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**XIX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the
Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Los Cabos, Mexico
12 to 14 March 2014**

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**Final Report of the Nineteenth Meeting of the
Forum of Ministers of Environment of
Latin America and the Caribbean**

Item I of the Agenda: Opening of the meeting

1. The Ministerial segment of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) began with an opening ceremony on Wednesday 12 March 2014 at 15:15 with words from the Minister of Environment of Ecuador, Ms. Lorena Tapia, as outgoing Chair of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, who thanked the hospitality of the Government of Mexico. The Minister reminded the participants of the progress made since the last Forum of Ministers held in Quito and mentioned the critical importance of strengthening the regional environmental agenda and the post-2015 Development Agenda, in order to lead to the integration of policies for achieving socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability. She also referred to the impacts of climate change, and the need to respond in a common but differentiated way to this shared global challenge. Additionally, she summarized a number of key environmental achievements in Ecuador and upcoming events both at national and regional level. Lastly, she expressed her hope that all countries will keep cooperating for the strengthening of regional and global proposals aimed at sustainable development, and passed the Forum's presidency to Mexico.

2. The Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico, Mr. Juan José Guerra Abud, thanked all delegates for their presence, and UNEP for its continued support. He informed delegates that the meeting's agenda focused on key issues of relevance for the region and addressed the issues of sustainable development, poverty reduction, and economic growth which respects the environment. Recognizing the importance of climate change, he exhorted countries to reach a common vision and position before the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Convention of the Parties (COP) that will take place in Lima later in the year 2014.

3. He also mentioned the other issues that would be discussed, including biodiversity and its sustainable use for improving people's quality of life, and chemicals' management. The importance of unifying criteria for the preservation of the environment, despite the possible different ideologies that the countries may have, was recognized, as was the importance of sharing best practices.

4. He thanked everyone again for being present in Mexico, and with these words he declared the Forum officially open.

5. The Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Achim Steiner, thanked Mexico for its hospitality as host country for the meeting. He reminded delegates that last time the Ministers of Environment met in Quito (February 2012) was in preparation for the Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and that the current Nineteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment offered a new historic milestone marked by the upcoming United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the 20th Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC and the reaching of an agreement on the post-2015 Development Agenda. Two of these meetings will be hosted by the Latin America and Caribbean region, showing its growing influence and capacity to push forward the international environmental agenda. He mentioned the key role played by the Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC as a political voice on environmental sustainability.

6. He also reminded the delegates of the relation between economic growth, poverty reduction, climate change and environment. With respect to climate change, he stated the importance of providing the international community with a direction and new momentum on this topic, and the need to convince our leaders, public and business community of the further risks associated with a delay in taking concrete steps to tackle the issue.

7. Reference was made to the importance UNEP is giving to Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which can be seen for example in the fact that World Environment Day is dedicated to them and a GEO SIDS report is being produced.

8. On the issue of chemicals and waste, he thanked the region for helping shape the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and urged the countries to ratify it for its entry into force and contribute to its implementation. He finalized by thanking countries for their decision to strengthen UNEP's role within the international community, so that it can continue working with the countries and other partners, given that cooperation is critical for tackling the challenges we face in sustainability.

9. The Municipal President of Los Cabos, Mr. José Antonio Agúndez, welcomed the meeting participants and reiterated that it is a privilege and honour to host the Forum of Ministers and wished them every success for the meeting.

10. The opening ceremony concluded with a brief video on the Biosphere Reserve El Pinacate y Gran Desierto, which was declared a United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage site on 21 June 2013.

1.1 Adoption of the rules of procedure of the meeting

11. The Ministers adopted mutatis mutandi, the Regulation of the UNEP Governing Council to govern the procedures of the meeting.

1.2. Election of the Board of Directors

12. In accordance with the practices established in previous meetings, the Chair proposed that the Board of Directors maintain the membership adopted during the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Experts. The proposal was approved by the participants and was constituted as follows:

Chairman:	Mexico
Vice-Chairs:	Chile
	Colombia
	Guatemala
	Guyana
	Paraguay
	Venezuela
	Trinidad and Tobago
Rapporteur:	Honduras

1.3. Approval of the agenda and programme of sessions of the meeting

13. The Chairman of the meeting proposed the adoption of the agenda, which was unanimously adopted.

14. The meeting continued with an address from Ms. Cecilia Iglesias from Argentina and Ms. Aura Yolanda Díaz Lozano from Colombia, the civil society regional representatives, in regards to the discussions held in November 2013 in Panama at the Regional Consultative Meeting

with Major Groups and Stakeholders from Latin America and Caribbean. They applauded the significant progress achieved with respect to Principle 10 and stated their expectations around the adoption of a regional instrument on the subject. They mentioned their concerns with respect to the UN Environment Assembly and the decision it will take with respect to the involvement of interested parties, stating the concern that indigenous people, local communities, youth and children have with respect to the need to have legal status in order to participate. They also expressed that civil society provides a different, enriching view to the discussions, and does not in any way endanger the decision-making processes of the intergovernmental body. They reiterated their support for more streamlined processes that enable a smoother implementation of the decisions made during environmental negotiations, and requested a continued support for civil society representatives in order to widen consultation processes. Lastly, they thanked the Government of Mexico for its hospitality and wished the participants a fruitful meeting.

Item II of the Agenda: Results of the meeting of the High-Level Experts of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean and follow-up of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

15. The Chair gave the floor to Mr. Enrique Lendo who had previously presided over the High Level Expert Meeting, and made a short but comprehensive presentation of each of the proposed draft decisions. Immediately after this, the chair opened the floor for comments.

16. Costa Rica recognized the importance of the decisions put for consideration and suggested addressing two additional aspects. Firstly, SIDS in the region are facing not only the economic consequences of climate change, but also the threat of disappearing. The second additional issue is mining, mentioning that in the case of Costa Rica opencast mining has been forbidden. In this regard, he invited to reflect on the economic model that countries of the region want to choose and whether it is still one based on extractive activities such as mining, fishing, or the timber industry.

17. Peru, agreed with the first point made by Costa Rica. Regarding the second point, Peru expressed that the region has advanced significantly in terms of regulations that allow dealing with the economic development challenges faced by LAC countries, which have shaped policy and normative development to date. The delegate added

that such policies and regulations have integrated sustainability as a criterion for investment projects.

18. The Chair of the meeting mentioned that mining is a necessary activity, generating employment and added value, and that it can improve the population's wellbeing. In Mexico, efforts are made to reduce environmental impacts and, as such, implementation of best practices is pursued. Before closing the session, the Chair considered the decisions presented by the High Level Expert Meeting approved and thanked the contributions of the delegations.

Item III of the Agenda: Ministerial Dialogues:

Global Agenda for Sustainable Development

19. In order to exchange ideas about priority topics for the global and regional agenda and to identify concrete initiatives of cooperation, the ministerial dialogues were opened on topics of high relevance for Latin America and the Caribbean, such as: the global agenda of sustainable development, climate change, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, chemicals and waste, as well as the celebration of the International Year of the Small Island Developing States.

20. The first of the ministerial dialogues was dedicated to the Global Agenda of Sustainable Development, under the moderation of Mr. Rodolfo Lacy Tamayo, Under-Secretary of Planning and Environmental Policy of Mexico. The moderator emphasized that this dialogue allows reflecting on key aspects to progress towards sustainable development and the process towards the post-2015 Development Agenda, which should overcome fragmentation and integrate the three dimensions of sustainability.

21. The Executive Director of UNEP was invited to initiate the debate. He started by emphasizing the boost that Rio+20 represented for the development agenda, which has seen an extraordinarily dynamic and rapid development of the post-2015 Agenda in less than two years, which attempts to integrate Sustainable Development Goals, and that counts with institutional platforms also created in Rio+20, such as the High Level Political Forum and the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP.

22. He pointed out that we have reached a point where the pressures from not harmonizing the three dimensions of sustainable development can no longer be ignored. We are therefore at a time of integration and balance, and we must make sure that the

environmental linkages of sustainable development are part of the DNA of the Sustainable Development Goals.

