



## Rapporteur Report EU-LAC Just Transitions Forum<sup>1</sup>

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## EU-LAC Just Transitions Forum

### - Executive Report -



## I. Background

The European Union (EU) and Community of Latin America and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit of Heads of State and Government will provide an opportunity to generate a high-level strategic dialogue on the challenges and opportunities of the cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the EU around their green transition and digital transformation agendas. Accordingly, and in the framework of its mission of promoting dialogue between governmental and civil society actors of both regions, the EU-LAC Foundation organised the **Just Transitions Forum**.

The objective of the **Just Transitions Forum** was to generate a discussion space for experts, researchers and other civil society actors on the challenges and opportunities of the LAC-EU bi-regional cooperation in the areas of **i) climate change adaptation and mitigation, ii) just energy transition, and iii) inclusive digital transformation**. In addition, the purpose of the Forum was to generate contributions and policy recommendations from civil society to the bi-regional dialogue that will take place at the next EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government.

The **Just Transitions Forum** took place on 15-16 May 2023 at the CaixaForum Macaya in Barcelona, Spain. The Forum was organised with the support of the European Commission, the *Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals* (IBEI), the *Diputació de Barcelona*, and "la Caixa" Foundation with the Club of Rome.

## II. Participants

In order to achieve the objectives of the **Just Transitions Forum**, direct invitations were issued to experts and leaders from LAC and the EU, who were affiliated to international organisations, research centres, universities, civil society organisations, among others. In addition, an open call for representatives of civil society organisations was made on the EU-

LAC Foundation's website. The EU-LAC Foundation received ca. one hundred applications through the open call.

The Forum brought together 54 face-to-face participants and 44 virtual participants, **which totalled 98**. Most of the attendees were representatives of civil society organisations, academia, and international organisations such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), among others. Representatives from private sector and trade unions -mostly members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)- also participated. In addition, the Forum was attended by representatives of CELAC Member States and the European Union (EU) as observers.

Two former Ministers and two former Vice-Ministers from the LAC region, who currently hold positions in international or civil society organisations, among other bi-regional leaders, participated in the Forum.

### III. Methodology

The **Just Transitions Forum** was held in hybrid format (in-person and online), to enable larger participation from both regions. The languages of the Forum were Spanish and English, with simultaneous interpretation.

Based on their expertise, participants chose to contribute in one of three working groups: i) climate change adaptation and mitigation, ii) just energy transition, and iii) inclusive digital transition. Each thematic group was organised into three working sessions focussed on specific aspects within the main theme. The working sessions started with the presentation of an invited expert, who provided inputs for the discussions. Afterwards, participants openly discussed the topics with the help of a moderator. Guiding questions were provided to assist the discussions.

In addition, each session had two designated rapporteurs to accurately and objectively document the key points discussed.

### IV. Proposals to the EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government

The main proposals and suggestions to the EU-CELAC Heads of State and Government are listed below by theme discussed.

#### i. Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

Proposals to EU-CELAC Summit Heads of State and Government:

#### **Session A: Economic, social, and environmental costs of climate change in LAC and the EU**

- 1. Transparency and public access to information on natural resources and environmental impacts.** There is a general lack of transparency in the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region in relation to environmental resources and impacts. It is crucial to foster an environment of openness and collaboration, promoting citizen participation and access

to environmental information. By strengthening transparency, informed decision-making can be promoted and a stronger and more effective environmental governance in the region can be achieved.

2. **Generating quality public information on costs associated with climate change and the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).** Accurate quantification of the costs associated with climate change and the transition is required to access climate finance and address issues such as transition resistance. Very few countries in LAC have conducted studies on how much it would cost to implement their NDCs. It is essential to generate these studies in the region for accessing climate financing and a better connection between finance flows and national needs. In addition to evaluate the economic aspects, it is fundamental to address the justice and equity aspects of the transition.
3. **Generating and disseminating information on the climate crisis at the local level and acknowledge women's community leadership.** There are several sources of data on climate change issues available at the macro level. However, problems often arise when trying to obtain quality official data at local scales. It is essential to address this gap and recognise the importance of generating data at the local level. In this regard, it is also recommended to acknowledge and support women as climate leaders who play a key role in producing information and building resilience at the local level.

***Session B: Bi-regional cooperation and financing of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in LAC***

4. **Opening the debate on the effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the need to improve its financing scheme.** Currently, these funds are being mobilised through intermediaries, which poses problems in terms of transparency and equitable distribution.
5. **Strengthening the local approach to climate finance and the role of affected communities.** Small and medium-sized cities often face difficulties in accessing finance and technical assistance to implement climate projects. It is therefore critical to strengthen the local approach to climate finance and highlight the crucial role of communities affected by climate change in making decisions, implementing solutions, and directly receiving funding to ensure more effective climate action.
6. **Promoting transparency in climate finance.** Transparency is another limited aspect of climate finance. In this regard, the implementation of schemes of transparency, collaboration and mutual trust in the EU and LAC cooperation is highly recommended. In addition, it is suggested to develop and implement better accountability mechanisms for climate projects.

7. **Promoting multistakeholder dialogue and public-private partnerships in climate finance.** Promoting multi-stakeholder dialogue is essential to unlock the trillions of dollars needed to finance climate action. The importance of discussing and seeking common solutions amongst the different actors involved in international cooperation and climate finance is highlighted. The relevance of public-private partnerships under sustainable and fair standards is also emphasised.
8. **Increasing climate finance for adaptation.** The distribution of international climate finance in LAC is uneven, with a greater proportion going to mitigation. It is necessary to increase funding for adaptation in LAC, as the region is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Also, a better connection between funding flows and national needs must be promoted to ensure effective use of resources.
9. **Promoting debt-for-climate finance swap mechanisms as a strategy to address climate change.** It is essential that countries avoid increasing their external debt to address the impacts of climate change. Instead, it is recommended to develop, promote, and implement debt-for-climate finance swap mechanisms.

#### ***Session C: Bi-regional cooperation on the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)***

10. **Fostering EU-LAC bi-regional dialogue and cooperation on the Carbon-Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).** It is essential to generate a clear and constructive dialogue between the EU and LAC countries to address concerns and challenges related to the CBAM. This includes discussing impacts on regional markets and employment, and possible trade diversions to other less regulated markets. In addition, LAC countries will require support to address the challenges and costs associated with CBAM implementation. An excessive economic burden on small producers and exporters should be avoided, and a just transition to more sustainable practices should be encouraged.
11. **LAC-EU bi-regional dialogue, agreement and cooperation on the development and implementation of environmental regulations and certifications.** LAC countries need to promote and adopt sustainable practices in the production of exported goods. It is important to encourage the certification of products with internationally recognised environmental standards in the region, which could open market opportunities and help mitigating the impacts of the CBAM. However, complying with the EU Green Pact regulations can be costly and challenging for LAC farmers and producers, particularly small producers. In this regard, it is fundamental to promote bi-regional dialogue on environmental certifications and regulations. Technical cooperation in the implementation of environmental certifications and regulations, particularly for small producers, is also fundamental.

## ii. Just Energy Transition

Proposals to EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government:

### *Session A: Energy transition during the crisis*

- 1. Targeting energy subsidies to the most vulnerable populations in LAC and evolution towards other models in the energy transition.** The energy policies implemented in LAC have been diverse and their effectiveness varies according to each context. However, in general, current subsidies not only promote the use of fossil fuels but have not been successful in addressing inequity (disproportionate burden of energy price increases on low-income populations). Governments in the region should adequately target fuel and energy subsidies to achieve a more efficient and sustainable energy policy. In addition, the importance of implementing more progressive subsidies is emphasised, as well as the importance of evaluating the transfer of subsidies to production, not only to consumption.
- 2. Strengthening LAC-EU bi-regional technical and financial cooperation for energy democratisation.** The European Green Deal offers new opportunities for cooperation between LAC and the EU on energy issues. LAC has one of the cleanest energy matrices on the planet; however, energy poverty is also a challenge in the region, with 16.1 million people without access to electricity. In this regard, it is noted that the allocation of investment funds for energy democratisation should be a key aspect in the cooperation between LAC and the EU in order to promote a just and sustainable energy transition.
- 3. Prioritising energy cooperation that promotes value-added production in LAC.** Cooperation between LAC and the EU in energy matters is an opportunity for joint growth and development. In this regard, it is important for LAC to participate in value-added activities and production, and not only remain an exporter of raw materials. Therefore, it is important to seek points of convergence and cooperation that promote the common interests of both regions.

### *Session B: Bi-regional cooperation, technical transfer, and financing of renewable energy projects*

- 4. Increasing, strengthening, and aligning bi-regional technical and financial cooperation on energy transition.** The share of financial cooperation between the EU and LAC has decreased in the last years compared to other regions and countries, leading to a perceived lack of priority in the EU's agenda towards LAC. In this regard, it is recommended that the EU prioritise the allocation of resources to LAC, help attract investment to the region, and foster dialogue for a just energy transition. Cooperation funds have the potential to financially enable projects that are not profitable in the short term. In addition, international cooperation, in alliance with public and private investments, can contribute to reducing dependence on external debt for the implementation of energy projects in LAC. In this regard, it is also necessary to align existing EU-LAC cooperation mechanisms and programmes with financing instruments for energy infrastructure.

5. **Assessing and promoting cooperation, investment and trade opportunities between the EU and LAC within the framework of the European Green Deal.** LAC has the cleanest electricity matrix on the planet, human capital, industry capable of manufacturing complex products (many European vehicle producers have manufacturing plants in LAC), mineral resources that can be extracted efficiently, amongst others. This translates into a low carbon footprint. On the other hand, the EU has the demand, the human and financial capital, and the goal of zero net carbon emissions by 2050. In this context, there is a coincidence of interests and a unique opportunity to strengthen social, economic, and environmental relations between the EU and LAC.
6. **Cooperation in the development of regulations and industrial policies for the energy sector in LAC.** In order to take advantage of financing opportunities from international cooperation, multilateral banks and the private sector in the energy sector, the LAC countries need to develop clear industrial policies and support mechanisms for projects. Emphasis should be placed on the development of new markets, such as electric mobility, and, in this regard, LAC should take advantage of the experience developed in the EU.
7. **Strengthening LAC regional cooperation for energy transition.** The role of governments in the implementation of energy policies is key to promoting the transition towards a more sustainable energy matrix in LAC. However, coordination at the regional level in LAC presents challenges compared to the coordinated action of EU Member States. In this regard, it is important to strengthen regional energy cooperation in LAC.

***Session C: Cooperation on lithium and other minerals of importance in the energy transition: regulatory framework, investment, environmentally friendly production, value chain, quality employment and marketing.***

8. **Implementing industry standards, regulations and policies that ensure environmentally friendly production and quality employment in bi-regional minerals trade.** Establishing adequate regulations and considering existing frameworks such as the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) is critical to promoting sustainable and fair bi-regional trade. This requires meaningful prior consultation, information for local communities, participation of indigenous people, and dynamic governance models that promote participation throughout mining projects. In addition to rigorous regulations, there is a need to ensure compliance at both production (LAC) and consumption (EU) levels. In this respect, there is a shared responsibility between LAC and the EU, and it is necessary to make use of existing traceability tools.
9. **Ensuring respect for indigenous and local communities' rights, including the guarantee of free, prior, and informed consent on mining and energy projects.** The development of mining and energy projects must guarantee free, prior, and informed consultation with affected communities. In this sense, LAC communities should have the possibility to reject a mining or energy project to be implemented in their territory, as is the case in the EU. If a project is freely approved, in addition to protecting the health and environment



of these communities, their participation throughout the project and in the economic benefits must be guaranteed.

10. **Encouraging the use of new technologies in mining projects.** Extractive and productive processes can be more efficient and environmentally and socially friendly. Energy, water, and soil consumption can be reduced. This requires the development and deployment of new technology. EU-LAC cooperation and technology transfer is key in this respect.
  
11. **Fostering LAC participation in value chains around lithium and other minerals of importance for the energy transition.** The demand for lithium is increasing considerably due to the transition to clean energy, especially driven by electromobility. Lithium demand is expected to increase by up to 41 times by 2040 compared to 2020. Bi-regional technical and financial cooperation aligned to both EU and LAC interests will be indispensable to foster LAC participation in value chains around lithium and other minerals essential for the energy transition. In addition, it is suggested to take advantage of the potential of new technologies for LAC and to ensure environmental sustainability in the extraction of these resources. Bi-regional cooperation should also contribute to strengthening local capacities, fostering technological innovation, and generating economic opportunities for the LAC region. In addition, it will be essential to strengthen regional cooperation in LAC for the production and local supply of industrialised products, such as batteries in the lithium chain.

### iii. Inclusive Digital Transformation

Proposals to CELAC-EU Summit of Heads of State and Government:

#### ***Session A: Digital divide and the deepening of learning and productivity gaps in LAC and the EU***

1. **Investment in technological infrastructure and connectivity with priority in rural areas and vulnerable populations in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).** The pandemic has revealed the LAC's education system weaknesses, and exacerbated learning gaps amongst children and adolescents from different socioeconomic backgrounds due to the lack of access to technology and connectivity. Governments should prioritise investment in technological infrastructure in rural areas and disadvantaged communities, as well as establish partnerships with the private sector to expand coverage. Additionally, policies should be implemented to promote affordable Internet rates and technological devices for students and teachers.
  
2. **Ensuring access to remedial education for children and adolescents who were deprived of learning opportunities during the pandemic in LAC.** Different studies show that learning gaps generated and exacerbated as a result of the pandemic could have permanent effects on productivity and future earnings. It is essential to implement policies, programmes, and recovery strategies to close these gaps and promote more inclusive education in LAC. In this regard, it is essential to implement policies that promote access to connectivity and technological devices for students and teachers.

3. **Strengthening teacher training in technology and pedagogy.** It is necessary to provide initial and continuous teacher training in the effective use of technology and appropriate pedagogical strategies for digital education.
4. **Strengthening training in digital skills, especially in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) areas,** to encourage the development of digital ecosystems and increase employability. Special attention should be given to the participation of women and closing the gender gap in STEM roles through the promotion of educational programmes that integrate women in these areas.
5. **Promotion of gender equality and socio-emotional inclusion.** Attention should be paid to gender gaps and the needs of the most vulnerable groups in the education system. Policies should be implemented to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities, migrants, people in poverty, amongst others.

