



**2020 UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
“Protecting the Planet and Building Resilience”**

Wednesday July 8 1:00 - 2:00 pm

Statement - Vice Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, María
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STATEMENT INPUTS - SCRIPT

- A very special greeting to all attendees of this meeting, especially to Ambassador Akram, Vice President of ECOSOC.
- I would like to start by sharing with you that Colombia is a country that has the wealth of 2 oceans and 5 mega-ecosystemic and hydrological regions, these are: Andean Region, Orinoquia, Pacific, Caribbean, and Amazonia. We are the number one country in diversity of registered bird species (1,909) and orchids (1,543). We are the second most mega-diverse in the world per square kilometer, (58,000 registered species). We are also the second country with the highest number of plants, amphibians, butterflies, and freshwater fishes, and lastly, the third in reptiles, and fourth in diversity of mammals.
- I mention these data to you because in Colombia, and in the world, we are experiencing a historical event that has forced us to reflect from different perspectives. Never before in the history of humanity, has been so clear the relationship between nature's health and animal health; and especially in one of its species, man.
- This reflection has allowed us to acknowledge that, in order to ensure the supply chain for men and women needs, such as drinking water, energy, medicine or food, we must ensure that the ecosystems that supply this sources, such as: the moors, wetlands, mangroves, wet or dry forests, or the rivers themselves; are very healthy and able to provide the services and goods that we need to not get sick and continue coexisting.
- Therefore it is so Important the role of protecting and restore these ecosystems since this allows us to Increase our resilience capacity. In turn, it strengthens us to prevent future pandemics, which could be more delicate.
- Ecosystems in nature function similarly to the human body system: When ecosystems are robust and healthy, they possess diverse species, they are more resilient, they have more space for healthier populations, and are less vulnerable to disease.
- It is an approach based on finding solutions based on nature, on ecosystems, thinking about the well-being of present and future generations.



- And thence, the concept of "*Biodivercities*" is born: Sustainable cities based on the health of their ecosystems and the people who inhabit them.
- Colombia promotes this strategy seeking to improve the link of its citizens with its main ecological structure. The purpose of this is to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, availing of the vocation of its territory to incorporate nature in the planning and organization of the territory and to promote the bioeconomy, science, technology, and innovation, and the circular economy, through the execution of comprehensive projects, to achieve greater well-being for citizens.
- Likewise, we launched the Circular Economy strategy, the first in Latin America, where companies play a central role, executing new business models that, through innovation, make the most of resources and allow the waste of some to be inputs for others, which is known as the famous closing of cycles.
- These new ways of thinking and doing include three dimensions: i. The efficient use of materials, energy, and water; ii. technological innovation in processes of transformation; and iii. leveraging and collaboration within the value chain, including suppliers and consumers of sustainable products and green markets.
- For that purpose, from Colombia, we will chair the Regional Coalition of Circular Economy of Latin America and the Caribbean. As leaders in the region, we will seek a common vision of the circular economy, and we will also build a roadmap that will allow us to move towards an effective transition to a circular economy in the region.
- All these efforts and strategies contribute and seek to achieve a "*Green recovery*". In which we seek to privilege and generate intergenerational responsibility, placing people and nature at the center of global action.
- In addition to these government policies, all countries must begin to think about the key actions that will allow us to have a green and resilient economic revitalization, for this we must:
 1. Recognize the essential link between domestic and wildlife, human health, and ecosystems as food providers. This bond is essential to maintaining the healthy and functional environments that we all need.
 2. Invest more in education and raise awareness through effective communication. It is imperative to be able to better understand the relationships between human and animal health, and integrity in the same ecosystem.
 3. We must start planning to build back our economies in a way that encourages green structural transformation. To do this, we must



generate long-term commitments to public spending and carry out price reforms. Once the restrictions are lifted, governments and development finance institutions should prioritize stimulus efforts that have high economic multiplier effects and reduce carbon emissions, such as the revitalization of the forestry economy.

4. Reduce the vulnerability of ecosystems through actions of ecological conservation and restoration, especially for the most vulnerable and threatened.
 5. Continue with the fight against deforestation, the degradation of our ecosystems, the trafficking of wildlife. To do this, we must strengthen legislation and enforcement mechanisms on wildlife management.
 6. Develop permanent monitoring systems that comprehensively include issues of ecosystem management and health and develop comprehensive actions in research and practice.
 7. Evolve towards a circular economy with more medium-sized companies, less economic concentration, and restoring balances with the environment, promoting access to capital, labor flexibility, and digital transformation.
- In Colombia, we will seek to lead all these actions through the targets proposed in the Pact for Sustainability through its "Produce Conserving and Conserve Producing" policy. This will allow us to achieve a green reconstruction of the economy, supporting its decisions in science.
 - I want to end these words with a thought. After the social isolation to which the world has been subjected, there is a perception that nature is recovering. This has allowed us to see animals through our windows that we have never seen before. However, it is very important not to lower our guard against the illegal activities that affect them, such as the illegal trafficking of species, illicit cultivation and illicit activities, land grabbing, etc.
 - This is a time to organize ourselves, and with priority, to establish effective strategies to achieve a green and resilient economic recovery.
 - Thank you very much to all.