23. The Ministers now count with a platform to articulate in a firmer and more direct way, which are the elements of the development agenda. UNEA is now a universal forum and its first universal assembly will take place in June; this is in itself an achievement towards having the environment play a more decisive role in multilateral forums.

24. UNEA's capacity to strengthen the environmental dimension of sustainable development will be demonstrated promptly, because the General Assembly of the United Nations has agreed that UNEA's decisions will be brought directly to its deliberations, thus providing a very direct avenue to place the environment at the centre of its decisions.

25. The agreements that the international community has adopted in the sphere of Multilateral Environmental Agreements have not managed to stop environmental degradation neither in general or specific topics of increasing gravity, like for example, the illegal traffic of wildlife and forest products. The challenge for UNEA is to serve as a platform to really attend to these problems that affect the governance and the legal framework, bringing together the key actors whose coordinated action is necessary to offer effective answers.

26. For these reasons, the Executive Director invited the Ministers to consider UNEA an opportunity for this forum, and invited them to participate actively in its first meeting in Nairobi, in June this year. There are areas related to the functioning of UNEA that will be discussed in this session, such as how to achieve a higher civil society involvement, as was requested by the last Governing Council.

27. Ms. Gisela Alonso, President of the Agency of Environment of Cuba, who was one of four persons of the region invited by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to be part of the High Level Panel for the post-2015 Development Agenda, was then given the floor.

28. Ms. Alonso thanked for the invitation and after reminding the delegates that four women represented the region in the panel, she stated that she would refer to the vision that she supported within the panel, which is a work that ended in March of last year. As for the methodology that the panel followed, she recalled that the work began with an assessment of the MDGs, which indicated that they could not meet the expected scope, and that the way in which they were conceived and their goals were not aligned with the needs of the countries. This analysis, in addition to the document *The Future We*

Want, was the basis for the dialogue of the High Level Panel, which was enriched by several contributions from diverse sectors. Additionally, she emphasized that two forums were celebrated in the region: the Caribbean Forum and The Conference on Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean: Follow-up to the Development Agenda Beyond 2015 and Rio+20; Bogotá, 5-9 March 2013.

29. The main topics she worked on in the panel included the critical need to fight poverty, hunger, undernourishment, women's discrimination, and the importance of guaranteeing education, health, water and sanitation for all, and of eliminating the social consequences of climate change and natural disasters that mostly impact the poorest and most vulnerable.

30. In addition to not meeting the goals, it was noted that their achievement had been unequal between countries and within countries. This indicates that the next goals, even in the case they are universal, must adjust to the diverse needs of countries. The development aid allocated to our region, characterized as middle income, is also insufficient.

31. She noted that the Rio challenges set 20 years ago are still valid, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities cannot be put aside in the next agenda because it is very related with the patterns of production and consumption. It is necessary to provide a different direction to the development model, which is absolutely unsustainable.

32. As for the roles of governments, the panellist emphasized the need for social public policies that place people at the centre, as well as policies focused on women, children and young people. User-friendly technologies are needed, that can be implemented by people, and accompanied by the development of capacity, generation of knowledge, and training, which could generate endogenous and indigenous solutions to solve problems, instead of mere technology transfer in the traditional sense. South-South Cooperation is also important for greater regional integration, and it must complement international cooperation and assistance.

33. The intervention ended by highlighting that our region presents the highest levels of inequity and greatest income inequality of the world. Social problems are a large determinant of the environmental challenges that are suffered; therefore solidarity and complementarity are the only way ahead, placing people at the centre of the agenda.

34. Next, the Vice-Minister of Environment from Brazil, Mr. Francisco Gaetani, greeted the Forum on behalf of the Minister of Environment, Ms. Izabella Teixeira and shared her reflexions, which follow.

35. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, has updated and given new strength to the international debate on sustainable development. He highlighted the need to address environmental challenges from a development perspective, setting the eradication of poverty and the transition to sustainable patterns of production and consumption at the centre of the international agenda. He also stressed the relevance of the Rio Conventions and the key milestones to be reached in the coming months and that LAC should engage actively as a region.

36. Brazil highlighted the need for the region to tackle, at the political level, the tasks of setting in place the post-2015 Development Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Financing Strategy, the 10 Year Framework for Sustainable Production and Consumption, amongst other processes agreed to in Rio.

37. Additionally, Brazil has been actively engaged in implementing the Rio+20 Conference mandate to strengthen UNEP as the leading authority that sets the global environmental agenda. But beyond being the voice for the global environment, the LAC region must ensure that UNEP performs the strategic function of promoting the environmental dimension of sustainable development, as the whole United Nations system adjusts to the sustainability paradigm, in the context of the post-2015 Development Agenda.

38. Additionally, Brazil stated that sustainable development strategies require sound science, innovation and technological solutions and Brazil recognizes UNEP's role in promoting scientific and technological cooperation and in helping build capacities in the developing world. He emphasised that the participation of young people and the need to listen to the voices of the new generations is critical. Additionally, UNEP should devote special attention to the promotion of sustainable cities and urban development.

39. In this line, Brazil is committed to strengthen its cooperation with UNEP. As announced by President Dilma Rousseff at the closure of the Rio+20 Conference, a significant financial contribution by Brazil was provided to support UNEP, in particular for its activities in South America and to promote South-South cooperation.

40. In closing, Mr. Gaetani stressed that the Brazilian Government is fully committed to making all necessary efforts for the transition to a model that is fairer, economically feasible, environmentally friendly,

and focused on the rational use of natural resources. He also called upon the need for a joint regional effort to find the common vision we wish to reflect in the global agenda we are jointly building.

41. The next panellist was the Director of Sustainable Development and Human Settlements of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Joseluis Samaniego, who was invited to present key concepts to enrich the debate.

42. Mr. Samaniego referred to sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean, considering the progress made since Rio+20 and the process towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Although we have seen the strengthening of institutions and environmental regulation, and of active social policies in the region, the Sustainable Development Goals force us to a very radical change in approach. The problem is that despite the fact that the development approach has lowered the incidence of extreme poverty, it has also resulted in the region being one of the most unequal, and that the boom in prices of raw material resulted in de-industrialization.

43. All of this results in a “factory of inequality” that is a consequence of the way in which the economy is structured; with employment concentrated in low productivity sectors.

44. Mr. Samaniego also conveyed that in this context, it is necessary that the regional problems converge with regional global processes, and are reflected on agreements on targets and indicators.

45. These two processes complement each other and there is a need to advance in both to have a positive impact in the agenda for sustainable development. He stated that if the global environmental agenda lacks content, governance does not make sense, but the agenda needs governance in order to be implemented.

46. The panellist suggested that the approach needs to be flexible, to concentrate on a concise list of targets that contribute to global public goods, where equity is the final objective, structural change is the way forward and policy is the instrument.

47. Mr. Samaniego concluded that a regional perspective of the post-2015 Development Agenda requires a structural change, and not a cosmetic reform, and for this, we require public transformational policies.

48. After thanking the panellists for their valuable contributions, the moderator invited the Ministers to share their approaches and ideas.

49. The Ministers of Ecuador, Colombia, Cuba, Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Chile participated in the dialogue. Among other

things, it was indicated that for Ecuador the global agenda must be based on the principles of "Buen Vivir" (Good Living), with a vision of sustainable development that incorporates a cultural variable and a rights-based approach (application of human rights, indigenous rights, co-existence in harmony with nature).

50. Ecuador reiterated the inclusion of new approaches or tools that countries have determined to achieve sustainable development, in line with national priorities, and for the Post 2015 Agenda to include means of implementation as a goal, indicators and timeframes, to ensure their compliance.

51. Colombia noted that together with Guatemala, during the preparation of Rio+20 they proposed the definition of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to guide the international agenda for the next decades. Similarly, the delegate also supported the definition of a limited number of measurable goals, which can be easily monitored.