#### ***Session B: Bi-regional cooperation for inclusive digital transformation***

6. **Promoting cooperation between LAC and the EU to close the digital divide.** It is essential to foster collaboration between both regions in the digital field, especially in reducing the digital divide. Strategic alliances, such as the RedCLARA initiative and the Bella II project, should be established to strengthen connectivity and digital development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The importance of promoting cooperation between civil society, universities, and the public sector is also emphasised.
7. **Ensuring universal access to digital tools in LAC and the EU.** To avoid increasing inequalities, it is crucial to ensure transversal and universal access to digital tools. Policies aimed at guaranteeing equitable access are essential to achieve just transitions in the digital age. Additionally, the need to promote digitisation in sectors such as agriculture is highlighted, as well as the development of a LAC network that complements the Red Terra project.
8. **Establishing adequate regulatory and legal frameworks in LAC.** In the process of digitisation, regulatory and legal aspects need to be considered. This involves addressing the protection of personal data and creating legal frameworks that regulate remote work. Furthermore, the skills of LAC people should be revalued in the European market, promoting cooperation and diversity.
9. **Promoting transparency and accountability through digitisation,** with a particular focus on youth.

#### ***Session C: Civil society networks in the green and digital transition***

10. **Reducing entry barriers and inequalities.** It is crucial to close the gap in access to European cooperation, especially for countries with structural inequalities. This may involve the implementation of specific support and financing programmes for countries

with fewer resources, as well as the promotion of policies that foster inclusion and equal opportunities.

- 11. Improving coordination between civil society actors and decision-makers and generate formal spaces for dialogue.** It is recommended to work on aligning the proposals of civil society organisations with those of public policy decision-makers. This implies generating formal and institutional spaces where civil society can engage and actively contribute to decision-making. These measures are essential to promote equity and ensure that all voices are heard in the construction of a fairer and more sustainable future.
  
- 12. Strengthening social dialogue between the EU and LAC and support social development and social entrepreneurship in both regions.** In this regard, the focus on social development in the EU was highlighted, where significant funds are allocated to social entrepreneurship and social issues are integrated into education and university projects. LAC was considered a region with great potential to develop these types of projects.

## EU-LAC Just Transitions Forum - Report -

The EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government of 17-18 July 2023 will provide an opportunity to generate a high-level strategic dialogue on the challenges and opportunities of the cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the European Union (EU) around their green transition and digital transformation agendas. Accordingly, and in the framework of its mission of promoting dialogue between governmental and civil society actors of both regions, the EU-LAC Foundation organised the Just Transitions Forum.

The objective of the Just Transitions Forum was to generate a discussion space for experts, researchers and other civil society actors on the challenges and opportunities of the bi-regional cooperation LAC-EU in the areas of i) climate change adaptation and mitigation, ii) just energy transition, and iii) inclusive digital transformation. In addition, the purpose of the Forum was to generate contributions and policy recommendations from civil society (**c.f. Executive Report**) to the bi-regional dialogue that will take place at the next EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government.

The Just Transitions Forum took place on 15-16 May 2023 at the CaixaForum Macaya in Barcelona, Spain. The Forum was organised with the support of the *Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals* (IBEI), the Diputació de Barcelona, and "la Caixa" Foundation with the Club of Rome.

### I. Background

The EU-LAC Foundation is an international intergovernmental organisation made up of 60 states of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the European Union (EU), as well as the European Union itself. Its mandate is to work in close collaboration with its members, to promote bi-regional partnership and dialogue. An essential part of its mission is to increase the mutual understanding of both regions and promote dialogue on the priority issues on the agenda of their strategic partnership. Furthermore, the EU-LAC Foundation aims to link intergovernmental processes with business, academic, social, and broadly, civil society sectors of both regions.

The third CELAC-EU Foreign Ministers' Meeting, which took place in Buenos Aires on 27 October 2022, stressed the importance of renewing the deep ties between LAC and the EU under the theme "Renewing the bi-regional partnership to strengthen peace and sustainable development"<sup>2</sup>.

This was the first formal EU-CELAC ministerial meeting since July 2018 and marked the resumption of a bi-regional dialogue based on a forward-looking, substantive, and positive

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<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/59827/celac-eu-fmm-joint-communique.pdf>

agenda. The topics discussed by the ministers largely revolved around the shared agenda on green and digital transition of the EU and LAC. In this context, the ministers:

- discussed ways to ensure an inclusive, equitable and sustainable post-pandemic economic recovery.
- agreed to deepen cooperation on food security, energy, health, social justice, and the integration of production systems and value chains, including on raw materials; as well as strengthening trade and investment relations between the two regions.
- exchanged views on innovation, the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss, disaster risk management and the digital agenda. In addition, they considered the financing of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, the transition towards a circular economy, protection of the oceans and how scientific innovation can support development.

The ministers also agreed to organise a series of high-level meetings on shared thematic priorities, which would lead to the EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government to take place in the second semester of 2023, during the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU.

Several of the EU-CELAC high-level meetings included in the Bi-regional Roadmap 2022-2023, focus on the discussion of bi-regional strategies and actions around the green and digital transitions of both regions. These meetings address issues such as climate adaptation and comprehensive disaster response, environment and climate change, energy cooperation, integration of production chains and food markets, the EU-LAC Digital Alliance, the work of the Bi-regional Network of Women on climate actions, and the EU and CELAC youth and civil society dialogue.<sup>3</sup>

Subsequently, the VII Summit of Heads of State of CELAC, held in Buenos Aires on 24 January 2023, reinforced several of the commitments made at the third Meeting of CELAC-EU Ministers.<sup>4</sup> The declaration of the Heads of State highlighted the importance of working in coordination for international climate action in the framework of the commitment to the 2030 Agenda. In addition, it put emphasis on accelerating an energy transition that is not only sustainable, but also just, equitable and inclusive. The declaration also stressed the importance of ensuring universal access to connectivity in the digital era without discrimination, especially to groups in vulnerable situation and in remote areas, as well as the reduction of digital divide.

In this context, the coming EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government will provide the opportunity to generate a high-level dialogue on the challenges and opportunities for bi-regional cooperation around the shared priorities of climate change adaptation and mitigation, energy transition and digital transformation. For LAC, in the face of increasing post-pandemic poverty and inequality, cooperation strategies for just transitions that do not deepen unequal regional or local development are strongly needed.

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<sup>3</sup> See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/59837/celac-ue-roadmap-2022-2023-final.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> See: [https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/userfiles/ut/buenos\\_aires\\_declaration\\_-\\_final\\_version.pdf](https://www.cancilleria.gob.ar/userfiles/ut/buenos_aires_declaration_-_final_version.pdf)

Civil society organisations, indigenous peoples, afro descendants, youth, private sector, labour unions, intellectuals, and artist, as well as other social actors have played an essential role in the EU-CELAC Summits. They have provided key information and recommendations on the thematic areas to the Member States and work, from their respective fields of expertise, in the implementation of initiatives addressing different aspects of the bi-regional agenda.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, and in the framework of its mission to promote exchange between governmental and civil society actors from the two regions, the EU-LAC Foundation proposes the **Just Transitions Forum**. The forum aims to promote discussion among researchers, experts, and other actors from civil society organisations on the challenges and opportunities of bi-regional cooperation around climate change adaptation and mitigation, just energy transition and inclusive digital transformation. In addition, the purpose of the forum will be to generate contributions and policy recommendations from civil society to the bi-regional dialogue that will take place at the next EU-CELAC Summit of Heads of State and Government.

#### 1. [Climate change mitigation and adaptation](#)

The third meeting of CELAC-EU ministers addressed issues related to combating climate change and biodiversity loss, as well as the importance of financing climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. The European Union adopted the European Green Deal as a governance program designed to tackle the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation. This plan aims to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

The European Union has implemented the Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) to promote emission reductions and has proposed the implementation of a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) to prevent unfair competition and the importation of high-emission products. While the CBAM can strengthen joint climate action between the EU and LAC, it may have a negative impact on the exports of some LAC countries in the short term.

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<sup>5</sup> Since the first summit in Rio de Janeiro, in 1999, organised civil society groups from both regions have come together and organised events to bring their experiences and perspectives to the attention of heads of state. To date, nine meetings convened by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) were held in preparation for previous Summits. Likewise, CONCORD Europe and *Mesa de Articulación* (both confederations representing more than 2000 NGOs) organised eight Forums of Civil Society ahead of the EU-CELAC summits. In addition to these, the EU-CELAC Summit process has been also complemented by the EU-CELAC Trade Union Meetings organised by the European Trade Union Confederation, *Confederación Sindical de Trabajadores de las Américas*, and the International Trade Union Confederation (seven editions to date), as well as the EU-CELAC Business Summit (five editions to date). In the same vein, the academic and scientific communities from both regions have been engaged in organising events to discuss and elaborate relevant information and Declarations to be taken into account by Heads of State and Government in order to contribute to the construction of the Euro-Latin American and Caribbean Area of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.

The EU has also launched the EUROCLIMA+ cooperation program to support the implementation of LAC's commitments under the Paris Agreement, funding projects in areas such as forests, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction, and energy efficiency.

CELAC member states reaffirmed their commitment to accelerate the sustainable and just energy transition, urging developed countries to fulfil their commitment to jointly mobilize \$100 billion per year for climate finance. They also highlighted the importance of climate justice, reparations policies, and the transfer of finance and technology to achieve environmental goals.

LAC is one of the most vulnerable regions to climate change, but its contribution to global emissions is proportional to its population and GDP. In this context, the mobilization of significant financial resources is crucial, and the use of financial instruments such as nature debt swaps, catastrophe bonds, and green and sustainable bonds is proposed as key strategies for governments in the region.

## 2. Just energy transition

The world is experiencing an energy crisis that has been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis. In this context, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of CELAC and the EU, in their October 2022 meeting, committed to strengthening their cooperation in energy security and the fight against climate change.

Cooperation will be based on the European Green Deal and the EU's new energy plan, REPowerEU. Energy transition in Europe has made significant progress, especially in countries with limited fossil fuel resources, reaching a 38% share of electricity production from renewable sources by 2020. However, one of the major challenges remains the dependence on natural gas, a challenge that has become more relevant due to the conflict in Ukraine.

The REPowerEU plan aims to dramatically accelerate the transition to clean energy and increase Europe's energy independence from fossil fuels, especially from Russia. Among the measures to be implemented is cooperation with international partners to find, in the short term, alternative suppliers of gas, oil, and coal. In the medium term, the plan seeks to accelerate the green transition and stimulate massive investments and cooperation in clean energies, especially in renewable hydrogen. It also proposes implementing incentives for industrial decarbonization, generating new legislation to streamline renewable energy permits, investing in gas and electricity infrastructure, increasing the European renewable energy target for 2030 to 45%, and promoting energy efficiency in the transport sector, among other measures.

On the other hand, CELAC countries confirmed in the 7th Summit of Heads of State their willingness to accelerate the energy transition in a sustainable, fair, equitable, and inclusive manner, contributing to the energy security of the region and considering the different

realities and capacities of each country. In the last two decades, several countries in LAC have made significant progress in diversifying their energy matrix and building renewable energy markets. The region has great potential in renewable energy resources, such as green hydrogen, and is also strategic in the provision of key minerals for the energy transition.

However, LAC faces significant challenges in its just energy transition. Millions of people still lack access to electricity, especially in rural areas. The COVID-19 crisis and the conflict in Ukraine have worsened investment capacity in renewable energy and energy efficiency in the region. In addition, the transportation sector is heavily dependent on fossil fuels.

In this context, deepening cooperation in energy transition between CELAC and the EU is relevant, mutually beneficial, and has the potential to achieve short- and medium-term energy goals in both regions, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, it is crucial to discuss an agenda that promotes a just energy transition, avoids creating a new purely extractive relationship between the EU and LAC, ensures environmental protection in energy trade in both regions, fosters investments linked to the generation of quality jobs and labour rights, and promotes energy security and the inclusion of vulnerable populations lacking access to electricity and/or sustainable energy services.

### 3. [Inclusive digital transformation](#)

Digital transformation has gained great relevance in the global context, and cooperation between the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the European Union (EU) presents a key opportunity to address the challenges and seize the opportunities that this transformation entails.

In the third CELAC-EU Foreign Ministers' Meeting in October 2022, a Digital Alliance was agreed upon with the aim of promoting an inclusive and people-centred digital transformation. This alliance seeks to overcome digital divides, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), and foster cooperation in areas such as regulation, connectivity infrastructure, and innovation.

The EU's Global Gateway initiative is a fundamental pillar of this Digital Alliance. Through this strategy, the EU seeks to strengthen ties between Europe and the world in the digital sector, promoting inclusion and addressing the global digital divide. The commitment to invest in quality digital education, with special emphasis on the inclusion of girls, women, and vulnerable groups, as well as cooperation in research and innovation, is highlighted.

In LAC, digital transformation offers new opportunities for economic and social recovery after the pandemic. Although the region has made significant progress in Internet usage, there are still significant digital divides. Disparities in Internet access exist based on income level and geographical location, limiting access to opportunities, knowledge acquisition, and income generation.



In this context, CELAC-EU bi-regional cooperation in digital transformation is crucial to closing these gaps and harnessing the potential of digitalization. Collaboration in areas such as infrastructure, regulation, and digital training will enable the promotion of inclusion, innovation, and sustainable development in LAC. Additionally, this cooperation aims to strengthen ties between the two regions and promote the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

In summary, the Digital Alliance between CELAC and the EU represents a unique opportunity to address the challenges and reap the benefits of digital transformation. Through collaboration in key areas, the aim is to reduce digital divides, promote inclusion and sustainable development, and strengthen ties between the two regions. This cooperation will drive economic growth, job creation, and improvement in the quality of life in Latin America and the Caribbean.

## II. Methodology

The Just Transitions Forum was implemented in a hybrid format (in-person and online) to allow for greater participation of representatives from both regions. The methodology of working groups was used, which allowed for specific and in-depth discussions on three key areas: climate change adaptation and mitigation, just energy transition, and inclusive digital transition. Each thematic group was organised into three working sessions focused on specific aspects within the main theme. The objective of the Forum was to provide a space for discussion among academics, scientists, experts, and representatives of civil society organizations. During the event, which took place on May 15th and 16th in the city of Barcelona, Spain, the status, and instruments of the EU-LAC bi-regional cooperation in relation to the mentioned topics were analysed.

Each working session started with a presentation of approximately 20 minutes by an invited expert, providing guidance on the topic at hand. Participants then had the opportunity to openly deliberate, sharing their knowledge and experiences under the moderation of a facilitator. Guiding questions were provided to assist in the discussion.

Furthermore, each session had two designated rapporteurs to accurately and objectively document the key points discussed, as well as the conclusions and recommendations generated during the group work. This task, known as participant observation, aimed to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the gathered information.

The rapporteurs played a crucial role in capturing and synthesizing the ideas and perspectives shared by the participants. Their objective was to clearly and concisely record the conclusions and recommendations arising from the working sessions, facilitating their subsequent analysis and follow-up.

