

FORTALEZA COMMUNIQUÉ

THE JOINT STATEMENT OF THE 2019 AMERICAS REGIONAL MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON GREEN ECONOMY

25 June 2019, Fortaleza, Brazil

1. A clear priority for many developed and developing economies is the need for innovation, productivity, and secure jobs. While different stakeholders might have varying needs, there is an overall need for higher productivity and efficiency, stronger resilience and innovation.
2. Green economy offers vast opportunities in eradicating poverty as well as sustaining economic growth and combating climate change, which is of particular concern for the countries in the Global South, as well as enhancing social inclusion, improving human welfare, creating opportunities for employment and decent work for all, while maintaining the healthy functioning of the Earth's ecosystems.
3. Failure to take a timely action in walking away from unsustainable economic practices threatens to potentially lead to catastrophic climate change impacts and environmental degradation that can have serious negative implications on future human health and welfare, and our entire ecosystem. A number of environmental systems are being pushed beyond sustainable limits through, for example, loss of biodiversity, nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, land use change, and climate change.
4. In order to drive sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and job creation, particularly for women, youth and the poor, it is important that implementation of green economy policies would adopt a holistic approach, by linking financing, technology, capacity development and other elements of the enabling environment for the green economy. Considerable advantages and synergies can be derived from enhancing cooperation between public and private sectors in the widespread and effective adoption of green economy principles and practices.
5. Overall, the decisions we make today will determine humanity's future. Our economic activity going forward will determine if we are able to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and maintain stocks of natural capital.
6. The 2019 Americas Regional Ministerial Conference on Green Economy, that took place during 24-26 June 2019 in Fortaleza, Brazil, was a result of the success of the annual, since 2014, World Green Economy Summit (WGES) model and a direct response to the requests of participating countries and institutional partners to bring green economy solutions closer to the regional contexts and to deepen the impact of transition to a green economy through promoting collaboration, scaling up and replication of successful practices at the regional level.
7. The Regional Ministerial Conference on Green Economy was designed as an extension to WGES aiming to raise regional awareness by showcasing and scaling up evidence-based green economy solutions crafted and tested by countries in the Americas in addressing sustainable development challenges pertinent to the needs and aspirations of the region.

8. The three thematic focus areas of the 2019 Americas Regional Ministerial Conference on Green Economy were improving regulatory and policy frameworks for a green economy, promoting innovative green investment through public-private partnerships, and advancing national capacities for a holistic green action.
9. The 2019 Americas Regional Ministerial Conference on Green Economy was organized by the World Green Economy Organization in close cooperation with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, and the Brazil Africa Institute, and was hosted by the Government of the State of Ceará, Brazil. Other partners that supported the 2019 Americas Regional Ministerial Conference on Green Economy include the UN Climate Change, United Nations Development Programme, and the International Solar Alliance.
10. It brought together high-level government representatives, representatives of international organizations, foundations, as well as relevant private sector players and civil society actors from around the Americas and beyond.
11. The participants of the Conference agreed to produce a joint statement intended to further promote the green economy agenda and to serve as a policy recommendation framework on the practical aspects related to advancing the transition to a green economy model.
12. More specifically, the participants agreed on the following recommendations:
 - A. In part of **creating enabling policy and legislative environment** for the green economy transition:
 - a. To build on the measurement and criteria for assessing the current situation and the results of the policies when creating the enabling environment; to consider the internationally accepted criteria, such as Green Growth Indicators by OECD, to introduce for measuring the progress consistent with the sustainable development goals and the Paris Agreement;
 - b. To monitor closely transformative changes for green economy, being adjusted when necessary. To consider ethics of development and ensuring universal treatment of countries as a key for green economy; to ensure that no country is left behind through the international conventions playing a key role, where the Montreal Protocol and the Paris Agreement serving as good examples of working approach; to develop common frameworks and approaches to reduce GHG emissions through cooperating in environmental (carbon) markets;
 - c. To combine long-term approach and short-term actions, where long-term strategies, implemented by countries shall be aimed at attaining development goals and provide general, systemic guidance for green economy development and short-term actions, experiments, and adjustment to local conditions based on the decentralized approach; these strategies shall be promoted to play an enabling role in introducing elements of circular economy, and lead to elaboration of sector and thematic work plans with associated training and capacity development, aligned with SDGs;
 - d. To identify change agents as promoters of development change and empowered through increased capacities to advocate for and support actions for green economy development. This includes empowering communities on all levels to be able to engage dynamically with the state;