52. Cuba stressed the importance of advancing the MDGs until 2015 and to keep counting with the continued financial and technological support of developed countries, including through Official Development Assistance. She also stressed that the SDGs must be universal, but with differentiated indicators and goals according to each country's capacity. She noted it is essential to include the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and reiterated that the issue of financing is critical.

53. Argentina indicated they consider the open process taking place in New York to be of key importance, and that SDGs must take the world financial crisis which has affected the region into account, and that the Post 2015 agenda will have to be advanced with the following principles: equity, inclusion; sovereignty; common but differentiated responsibilities; and promotion of an inclusive economic system. The Argentinean representative emphasized the importance of participation from all sectors, the relation between the SDGs and the MDGs, and their cross-cutting character.

54. Paraguay indicated that there is clear evidence that we are not developing in a sustainable way, and that we must therefore take into consideration past experiences and lessons learned. It mentioned that growth is not always equivalent to sustainability, and that it is necessary to consider future natural resource demand. Paraguay also emphasized the importance of incentives for production and investment that are sustainable and contribute to poverty reduction.

55. Peru made the point that a good economic policy and a good social policy do not necessarily translate into a significant reduction in

poverty. Few analyses exist on this matter, and there should be an evaluation of the contributions that environmental policies have made to poverty reduction. In addition, good national policies can be insufficient due to the global nature of environmental problems. International agreements and frameworks are therefore necessary, and the regional agenda cannot lose sight of this dimension.

56. Uruguay said that the Forum is an opportunity to deepen ideas regarding environmental issues and reaching to agreements even when there are differences in the region, because speaking about the environment is to speak about development, and therefore it is a political and ideological issue, and this does not prevent the establishment of agreements. She further noted that it is not possible to decouple the environmental issue from the economic and social issues, and that our region should maximize efforts in the social pillar towards sustainable development. In our region the issue is not only about poverty reduction and eradication of indigence, but primarily, it is an issue of inclusion, pointing out the differences between poverty and social inclusion in a continent where great inequality persists. She stressed the need to work as ministers of environment, on the mitigation of territorial and environmental inequalities, and in this sense she referred to disasters, including both threats and vulnerabilities among which she emphasized the location of families without resilience in disadvantaged territories due to territorial segregation imposed by the land market in our cities. She reaffirmed the principle of "common but differentiated needs" agreed at Rio +20, which must be present in each of the strategic areas emphasizing this principle in the financing and technology transfer to our region.

57. Chile mentioned that there is a move towards increasing empowerment and participation of civil society, based on increased access to information. However, this growing environmental consciousness is not reflected in changes of consumption patterns and adoption of more sustainable lifestyles.

58. Mexico underlined that it is necessary to consider targets and indicators. They indicated there are still some areas lacking goals; for example, a goal needs to be developed on strengthened resilience of local communities.

59. The Executive Director of UNEP was invited to make final comments, and referred to the opportunity created by the growing influence of the environmental agenda in the years ahead, and the hope that the UNEA can help to generate a sense of possibility and opportunity for change, without negatively affecting other sectors of

development. The case of renewable energies is a good example, with investments that have grown enormously in recent years.

60. He ended by observing that Ministers of Environment are often still considered marginal actors, but this situation has changed in countries where the ministers have developed a positive vision and narrative. UNEA will take place shortly, with the presence of the Secretary-General and of the President of the General Assembly, and the voice of Latin America and the Caribbean can be very important if the region is ready to generate proposals that can lead work at the global level.

61. The Minister of Costa Rica referred to the challenges of solar energy and to the complexity of public participation processes linked with environmental management.

62. The moderator thanked the panellists for their outstanding interventions and the Ministers for their contributions to enrich the debate. In conclusion, the moderator commented on the opportunities to advance the regional environmental agenda, and the platform UNEA offers, so that the outcomes of the SDGs process allow rapid transition to low carbon sustainable development.

Climate change

63. The Secretary of Environment and Natural resources of Mexico, Mr. Juan José Guerra Abad, thanked global leaders on climate change in the panel for their participation; Mr. Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Minister of Environment of Peru, was also presented as Moderator of the Panel. The participants of this panel included Mr. Rajendra Pachauri, President of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; Dr. Mario Molina, President of the Mario Molina Centre; Ms. Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and Mr. Joseluis Samaniego, Director of the Division of Sustainable Development and Human Settlements of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

64. To introduce the panel, Minister Pulgar-Vidal of Peru emphasized the importance of achieving an agreement in the COP20. He mentioned as key points for the panel the following issues: i) a high level of ambition, including the recognition of our common but differentiated responsibilities; ii) consensus, working with neutrality and without repeating errors of the past; and iii) a sense of urgency. He emphasized that we cannot afford to keep leading the planet on a failed course as well as the importance of this region in the definition of the negotiations that will take place in the COP20 to be held in Lima in December 2014. He insisted that the region has a responsibility in

this process, and that this dialogue can find points of common agreement allowing cooperation toward the negotiation of an agreement on climate change, just as the process, which seemed lost, was recovered in Mexico during the Cancun COP16 in 2010.

65. Mr. Pachauri emphasized that climate science is at the heart of sustainability policy. His presentation provided a compelling overview of some of the vulnerabilities and impacts of climate change. He noted that under some scenarios, a 1 in 20 year hottest day is likely to become a 1 in 2 year event. Dr. Pachauri illustrated that the last 3 decades have been the increasingly hottest since 1900. He highlighted that if the world continues on a “do nothing scenario”, the sea level will rise by almost a metre by the end of the current century. The rate of sea level rise since the mid-19th century has been larger than the mean rates during the previous two millennia. He indicated that the land and ocean temperature during the period 1850-2012, has shown a historical increase over the last three decades. Dr. Pachauri argued that both mitigation and adaptation are required and that we cannot have one without the other. He explained that the cost of renewable energies is still higher than fossil fuels, but in many contexts renewables are now competitive. He emphasized the urgency of reaching a new climate agreement, and noted that as the level of ambition for mitigation is reduced, the cost of adaptation actions will keep increasing. He summarized that collective learning is needed to address the climate crisis, and quoted the words of Albert Einstein “Problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them.” The Moderator mentioned that listening to Mr. Pachauri reaffirmed the sense of urgency, and he asked the plenary how to convert this sense of urgency from the scientific to the political domain.

66. Mr. Mario Molina began his intervention by stating that although countries as Mexico already are taking measures to address climate change, Mexico cannot solve alone the global problem without international agreements being reached. He described the situation in the United States of America where although 97% of scientists agreed that the climate was changing, and although 95% of experts agreed that climate change was caused by humans, the public opinion does not correspond with this scientific consensus. He emphasized that we are not talking about a problem at the end of the century, but rather in the present.

67. Mr. Molina stressed that it was necessary to take action now; it was possible to solve the problem with costs that were relatively manageable and much cheaper than deferring costs to the future. He

also highlighted “no regrets” measures allowing us to save and use public resources wisely, for example emissions taxes, sustainable buildings, and climate change legislation. Mr. Molina closed his intervention by mentioning that it is necessary to make a very big effort in changing people’s perception and opinions so they trust in science, to change the unacceptable culture of taking decisions without considering the scientific base.

68. Ms. Christiana Figueres emphasized that there are two levels of responsibility, national and international. At the national level, at least three responsibilities existed: i) to ratify the Amendment to the Kyoto Protocol; ii) to continue with implementation of legal frameworks, in which Mexico is a leader with the adoption of its General Law of Climate Change in 2012, and for which there are also important advances in Latin America and the Caribbean in approximately 14 countries; and iii) to conduct a national analysis with regard to the full range of its potential actions for mitigation and adaptation. On the other hand, Mrs. Figueres emphasized that on a global scale it would be necessary: i) to take forward implementation of the Green Climate Fund, which has become a barometer of the success of the Framework Agreement on Climate Change; ii) to develop financial structures and conduct technical assistance; and finally mentioning that iii) the an Agreement needs to come out of the COP in Lima and it will be necessary to recognize and quantify emissions reduction commitments that have already been made, in order to analyze whether these will be sufficient to change the trajectory of greenhouse gas emissions. Also, Ms. Figueres emphasized that the Latin America and Caribbean region benefits at present with an incomparable leadership; Bolivia has the Presidency of the G77 and Peru will host the COP20 in Lima. This is an opportunity for the region to demonstrate technical and political leadership, and show that it is possible to reach an agreement in Lima. At the end of her intervention, she shared the calendar of ministerial meetings on climate change for the rest of 2014 and 2015.