The presence of designated rapporteurs enhanced the quality and transparency of the process by providing a comprehensive and accurate compilation of results. Their

contribution ensured a detailed record of the discussions and decisions made in each thematic group, which was essential for the success of the event and the follow-up of agreed-upon actions.

These conclusions and recommendations were presented and articulated in a plenary session at the end of the event, where the moderator or a participant who had contributed to all the working group sessions presented the outcomes.

In summary, the forum's methodologies aimed to encourage active participation of attendees, facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences, and ensure the collection of specific conclusions and recommendations in each thematic area. By the end of the event, an overview of the results was achieved, promoting collaboration and synergy among the working groups.

### III. Participants

In order to achieve the objectives of the **Just Transitions Forum**, direct invitations were issued to experts and leaders from LAC and the EU, who were affiliated to international organisations, research centres, universities, civil society organisations, among others. In addition, an **open call for representatives of civil society organisations** was made on the EU-LAC Foundation's website. The EU-LAC Foundation received ca. one hundred applications through the open call.

The Forum brought together 54 face-to-face participants and 44 virtual participants, **which totalled 98**. Most of the attendees were representatives of civil society organisations, academia, and international organisations such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), among others. Representatives from private sector and trade unions -mostly members of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)- also participated. In addition, the Forum was attended by representatives of CELAC Member States and the European Union (EU) as observers.

The **keynote speakers** of the Forum were: Izabella Texeira, former Minister of Environment of Brazil, and Champion of the Earth 2013; Felix Fernandez-Shaw, Director for Latin and the Caribbean at DG INTPA – European Commission; and Rodolfo Lacy, Director of Climate Action and Environment at OECD and former Vice-Minister of Environmental Policy and Planning of Mexico.

The **invited experts** who opened the Forum's working sessions with presentations were: Juan Vázquez, Deputy Head of the Latin America and Caribbean Unit, OECD Development Centre; Jeannette Sanchez, Director of Natural Resources Division at ECLAC and Ecuador's Former Minister of Social Inclusion; Javier González, Director of SUMMA Laboratory in Chile; Sandra Guzmán, Founder of *Grupo de Financiamiento Climático para Latinoamérica y el Caribe*

(GFLAC); Kristin Lang, Head of the Global Partners Division of the European Investment Bank; Mark Urban, Director of International Cooperation at Clara - Bella II; Martín Obaya, Director at CENIT – Argentina; and Andrea Ordóñez, Director of Southern Voice Latin America.

The agenda of the event and a detailed list of participants can be found in the Appendix.

#### IV. Results

##### 1. [Keynote speakers](#)

###### 1.1. **Izabella Teixeira. Co-Chair of the International Resource Panel, Former Minister of Environment of Brazil, Champion of the Earth 2013**

The world is going through a transition where everything is changing. This demands cooperation not only between the North and the South but also between the West and the East. Traditional regional cooperation faces new challenges, especially with the convergence of the climate crisis and the crisis of democracy. Bilateral cooperation must unite climate and democracy to ensure a just transition. It is essential to address social needs, recognize the role of nature, and prioritize peace. The political landscape could change, leading to the emergence of aligned cooperation and the creation of bonds of friendship.

Bilateral cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has been strong, but new demands arise after the war [in Ukraine]. LAC countries have alternative approaches to addressing climate change. However, it is crucial to take into account the asymmetries that exist in the region, such as social, digital, and environmental disparities. Combating informality in the economy is also a significant concern.

The future is not simply about protecting the past. The goal is to create societies that are less exposed to risks. This requires new arrangements for global financial governance that give voice to developing countries. It is necessary to move away from traditional regional perspectives, such as the G7 and the G20, and consider alternative arrangements like “Brics+.” The governance structure must be reorganised to adapt to the future, as there is no comfort zone in the face of current challenges.

Latin America lacks political leadership, and there is erosion of state and institutional effectiveness. The lack of political creativity stems from a lack of trust and leadership. People take to the streets to demand more action than politicians are willing to take. It is essential to find a balance between the present and the future to avoid burdening future generations with the costs of climate change.

Science must play a crucial role in shaping our future, offering a scientifically grounded hope. It is important to create a new narrative based on hope, highlighting commonalities between the EU and LAC, such as civil rights. Achieving equality in carbon markets is necessary, even

though the cost of mitigation will be higher in the future. Inviting people to join based on trust, credibility, and a clear exposition of the commitments involved in decision-making is fundamental.

The focus should be on how to grow together with nature, moving beyond traditional economic growth towards carbon-neutral growth. Business leaders and the financial world must be included in discussions on climate security, as solutions also require addressing fiscal debt in Latin America. Social equality and power-sharing among different social groups, who are differently affected by climate change, are crucial.

Cities and urbanization play a critical role in adaptation and resilience, as they face the greatest vulnerability. Public health, along with biodiversity, must be part of the equation for a sustainable future. Provocative questions for discussion include how to come together in the region, address data challenges, promote transparency in public services, combat corruption, identify winners and losers in the region, develop a roadmap for Paris+20, adopt different perspectives to view the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and shape desired forms of globalization and regionalization.

In the context of the Amazon, preservation is paramount. It is crucial to explore how regional trade, regional visions, minerals, and natural resources can be shared sustainably. Revitalizing the pact among all countries in the Amazon basin is vital. Transforming the food system and managing land use in Brazil are essential goals. National congresses and parliaments need to be brought together to include democracy in decision-making processes and strengthen democratic institutions.

#### **1.2. Félix Fernández-Shaw. Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, DG INTPA, European Commission.**

The first meeting of Heads of State of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC) in eight years highlights the importance of the green transition for both regions. A just and inclusive transition is sought to lead us towards a sustainable future without leaving anyone behind. There is a broad convergence of views and perspectives between both regions, and the need to technologically reinforce the path towards the future is recognized. The question is how to make it inclusive and social, promoting just, green, and digital transitions and working hand in hand with Europe. Solutions that incorporate new technologies, ensuring inclusion and digital access, and addressing issues very similar to those raised in Europe are sought.

The importance of respecting the planet and achieving sustainable growth is emphasized. Latin America and the Caribbean are an emerging global power, with mineral and natural resources to be leveraged in the use of renewable energies such as wind, sun, and water. The region has the capacity to achieve strategic autonomy and become a major energy exporter to the world. A transition towards professional education that generates formal employment and promotes gender equality to close the inequality gap in various areas is sought.

The importance of making productive investments rather than extractive investments is emphasized, adding domestic value in areas such as infrastructure, digital and electrical connectivity, and the last mile. Alliances need to be forged with the global private sector to promote productive investments. The importance of green hydrogen and renewable energies is mentioned, as well as the need for university education that includes the middle class.

The importance of working together, forming a Team Europe with development banks, development offices, and financial instruments, is emphasized. The need to promote projects in areas such as maritime transport, maritime connectivity, food security, and last-mile connectivity is highlighted. The need for a digital alliance between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, promoting inclusion and digitization of government services, as these are shared issues, is mentioned.

The focus of Latin America and the Caribbean on decarbonization is highlighted, leading the Paris agreements and the electrification of public transport. It is a region with a high degree of renewable energy use. In the social sphere, the implementation of a new national program that includes action plans for youth and gender equality is highlighted. All EU member states take action to promote inclusion in the labour market, generate more green jobs, and promote vocational training.

Finally, it is emphasized that the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean are starting to act with significant public funds, such as the Green Deal, to carry out these transitions in an inclusive manner.

**1.3. Rodolfo Lacy. Director of Climate Action and Environment for Latin America at the OECD, former Deputy Minister of Environmental Policy and Planning at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico.**

The presentation addresses the concerning issue of temperature increase, which is not caused by Latin American countries but has severe effects on the region. This temperature increase generates stress in productive activities, affects public health, and reduces ecosystem resilience. We find ourselves in uncharted territory where the climate conditions differ from what we knew. Forecast models have been invalidated, so it is necessary to go back to the Pliocene period when a phenomenon similar to El Niño was permanent.

It is estimated that a global warming scenario of 2.5°C could cost the region between 1.5% and 5.0% of its GDP by 2050. However, besides temperature increase, it is important to visualize and analyse other climate phenomena in detail. The resilience of forest ecosystems is decreasing, reducing their capacity to produce food. There are also climate risks that have significant effects on the economy.

Temperature increase can create areas on the planet where humans cannot survive due to water scarcity or extreme temperatures. Despite the fact that the Latin America and the Caribbean region emits only approximately 8% of global greenhouse gases, it is essential for the region to adapt to climate changes. Although the Paris Agreement and other environmental agreements have been signed, they have not yet been fulfilled due to economic, political, or capacity-related reasons (lack of professionals capable of creating suitable programs).

There is a ten-year window of opportunity to make significant changes. Regarding adaptation, it is necessary to establish ad hoc taxonomies that standardize the projects carried out, as there are many unknowns, and people at the local level do not know where to start or how to do it. Adequate financing is required for mitigation.

The EU-LAC countries led the creation of the loss and damage fund. Early warning systems should also be implemented to warn about new climate hazards and disasters, with alerts at the local level. The role of mobile devices is crucial in implementing this warning system, and trade agreements should be established with telecommunications companies. Specific local infrastructure should be created in communities to reduce climate risks, decrease CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and protect biodiversity, particularly by increasing connectivity and eliminating ecosystem fragmentation. It is important to work with the most disadvantaged communities. For example, mangrove restoration projects and the creation of biological corridors can be carried out to mitigate the negative effects of roads and railways on biodiversity and enable animal migration.

In terms of energy, it is necessary to continue shifting towards new energy matrices. There are necessary technologies to achieve zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but approximately half of these technologies are still in the laboratory. Latin America and the Caribbean can play an important role in this aspect, but it depends on available technologies and digital alliances. There are economic challenges, as factories in the region continue to produce fuels, and if they are produced, they are exported. Electric vehicles have a high cost, and importing vehicles from outside the region generates debt. It is necessary for factories in Latin America and the Caribbean to start producing electric vehicles, and the importation of used vehicles should be restricted for safety and environmental reasons. Buildings should also be sustainable and energy-efficient, which implies a profound transformation of the construction economy towards a circular economy.

Banks are decarbonizing their portfolios, and conditionalities are required from global banks in terms of institutions, inclusivity, procedures, and responsible behaviour requirements. A new idea is to find the ideal community instead of searching for the perfect place, where the winning community receives resources and infrastructure inclusively. Environmental justice is crucial to ensure that the voices of Latin America and the Caribbean are taken into account. It is important to value natural resources and establish a higher price for carbon, as only 17% of the available financial resources in the environmental financing field are used in the region.

## 2. [Working Groups and Sessions](#)

### 2.1. Group 1: Climate Change Adaption and Mitigation

*Session A: Economic, Social, and Environmental Costs of Climate Change in Latin America and the EU*

#### a) Presentations

**Juan Vázquez Zamora, Deputy Head for Latin America and the Caribbean, OECD Development Centre.**

In a global context, the triple transition towards a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient economy is necessary. One of the essential drivers for achieving this transformation is economic growth. However, in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, the potential for economic growth remains low. In recent years, growth has declined to less than 1%, which hinders poverty reduction and convergence with developed countries.

Given this reality, green transition and investments play a fundamental role as catalysts for growth and transition in the region. It is important to highlight that the transition to a green economy and the associated investments offer a great opportunity for growth in the region. However, it is also necessary to address social indicators that show a deceleration in poverty reduction and, in some cases, an increase in poverty levels in the region, returning to levels of a decade ago. This is partly due to the rise in global and local inflation, which disproportionately affects vulnerable households.

Furthermore, the Latin America and Caribbean region disproportionately suffers the consequences of the climate crisis. The region is home to 13 of the 50 most vulnerable countries worldwide and has experienced a significant increase in extreme climate events, with a 60% increase between 2001 and 2022. Although LAC contributes only 8.1% of global emissions (proportional to its relative population in the world), these emissions have been growing.

The transition to a sustainable economy also offers opportunities to transform the region's productive structure. Currently, the region is concentrated in low-value-added sectors, such as raw material production. However, there are opportunities to develop new technologies, generate jobs in sectors such as sustainable tourism, agriculture and livestock, and transportation, as well as leverage successful experiences already taking place in the region.

It is essential to adopt a cross-cutting perspective in which different actors work together, identifying investment opportunities that benefit the entire economy and not just specific sectors. The transformation of the energy matrix offers many opportunities, and the Latin America and Caribbean region already has 33% of renewable energy, surpassing the global average of 13%. Additionally, the region has a privileged position in mineral production,

accounting for 61% of global lithium, 39% of copper, and approximately one-third of nickel and silver.

Regarding the social transition, it is crucial to consider the justice perspective in this process. Creating quality employment is essential, especially in a region with high levels of informal labour. According to the OECD, it is estimated that up to 10.5% of green jobs could be created with additional investments in these sectors, accompanied by investments in human capital and social protection. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that the transition is not only about volatile sectors but also about tasks that are transforming as the process advances.

To enable a progressive transition in the region, three key points need to be addressed. Firstly, financing is required to develop environmentally friendly fiscal policies and innovative strategies to mobilize the necessary resources. However, fiscal space is limited, and there is a high burden of public debt and subsidies that need to be reviewed. An instrument that can be very useful for financing the transition is the issuance of green, social, and sustainable bonds (GSS).

Secondly, governing the transition is necessary by introducing inclusive political processes involving the private sector, trade unions, academia, and civil society. Although citizen support for the green agenda in the region is high, it is necessary to involve governments more actively in facilitating these changes.

Thirdly, international partnerships must be strengthened to support a more sustainable development model in Latin America and the Caribbean. The European Union's Green Deal represents an opportunity for the region as it strengthens international partnerships. Additionally, LAC participates in more than 10 climate negotiation coalitions, which could allow it to have a unified voice in multilateral climate negotiations.

In summary, the transition to a sustainable economy in Latin America and the Caribbean offers both opportunities and challenges. Key sectors such as sustainable agriculture and livestock, transportation, bioeconomic industry and trade, sustainable tourism and mining, water management, and energy are prioritized in this process. It is essential to adopt systemic policies and productive transformations that promote the circular and blue economy, as well as leverage the significant opportunities the region has in terms of renewable energy matrices and mineral resources. All of this must be accompanied by measures to ensure social justice, generate quality employment, and strengthen international partnerships to achieve a successful transition towards a sustainable future in Latin America and the Caribbean.

#### b) Working Group Discussions

##### ***Lack or excess of information***

The Latin America and Caribbean region face a widespread lack of transparency, both due to capacity limitations and a lack of political willingness to share information and resources.



