ongoing cooperation, such as those related to the role of artificial intelligence in education.

### **Good practices and challenges in the preparation of voluntary national reviews**

**The moderator, Rodrigo Arim, Director of the Planning and Budget Office of Uruguay**, said that the SDGs were an example of multilateralism's contributions and provided a platform that committed countries to a multidimensional approach to development. Voluntary national reviews were proof of that commitment. Sharing experiences with the preparation of those reviews, exchanging the best practices of each country and being transparent about the difficulties faced was part of the rationale of the Community of Practice on voluntary national reviews in Latin America and the Caribbean. **In his capacity as panellist**, he referred to two characteristics of the voluntary national review to be presented by his country. First, the relevant institutions reported directly to the Office of the President and were led by three entities responsible for planning and budgeting, statistics and international cooperation, which coordinated with the other stakeholders in a process that went beyond preparing the review, as it also spurred action. The second was that the review was based on public participation, through a digital platform and in-person and online workshops.

**Lavito Bacarissa, Executive Secretary at the National Commission for the Sustainable Development Goals of Brazil**, said that the inclusion of public participation in the preparation of the voluntary national review in 2024 had been an innovation. The process had involved a number of challenges in areas such as budgeting, territorialization of the 2030 Agenda, preparation of voluntary local reviews, updating of SDGs nationwide and the creation of new indicators, which were already being addressed. Brazil would soon hold its First National Conference on the Sustainable Development Goals, which would entail considerable national mobilization, and was preparing its voluntary national review for 2026.

**Carlos Applewhaite, Development Analyst in the Sustainable Development Goals Secretariat at the Planning Institute of Jamaica**, outlined lessons learned from execution of voluntary national reviews in the country, including that such reviews could support multilateral negotiation processes, strengthened national statistical systems and data capacity assessments enabled the production of quality data to measure SDG indicator progress, and strategic partnerships facilitating SDG implementation, monitoring and coordination bolstered the review process.

**Joyelle Clarke, Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment, Climate Action and Constituency Empowerment of Saint Kitts and Nevis**, said that challenges encountered in the voluntary national review process included statistical impediments and a lack of structured engagement frameworks.

Those had prompted investment in a digital transformation approach to improve data collection and storage and a focus on fostering communication and public engagement to encourage local buy-in and participation.

### **Statements by delegations**

The representative of **Brazil** said that inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities were being built. Accelerating achievement of the SDGs would require combining public investment, financing, institutional strengthening, territorial planning, climate action and public participation. Permanent capacities must be developed to transform cities and reduce inequalities. The representative of **Mexico** said that the experience with voluntary local reviews was valuable, and that they provided accurate and contextualized information, ensuring that decisions were based on real data and addressed the specific needs of each community. He described his country's progress in that regard.

The representative of **OHCHR** said that although voluntary national reviews were not focused on human rights, the integration of those rights into the reviews in the region guided national policymaking that benefited its people.

**The intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the ninth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development were adopted.**<sup>5</sup>

### **Closing session**

**Jorge Félix Rubio, Director General for Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru, the country serving as Chair of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development**, said that the ninth meeting of the Forum had been a valuable opportunity for regional cooperation and for renewing commitments to the 2030 Agenda. The need to close structural technological and productive gaps, move towards more equitable and effective financing for development, and strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation had been underscored. The most critical challenges facing the region had also been addressed, including ensuring universal access to water and sanitation, advancing a sustainable energy transition and building more inclusive and resilient cities. The experiences shared had shown a common commitment among all stakeholders; however, at the current pace only part of the Goals would be achieved by 2030, underscoring the urgency of accelerating action and strengthening institutional capacities, with political will and citizen participation.

**José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Secretary of ECLAC**, said that the Forum had shown the capacity of various actors to build agreements, align efforts, advance shared agendas and, despite differences, build bridges and foster trust. The practices shared showed that change was possible, and that analyses and studies needed to be connected to everyday experience for ideas to translate into real transformations. He expressed appreciation for the contributions of multiple stakeholders, particularly young people and civil society, and reaffirmed the need to act with a common voice on key issues such as climate change, financing for development and social inclusion, with due regard for human rights. In closing, despite insufficient progress towards the Goals, he cautioned against pessimism and called for renewed commitment to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://foroalc2030.cepal.org/2026/en/documents/intergovernmentally-agreed-conclusions-and-recommendations-ninth-meeting-forum-countries>.