69. Finally, Joseluis Samaniego, referred to the Study of the Economics of Climate Change in Mexico, a leading analysis on this topic in the region published in 2009. Some other countries of the region, including Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru and Uruguay, later conducted similar analysis. In his presentation Mr. Samaniego also described the impacts of climate change on the incomes of different economic sectors. In this respect, he described the relation between vulnerability and costs of inaction, summarizing a study conducted by ECLAC in the Andean region, which is an important source of water for cities in the Pacific region, a region that is water-stressed and has growing demand. This study analyzed the long-term viability of the

agricultural sector, coastal impacts, population at risk. He also noted vulnerabilities of housing, declines in the productivity of certain agricultural products, and a change in the potential in some economic sectors. Also he emphasized the magnitude of the impacts of the climate change and the costs of inaction, which could even represent between 1% to 4% of annual GDP in the region.

70. Additionally, Mr. Samaniego described the application of fossil fuel subsidies in the region and their impact on social inequality, the effect of fiscal policies on food security and energy security, and possibilities to address climate through valuation of externalities and the introduction in the region of parametric insurance. Also, he emphasized the need help cities with waste management, and the need to send coordinated messages international financial institutions, encourage them to increase the level of climate investments.

71. During the panel, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation emphasized their commitment to supporting Peru to ensure the success of its Presidency of COP20, enabling a positive agreement to be reached. They also mentioned that in the region an increasing political commitment exists towards the achievement of effective actions in international negotiations. Also, during their interventions they repeated that both adaptation and mitigation are priorities in national agendas and that financing remains an important challenge for the region.

72. Caribbean countries reiterated their high vulnerability to climate change as island States and requested the entire Latin America and Caribbean region to represent their concerns in a more forceful way in international forums.

73. The participants in the panel reiterated the importance of a scientifically based understanding of climate change and the development of clear messages to ensure the general public in the region was aware of its human and economic costs.

74. Finally, Mr. Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, commented on the importance of using international forums as the First Meeting of the UN Environment Assembly to be held in Nairobi in June 2014 and the Climate Change Summit to be held in New York in September 2014, as forums to catalyze political commitments in order to achieve the success expected at COP20 in Lima.

75. Secretary Guerra introduced the next session on "Cooperation" and gave the floor to the representative of the World Bank Mr. Ede Ijjasz-Vásquez as moderator.

76. Mr. Walter Vergara, responsible for climate change at the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) made a presentation on “Instruments of Regional Financing for Emissions Reductions in Latin America and the Caribbean”. He stated that emissions in the region are 5 gigatonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year (GtCO₂e/year) at present, and that an 80% reduction would correspond to 1 GtCO₂e/year in 2050. The IDB has estimated that the cost in the region to achieve these reductions would be 100 billion dollars per year. At present, 94% of the emissions of the region come from eight countries.

77. The most important initiatives the IDB is currently working on regarding mitigation are as follows: Initiative 20x20, for the recovery of degraded land for productive use and conservation (objective: 20 million Ha by 2020); Bioclimate Fund, to encourage conservation to avoid emissions from land use change (Objective: 0.5 million Ha deforestation avoided by 2020); Regional facility of financing of geothermal energy: three projects in Costa Rica, and seven more projects up to 2020 (Objective: 350 MW installed); concentrated solar energy initiatives: projects in four countries—Peru, Mexico, Chile and Brazil (Objective: 1 GW installed for 2020); to promote new (pre-commercial) technologies: Two projects for 2020--(i) Marine energy projects in Chile and the Caribbean, and (ii) Transport using high-intensity batteries in Colombia.

78. Secretary Guerra presented the Mexican Law and National Strategy on Climate Change, an approach that he hoped could contribute to progress in the region on this topic. Mexico is a country vulnerable to climate change. In the first half of 2013 it suffered from a historical drought, while in the second half of the year there was extreme rainfall.

79. Thanks to the approval of the General Law of Climate Change, there was great progress in the year 2013: an Inter-Secretarial Commission of Climate Change was created, as well as the National Institute for Ecology and Climate Change (INECC), the Council of Climate change was constituted (headed by Mr. Mario Molina), the National Strategy on Climate Change was launched (with objectives covering 10, 20 and 40 year timeframes) and a National Climate Change Fund was created.

80. Mexico is responsible for 1.4% of global greenhouse gas emissions. The Objective of the Law is to reduce emissions by 30% by the year 2020; to increase the proportion of clean energy in the energy matrix by 35% by the year 2024; and to reduce emissions by 50% by the year 2050.

81. The National Climate Change Strategy is based on eight pillars, three on adaptation and five on mitigation. Regarding adaptation: to reduce social vulnerability, to reduce vulnerability of infrastructure, and to preserve ecosystems. Regarding mitigation: to accelerate the transition to clean energy, to reduce energy intensity, urban sustainability, to improve agricultural and forest production, and to reduce short-lived climate pollutants.

82. The Special Climate Change Programme includes 197 lines of action. At present Mexico is working on 12 Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs).

83. Mr. Jose González y González (European Commission) spoke about the current state and perspectives in the collaboration between the European Commission and Latin America and the Caribbean in the field of environment and development. His presentation began with a description of the institutional and legal framework for this cooperation and the context of the political dialogue taking place in the Summits of Heads of State.

84. The presentation included examples of cooperation initiated by EUROCLIMA, describing its different phases and collaborating institutions, including UNEP, the Inter-American Institute for Agricultural Cooperation (IICA) and ECLAC among others. The representative of the European Commission presented examples of advances and results achieved in four main areas in the period 2013. These included WATERCLIMA, which was supporting management of river basins and coastal zones, and different mechanisms of financing capacity development. He then presented priorities and thematic programmes for the 2014-2020 phase of work.

85. The moderator opened the floor for discussion. El Salvador indicated that cooperation is important, but all the opportunities are not taken advantage of. They described the climate monitoring centre in their country. They also mentioned that a national climate change strategy exists, comprising three axes: adaptation, mitigation and loss-and-damage. El Salvador had created a National Program of Restoration of Ecosystems and Landscapes. He emphasized the importance of monitoring, reporting and verification mechanisms (MRV).

86. The delegate of Chile emphasized the importance of information systems, particularly, the strengthening of emission inventory teams and meteorological offices.

87. Cuba described results in the area of climate change and mentioned the creation of a national scientific program for the analysis

of climate change issues. In 2007 it started a national program to address climate change. Currently, Cuba is working on a set of actions requiring strategic alliances at the national level, as well as with international cooperation actors. Cuba suggested that early warning systems in their country help to reduce vulnerability of climate change. He emphasized the importance of training at the national level. Cuba indicated that at present it is working to change the energy matrix.

88. The delegate of Uruguay shared an experience of regional coordination that is currently underway (the Regional Environmental Agenda, (AAR for its initials in Spanish)). She described the meeting of the Community of Latin American and the Caribbean (CELAC) last year in Quito and the diagnostic process led by Cuba in which the countries expressed their priorities in different areas. In May last year at the meeting of the ministers of environment of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) the possibility of defining a subregional environmental agenda was discussed. Argentina and Uruguay made a summary of the consultation and a summary of common topics. The Presidents of MERCOSUR validated this agenda and prompted this work further. In November, during a meeting of the ministers of environment of MERCOSUR main priority areas were defined, taking into account the link between environment and social inclusion. It was agreed that each country should take the responsibility for coordinating projects generating a strategic line of work, all with a strong component of social inclusion. It is expected that this year these projects are presented at the next meeting of MERCOSUR, and for specific projects to be approved. She invited everyone to participate in the process through CELAC.