Although the Escazú Agreement has made significant progress in this aspect, there are still challenges that need to be addressed to ensure consistent generation and exchange of information. It is crucial to foster an environment of openness and collaboration, promoting citizen participation and access to environmental information. By strengthening transparency, informed decision-making can be promoted, laying the foundation for more robust and effective environmental governance in the region.

### ***Information sources and costs of the climate crisis***

In the field of information related to climate change, there are diverse sources of data available, including reports from the OECD and other specialized organizations. However, difficulties often arise when trying to obtain official and quality data, especially at local scales. It is essential to address this gap and recognize the importance of generating community-level data. In this sense, empowering women leaders in information production is necessary as they play a prominent role in data collection and analysis. By strengthening their participation, a more comprehensive and representative perspective can be obtained, which will contribute to informed decision-making and effective implementation of measures against climate change.

### ***Costs and challenges of the transition***

Addressing climate change requires a clear understanding of the costs associated with both its impacts and the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It is crucial to quantify these costs to have a comprehensive view of the challenges we face. Among the aspects to consider are the costs linked to drug trafficking, resistance to transition in sectors such as the petroleum industry, and security in the context of growing debt. In addition to evaluating economic aspects, it is vital to address justice and equity in this transition. This implies ensuring that the measures taken do not perpetuate inequalities but promote inclusion and protection of the most vulnerable. By considering all these elements, it is when it is deemed possible to move towards a more effective and equitable response to the climate crisis.

### ***Community-level information and female leadership***

Women community leaders play a fundamental role in information production and building resilience at the local level. Their active participation in community initiatives and projects has generated relevant information that is vital for addressing the climate crisis. Through their leadership and experience, these women have demonstrated their capacity to design effective climate policies and actions. It is essential to recognize their valuable contribution and empower them in decision-making, as their unique perspective and commitment to sustainability can drive significant changes in the fight against climate change. Recognizing and supporting community women as climate leaders are key elements in achieving a more equitable and sustainable future.

## Key Highlights

- There is a widespread lack of transparency in the region regarding information and resources.
- The Escazú Agreement has made progress, but challenges remain in sharing information consistently.
- Generating data at the local level is a challenge but crucial for understanding specific impacts and community needs.
- The costs of climate change and transition require precise quantification to access financing and address issues like drug trafficking and transition resistance.
- Women community leaders play a fundamental role in information production and building resilience at the local level.

### *Session B: Bilateral Cooperation and Financing of Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Measures in LAC*

#### a) Presentations

#### **Sandra Guzmán. Founder of the Climate Finance Group for Latin America and the Caribbean (GFLAC).**

In times of multiple crises - health, environmental, economic - it is fundamental to reflect on three main points related to climate change in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Firstly, it is necessary to address the climate needs of countries in the region and not just focus on the quantity but also the quality of those needs. Incomplete information hinders the accurate calculation of the costs of both mitigation and adaptation.

Secondly, the current state of climate financing in LAC is a relevant issue. Only a few countries have conducted studies on the cost of implementing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and there is a need for better connection between financing flows and national needs. Moreover, the distribution of international climate financing in the region is unequal, with a larger proportion allocated to mitigation and limited allocation to adaptation, despite the region's high vulnerability.

Thirdly, opportunities for cooperation between the European Union (EU) and LAC should be explored. Overcoming existing challenges, such as the lack of a common definition of climate financing, limited access to funds, limited transparency, and a lack of transformative and long-term focus, is necessary for effective collaboration. Cooperation should focus on financing adaptation, direct and effective access for local actors, transparency schemes, public-private partnerships under sustainable and just standards, and addressing financing for losses and damages.

In general, addressing climate change in LAC requires a comprehensive approach. This involves not only considering financial needs but also transforming public finances towards sustainability, promoting social participation, and measuring the social impact of actions.

Additionally, it is crucial to recognize the importance of international collaboration and overcome existing challenges to achieve effective cooperation between the EU and LAC. The transition to a sustainable development model requires profound changes in the economy, governance, and the way projects are conceived, taking into account both the visible and necessary aspects and the invisible and urgent ones to address the current challenges in the region.

In terms of climate change, LAC faces various challenges. The Standing Committee on Finance, part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), conducted a study based on documents submitted by developing countries to the UN. However, only a few countries have calculated the cost of implementing their NDCs by 2020. These calculations indicate that approximately \$5.8 trillion would be required, equivalent to around \$580 billion annually. This represents nearly six times more than the commitment made at the Copenhagen Conference. However, this figure is based on incomplete information and primarily focuses on the costs of mitigation, while calculating adaptation costs is more complex.

An analysis conducted by the Viva Foundation one year later suggests that the needs could amount to trillions. Only 11 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have made reference to these calculations, committing to contribute billions of dollars by 2030. However, this amount is insufficient and does not adequately represent the region's needs.

A major challenge in LAC lies in connecting financing flows with actual needs. How is that money being channelled? Is it linked to national policy or isolated projects? Improving this connection is essential to increase the effectiveness of financial flows and implemented measures. Additionally, clear tracking of where the committed money is being invested is necessary.

Addressing these challenges requires setting new quantifiable goals. However, it is also necessary to discuss whether the current figure is sufficient or if greater financing is needed to tackle the real challenges.

Among the existing challenges are the national limitations in estimating climate needs and the difficulty of including needs at the city and territorial levels. It cannot be addressed solely from a macro perspective, but the needs of cities and territories beyond central governments must be considered.

Furthermore, this involves not only financial needs but also the transformation of public finances. It is important to consider the Sustainable Finance Index (SFI), which evaluates how countries are spending on carbon-intensive activities compared to sustainable ones. In 2021, the highest-emitting countries in the region allocated ten times more resources to carbon-intensive activities than to sustainable activities, such as oil and mining. Countries need to be motivated to move away from these extractive activities, but it is also necessary to consider how critical sectors such as education and health will be financed.

The lack of inclusion of climate change in public finances in a widespread manner in LAC is another challenge. Additionally, climate change cooperation in the region is poorly distributed, and although the region is the third-largest recipient of climate financing, it is not disbursed equitably, with insufficient allocation to adaptation. The Green Climate Fund also exhibits an imbalanced distribution.

Among the main problems of international climate financing, including Europe, is the lack of a common definition and shared taxonomy. This lack of clarity hinders the identification of which projects and activities can be considered as climate financing. Moreover, financial flows often do not respond to national and local needs, resulting in ineffectiveness. Direct access to financing remains limited, favouring certain countries and institutions while excluding cities and indigenous communities and vulnerable groups such as women. There is also a lack of social impact indicators and limited effective governance and triangulation.

Transparency is another limited aspect in climate financing. Many countries lack knowledge about the institutions responsible for generating data related to climate financing. Improved project accounting is required from top to bottom and vice versa.

Having a transformative and long-term approach is crucial in international cooperation and climate financing. Climate change represents a systemic challenge that requires a change in the current development model. Additionally, projects and actions must align with the necessary long-term transformations. It is essential to involve communities as allies rather than mere objects of study. Cooperation must be comprehensive, addressing both the visible and necessary aspects as well as the invisible and urgent ones, such as drug trafficking, organised crime, inequality, and insecurity. Climate financing is moving, but it is not addressing the underlying structures of the problems, limiting its capacity to be truly transformative.

Regarding opportunities for cooperation between the European Union (EU) and LAC, five key points are proposed. Firstly, the need for financing for adaptation is emphasized, with a central focus on EU cooperation policy. Significant increase in financing for adaptation is required in LAC countries, especially for critical sectors such as water and biodiversity. Secondly, facilitating direct and effective access to financing is proposed, including involvement of local and decentralized actors who can be more effective in implementing sustainable projects.

The third point concerns the implementation of transparent, collaborative, and mutually trusting schemes between the EU and LAC. A transparent and collaborative system that benefits both parties need to be established. The fourth point highlights the importance of public-private partnerships under sustainable and just standards. The need to avoid the participation of European companies in highly destructive projects in LAC, such as the case of the Maya Train in Mexico, is emphasized.

Finally, attention to financing for losses and damages is emphasized. It is crucial that countries do not continue to incur debts to address the impacts of climate change. International cooperation needs to be reformed to address these challenges and overcome fear of the local, the new, the risky, and the transformative. The importance of generating jobs in conservation sectors and adopting a comprehensive vision of the territory that includes the critical battle for its defence is also highlighted. Furthermore, the need for a long-term and transformative approach, as well as mutual learning and comprehensive collaboration among the involved parties, is emphasized.

#### b) Working Group Discussions

##### ***Financing and International Cooperation:***

The Argentine presidency proposed a debt-for-climate financing swap as a measure to address climate change at the COP in Egypt. However, this proposal was not successful at the conference. Additionally, commodity-exporting countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Peru, and Colombia are involved in international cooperation initiatives. It is important to connect the analysis and discussions on international cooperation with the multilateral system and the World Trade Organization (WTO). It is highlighted that Colombia, through its president Gustavo Petro, has also supported the idea of debt-for-climate financing.

##### ***Climate Financing and Cooperation Practices***

There is a debate about the effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund and the need to change the current financing scheme. Funds are being mobilized through intermediaries, which raises issues in terms of transparency and equitable distribution. The importance of involving communities affected by climate change in decision-making and direct receipt of financing is emphasized to ensure more effective climate action. Some mentioned initiatives are the Frontier Funds Accelerator and the Community Resilience Fund, which are considered more efficient alternatives.

##### ***Trade Relations and Cooperation***

The need to understand trade relations and the cooperation sector as interrelated economic sectors is raised. There are dichotomies in conditioned financing for climate change adaptation and mitigation. It is also questioned whether the European Union understands and is willing to change in relation to these points, reflecting the importance of effective international cooperation.

##### ***Reforms in Financing Mechanisms***

It is crucial to mobilize trillions in credits and bilateral operations to effectively address climate change. The need for a qualitative change in existing financing mechanisms is highlighted to ensure adequate climate action. Additionally, the involvement of the private sector in managing the trillions of dollars needed to finance ambitious climate projects is proposed.

### ***Challenges at the Local Level and Green Financing***

The importance of action at the local level is recognized, especially in areas such as urban planning and the promotion of sustainable mobility. However, it is mentioned that small and medium-sized cities often face difficulties in accessing financing and support for climate projects. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen the local approach in climate financing and highlight the crucial role of affected communities in implementing climate solutions.

### ***International Cooperation and the Need for Dialogue***

The promotion of multisectoral dialogue is considered essential to unlock the three trillion dollars needed to finance climate action. The importance of understanding the issues and seeking common solutions among the different actors involved in international cooperation and climate financing is emphasized. Additionally, the need to align investments with the climate agenda and use common indicators to measure progress and the impact of actions is highlighted.

### ***Bottlenecks and Challenges***

The question of the main bottlenecks in cooperation and climate financing is raised. It is necessary to reflect on and address the challenges to transform the current financial system towards stronger and more effective climate action.

#### **Key Highlights:**

- Debate on the effectiveness of the Green Climate Fund and the need for a change in the financing scheme.
- Importance of involving affected communities in decision-making and direct financing.
- Participation of the private sector in climate financing.
- Strengthening the local approach in climate financing and the role of affected communities.
- Promotion of multisectoral dialogue and alignment of investments with the climate agenda.
- Transformation of the financial system towards strong climate action.

#### ***Session C: Bi-regional Cooperation on Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)***

##### **a) Presentations**

#### **Sonja Peterson. Professor of Global Commons and Climate Policy, Kiel Institute for the World Economy**

The implementation of carbon adjustment measures aims to create fair competition in the context of climate policies. Under this approach, countries that export carbon-intensive goods receive refunds for the carbon-related costs of their exported products. Modelling studies have shown that this approach significantly reduces carbon leakage, which refers to

the relocation of carbon-intensive industries to countries with less stringent climate policies. However, these studies also indicate negative effects on other countries, especially developing and emerging economies. Despite these challenges, the European Union (EU) has taken the initiative in implementing a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) project.

The EU's plans for CBAM require compliance with the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which means there will be no refunds for carbon costs for exporters. However, if reports demonstrate that the carbon intensity of a product is lower, deductions can be made. Initially, CBAM will be applied to imports of certain goods and selected precursors with carbon-intensive production and a higher risk of carbon leakage. By 2026, CBAM will be fully operational, with a gradual implementation phase and a parallel phase for the gradual phasing out of free allowances until 2035. Default values for carbon content will be established, but there will be opportunities to demonstrate lower carbon intensity.

The impact of CBAM goes beyond carbon-related factors. It is an integral part of the EU's "Fit for 55" package, which seeks to achieve further emission reductions within the EU and reduce global climate damages. As a result of CBAM, free allowances will no longer be allocated to EU industries, leading to higher prices for EU products in global markets. However, this adjustment may also benefit competitors in those markets. Importers of EU goods may experience negative effects due to additional costs associated with CBAM. The impact and costs of CBAM vary depending on factors such as exemptions, the energy intensity of companies, and the degree of trade with the EU in sectors covered by CBAM.

Exemptions from CBAM can be granted to countries that already have a comparable carbon price in effect. However, it is unclear how this would work. There are indications that the EU is interested in finding solutions, and some scientific work has been done on carbon price equivalence. One possibility could be the establishment of standards or industrial agreements that promote clean production benchmarks through means other than carbon pricing. Carbon intensity and carbon trade are essential factors in determining the extent to which a country is affected by CBAM. Overall, countries located further north are expected to be more affected, while certain countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) may experience relatively small effects compared to others.

Regarding bi-regional cooperation on CBAM, there is the possibility of exemptions for countries with climate commitments. The concept of a carbon border adjustment is not new and serves to level the playing field in the context of unilateral climate policies. Its goals include preventing carbon leakage and retaining jobs at the national level while pursuing ambitious carbon emission reduction goals. In domestic markets, imports in countries with carbon pricing are required to pay an equivalent carbon price for the emissions generated during production. In export markets, refunds are provided for carbon costs related to exported goods.

The EU's CBAM is the first of its kind worldwide. It requires importers of covered goods into the EU to register with national authorities and acquire CBAM certificates based on weekly allocations from the Emissions Trading System (ETS). Importers must declare the emissions associated with their imports and deliver the corresponding number of certificates each year. If importers can demonstrate that a carbon price has already been paid during production, that amount can be deducted. CBAM is designed to comply with WTO rules, ensuring no refunds for carbon costs for EU exporters. Initially, it is applied to certain selected goods and precursors, with a focus on sectors with a higher risk of carbon leakage.

