



CIRCULAR ECONOMY COALITION

Latin America & the Caribbean

PRESS RELEASE

Latin America and the Caribbean launches the Circular Economy Coalition

Barbados, February 1, 2021. - A new initiative to support Latin America and the Caribbean in the transition to a circular economy as part of the COVID-19 recovery was launched today.

The Regional Coalition on Circular Economy was announced during a virtual side event at the [XXII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers](#) of Environment of the region, hosted by Barbados and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

The new Coalition, coordinated by UNEP, will be led by a steering committee composed of four high-level government representatives on a rotating basis, starting with Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Peru for the 2021-2022 period.

“As extracting, wasting and ‘doing business as usual’ can no longer be supported by the planet, it is key to build a common regional vision on circular economy. The Coalition we are launching today will help precisely to do that and to implement concrete and measurable practices,” said Carlos Correa, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia and Chair of the Coalition.

Correa participated in the side event along with Mariano Castro, Vice Minister of Environmental Management of the Ministry of the Environment of Peru, Rolando Castro, Vice Minister of Energy and Environmental Quality of the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, and Walter Verri, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mining and Uruguay.

Moving away from a ‘take, make, waste’ mentality, a circular economy is a resilient, diverse and inclusive economic model that creates opportunities for a sustainable growth. It fosters long-term economic productivity and green jobs, while tackling global challenges like climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

The Coalition will support access to financing by governments and the private sector, with special emphasis on small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in order to promote resource mobilization for innovation and the implementation of specific projects in the region.

The initiative will count on eight permanent strategic partners: the Climate Technology Centre & Network (CTCN), the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy Coalition (PACE), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Economic Forum (WEF) and UNEP.

Driven by eco-design, a circular economy eliminates waste and pollution, keeps products and materials in use, and regenerates natural systems. Adopting these principles can reduce the use of raw materials by up to 99%, contributing to protect biodiversity, according to UNEP International Resource Panel.

While the current climate discussions focus on switching to renewable energy and energy efficiency matters, which will tackle 55% of the total GHG emissions, circular economy can help address the remaining overlooked 45%, which are generated by the way we make and use products and the way we produce food, according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

The Coalition aims to implement a circular economy approach through collaborative work between governments, businesses, and society as a whole.

“The creation of this coalition reaffirms the region’s commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with special emphasis on SDG 12, *Sustainable Consumption and Production*, through the promotion of innovation, sustainable infrastructure, and an inclusive and circular economy,” said Leo Heileman, UNEP Regional Director in Latin America and the Caribbean.

“Acknowledging that unsustainable consumption and production patterns are the root cause of the three planetary crises we face today—climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss—, we have a unique opportunity to rethink our

linear economy and reshape our unsustainable consumption and production patterns,” Heileman concluded.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

UNEP is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

For more information, please contact:

Regional Communication Unit for Latin America and the Caribbean, UNEP:

unep-latinamerica-news@un.org