89. Ecuador emphasized advances on the subject of climate change in the country. As an example, the Constitution addressed in a specific manner the need to mainstream climate change. Also a National Plan of Good Living existed, which addressed the need to implement this type of action. Ecuador had a National Strategy of Climate Change that ran until 2025 and a National Plan of Climate Change. During its intervention, Ecuador made concrete proposals on how to articulate cooperation efforts on climate change: creation of financing mechanisms of a regional character; promotion of technologies of a local character; and the creation of a knowledge network, a regional platform that reflects advances of the countries and provides feedback.

90. Guatemala took the floor and underlined the importance of taking concrete actions on climate change. In this regard, Guatemala informed about the recent approval of the Framework Law on Climate Change of Guatemala, which is currently under implementation in the

country. In this regard, she reiterated the willingness to learn about experiences from countries that are in the forefront in the implementation of this legislation.

91. The Brazilian delegate stressed the historical importance of having this Climate COP in the region, especially in a country of the Amazon. He added that, for Brazil, if Warsaw was a meeting of transition, the COP in Lima should be a COP of action. For this reason, for the countries of the region to come together is of fundamental importance. He thanked, on behalf of Minister Izabella Teixeira, the support of the countries of the region to the Brazilian proposal on historical responsibilities that became a proposal of the G77 group. Finally, he argued that mitigation efforts of developing countries in the forestry sector should be internationally recognized and compensated.

92. The representative of Colombia supported the intervention of Chile regarding the importance of monitoring systems and environmental information, which were fundamental for designing and implementing environmental policies.

93. Secretary Guerra thanked the panellists and the interventions of the countries and invited participants to the lunch where the study of Green Economy would be presented.

Cooperation on Biodiversity and Sustainable Development

94. The Ministerial Dialogue on Cooperation for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development aimed to provide elements for analysis and share lessons learned, in support of informed decision making and enable the development of effective public policies in the region to ensure conservation, sustainable use of biodiversity and the benefits it provides to human wellbeing.

95. The dialogue was moderated by the Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, Mr. René Castro. The panel members were Mr. Bráulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Mr. John Scanlon, Secretary General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Mr. José Sarukhan Kermez, National Coordinator of the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity and Mr. Luis Fueyo, Head of the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONAP).

96. The moderator mentioned the important relationship between the subject of the previous dialogue, climate change, and biodiversity. He

recalled the processes for the adoption of the Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. At that time, for example, it had been already identified that, at terrestrial level, the so-called “biological options” accounted for 75 % of the options for mitigating climate change. The links between climate change and biodiversity are very close. He mentioned that leaving intact tropical forests in the world would cost between USD 5 and USD7 billion per year, and that his country had chosen to contribute to the mitigation of global climate change by promoting forestry.

97. The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity highlighted areas that need to be addressed at national and international level to advance the biodiversity agenda. He noted that nationally the priority is updating national strategies and plans on biodiversity, in order to meet the commitment made at the 10th Conference of the Parties held from 18 to 29 October 2010 in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan. The revised and updated 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, was adopted at CBD COP10. He stressed that this plan provides the overall framework for biodiversity, not only regarding biodiversity-related agreements, but for the entire United Nations system. Furthermore, the Conference decided that the fifth national report, due by 31 March 2014, should focus on the implementation of the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan and progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The countries also agreed to include information about their efforts to mobilize resources at the international and national level, which should be implemented in an inter-sectoral manner.

98. Another priority is the national ratification of the Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization. The Executive Secretary recalled that ratification of 50 countries is required for the Protocol to enter into force. To date, the Protocol has been ratified by 29 countries, mostly in Africa and Asia, followed by Europe. He warned that in Latin America and the Caribbean, only Mexico, Panama and Honduras had ratified it; Dominican Republic, Guyana and Guatemala are advancing their respective ratification processes. He noted the importance of the Protocol for Latin America, as it is the most biodiverse region in the world, and the opportunities available to add value to genetic resources, create new markets and jobs and thus provide alternatives to the extractive economy that dominates the region.

99. Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias also explained that the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the

Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety also needs to be ratified by the countries in the region.

100. Globally, the Executive Secretary of the CBD noted that the first major review to assess the progress of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, is to be conducted at the next Conference of the Parties to be held in Korea. There, the following topics will also be discussed: to improve the mechanisms and processes of the Convention and its Protocols and foster greater synergies with other conventions; resource mobilization at national and international levels, including through innovative financial mechanisms; reviewing the budget assigned by the GEF (a very limited increase is expected); marine biodiversity (including the identification of priority areas and ocean acidification, inter alia) and synthetic biology.

101. Finally, The Executive Secretary of the CBD drew attention to the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda which may also serve to promote biodiversity in national plans. He also referred to the need to incorporate the sustainable use of biodiversity in economic agendas to advance options for sustainability, and reminded delegates that the preservation of biodiversity presents an opportunity and part of the solution to address the issues of food security, health, water supply, poverty reduction and improved quality of life.

102. Mr. John Scanlon introduced his presentation by expressing that biodiversity is an agreed concept but the challenge is the implementation of measures on the ground to achieve conservation goals. Similarly, science has an important role to play. From his point of view, CITES sits at the intersection between trade, the environment and development and thus plays a key role in sustainable development.

103. Mr. John Scanlon noted the CITES Convention aims to stem illegal trade of species and facilitate legal trade in wildlife. CITES regulates international trade in over 35,000 species of plants and animals to ensure that any such trade is not detrimental to the survival of the species, making use of both science and policy measures. For some species (Appendix I) commercial international trade is generally prohibited, and for others commercial international trade is subject to strict regulation to be sure it is legal, sustainable and traceable (Appendix II). Some commercial international trade is regulated only to ensure legal origin (Appendix III), leaving the issue of sustainability to measures already taken at the national level.

104. Mr. Scanlon mentioned that sustainable wildlife use can be consumptive or non-consumptive; and that commercial trade may be

beneficial to the conservation of species and ecosystems and/or to the development of local people when carried out at levels that are not detrimental to the survival of the species in question. He offered a number of examples from around the world where local livelihoods are dependent on the existence and trade of species of fauna and flora, and the way these also play a role in the national economy. For an example from Latin America, he referred to the *vicuña* which is a species that was under the threat of extinction and whose population has been recovered.

105. Mr. Scanlon mentioned several trends observed in international trade in wildlife: he talked about traceability and the role consumers can play in ensuring sustainable sourcing of products. In addition, he mentioned that commercially valuable marine and timber species have been recently added to CITES Appendix II and that the LAC region was instrumental in the recent negotiations with respect to, for example, these shark and manta ray species. He also talked about trends in illegal wildlife trade and the role of organized crime in industrial-scale poaching, which must be treated as a serious crime and requires coordinated action at both national and international levels. Access to finance was discussed in the last COP and is still a challenge that many countries face with respect to implementation.

106. He concluded by calling attention to the fact that both consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife are critical to the survival of the species but also provide opportunities for the generation of jobs, mostly in rural areas. He also noted the importance that sustainable development objectives include international trade in species.

107. Mr. José Sarukhan noted the loss of ecosystems occurs silently and is not seen as an important issue as climate change. He noted that biodiversity in Latin America and the Caribbean has four unique attributes: 1) It is the region with the highest biodiversity in the world; 2) The significant cultural diversity in the region is a result of biological diversity; 3) It is the region that has produced the greatest number of species through domestication, which contributes to an even greater biodiversity; 4) It is recognised as having a great number of well known of biodiversity-oriented institutions (Conabio, INBio of Costa Rica, Humboldt Colombia, among others).

108. Mr. José Sarukhan stressed that it is essential to better understand biodiversity to protect it and that this lack of understanding has negatively affected the effective implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Protection requires government

commitment, participation of children and young people, and South-South cooperation.