The degree of trade with the European Union (EU) in sectors covered by CBAM varies among countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Brazil stands out as the only significantly exposed country in the region. However, Brazil has a relatively low CO<sub>2</sub> intensity per unit of GDP compared to other countries like Ukraine, Iran, and others. On the other hand, Argentina is not highly exposed in terms of trade with the EU in sectors covered by CBAM, but it has a relatively higher per capita CO<sub>2</sub> intensity. A slightly different modelling exercise, evaluating the expected impact of CBAM on the GDP of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, indicated that the impact is insignificant for countries in the region. However, neighbouring non-EU European countries and some African countries may face a more challenging scenario in terms of the impact of CBAM on their GDP.

In conclusion, CBAM should be considered as part of a comprehensive policy package. It will be implemented gradually, allowing for a phase of learning and adjustment. While there may be negative impacts on EU trading partners, the effects on countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are expected to be minimal. The ideal outcome is for CBAM to become redundant, and the EU is open to cooperation on carbon pricing or other comparable measures, especially at the industrial level.

#### b) Working Group Discussions

##### ***Impact on Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC):***

It is mentioned that the impact on countries in Latin America and the Caribbean is generally mild, but specific products exported to Europe could be more relevant in future CBAM sectors, especially in the agricultural and mineral sectors. It is highlighted that products such as soybeans have greater relevance than iron and steel in the context of CBAM.

##### ***Implementation and Scope of CBAM:***

The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is considered an experiment, and its practical functioning is not yet fully understood. It is expected that in the near future, CBAM will not be relevant to the agricultural sector, as the European Union (EU) has not yet applied a carbon price to agricultural products. The transportation and heating sectors are expected to be the next ones affected by carbon pricing. The EU is anticipated to cautiously evaluate each step of CBAM, and its future direction cannot be predicted with certainty.



**Concerns and Challenges for LAC countries:**

Some participants express concerns about perceiving the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) as an imposition rather than cooperation. There is questioning about whether Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries are prepared to comply with CBAM regulations, and support is requested for emerging economies in this transition. The burden this represents for developing countries is emphasized, along with concerns about possible trade diversion to nations with less stringent restrictions. Additionally, specific concern is mentioned about the impact on the agricultural sector, especially through the Farm to Fork strategy, which aims to reduce carbon intensity in agriculture.

**Associated Regulations and Certifications:**

The issue of deforestation regulations and their impact on products from South America, such as soybeans, coffee, cocoa, livestock, and timber, is mentioned. It is acknowledged that the implementation of Green Deal regulations and associated certifications carries an additional cost for exporters of Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) products. It is important to note that product certification must be accepted by the European Commission, which can create a new market for certifying companies. However, there is also discussion about the possibility that these regulations may have negative impacts on employment and divert trade to other markets, such as China or the United States.

**Measures to Support Cooperation:**

It is mentioned that the EU has proposed support initiatives, such as infrastructure and measures, to assist partner countries in complying with CBAM regulations. Furthermore, the importance of ensuring that domestic markets are not harmed and that domestic producers do not suffer a negative impact is emphasized. The need for clear dialogue and an international dimension in the debate on these measures and their impact on regional markets and small producers is also stressed.

**Key Highlights:**

- CBAM has a mild impact on Latin America, but certain agricultural and mineral products could be affected in the future.
- The EU's Farm to Fork strategy will have a significant impact on the agricultural sector in Latin America.
- The EU's deforestation directive will affect products such as soybeans, coffee, cocoa, livestock, and timber.
- Meeting the EU's Green Deal regulations can be costly and challenging for small farmers in Latin America.
- There is concern about trade diversion and the support needed for Latin American countries to comply with EU regulations.
- The question is raised about how to prevent Latin American domestic markets from being disadvantaged due to CBAM regulations.
- Concerns about the impact on employment and trade diversion to other markets.

## 2.2. Group 2: Just Energy Transition

*Session A: Energy transition during the crisis: subsidies and price-cap regulations in LAC and the EU as social protection measures in the face of rising fossil fuel prices?*

### a) Presentations

#### **Jeannette Sánchez, Director of the Natural Resources Division, ECLAC**

In the context of social protection against rising fossil fuel prices, the implementation of subsidies and price caps in Latin America and the European Union is proposed. Major crises such as wars and pandemics have brought fundamental issues to the forefront, including water, energy, and food, which are essential resources. Energy transition is not only crucial for addressing climate change but also for achieving resilience and energy security in both regions, in an uncertain and changing world. Social inequalities and gaps in energy access require significant political changes. In particular, Latin America faces special pressures due to its natural resources.

Both Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the European Union (EU) heavily rely on fossil fuels as their primary source of energy in terms of natural resources. In LAC, 66% of the primary energy supply comes from fossil fuels, with oil (32%), natural gas (29%), and coal (5%) being the most used. On the other hand, in the EU, 76% of energy originates from fossil fuels, with gas (34%), oil (31%), and coal (11%) being the most prominent. It is important to note that electricity generation in LAC is mostly renewable, accounting for 61.3%, while in the EU, it only reaches 33.2%. In terms of energy product imports, the EU heavily depends on imports, with 57.7% of consumed energy coming from abroad. Although LAC is not a net energy importer, it is losing its position as a net exporter and does import refined fossil fuel products, accounting for 26% of its supply in 2021. Both regions have relatively small contributions to global greenhouse gas emissions, with LAC contributing 10% and Europe contributing 8% (IPCC, 2019). However, both regions experience the impacts of climate change, with the agricultural sector and land-use change being the main sources of pollution in LAC, while in the EU and globally, the energy system, industry, and transportation are the main culprits.

In this context, the question arises about the role fiscal objectives can play in addressing these issues. Some topics to be addressed include the energy structure in Latin America and the European Union, the impacts of crises on energy systems and policy responses, as well as the impetus for transition.

The current crises have caused disruptions in energy systems worldwide. However, this also represents an opportunity to address the transition to more sustainable energy sources. The effects of the energy crisis are accentuated in Latin America due to structural conditions of inequality, poverty, infrastructure gaps, and restrictions in financing and investment. In LAC, the poorest quintile pays up to 5 times more for electricity as a proportion of their income and up to 9 times more as a proportion of their expenditure than the richest quintile. In other

words, the poorest sectors are the most affected, as they end up paying a high percentage of their income on energy costs. This has led to protests and strikes in both Latin America and the European Union. The issue of energy subsidies and tariffs is particularly sensitive due to limited access and the high costs borne by citizens, exacerbating the significant inequalities in Latin America.

In this context, a balance between economic protection and energy efficiency is sought. Sustainable Development Goal 12 precisely addresses this issue. The strategy of reducing permanent and generalized subsidies to fossil fuels represents an opportunity to advance in the transition and energy security. Energy transition involves a sustainable transformation process of the energy system that requires a new ecosystem of governance, targeted investments, and modern regulatory frameworks.

To achieve a more sustainable energy system in LAC, a set of key measures is proposed. Firstly, universalizing access to electricity through renewable sources is proposed while addressing energy poverty. This would require an annual investment equivalent to 1.3% of GDP over 10 years, creating approximately 7 million jobs and achieving a significant 31.5% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, the aim is to increase the share of renewable energy in the energy mix, leveraging their relative low costs and developing value chains for technologies such as solar, wind, green hydrogen, and batteries, which would also create opportunities for new industrial sectors. Another important objective is to enhance energy efficiency in all economic sectors, residential areas, and buildings, which requires specific financing, technology, and policies. Additionally, efforts are directed towards improving regional energy security and resilience against potential external shocks, not only through diversified generation but also through investments in transmission and distribution networks. Finally, emphasis is placed on the importance of strengthening complementarity, integration, and interconnection between the energy systems of the region, which offers opportunities for the development of a regional renewable electricity market but requires shared agreements and standards.

In conclusion, the speaker highlights that the challenges in Latin America can be complemented by the opportunities offered by cooperation with the European Union in the field of energy transition. The energy transition and sustainable development agendas in Latin America and the European Union have a high potential for complementarity.

In this regard, it is noted that LAC faces various challenges in the energy sector. Energy poverty is one of them, with 16.1 million people lacking access to electricity and 77 million without access to clean cooking. Furthermore, financing and investment are required to carry out the energy transition, as well as technology transfer in sectors such as renewable energy, green hydrogen, and energy storage. It is essential to generate local capacities for innovation and technology that drive a shift in the productive structure towards more sustainable activities. Managing social conflicts and environmental impacts in territories also represent significant challenges.

However, there are opportunities for collaboration between LAC and the European Union (EU). The EU possesses knowledge, technology, and financial resources that are necessary in the region. Financial mechanisms can be established to reduce risk and support financing options with lower environmental impacts. Likewise, business models can be promoted to encourage foreign direct investment and technology transfer in areas such as renewable energy, green hydrogen, and energy storage. Facilitating trade, investment, and regulatory harmonization can also provide benefits. Additionally, support can be provided in developing productive capacities to advance sustainable value chains in natural resources and services that LAC provides.

## b) Discussion Working Groups

### ***Energy Policies in Latin America:***

The implemented energy policies in Latin America (LAC) have been diverse, and their effectiveness varies across countries and contexts. The existence of challenges in meeting environmental standards is acknowledged, as there is a need to strike a balance between economic development and environmental compliance. The transition of subsidies towards other models of energy support is proposed as a relevant measure to consider in the region. It is important to differentiate between subsidies and incentives and appropriately target resources to achieve a more efficient and sustainable energy policy.

### ***Cooperation and Convergence between LAC and the EU:***

Cooperation between Latin America and the European Union (EU) is strengthened by the Green Deal, which presents an opportunity to find common ground and promote bi-regional cooperation in the energy field. The challenge of convergence between LAC countries that possess fossil resources and the need to transition towards more sustainable energy sources is recognized. Energy democratization, subsidy targeting, and investment fund allocation are key aspects to consider in the cooperation between LAC and the EU to promote a fair and sustainable energy transition.

### ***Potential of Renewable Energy and Bioenergy:***

The importance of renewable energy in Latin America is highlighted, but the role of biofuels and bioenergy in the region's energy matrix is also questioned. The potential of LAC in the carbon market is recognized, and there is a need to avoid the export of raw materials without added value, instead promoting an energy development approach that includes cleaner and more sustainable technologies.

### ***Coordination and Role of Governments:***

The role of governments in implementing energy policies is crucial to promote the transition towards a more sustainable energy matrix in Latin America. However, it is pointed out that regional coordination in LAC poses challenges compared to the coordinated action of EU member states. To achieve a successful transition, long-term policies, the creation of transition funds, and the implementation of direct and progressive subsidy systems that promote equitable access to clean energy sources are proposed.

### ***Perspectives and Building a Sustainable Future:***

Cooperation between Latin America and the European Union in the energy field is seen as an opportunity for joint development and the construction of a more sustainable world. The importance of Latin America being value-added and not just an exporter of raw materials is emphasized, recognizing the region's potential in implementing policies aligned with the EU's Green Deal. In this regard, it is necessary to seek points of convergence and cooperation in instruments where both regions can find common interests.

#### **Key Highlights:**

- Energy policies in Latin America (LAC) have been diverse, with varying effectiveness across countries and contexts.
- The re-adaptation of subsidy policies towards other models of support in the energy transition is proposed as a relevant measure in the region.
- Cooperation between LAC and the EU, strengthened by the Green Deal, offers opportunities for convergence and bi-regional cooperation in energy matters.
- There is a challenge of convergence between LAC countries with fossil resources and the need to transition towards more sustainable energy sources.
- The importance of avoiding the export of raw materials without added value and promoting cleaner and more sustainable technologies is highlighted.
- The role of governments is crucial in implementing energy policies in LAC, with proposals for long-term policies and direct and progressive subsidy systems.
- Cooperation between LAC and the EU in energy provides opportunities for joint development and the construction of a more sustainable world.

#### ***Session B: Bilateral Cooperation, Technical Transfer, and Financing of Renewable and Green Energy Projects***

##### **a) Presentations**

#### **Kristin Lang. Head of Division for the Public Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean, European Investment Bank**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is one of the world's largest lenders and has positioned itself as a “climate bank” with a focus on green investments. Ensuring a just transition for all is a priority, and the EIB is guided by its environmental and social standards to ensure that all investments are resilient. The EIB takes a holistic approach by considering both social and environmental sustainability in its investment decisions. In 2022, the EIB launched the EIB Global program, a milestone aimed at increasing cooperation and partnership outside the European Union.

The EIB has been active in Latin America since 1993 and in the Caribbean since 1987. In 2022, it provided €1.7 billion in loans to the public and private corporate sector, with 75% of

cooperation focused on climate action. These loans are characterized by a dual focus. Firstly, they target climate action and environmental sustainability, seeking alignment with the goals of the Paris Agreement. Secondly, they focus on fulfilling the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. An example of their work is a large wind farm project in Brazil called Neoenergia's Renewable Energy Generation, which also focuses on gender equality by creating opportunities for women to learn electrician skills through an online school.

The EIB's initiatives in Brazil include the Climate Action Framework Loan from BDMG, which focuses on photovoltaic solar energy, small hydroelectric power plants, and other renewable resources. The Sicredi Solar Energy Framework Loan aims to finance investments in solar energy primarily for small and medium-sized enterprises and households, creating a conducive environment. In Chile, Brazil, and Peru, the EIB implemented the ENEL Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Framework Loan, benefiting households led by women and connecting them to the grid, allowing them to access social benefits and reduce energy consumption and costs.

The concept of a just transition is crucial both within and outside the European Union. Each country has its own decarbonization needs and different development priorities. Institutional capacities, workforce formality, inequality, poverty, and fragility must be taken into account when planning and implementing a just transition.

The EIB recognizes the importance of a country-specific plan and leveraging existing strengths to lead a successful transition. Drawing on its experience in Europe, the EIB can share valuable knowledge and expertise. It also emphasizes the concept of just resilience, recognizing the unequal impacts of climate change and the need to consider who will benefit and how from adaptation policies and responses.

#### b) Working Group Discussions

##### ***Current state of bilateral technical and financial cooperation in energy transition:***

Financial viability is a crucial factor for project implementation, making it challenging to execute non-profitable initiatives in the short term. Additionally, high investment and dependence on technology imports generate significant debt in Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries. These circumstances have raised concerns about accumulated debt and have led to a lack of confidence in the arrival of cooperation funds. Moreover, dialogue and cooperation between Europe and LAC have decreased in recent years, while China and the United States have increased their dialogue and infrastructure investment in the region. There is a lack of priority from the European Union (EU) towards LAC compared to other regions. A creative approach and allocation of more resources are required to support public policies and strengthen the participation of civil society in bilateral cooperation.

### **Opportunities for financing energy transition in LAC:**

To harness financing opportunities in the region, clear industrial policies, and support mechanisms for projects in the energy sector are necessary. Emphasis should be placed on creating new markets, such as electric mobility, and sharing Europe's experience in electromobility. Financing should be directed towards projects that benefit communities with energy poverty and promote value-added generation in the region. It is important to bridge the existing gaps between Europe and LAC through innovation and the development of local technology. Additionally, financing instruments should align with existing cooperation mechanisms and encourage the participation of local stakeholders.