109. With respect to Mexico, Mr. José Sarukhan noted Conabio's (National Commission for Knowledge and use of Biodiversity) achievements, including: the development of the National Biodiversity Information System (SNIB) which has over 9 million records of specimens of domestic and foreign collections; the development of a modelling system with more than 4,000 species with probabilistic models of spatial distribution of species; capacity development for the interpretation of remote sensing images; the detection of forest fires including capacity development for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the REDD+ programme; the evaluation of Mexican ecosystems; the establishment of centres of origin and genetic diversity; encouraging work with rural communities which has increased the value of the products of their ecosystems, and the promotion rational management and conservation; the promotion of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in biological corridors, particularly the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor; enhancement of environmental education through the *Aver Aves* project (Conabio/CBM-M community-based bird monitoring network with more than 130 employees trained in 5 states in south-eastern Mexico); and the establishment of the *Natura-Lista* programme, which invites non-experts to be naturalist and become part of a social network supporting natural protected areas.

110. Mr. Sarukhan concluded offering Conabio's support to train people from other countries and strengthen institutions in the region to promote the integration and protection of biodiversity and natural capital.

111. The moderator invited Ministers and Heads of Delegations to contribute their opinions and views on the issues raised by the speakers, in order to draw conclusions that could be part of the Ministerial Declaration.

112. In this context, the Minister of Guatemala, Ms. Michelle Martínez, informed that the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity was ratified by the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala by Decree 6-2014 on 3 March 2014. **113.** The representative of Colombia commented on the government's commitment on the issue of biodiversity through its policy and action plan on biodiversity, which are aimed at contributing to meet the Aichi Targets, while contributing to health and equity objectives. The delegate mentioned the production of a manual showing the costs

associated with biodiversity loss in aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, talked about the progress made with respect to the designation of new protected areas, particularly critical ecosystems such as Páramos, and the Vision Amazonia, which promotes sustainable development in the Amazonia region and is aimed at reducing deforestation. He also mentioned the country's actions related to the control of illegal trade in timber species and talked about the efforts made by Colombia, Brazil, Honduras and Mexico to include shark and manta ray species in the CITES Appendix II. He confirmed the importance of research in the field and capacity building. Colombia wants to support the next CBD COP and other post 2015 agenda items related to biodiversity, resilience and ecosystem services, items which need to be transversal through all the SDGs.

114. The representative of Brazil mentioned his country's achievements with respect to the reduction in deforestation in recent years, which was a result of both political commitment and public participation. He mentioned how biodiversity protection is a national political priority. With respect to the Aichi Targets and National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, he mentioned that national consultation processes had been undertaken in order to translate global targets to national ones and identify national priorities. He highlighted the importance of exchanging experiences between countries, and addressing resource mobilization. On ABS, he mentioned that in July 2012 the national process of ratification was started but consultations were still underway between different sectors which must reach an agreement on the national legal framework which can help for implementation at the national level. He also reminded delegates that in the last MERCOSUR summit in Caracas, biodiversity was included as one of the five key priority areas.

115. Mr. Luis Fueyo, Head of the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONAP) emphasized that natural areas is one of the most important instruments for the conservation of biodiversity. They allow for the establishment of effective governance mechanisms as a result of public participation processes and land management. These areas also allow help address social challenges and poverty issues. He explained that CONAP has generated for public strategies; has conducted gap analysis to improve the management of these areas and has prompted strategies. Similarly, the Aichi targets were integrated in the national development plan.

116. He also explained that Mexico draws on multilateral cooperation to address issues such as climate change, landscape scale and

watershed management, and has USD \$115 million of additional external financing.

117. Ms. Margarita Astrálaga, Regional Director and Representative of UNEP, discussed the importance of not only developing knowledge on the status of natural capital, but also understanding its value in order to protect it. She mentioned a number of key areas on which future cooperation between the countries of the region could be based, such as the area of economic valuation of ecosystems. She provided an example of the valuation of a coastal lagoon protected area in Honduras, where a UNEP study showed clear indications of the economic, ecological and social value of the ecosystem services provided by the area. Similarly, she mentioned two UNEP studies undertaken in El Salvador and Panama, which also demonstrated the high social and economic values obtained from the ecosystem services provided by two terrestrial protected areas, including water supply, reduction in vulnerability, forestry and tourism.

118. Ms. Astrálaga also presented the work undertaken in the region with respect to The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) Initiative, stating examples from both the Caribbean and Latin America. In the former, UNEP worked successfully with the University of the West Indies to build the capacity of representatives of the Ministries of Environment and Finance on the integration of the value of biodiversity in development and planning decision-making processes. In addition, she stated St. Lucia's interest in starting a national TEEB study.

119. In Latin America, a national TEEB initiative is currently underway in Brazil, and upcoming work in this respect is expected in Mexico and Colombia. Bolivia is currently working on translating the TEEB study to its own concept related to the rights of Mother Earth, which will be included as one of the global case studies. Also at a global level, thematic work under the TEEB initiative includes a study on TEEB and cities, Oceans, etc. Regarding future opportunities, Ms. Astrálaga mentioned that governments in the region could cooperate on the issue of ecosystem valuations of coastal areas, particularly in the case of transboundary biological corridors, as well as further national TEEB studies. She also mentioned that in terms of cooperation at a regional level, UNEP is currently assisting Caribbean countries through support on the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and the strengthening of legal drafters.

120. She concluded by stating that upcoming activities include the implementation of a new EC-funded project in cooperation with FAO, IUCN and WWF in the Amazon biome aimed at strengthening and

integrating the management of its protected areas, in order to contribute to the implementation of the Amazon Ecosystem Conservation Vision and to the achievement of the Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi targets at a regional level.

121. The moderator then requested the panellists to make their final comments. Mr. Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias stressed that economic valuation of ecosystems is important but it is only a first step that must be completed with other financial instruments and changes in public policy. To that end, the interaction with Ministries of Finance and Economy must be deepened. He also mentioned that protected areas are a win-win element as they can contribute to the achievement of development goals.

122. Mr. John Scanlon noted that CITES was established 41 years ago and its vision of species complements the CBD and the vision of ecosystems. He also mentioned that ecosystems and species must be viewed in unison, not separately, and that integrity of ecosystems must be promoted.

123. Mr. José Sarukhan reflected on climate change and conservation of biodiversity. He noted that the former is more global in nature, while the status of biodiversity is local and data are not comparable. Therefore different management approaches involving local people and scientists are needed.

Chemicals and Waste

- Chemicals

124. This Ministerial Dialogue was moderated by Under Secretary Rafael Pacchiano, of SEMARNAT of Mexico, who emphasized the importance of promoting the suitable management of the chemicals and waste to minimize the risks on human health and the environment. He also noted the challenges that mercury brings to the region, such as the increase in mercury trade at the intra-regional level following its use in the extraction in informal small scale gold mining, which represents the main source of mercury emissions in the region.

125. After these initial comments, the Executive director of the UNEP was invited to make an introduction to the topic. His intervention focused on the Minamata Convention on mercury, and emphasized the roll that the ALC region, and particularly Uruguay, played in the negotiations. He remembered that until now 18 countries of the region

have signed the agreement, and urged the countries to initiate the legislative processes for its ratification, recalling that 50 ratifications are needed for the agreement to enter into force. The Executive Director indicated that in the region 71% of mercury emissions come from the informal small scale gold mining sector, which shows strong linkages between health and environment. He emphasized that this is a very important challenge in the same manner that chemical risk management is.

126. Mr. Ibrahima Tow, Coordinator of the Chemicals Group of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) described the GEF support in the area of mercury. After presenting the general objectives of the Chemical focal area, he pointed out that work on mercury by the GEF goes back to 1995. Since then, early actions have been carried out, for example in the health sector and in the informal gold extraction. For the fifth financing cycle, the GEF allocated 25 million dollars to support the process of negotiation of the Agreement. Mr. Tow described the projects financed during this period, including several that have been developed in the ALC region. He noted that the GEF has been designated as the financial mechanism of the Minamata Convention and that will operate according to the article 13 and guidelines set by the Conference of the Parties. He informed that the approved allocation in GEF-5 was 10 million dollars for financing early actions in mercury, including preliminary evaluations and national plans of action on informal small scale gold mining. Finally he expressed his wish that GEF-6 would allocate approximately 125-130 million dollars can be assigned to support the implementation of the Agreement.

127. The following panellist was Mr. Luis Augusto Galvao, Director of Sustainable Development and Equity in Health at the Pan-American Health Organization (OMS/OPS), noting the work and coordination on the subject of health and environment, particularly with UNEP. After indicating the impacts of mercury on health and the channels of exposure, he highlighted the references to health in the Minamata, Convention, particularly article 16 no health. He informed that the OMS has been invited and is ready to support the implementation of the Minamata agreement, and this will be discussed in its next World Assembly. Finally, he emphasized the importance of good coordination between the ministries of health and environment.

128. During the interventions, the delegate of Uruguay thanked the rest of GRULAC countries for supporting her country as chair of the negotiations and the successful joint work that was carried out during the negotiation of the Convention, which is an example of the capacity of the region to coordinate and contribute to advancing the

environmental agenda, while recognizing diversity. However, she stressed the need for further work at national level and in a coordinated manner as a region during the ratification process, as well as the importance of continuing to consider environmental and health issues jointly, which is ultimately, to work on sustainable development.

129. Colombia noted the leadership of the region, and the country commitment in the negotiation of the Convention. He indicated that this is a priority topic for Colombia, due to the social, health and environmental impact of the informal small scale gold mining. He informed on the new normative framework on mercury, which the country promises to eliminate its use in mining in a period of 5 years. This process cannot be implemented in an isolated manner and must be accompanied by integral politics towards sustainable development.

130. The Minister of Honduras referred to the efforts of the country in the area of integral management of chemicals and waste. The new institutional structure of the Secretariat of Environment has the objective of a more integral environmental management.

131. The representative of Brazil spoke on behalf of the Minister of Environment indicating that the country reaffirms its commitment to the Convention and that it will take the necessary actions for its ratification. He informed about the different initiatives being carried out on this matter, and emphasized the importance of regional cooperation, particularly in the field of informal small scale gold mining.

132. The Minister of Guyana noticed that when the ratification process is completed, countries should receive support from the international cooperation, in particular those countries that should eliminate practices of informal small scale gold mining, since alternatives are costly. The mobilization of resources has to be very rapid and the GEF has an important role.

133. The Minister of Ecuador informed that the country has established a two-year plan for the elimination of mercury in the mining sector, call the Zero-Mercury Plan, which includes also actions on the health sector. It was indicated that the different actions are within the framework of changing the productive matrix. Regarding biodiversity, she informed that, Ecuador recently created the National Biodiversity Institute to position the green productivity matrix towards a productive vision for development.

134. Finally, the Minister of Cuba informed that the country will continue working towards the signing of the agreement, and mentioned that mercury pollution is a very serious problem that

affects the population of the region and that additional resources are needed to cope with it.

- Waste

135. Deputy Secretary Pacchiano introduced the panel, indicating the main tendencies and challenges for the region. He noted the need to improve the management of waste, to increase recycling rates as well as to encourage cooperation and possible regional solutions noting that waste can bring opportunities.

136. The first exhibitor, Alfredo Rhim, of the Inter-American Development Bank began his presentation with main trends on waste management in the region. He showed some important advances like the increase in waste collection coverage but noting that there are still aspects that must be improved in a context of increasing waste generation. One key aspect comprises informal waste recyclers, which in the region are estimated to be more than 400.000 persons. He also described the BID activities in this area, which at present provides 305 million dollars in seven countries and showed examples of projects in different countries of the region. He concluded the presentation with a set of recommendations for the future.

137. The following panellist was Dr. Ede Lijasz-Vasquez, Director of the Department of Sustainable Development for Latin America of the World Bank, who also offered a vision of the set of tendencies in the region. He emphasized some advances in the region indicating that while differences between countries exist, this also represents an opportunity to exchange experiences. He pointed out that the Ministries of Environment are not the only ones with a mandate on this issue, which presents a coordination challenge with other areas for the design and implementation of public policies. He emphasized the need to work together with Ministries of Finance. He referred to green growth, which in regards of the sanitation sector requires a change in citizens' behaviour to avoid trajectories similar to those of developed countries. The sector requires efficiency and investments in new technologies while simultaneously attending social issue. That's why the areas of intervention of the World Bank in this topic include community project and social inclusion.

138. The delegate of Chile indicated that progress in waste management is gradual, and that one of the main difficulties in designing effective waste management is that there is no cost in generating waste that should be paid by citizens and that this is a barrier to achieve necessary changes.

139. The Minister of El Salvador pointed out that this is a fundamental topic in environmental management. He described the experience of the country when open dumping was prohibited and on recent developments on the legislative area. He also indicated the importance hazardous waste. He emphasized that opportunities for south-south cooperation are being exploited fully taking into account the body of experiences in the region.

140. The Minister of Ecuador referred to the Integrated Waste Management program that will be launched in September 2014, which is based on minimizing waste generation, improving waste management and the closing of open dumping areas by 2017. This is a problem linked to poverty, for which interventions in sanitation are essential to diminish gaps and improve the quality of life for more vulnerable populations.

141. The Minister of Paraguay, referred to the law of solid residues, and the challenges of management that persist as for the varied needs, which go from the absence of information, up to the low recycling valuation, as well as the informality in the final residues disposition. It indicated that incentives are necessary because the population in poverty situation is not provided with the resources to pay the sanitation services. The dangerous residues are also a problem since the country even is not provided with treatment facilities.

142. The vice-minister of Peru referred to the national goal of handling 100% of solid urban waste by the year 2021, which will require big investments. He informed about the establishment of incentives for the local management of direct waste transfers in municipalities that can show a participation of families in the waste separation. This resulted in that 20% of the population now separates waste. Another mechanism was the development of capacities to formulate investment projects.

143. The intervention of the Secretary of Environment of Mexico, who indicated the priorities and actions in this field for the country and exhorted greater cooperation in the region, closed the meeting.

Celebration of the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

144. In introducing this agenda item, a statement on behalf of Caribbean SIDS was presented by the Hon. Kenred M. A. Dorsett, M. P., Minister of Environment and Housing of Bahamas.

145. The minister in setting the stage for the dialogue emphasized that SIDS notwithstanding their vulnerabilities are critically important members of the international community representing approximately 23 percent of the countries of the United Nations and the 46 per cent of the Member States of the Latin America and the Caribbean respectively.

146. The minister also alluded to the important role played by SIDS globally. He also reiterated as highlighted in chapter 17G of Agenda 21 and reaffirmed in the “Future We Want” of SIDS being a special case for environment and development.

147. In addressing the Third International Conference of SIDS the Minister alluded to the preparations at the national, regional, interregional and global levels for the conference, against this backdrop the Minister highlighted a number of issues contained in the outcome document of the SIDS Interregional meeting held in Barbados 2014. Among the issues highlighted Include: The call for an urgent need to assess whether the current mandates and operational functioning of UN entities are sufficient to provide the support required by SIDS. It is also necessary as highlighted in the Outcome Document for an identification of financial resources and institutional capacity needed by UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes to enhance delivery of projects on the ground and to enhance overall effectiveness.

148. He expressed that Caribbean countries have the political will and therefore the developed countries must provide the economic capital under the premise of “the polluter pays” that would enable them to adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change.

149. He also noted that several Caribbean SIDS are classified as middle income countries which limits their ability to readily access financial resources, notwithstanding that these very same countries are heavily burdened by debt which constrains their ability to effectively meet their development goals.

150. He also mentioned the need for adequate, coherent, consistent and coordinated support by the UN System to SIDS for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA).

151. In addressing the issue of the international year of SIDS the Minister emphasised its importance for the Caribbean and by extension to the region. He emphasised that the international year from the perspective of the Caribbean SIDS must not only focus on the

vulnerabilities of SIDS but also be used as a recognition and celebration of SIDS contributions to the world.

152. The minister also emphasised that the Caribbean SIDS would like to celebrate the International Year in close collaboration with the other countries from the region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

153. He expressed that all agencies, funds and programmes of the UN System located in a Caribbean SIDS and or have a mandate for SIDS should develop a set of specific activities in observance of the International Year of SIDS.