### **Energy trade between LAC and the EU:**

There is significant potential for energy trade between LAC and the EU, which can contribute to the energy security of both regions. Promoting fair energy trade requires appropriate bilateral cooperation, technical transfer, and financing. In this process, the public sector, private sector, and civil society organizations play important roles, and their active participation is required to ensure beneficial and sustainable energy trade.

#### Key highlights:

- Projects must be financially viable, which poses challenges for implementing non-profitable projects in the short term.
- Concerns exist regarding debt and a lack of confidence in the arrival of cooperation funds.
- Dialogue and cooperation between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have decreased, while they have increased with China and the United States.
- A creative approach and more resources are needed to support public policies and strengthen the participation of civil society in bilateral cooperation.
- Clarity in industrial policies and support for projects in the region is necessary.
- Creation of new markets, such as electric mobility, and sharing Europe's experience in electromobility.
- Alignment of financing instruments with existing cooperation mechanisms and fostering the participation of local actors.

*Session C: Cooperation on Lithium and Other Minerals of Importance in the Energy Transition: Regulatory Framework, Investment, Environmentally Friendly Production, Value Chain, Quality Employment, and Commercialisation*

#### a) Presentations

#### **Martín Obaya. Director of CENIT - EeYn/UNSAM, CONICET Researcher, Green Dealings Project**

The energy transition requires a considerably larger amount of minerals compared to fossil fuels. The demand for lithium has experienced significant growth and is expected to continue

increasing, up to 41 times more by 2040 compared to 2020, driven mainly by electromobility. This phenomenon is happening outside of lithium-rich countries. Lithium resources primarily come from Latin America, and only Argentina and Chile are global lithium producers. These countries, along with Bolivia, form the “Lithium Triangle” and have adopted different strategies regarding its exploitation, sharing economic characteristics but with very different policies, with Argentina having a highly liberalized market.

Governance of lithium is a relevant aspect to consider. Both at the local and national levels, countries at the end of the value chain establish rules that affect lithium production methods. For example, Germany has implemented a set of private and voluntary rules not only for mining companies, while the European Battery Regulation proposal (2022 agreement) and the German Corporate Due Diligence Act refer to four minerals (in the case of the EU) or all economic resources (in the case of Germany) and are linked to human rights violations.

There are recommendations for responsible lithium mining and recommended actions to prevent sustainability risks. The voluntary scheme IRMA (Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance) provides a reference framework for lithium mining companies and offers certification for all minerals. Currently, lithium is in a scenario where there are few rules, so it is necessary to develop them. A Delphi study has identified the conditions that must be met in the lithium value chain, highlighting challenges related to environmental sustainability, water balance in salt flats, biodiversity, pollution, cultural and social impact, participation of indigenous communities, development of productive and technological capacities, institutional capacities, transparency, and access.

Regarding cooperation between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean (EU-LAC), different dimensions of sustainability are proposed. In the environmental sphere, the focus is on the development of state capacities, monitoring and supervision technologies, baselines, and participatory monitoring models, as well as the development of new production processes. In the social sphere, participatory models are promoted, while in the economic sphere, the aim is to develop productive and technological capacities, as well as intra-regional cooperation. In terms of governance, the importance of information and transparency is emphasized, as well as the strengthening of state capacities in this area.

## b) Working Group Discussions

### ***Current State of Bi-regional Technical and Financial Cooperation around Lithium and Other Minerals:***

Bi-regional technical and financial cooperation regarding lithium and other minerals is currently in a state that presents several dimensions. These minerals, such as lithium, nickel, and manganese, are considered important for the energy transition. The implementation of projects related to them must strictly comply with the International Labour Organization Convention 169, especially in countries like Chile. In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), there are different realities and phenomena regarding lithium and other minerals. The exploitation of these resources poses a development dilemma, as it can generate economic



benefits but also have negative impacts on the environment and local communities. It is crucial to manage the balance between the country's needs and sustainability in the exploitation of these minerals. Additionally, areas of sacrifice are observed where people face risks and health issues due to environmental defence in critical areas.

***Main Challenges/Bottlenecks in the Bi-regional Relationship around Lithium and Other Minerals:***

Significant challenges are faced in the bi-regional relationship around lithium and other minerals. The concentration of lithium demand in Europe raises the need to find ways to benefit Latin America and the Caribbean in the sector. Ancestral indigenous territories are particularly affected by mineral exploitation, but their demands are often overlooked in surveys. Ensuring respect for indigenous rights, including free, prior, and informed consent, is essential. There is also a need to reconsider the idea of sacrificing the lithium triangle to meet global demand, taking into account social and environmental impacts. Although national legislation exists, indigenous peoples' rights are not always respected in practice. Tracing minerals along the value chain is a significant challenge to ensure their legal origin and prevent illegal mining. The lack of regional convergence in Latin America and the Caribbean requires a regional strategy to address the challenges related to lithium and other minerals. While both public and private companies play a fundamental role, it is necessary to address human rights violations and corruption associated with them. Furthermore, the geographical location of lithium in ecologically sensitive areas necessitates the development of sustainable economic models.

***Regulations to Ensure Environmentally Friendly Production and Quality Employment in the Bi-regional Trade Framework:***

To ensure environmentally friendly production and quality employment in the bi-regional trade of minerals, it is crucial to establish appropriate regulations and consider existing frameworks such as the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA). This requires significant prior consultation, information for local communities, participation of indigenous peoples, and dynamic governance models that promote participation throughout the project. Local and regional governance models need to be resolved, addressing the absence of the state and civil society, and promoting equitable negotiations between Latin America, the Caribbean, and the European Union. All of this can lay the foundations for sustainable production and quality employment in mineral exploitation.

***Required Technical and Financial Cooperation to Foster Value Chains around Lithium and Other Minerals:***

To foster value chains around lithium and other minerals, strong technical and financial cooperation is required. In this regard, harnessing the potential of technologies such as blockchain can play a crucial role in attracting investments and ensuring environmental sustainability in the exploitation of these resources. Furthermore, it is essential to establish both technical and financial cooperation agreements that drive the development of these value chains in Latin America and the Caribbean, thus promoting a sustainable and responsible approach to managing these minerals. These collaborations can contribute to

strengthening local capacities, fostering technological innovation, and generating economic opportunities that benefit communities and the region as a whole.

### Key Highlights

- Bi-regional technical and financial cooperation around lithium and other minerals is crucial for the energy transition and faces challenges related to balancing economic development and environmental sustainability.
- Indigenous rights and the participation of local communities are fundamental elements that must be respected in mineral exploitation, and prior, free, and informed consultation is required.
- Regulations must be established to ensure environmentally friendly production and quality employment, considering existing frameworks such as the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance.
- Regional convergence in Latin America and the Caribbean is necessary to address challenges associated with minerals, including human rights violations and corruption.
- It is important to develop sustainable economic models that take into account the geographical location of lithium in ecologically sensitive areas.

### 2.3. Group 3: Inclusive Digital Transformation

#### *Session A: Digital Divide and Deepening Learning and Productivity Gaps in LAC and the EU*

##### a) Presentations

#### **Javier González. Director of SUMMA - Research and Innovation Laboratory in Education for Latin America and the Caribbean**

The pandemic has had a significant impact on education in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), revealing the existing weaknesses in the system. There is a close relationship between labour productivity and education, forming a triad with the labour market and the productive system, depending on the type of capitalism present in each country.

According to the McKinsey Global Institute, currently, 50% of workers in Latin America could be replaced due to the automation process. At the same time, it is highlighted that during the pandemic, the region was severely affected, and most schools had to close, resulting in 3 out of every 5 children losing a full year of education, according to UNICEF.

Educational poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean averages around 80%, according to the World Bank. Additionally, 80% of 10-year-old children in the region cannot read, which is a dramatic situation. Unlike diseases that become evident in hospitals, the lack of literacy in children is less visible but equally concerning.

Is this situation due to their level of development? According to the results of the 2012 PISA report, they are worse off in terms of development than one might think. One of the main reasons is their structural and unstructured inequality, both at the governmental and elite levels. This makes society highly unequal, even if they are not as poor compared to Sub-Saharan Africa.

There are ten invisible populations in their society, such as migrants (with Venezuela having more migration than Syria), people in poverty, disability, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity, ethnicity, among others. For example, 66% of LGBTI+ youth claim to have experienced homophobic harassment in school, sometimes perpetrated by teachers themselves.

Young people deprived of liberty not only lose their freedom but also their right to education. In countries like El Salvador and Chile, juvenile incarceration is a significant problem, where 30% of these adolescents do not receive education. These young people are excluded both by legal norms and social norms.

During the pandemic, ECLAC has shown a reduction in the prioritization of public spending, especially in social and educational spending. However, this situation has also been observed in the United States, where there has been a significant increase in spending due to the pandemic.

Chile is the country that spends the most on students in the region, but it is not only about the amount of spending but also how these resources are actually used.

The mirage of modernity became evident during the pandemic. The “Voces Docentes” survey, the largest in education in Latin America and the Caribbean, conducted in 20 countries and involving 200,000 teachers, reveals the challenges in learning and educational strategies.

The “Distance Learning Readiness Index” is an indicator that measures countries' capacity to adopt digital education. According to this index, there is a significant difference in internet connectivity between higher and lower economic sectors.

Although young people are generally considered digital natives, internet access is a crucial issue. During difficult times, many people cut back on their internet plans, which affects students. In terms of computers, approximately 62% of students have access to them, but most teachers have to buy their own computers to be able to teach (Latin American distance education relied on teachers' personal computers).

In terms of connectivity, 60% of people in Guyana report insufficient internet, while in Chile, the percentage is 12%. On average, 43% of the population considers their internet connection to be adequate.

Additionally, there is insufficient support and accompaniment from ministries and local authorities for distance education. 81% of teachers state that they have received training for distance education, but 46% consider this training to be insufficient.

94% of teachers implemented strategies to level their students' learning. 72% provided personalized tutoring through applications like WhatsApp. Before the pandemic, many teachers showed resistance to using these technologies, but the emergency situation led them to open up to these tools.

Various digital tools were used, with 70% of teachers using CREA, Zoom, Google Meet; 63% used YouTube, and 59% used digital guides. In many cases, ministries simply converted books and documents into PDF files, something that had not been done before.

SUMMA has developed a platform that compiles education studies and meta-analyses published in Scopus and Easy. Technology makes a difference when it facilitates the basic aspects of pedagogy, such as metacognition.

It is necessary to focus technology and innovation in these areas and use different pedagogical strategies that help when combined with technologies and AI. For example, Khan Academy helps identify students' most common errors to work on them.

Regarding the measures countries are taking for recovery, some initiatives stand out:

- The Comprehensive Recovery and Socioemotional Learning Program (PRISA).
- The University of the West Indies in the Eastern Caribbean, addressing digital technology issues in more than 10 countries.
- The case of Honduras, which uses the Open University's global learning to combine technology with learning communities. This approach involves a process of learning, experimentation, reflection, etc.
- In the Eastern Caribbean, it is observed that 70% of preschool teachers, 28% of primary school teachers, and 30% of secondary school teachers are not trained in these technologies.

There are priority areas to close the digital gaps in the education system:

- Technological infrastructure.
- Data ownership rights.
- Contracts with providers to increase coverage in areas where it is not profitable.

It is essential to develop platforms that support levelling and the relevance of AI, such as Khan Academy, which offers learning paths and student progress tracking. Initial and ongoing teacher training is also required, as well as an inclusive approach that recognizes, values, and builds upon diversity in the classroom.

In summary, the pandemic has exposed the region's weaknesses in terms of digitalization and education. Educational poverty, structural inequality, technology access gaps, and lack

of teacher training are some of the challenges that need to be overcome. However, there are also opportunities to close these gaps and promote more inclusive education through the development of technological infrastructure, strengthening pedagogical skills, and focusing on socio-emotional well-being and gender equality. Countries in the region are implementing programs and strategies for recovery, but joint efforts and a long-term vision are required to achieve effective transformation in education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The transition to a more inclusive Latin America and the Caribbean requires addressing the gaps, challenges, and opportunities of the digital and AI revolution in education. The mentioned priorities to close digital gaps are considered areas of potential collaboration between the European Union and LAC.

#### b) Working Group Discussions

##### **Digital divide:**

It was mentioned that the pandemic has exacerbated the lack of access to quality internet resources in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The importance of addressing the asymmetry in difficulty between regional agendas and the need for personalized approaches was also highlighted.

##### **Impact on education:**

Emphasis was placed on the number of children who were excluded from learning during the pandemic and the need to recover them. It was mentioned that the lack of access to digital education has increased the gap between those from higher socio-economic backgrounds and vulnerable sectors.

##### **Potential of digitization:**

The discussion focused on how digitization can improve educational services, enhance labour markets, and modernize public services. It was mentioned that artificial intelligence (AI) can be used ethically to assist in learning and address educational gaps, but the proper implementation was emphasized.

##### **Challenges and opportunities in the ALC-EU bi-regional cooperation:**

The importance of addressing the specific priorities and challenges of each region and country was raised. The need to gather data to inform policies and promote inclusive digital transition was highlighted. The importance of strengthening educational systems to face possible disruptions in the future was also mentioned.

##### Key points:

- The lack of access to quality internet resources exacerbated the effects of the pandemic in LAC.
- It is necessary to address the asymmetry in difficulty between regional agendas and adopt personalized approaches.

- Ensuring the recovery of children who were deprived of learning opportunities during the pandemic is essential.
- Digitization can improve educational services, labour markets, and public services.
- Ethical implementation of artificial intelligence can assist in learning and address educational gaps.
- ALC-EU bi-regional cooperation needs to address the specific priorities and challenges of each region and gather data to inform policies.
- Educational systems need to be strengthened to face possible disruptions in the future.

*Session B: Bi-Regional Cooperation for Inclusive Digital Transformation: Closing Learning Gaps, Increasing Productivity, and Bi-Regional Trade*

a) Presentations

**Mark Urban. General Director for International Cooperation, CLARA-BELLAI.**

Red Clara is a federation of national research networks in Latin America, with the purpose of strengthening an academic community. Its objective is to promote inclusion and socioeconomic integration through fair transitions. Although energy and transportation infrastructures underlie the current problem, they are not directly related to the solution. Therefore, Red Clara provides support to find solutions in connectivity and digital infrastructure.

It is important to recognize the digital challenges due to the exclusivity dimension they can bring to response elements. Good digitization allows for both exclusive debate and dialogue. The digital world is a tool, not an end in itself. Tools transform data into information, and on that basis, an additional layer of knowledge is added. There is a chain that aims to reach concrete decisions and actions, where data is the raw material and decisions are the product to address challenges.