154. Finally he thanked the Executive Director of UNEP for dedicating the World Environment Celebrations 2014 to the Sustainable Development of SIDS and its linkage to Climate Change.

155. Continuing the dialogue the Hon. Dr. Kenneth Darroux Minister Environment of Dominica acknowledged the commitment shown by Latin American and the Caribbean in supporting SIDS issues. He called up on the United Nations System to make a special effort to support the SIDS issue. He said this was of particular importance since with less than six months to the convening of the Third International Conference, he does not feel the support from the international community. He also emphasized the need for activities on the ground as well as those which address livelihood issues.

156. The representative of Nicaragua, Mr. Luis Fiallos, associated himself with comments made by Minister Dorsett, and expressed his satisfaction for participating in the launch of the International Year of SIDS. He said that the vast Caribbean Coast in his country shares some vulnerability with Caribbean SIDS. He also mentioned the contributions of Nicaragua in reducing emissions through the radical transformation of the energy matrix, based on foreign direct investments due to political, economic and social stability of Nicaragua.

157. The Viceminister of Environment and Development of Colombia, Mr. Pablo Viera, in his intervention shared the concerns of Caribbean SIDS and pledged Colombia's support to SIDS.

158. The Honourable Mr. Rene Castro Minister of Costa Rica also pledged Costa Rica's support to SIDS. The Minister suggested that the Latin American and the Caribbean Region should use the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC to be held in Lima in December 2014 to advance some of the issues, stopping progress being made in the implementation on the convention.

159. He further suggested that countries of Latin America and the Caribbean take steps before 2015 and by so doing demonstrate the

hemisphere's ability to address adaptation issues. He also called on all Latin American and Caribbean countries to support Peru as one body to support Caribbean SIDS.

160. Minister Dorsett, said that politically, SIDS represents a large block of developing countries which is largely under represented across the UN system.

161. He added that progress made to date by SIDS has been largely by their own actions. He recognized with great thanks the South-South cooperation and the support of their partners, especially in this region, which has supported their collective efforts.

162. He mentioned a number of environmental challenges that cannot be addressed unilaterally, but collectively by all nations, as illegal poaching, the systematic overexploitation of marine resources, marine environment pollution from chemicals and climate change.

163. He also commented that, in particular, the emerging climate crisis reinforces the need for urgent and immediate actions involving all of the Ministers responsible for the Environment and he suggested that this Forum of Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean must act to face the challenges of our global environment. In addition, he expressed that the support in the Forum's Declaration sends a message of solidarity as we celebrate the international year of small island developing states. He further said that the United Nations Environmental Assembly of UNEP (UNEA) must also respond by finding collective actions to respond to their call for support.

164. The Minister of the Public Service, Sustainable Development, Energy, Science and Technology of Saint Lucia, Hon. Mr. James Fletcher in his contribution emphasized the importance of climate change to Caribbean SIDS as it relates fundamentally to these countries ability to survive. He also touched on issues being addressed within the context of the negotiations taking place within the UNFCCC including those related to loss and damages. The minister also alluded a number of issues confronting SIDS, including inter alia, debt which limits the fiscal space of these countries, threats to biodiversity, and water availability, and disaster risk.

165. In her contribution to the dialogue, Ms. Elba Rosa Perez Montoya, Minister of Science, Technology and Environment of Cuba underscored the need to commit to talk to each other and translate the talk into action. Against this backdrop the Minister highlighted a number of areas for which Cuba has expertise which if accessed, can contribute to the building of capacities in Caribbean SIDS. The Minister

specifically mentioned the recently established capacity building centre in Cuba and offered it to SIDS.

166. The representative of Antigua and Barbuda, Mr. Julius Ross raised the question as to whether there is a programmed week of activities to celebrate the International Year of SIDS. Mr. Ross also underscored the need for putting talks into practical action.

167. Antigua and Barbuda also suggested for collaboration with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) to be promoted.

168. The Regional Director and Representative of UNEP , Ms. Margarita Astrálaga said that UNEP together with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), CARICOM and other agencies are working on developing a programme to support SIDS on climate and that as soon as the draft proposal is more advanced it would be sent to countries.

169. The Executive Director of UNEP in his contribution to the dialogue initiated by recognizing that there is a long way to go in responding to the challenges faced by SIDS, and he outlined a number of areas in which UNEP supports SIDS. These include inter alia to the contribution UNEP makes with respect to the implementation of the Montreal protocol, support to the efforts of a number of SIDS in the area of Green Economic transformation, strengthening the strategic presence of UNEP in the SIDS region, the commitment to prepare a GEO SIDS as part of contribution to the Third International Conference of SIDS. In terms of the International Year of SIDS the Executive Director highlighted that the world environment day 2014 will focus on the sustainable development of SIDS and its link to climate change. He reiterated that SIDS can count on UNEPs commitment.

Item IV of the Agenda: Tour and lunch at the Sea of Cortes

170. The Ministers of Environment and Heads of Delegation had the opportunity to learn about several conservation areas in the Sea of Cortes in Mexico, an important ecological reserve with a rich biodiversity.

Item V of the Agenda: Other matters

171. No other matters were included upon the adoption of the agenda, hence no additional matters were discussed.

Item VI of the Agenda: Review of the Draft Final Report of the Nineteenth Meeting and adoption of the Ministerial Declaration

172. Under this agenda item, the delegations reviewed the set of decisions and the draft Ministerial Declaration of the meeting.

173. The Vice-Minister of Honduras in his capacity as Rapporteur presented the report indicating that due to its length, it was proposed to give one week for ministers to review it.

174. The Regional Director and Representative of UNEP , Ms. Margarita Astrálaga reported that the final report of the meeting, with including the final exchanges of the evening, would be sent in digital form by the Forum Secretariat to ministers and heads of delegation to receive contributions within one week. She also requested to provide the Secretariat with the speeches delivered during the meeting to attach to the report.

175. After this, the Chair proposed the adoption of the Los Cabos Declaration, which was adopted by the participants (Annex I).

Item VII of the Agenda: Closing of the Nineteenth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

176. Under this agenda item , the Chairman of the Forum , the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico , Juan Jose Guerra , said that important decisions were discussed and approved for the region on the following topics : (1) Governance and strengthening of the Forum of Ministers, (2) Environmental Education for sustainable development, (3) Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, (4) Cooperation on chemicals and waste, (5) Small island developing states (SIDS)the regional clean air plan , (6) indicators of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC); (7) sustainable consumption and production. (8) Regional Action Plan on Atmospheric Pollution, and (9) Cooperation on climate change.

177. Thereafter, the Chairman invited delegations to make their final 5contributions.

178. Mr. Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, appreciated the clear orientations from the Forum, the richness of the discussions and expressed the hope that the vision and energy of Latin America and the Caribbean are transmitted to the United Nations Environmental

Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEA) whose first meeting will take place from 23 to 27 June 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya.

179. The Vice Minister commented that Peru as one of the delegates with longer participation in the meetings of the forums of ministers of environment and based on this experience and knowledge of the forum, stressed that the XIX Meeting of the Forum has registered the best performance. As an example, he recalled that the ministerial dialogue on climate change was attended by two Nobel prizes (Dr. Rajendra Pachauri and Dr. Mario Molina), the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Ms. Christiana Figueres, the Executive Director of UNEP and other personalities. He added that the agreements reached will allow greater incidence in international processes on sustainable development. He also reiterated the words of the Minister of Environment of Peru on the goal of reaching a substantial agreement at the next Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC, COP20 which will take place in their country.

180. The Vice Minister of Colombia appreciated the hospitality received, and offered for Colombia to host the XX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016.

181. Finally, the Chairman of the Forum acknowledged the words of gratitude towards his country and his team. He appreciated the trust of the countries and expressed his commitment to represent the voice of the region in all relevant regional and global fora.

182. The XIX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean was closed by its Chairman, Mr. Juan Jose Guerra Abud, Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico on Friday 14 March 2014 at 18:30.