To achieve fair transitions, it is crucial to ensure access to digital tools. This involves taking into account transversality and universality, as failing to consider them can contribute to increasing inequalities. It is necessary to consider various dimensions of access, such as physical access, connectivity, access to platforms and applications, capabilities (knowledge for use and management), and an additional dimension related to soft skills and knowing how to employ them in decision-making.

Speaking of economies of scale in terms of knowledge is fundamental. Research and education networks are present worldwide. In Latin America, some of these networks include Reuna, Ragie, Cudi, Renta, Rednesah, Rumba, RNP, Rauz, Cedia, and Conare. These networks seek new transversal capacities through the creation of interregional groups with the aim of eliminating borders in the development of science, education, and technology in Latin America.

The intraregional connectivity of Red Clara covers Latin America but also establishes connectivity links with South America and Europe, especially between Brazil and Portugal. Red Clara's goal is to become a key actor in terms of connectivity and facilitate the processes of digital transformation in education, science, technology, and innovation in Latin America and the Caribbean. It is considered a public good available for these processes.

Within the framework of the conference held in Bogota, a digital alliance was established that represents a development opportunity and includes four pillars: political dialogues, investment accelerator, digital services (such as Earth observation through Copernicus), and infrastructure with the Bella II project. Bella II, which stands for “Building the Europe Link to Latin America and the Caribbean,” aims to reduce the digital divide and support the development of the necessary infrastructure to consolidate and expand a digital ecosystem in areas of science, technology, education, and innovation. The estimated initial investment for Bella II is 28 million euros, with a contribution of 13 million from the European Commission.

One of the expected early outcomes of Bella II is the creation of a resilient optical backbone network, ready to receive powerful links and be used in scientific research development. Strengthening power in Central America and expanding towards the Caribbean is necessary. The aim is to connect Peru, San Salvador (El Salvador), Tegucigalpa (Honduras), Guatemala City (Guatemala), San José (Costa Rica), to the rest of the BELLA infrastructure, and the possibility of its extension to the Caribbean (indicatively the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica), Paraguay, Bolivia, Mexico, Belize, and Uruguay. Another expected outcome is the articulation and interconnection of higher education and research centres. Additionally, a testbed service is sought to promote the creation of solutions and innovations.

Within the framework of Bella II, collaborative projects that need strengthening have been developed. This program aims for an open dialogue between actors from both regions and has a regional training platform. Observation strategies for Earth, such as the GEO and Copernicus projects, among others, which have great potential for capacity development and knowledge management in Latin America, are also being implemented.

In the field of telemedicine, the university network Reute AL stands out, which emerged in Brazil with a specific initiative. A blockchain working group for diplomas and data cybersecurity training has also been created. The aim is to explore, deploy, and pilot the life of diplomas in blockchain technology, as well as provide blockchain training to trainers. Furthermore, a regional working group on cybersecurity has been established, and projects in collaboration with Lac4 and the Estonian government are planned and managed.

In summary, Red Clara and the Bella II project are key initiatives to strengthen connectivity and digital development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Through partnerships,

investments, and the use of digital tools, the aim is to reduce the digital divide and promote science, technology, education, and innovation in the region.

## b) Working Group Discussions

### **Cooperation between Latin America and Europe:**

The cooperation between Latin America and Europe was addressed, focusing on the digital divide. Various initiatives and areas of collaboration in this context were discussed. The RedClara project was mentioned, and the lack of integration of countries like Peru, Bolivia, and Paraguay was pointed out. The importance of including STEAM approaches (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) was also raised. Furthermore, the importance of cooperation between civil society, universities, and the state, especially in topics related to entrepreneurship, seedbeds, and incubators, was reflected upon.

### **Access to technology and digitalization:**

The importance of ensuring universality in access to technology and adding economic value to data was highlighted. The need to promote digitalization in sectors such as agriculture, as well as the development of a Latin American network that complements the Red Terra project, was mentioned. The relevance of education in data exchange and the need to imagine a new social contract that regulates the use, protection, and utilization of data were also discussed.

### **Regulatory and legal aspects:**

The need to consider regulatory and legal aspects in the process of digitalization was emphasized, including the protection of personal data and the creation of legal frameworks addressing remote work. Additionally, the importance of promoting transparency and accountability through digitalization, with a particular focus on youth, was reflected upon. The role of unions and the valorisation of the skills of people from Latin America in the European market were also mentioned, as well as the need to cooperate from the perspective of diversity and the distance between regions.

### Key points:

- The importance of not limiting oneself only to connectivity access and considering other approaches in bridging the digital divide.
- The inclusion of arts in the STEM approach and the integration of entrepreneurship courses in university spaces.
- The need to ensure the universality of access to technology and give economic value to data.
- The importance of education in data exchange and information protection.
- The need to consider regulatory and legal aspects, especially in the protection of personal data and remote work.
- The promotion of transparency, accountability, and youth participation in digitalization.



- The valorisation of the capabilities of people from Latin America in the European market and the need to cooperate from the perspective of diversity and distance.

*Session C: Civil Society Networks in the Green-Digital Transformation: Opportunities for Articulation and Influence in the LAC-EU Cooperation Agenda*

a) Presentations

**Andrea Ordoñez. Director of Southern Voice Latin America.**

In her presentation on civil society networks in the green-digital transformation and the opportunities for articulation and influence in the cooperation agenda between the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the European Union (ALC-EU), her focus is on civil society networks in digital transformation and the opportunities for collaboration in the cooperation agenda between both regions.

The speaker emphasizes the importance of considering bi-regional relationships and reflecting on how, when, and where to collaborate. The four C's model is presented as a way to understand the relationships between different actors. In the case of cooperation, it is pointed out that when goals and objectives are similar, there is a conducive space for collaboration, generating cooperation, co-optation, and complementarity. On the other hand, when goals and strategies differ, confrontation arises, allowing for a critical view of the differences.

There is mention of certain co-optation dissonances between the North and the South, where organizations with less power do not feel represented in that joint work, especially when there are common goals but different strategies. In this regard, several considerations for collaboration are raised, such as power asymmetry between the parties, differences in experience, resources, and opportunities for influence, as well as common or different agendas. The legacy of historical relationships, both in the Caribbean and beyond Ibero-American relations, is also emphasized.

It is crucial to consider to what extent the agendas of both types of organizations are common, as this influences the promotion of networks between different regions. When addressing the relationships between the European Union and Latin America, the importance of considering historical legacies and their impact on civil society networks in the future is underscored. Additionally, it is highlighted that relationships with Europe are marked by the relationships between Spain and Portugal.

Within the tasks for dialogue reflection, the following points are raised. Firstly, there is concern about the co-optation of independent civil society associations that have more experience in discussions and priorities. Analysing the articulation of civil society in the region is fundamental. Secondly, the difference between the forums of the European Union and Latin America is highlighted. CELAC is a relatively new space compared to the European

trajectory. However, it is relevant in terms of linkage, and the engagement groups in the G20 are mentioned, which involve a variety of civil society actors, think tanks, among others. This indicates that the levels of consolidation between CELAC and civil society differ, and civil society will need an interlocutor to carry out the dialogues. This task presents challenges as there is difficulty in establishing a change agenda in civil society.

It is important for the dialogue to include discussions on the funding of these regional networks, with the aim of avoiding conflicts of priorities. The importance of exploring working relationships and solidarity that go beyond mere assistance is also highlighted. Collaboration has left a legacy of visualizing relationships so far, and the situation in Latin America requires a different approach than the traditional one. Additionally, it is fundamental to consider where the added value of civil society associations in the region lies.

Lastly, it is proposed to explore the relationships of civil society in the region beyond the benefactor-beneficiary dynamics, in order to strengthen the relationship between interlocutors in both CELAC and the European Union.

#### b) Working Group Discussions

##### ***Entry barriers and inequality:***

The need to close the gap in access to European cooperation was highlighted, as high levels of institutionalization make it difficult for countries with structural inequalities to participate. The importance of finding concrete responses and overcoming territoriality that limits the development of solutions was raised.

##### ***Coordination between actors:***

Emphasis was placed on aligning the proposals of civil society organizations with the decisions of decision-makers. The need to establish mechanisms that allow for greater political and financial flexibility was mentioned, considering budgetary and financial management as a challenge in itself.

##### ***Civil society participation:***

The importance of opening spaces for direct dialogue with territorial actors, ensuring the representation of diverse local realities, was emphasized. The need to avoid expectations of investment and resources in international exchange spaces and instead seek ways to impact society as a whole was raised.

##### ***Tools of social engineering:***

The role of civil society organizations, unions, and human rights defenders as contributors in promoting digital transition was mentioned. The experience in Romania and the importance of preserving knowledge through collaboration between economic and social councils were referenced.

**Challenges and opportunities:**

Challenges such as lack of political will, language and time barriers, and institutional fragility were addressed. The importance of expanding the definition of civil society, including academia and other actors, and promoting the inclusion of women and indigenous populations in the digital transition was emphasized.

**Bi-regional cooperation:**

The need to strengthen networks between civil society and optimize their collaboration, seeking a holistic agenda where each organization can contribute from different areas, was mentioned. The importance of generating mechanisms to verify the effectiveness of cooperation and monitoring digital ecosystems was highlighted.

**Public policies:**

The importance of developing regulations and fiscal frameworks to support civil society, taking into account the experience of the European Union, was raised. The importance of modernizing the legislative framework and seeking own mechanisms to promote social dialogue in Latin America was mentioned.

**Social development and entrepreneurship:**

The focus on social development in Europe, where significant funds are allocated to social entrepreneurship and social issues are integrated into education and university projects, was highlighted. Latin America was considered a region with great potential to develop such projects.

**Key highlights:**

- The importance of overcoming institutional barriers in European cooperation and aligning proposals with political decisions.
- The need to bridge the gap between international actors and local realities through social engineering tools such as civil society.
- The importance of digital transition, the participation of women and indigenous populations, and the creation of mechanisms to define priorities and regulations.
- The importance of collaboration, networks, and synergies among civil society, as well as the need for a holistic agenda and favourable public policies.
- Strengthening social dialogue between the European Union and Latin America, and supporting social development and social entrepreneurship in both regions.

### 3. [Plenary](#)

#### a) [Conclusions/recommendations](#)

#### **Group 1. Session A / Maiara Folly, Executive Director and Co-Founder at CIPÓ, Brazil**

In her conclusions, Maiara Folly addressed the challenges of transitioning to a green economy. She highlighted the weak potential for economic growth and high inflation due to the global crisis, including the pandemic and armed conflicts. She also mentioned the cost of living crisis. In this context, she emphasized the importance of placing social equality at the centre of the transition and avoiding repeating past mistakes such as reproducing extractive models. Maiara underscored the need to prioritize decent jobs and focus on national value-added production. She also urged for more creative thinking in financing, addressing tax evasion, and applying taxes on fossil fuels. She highlighted the importance of social participation in generating data and pointed out that the region still lacks precise quantification of the social and economic costs of climate change. Regarding mitigation and adaptation, Maiara argued that it is necessary to find a balance and shift the focus towards adaptation.

#### **Group 1. Session B / Irene Haddad, Team Leader AL-INVEST VERDE**

Irene Haddad focused on the necessary financing to mitigate the effects of climate change and the involvement of the financial sector in this issue. She emphasized climate investment and nature protection, as well as the importance of financial programs that align with climate change. She also highlighted the role of multilateral banks in this context. However, she pointed out that there is still a long way to go to find a viable system. Irene emphasized the importance of governmental actors in this process but also recognized that changes in government can affect long-term focus. She stressed the need for actions to be sustainable over time and for their effects to endure beyond political changes. She also referred to deficiencies in existing financing mechanisms.

#### **Group 1. Session C / Claudia Uribe, Head of the Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, International Trade Centre (ITC) and former Vice-Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism in Colombia**

Claudia Uribe referred to the equal application of measures to all European companies and companies importing to Europe. She mentioned a measure of great impact, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which will be implemented in 2026, and stated that there are concerns about its effect on Latin American exports, particularly for small producers. She highlighted the important role of European companies in Latin America and mentioned that the group did not agree that the CBAM would not affect the region so much. She emphasized the regulation of deforestation and its critical impact on Latin America's economy and the income of the most disadvantaged groups, such as coffee

production in Guatemala. She advocated not turning trade into a mere façade for environmental issues.

### **Group 2. Session A / Nadia Catalina Combariza Diaz, Co-Founder of Think Tank POLEN Just Transitions**

Nadia Catalina Combariza Diaz focused her intervention on fuel subsidies and the consequences of the pandemic in Latin America. She highlighted that the structural context in the region is very different, and Latin American countries pay five times more for energy relative to their purchasing power. Nadia emphasized the importance of having more progressive subsidies and transferring subsidies to production, not just consumption. However, she also recognized that once implemented, subsidies are difficult to eliminate, raising governance questions. She pointed out the need for long-term public policies, transition funds, and the importance of finding common ground in the instruments used.

### **Group 2. Session B / Andrea Costafreda, Oxfam Intermón, Programme Director for Latin America and the Caribbean**

Andrea Costafreda highlighted the diverse energy matrices in Latin America, ranging from countries with significant oil dependence to those that are 100% renewable. She emphasized the need to implement fiscal and spatial reforms and mentioned the feeling of Europe losing leadership to China and the United States in the region. Andrea mentioned the importance of addressing human rights violations related to commodity exporters in Latin America and the resistance this generates in affected countries. She also emphasized that the economy cannot solely rely on exports but should also focus on domestic consumption. Additionally, she mentioned the need to consider waste in the green transition and the importance of linking it with industrial policies in both continents. She emphasized the importance of conducting a social analysis to close gaps in society and pointed out that classical financing instruments are disconnected from infrastructure investments. She proposed connecting development instruments with financing instruments and addressing high financing standards that make Europe less competitive, exacerbating the debt crisis in Latin America. She also mentioned the need to find financing methods that reduce the region's dependence on external funding and emphasized cooperation in education and the fight against energy illiteracy. She advocated for renewed cooperation in the new multilateralism and linked the green transition debate to the “beyond growth” debate.

### **Group 2. Session C / Juan Pablo Maureira, Managing Director at ENERGIQA, Belgium**

Juan Pablo Maureira spoke about the need to generate concrete actions towards a common goal. He noted that it is not just about an energy or transportation transition but about analysing where the just transformation lies. He highlighted the importance of reinforcing the participation of local peoples and communities and advocated for including them in decision-making through voting and consultation. He mentioned the importance of educating and informing people to equip them with the necessary tools and advocated for

cooperation between Latin America and Europe. He emphasized the importance of including indicators beyond CO<sub>2</sub> and temperature, such as water use. He pointed out that Europe has established governance schemes and a joint perspective of 27 countries, while Latin America needs to find a joint agenda to act with more power. He highlighted opportunities in education and research and advocated for a more dynamic perspective.

### **Group 3. Session A / Javier González, Director at SUMMA– Laboratory of Education Research and Innovation for Latin America and the Caribbean**

Javier González addressed the situation in Latin America after the pandemic and highlighted the problems of inclusion, equity, and gender that have worsened as a result. He pointed out the increase in educational poverty and its economic, social, and productive effects. Javier mentioned that governments have responded with limited and depleted resources and highlighted the importance of digitization as a tool that can aid education. He also mentioned the development of artificial intelligence as an opportunity in this regard. He noted that the education system heavily relies on individual resources of teachers and mentioned the lack of research coming from the Global South, reflecting a power asymmetry. He emphasized the importance of international cooperation and collaboration in negotiations with large international companies, data accessibility, and teacher training in relation to new technologies. He emphasized that the issue of inclusion is key in a region with significant inequalities and advocated for digitization as a way to include all individuals and develop capabilities, along with national research and development systems.

### **Group 3. Session B / Alejandro Barros, Board Member at Espacio Público, Chile**

Alejandro Barros highlighted the need to open academic discourses to society and emphasized the importance of just transformation in the digital era. He pointed out the problem of access and the need to invest in long-term infrastructure, as well as the maintenance of services. He also mentioned the issue of data protection, especially in the private sector of the United States, and raised questions about how companies access the digital economy. He emphasized the importance of skills and competencies to fully harness digital opportunities and mentioned that access to devices can create economic gaps. He highlighted the importance of services and the need to invest in applications that are actually used.

### **Group 3. Session C / Alejandra García, student at Pablo de Olavide University, Sevilla**

The existence of inequality gaps and differences in funding capacity between different regions was addressed. The need to expand ideas and promote inclusive consultations and participations to address these challenges was highlighted. The importance of having formal and institutional spaces where civil society can engage and actively contribute to decision-making was also emphasized. These measures are fundamental to foster equity and ensure that all voices are heard in the construction of a fairer and more sustainable future.

## V. Conclusions

As conclusions, it is crucial to place social equality at the centre of the transition to a green economy. This implies avoiding the reproduction of extractive models and prioritizing the generation of fair jobs and national value-added production.

Similarly, creative forms of financing should be sought, such as addressing tax evasion and implementing taxes on fossil fuels. This could help finance the necessary actions to mitigate the effects of climate change and promote the transition to renewable energy.

It is also necessary to promote social participation in data generation and decision-making. However, there is still a lack of precise **quantification** of the social and economic costs of climate change in the region, so a more comprehensive approach considering multiple dimensions is required.

However, governmental actors play a crucial role in the transition process, but long-term continuity beyond political changes must be considered. Even more importantly, public policies must be sustainable over time and transcend political agendas to achieve lasting results. On a larger scale, it is necessary to improve existing financing mechanisms and find ways to reduce the debt crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean. This involves connecting development instruments with financing instruments.

More specifically, cooperation between Latin America and the European Union in the transition to a green economy should be promoted. This involves sharing knowledge, promoting research and education, and fostering collaboration in the field of renewed multilateralism.

For this reason, inclusion and equity are key elements in a just transition. It is important to ensure that all individuals and communities' benefit from the opportunities offered by the transition, avoiding the exacerbation of existing inequalities. Inclusive public policies that address social and economic gaps must be implemented.

At the same time, digitization and new technologies play a fundamental role in a just transition. Investments in digital infrastructure, digital skills training for the population, and equitable access to digital services must be ensured. In addition, data protection must be addressed, and fair and equitable access to the digital economy must be promoted.

As mentioned before, citizen participation and the inclusion of civil society in decision-making are crucial. In this regard, formal and institutional spaces should be promoted where all voices are heard, and active contributions can be made in building a more just and sustainable future.

In summary, the transition to a green economy in Latin America requires a comprehensive approach that places social equality at the centre, promotes citizen participation, ensures adequate financing, and fosters international cooperation.

## Appendix: Programme and List of Participants

### EU-LA Just Transitions Forum Programme

**Dates:** 15-16 May 2023

**Organisation:** EU-LAC Foundation

**In collaboration with:** Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI), Diputació Barcelona, "la Caixa" Foundation and the Club of Rome.

**Format:** Hybrid

**Place:** CaixaForum Macaya. Passeig Sant Joan, 108, 08037 Barcelona, Spain

**Languages:** The Forum will be held in Spanish and English, with simultaneous interpretation

Monday, 15.05.2023 (CET) 13:30 – 18:00	
13:30h - 14:30h	<b>Registration of participants</b>
14:30h – 15:00h	<b>Inauguration – Welcome remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Leire Pajín Iraola</b>, <i>President, EU-LAC Foundation</i></li> <li>○ <b>Eva del Hoyo Barbolla</b>, <i>Director General for Sustainable Development Policy, State Secretary for International Cooperation, Spain</i></li> <li>○ <b>Lluïsa Moret</b>, <i>First Vice-President and President of Equality and Social Sustainability, Diputació de Barcelona</i></li> <li>○ <b>Jaume Lanaspá Gatnau</b>, <i>Member of Board of Trustees of "la Caixa" Banking Foundation, and Chairman of Barcelona Office of Club of Rome</i></li> <li>○ <b>Emma Clua</b>, <i>Head of Sector of Human Development and Digital Alliance, European Commission</i></li> <li>○</li> </ul>
15:00h – 16:00h	<b>Keynote Speaker's presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Izabella Teixeira (BRA)</b>, <i>Co-Chair of the International Resource Panel, Brazil's Former Minister of the Environment, Champion of the Earth 2013</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Moderator:</b> <b>Adrián Bonilla (ECU)</b>, <i>Executive Director, EU-LAC Foundation</i></p>
16:00h - 16:30h	<b>Coffee Break</b>



16:30h - 18:00h **Session A of all the working groups**

**Group 1 - Economic, social, and environmental costs of climate change in LAC and the EU**

**Presentation:** [Juan Vázquez Zamora \(SPA\)](#), Deputy Head of the Latin America and Caribbean Unit, OECD Development Centre (virtual)

**Moderator:** [Maiara Folly \(BRA\)](#), Executive Director and Co-Founder of CIPÓ

**Group 2 - Energy transition during the crisis: subsidies and price-cap regulations in LAC and the EU as social protection measures in the face of rising fossil fuel prices?**

**Presentation:** [Jeannette Sánchez \(ECU\)](#), Director of Natural Resources Division ECLAC (virtual)

**Moderator:** [Nadia Catalina Combariza Díaz \(COL\)](#), Co-Founder of Think Tank POLEN Just Transitions

**Group 3 - Digital divide and the deepening of learning and productivity gaps in LAC and the EU**

**Presentation:** [Javier González \(CHI\)](#), Director of SUMMA– Laboratory of Education Research and Innovation for Latin America and the Caribbean

**Moderator:** [Rafael Palacios Bustamante \(VEN\)](#), Professor and researcher, Business & Law School Berlin

**Tuesday, 16.05.2023 (CET) 08:30 – 18:30**

8:30h – 9:30h **Registration of Participants**

9:30h – 11:00h **Keynote Speakers presentation**

- [Félix Fernández-Shaw \(SPA\)](#), Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INTPA)
- [Rodolfo Lacy \(MEX\)](#), OECD Director for Climate Action and Environment for Latin America, Former Vice Minister of Environmental Policy and Planning at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico

**Moderator:** [Daniela Araujo \(ECU\)](#), Programme Manager of Sustainable Development and Economic Issues, EU-LAC Foundation

11:00h – 11:30h **Coffee Break**

11:30h – 13:00h

**Session B of all the working groups**

**Group 1: Bi-regional cooperation and financing of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in LAC.**

**Presentation:** [Sandra Guzmán \(MEX\)](#), Founder of Grupo de Financiamiento Climático para Latinoamérica y el Caribe (GFLAC)

**Moderator:** [Irene Haddad \(SPA\)](#), Team Leader AL-INVEST VERDE

**Group 2: Bi-regional cooperation, technical transfer, and financing of renewable/green energy projects.**

**Presentation:** [Kristin Lang \(EU\)](#), Head of division Global Partners, European Investment Bank (virtual)

**Moderator:** [Andrea Costrafreda \(SPA\)](#), Oxfam Intermón, Programme Director for Latin America and the Caribbean

**Group 3: Bi-regional cooperation for inclusive digital transformation: closing learning gaps, increasing productivity and bi-regional trade.**

**Presentation:** [Mark Urban \(URY\)](#), Director for International Cooperation, Academic Relations, and Communication at CLARA-BELLAI

**Moderator:** [Alejandro Barros \(CHI\)](#), Director at Espacio Público Chile

13:00h – 14:00h

**Lunch**

14:00h – 15:30h

**Session C of all the working groups**

**Group 1: Bi-regional cooperation on the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).**

**Presentation:** [Sonja Peterson \(GER\)](#), Professor of Global Commons and Climate Policy, Kiel Institute for the World Economy (virtual)

**Moderator:** [Claudia Uribe \(COL\)](#), Chief of the Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, International Trade Centre (ITC)

**Group 2: Cooperation on lithium and other minerals of importance in the energy transition: regulatory framework, investment, environmentally friendly production, value chain, quality employment and commercialisation.**

**Presentation:** [Martín Obaya \(ARG\)](#), Director CENIT - EeY/UNSAM, Researcher CONICET, Green Dealings Project

**Moderator:** [Juan Pablo Maureira \(ECU-BEL\)](#), Managing Director of ENERGIQA

### Group 3: Civil society networks in the green-digital transformation: opportunities for articulation and influence on the LAC-EU cooperation agenda

**Presentation:** [Andrea Ordóñez \(ECU\)](#), Director of Southern Voice Latin America

**Moderator:** [Alejandra García \(SPA\)](#), student at Pablo de Olavide University, Sevilla

15:30h – 16:00h

**Coffee Break**

16:00h – 17:30h

**Plenary and conclusions**

*Presentation of the results of the working groups*

17:30h – 18:30h

**Closing Session**

- [Adrián Bonilla \(ECU\)](#), Executive Director, EU-LAC Foundation

### List of Invited Experts and Participants

#### GROUP 1: Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

- **Alejandro Linayo (ESP/VEN)**, General Director at *Centro de Investigación en Gestión Integral de Riesgos (CIGIR)*
- **Claudia Uribe (COL)**, Chief of the Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, International Trade Centre
- **Francesco Chiodi (IT)**, Programme Coordinator at International Italo-Latin American Organisation (IILA)
- **Irene Haddad (SPA)**, Team Leader at AL-INVEST VERDE
- **Josep Puxeu Rocamora (ESP)**, President of the Latin America Follow-up Committee of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- **Juan Vázquez Zamora (SPA)**, Deputy Head of Latin America and the Caribbean Unit, OECD Development Centre (virtual)
- **Lorena Ruano (MEX)**, Professor at the International Studies Division, *Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas (CIDE)*
- **Maiara Folly (BRA)**, Executive Director and Co-Founder of CIPÓ
- **Maite Rodríguez (GUA)** Founder of *Fundación Guatemala*
- **Paula Wojcikiewicz Almeida (BRA)**, Professor at FGV Centre of Excellence on EU-South America Global Governance (virtual)
- **Pedro Affonso Ivo Franco (BRA)**, Commissioned Researcher, *Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen*

- **Rosa Arlene María (DOMR)**, Executive Director at *Centro Iberoamericano de Desarrollo Estratégico Urbano CIDEU*
- **Sandra Guzmán, (MEX)**, Founder of *Grupo de Financiación del Clima para América Latina y el Caribe (GFLAC)*
- **Sonja Peterson (GER)**, Professor of Global Commons and Climate Policy, Kiel Institute for the World Economy (virtual)
- **Valeria Scorza (SPA)**, Director of Alliances at *Fundación Avina*

### GROUP 2: Just Energy Transition

- **Andrea Costrafreda (SPA)**, Programme Director for Latin America and the Caribbean at Oxfam Intermón
- **Felipe Bosch (ARG/IT)**, Co-founder Americas Programme of *Groupe d'etudes geopolitiques*
- **Jeannette Sánchez (ECU)**, Director of the Natural Resources Division, ECLAC (virtual)
- **Juan Pablo Maureira (ECU/BEL)**, Managing Director at ENERGIQA bv
- **Kristin Lang (EU)**, Head of division Public Sector - Latin America and Caribbean, European Investment Bank (virtual)
- **Luis Martínez Cerna (CHI)**, Director of School of Government and Communications at *Universidad Central de Chile*, and Executive Director at *Centro Latinoamericano para las Relaciones con Europa (CELARE)*
- **María Concepcion (USA)**, Program Manager at Oxfam America-Puerto Rico office
- **María Victoria Boix (ARG)**, Cities Program Director at CIPPEC (virtual)
- **Martin Obaya (ARG)**, Director CENIT - EEN/UNSAM, Researcher CONICET, Green Dealings Project
- **Michelle Arellano-Meza (ECU)**, Director of Innovation at *Instituto de Investigación Aplicada a la Sostenibilidad (IIASUR)*
- **Miguel Vásquez (ESP)**, Senior Researcher at SDA Bocconi Sustainability Lab
- **Nadía Catalina Combariza Díaz (COL)**, Director of the Energy Democratisation Project, SDG Nexus Network/ Think Tank POLEN Just Transitions
- **Lucie Gaildraud (FRA)**, Student at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, París

### GROUP 3: Inclusive Digital Transformation

- **Alejandro Barros, (CHI)**, Director at Espacio Público Chile
- **Andrea Ordóñez (ECU)**, Director of Southern Voice Latin America (virtual)
- **Carlos Ruíz Macho (SPA)**, Technical Specialist at *Instituto Interamericano de Cooperación para la Agricultura (IICA)*
- **Daiana Bouzo, (SPA)**, Transparency, Integrity and Public Policy Coordinator at Transparency International
- **Dumitru Fornea (ROM)** Secretary-General of the MERIDIAN National Trade Union Confederation, EESC

- **Elíana Marcela Alonso (COL)**, Manager at Project Bella T, Red Clara (virtual)
- **Francia Serrano (MEX)**, Partnership Coordinator of MY World Mexico
- **Javier González, (CHI)**, Director of SUMMA – Laboratory of Education Research and Innovation for Latin America and the Caribbean
- **Marcela Angulo (CHI)**, Director at *Espacio Público Chile* (virtual)
- **Mark Urban (URY)**, General Director for International Cooperation, BELLA-T Project
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