- e. To introduce green skills development and environmental education in the countries' human development strategies as key drivers of transition to a green economy;
- f. To improve the awareness of all stakeholders and sectors of society about green economy, along with capacity building; to promote engagement of all actors so as to get them involved and become more ambitious regarding climate action and transition to a green and sustained economy; link citizens and decision makers in governance processes, ensuring inclusion of the most vulnerable;
- g. To adjust policies and legislative array to foster decarbonized technological changes and promoting clean market solutions based on sustainable technologies; to ensure that the policies' adjustment is a participatory process, a dialogue engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including those from outside of the environment/climate change sector, and the highest level of government representatives; to implement regulations on energy efficiency and renewable energy to motivate investors;
- h. To ensure implementation of the inclusive green economy approach which recognizes that integrated collaborative solutions are required to address inequalities and vulnerabilities that vary across landscapes and population groups;
- i. To remove perverse incentives (fiscal, tax, regulatory etc.) for industries, economic and social areas where the green economy solutions are sustainable, and replaced them with mechanisms to encourage positive behavior; these should be tested and adjusted to ensure the desired response. A circular economy programme can be an effective entry point to encourage a culture of innovation, prototyping and experimentation.

B. In part of advancing the use and scaling up of green innovative technologies:

- a. To create enabling conditions through building the comprehensive systems which include availability of finance, relevant regulation, and accessibility of innovative solutions; to update taxation system for the promotion of green and circular and decarbonized economy;
- b. To promote innovations to transit to a circular economy which is the key for the promotion a green economy; to implement innovative approaches and technologies to ensure that the Green Economy, the Blue Economy and the objectives of Sustainable Development including the new Climate Regime are integrated and indivisible;
- c. To promote joint action of various social actors, government, civil society, companies and consumers in order to create a positive environment for innovation, where everyone performs its role with knowledge and mutual respect;
- d. To develop and implement green innovative resilient technologies based on the involvement of different actors, starting from the public authorities, entrepreneurs, family farmers, cooperatives, as well as big production companies and ensure wide spread of non-harm to the environment. Governments must be developers of comprehensive policies that promote the initiatives that lead nations to greener economies.

Companies must be open up to new concepts and production practices, focused on those technologies that promote the development of eco-technologies. Schools and universities should be responsible for transforming the minds of the next generations, breaking paradigms;

- e. To deepen cooperation with international agencies which can provide technical assistance (e.g. barrier diagnosis, feasibility assessments, etc.), broker relationships, leverage public and private financing, and help to streamline and systematize successful practices and exchange knowledge and experiences from across the globe; to engage international agencies to providing grant financing or start-up capital to lower the risk of an investment, to crowd in other resources or test a new technology or solution in the field before commercialization or upscaling.

C. In part of enhancing the role of **green finance** as a way **to fund sustainable development**:

- a. To direct capital flows towards sustainable projects that serve our long-term goals. In order to do this, as the first priority, the states need to work on changing the investment culture and behavior of all market actors within a sound regulatory environment, including through providing more financial and other incentives to choose and offer green products, and accelerating the implementation of the green solutions, leaving none behind.
- b. To address a key challenge that is to find appropriate and effective ways in order to operate and mobilize resources from the international finance institutions, private sector and the financial sector according to the criteria of sustainable finance;
- c. To mobilize private investments, assuming that while markets and capital flows operate within a short-term framework and investment is not encouraged due to low valuation of sustainability, the investment only may be insufficient on relevant issues to achieve sustainable development (such as poverty reduction or climate change) if the expected return - adjusted to the corresponding risk - is unsatisfactory compared to other investment options;
- d. To maintain high level of engagement of the public sector as it plays an increasingly important role in the inclusion of criteria of social profitability in the cost-benefit analysis and can create a favorable environment and the right incentives to strengthen the ecosystem and attract private capital and direct it towards development objectives;
- e. To seek public revenue generation and investment, and incentivize research and development of alternative materials and approaches for growth. For that knowledge shall be shared across varying parties (government, SMEs, MDBs, commercial banks, credit unions, cooperatives, social enterprise, IFIs, etc.) on how various financial instruments work, the nature of the risk and opportunity from each party's perspective to be able to construct/negotiate/innovate financing arrangements;
- f. To combine public and private resources, in order to achieve the necessary leverage to maximize the impact of financing for development, extending to solid investments and micro finance to address vulnerability. To achieve more sustainable growth, all members of society must play their role, the financial system is not an exception;

- g. To accompany efforts in the mobilization of private resources by a greater variety of instruments, including developing the markets of environmental commodities, green financial instruments, such as green bonds and hybrid instruments;
- h. To reorient private capital towards more sustainable investments that requires a complete analysis of the financial system functioning.

D. In part of **national-level capacity development for green action:**

- a. To understand that developing capacities for green economy planning, strategic management, and implementation require systematic effort and investment;
- b. To ensure that national capacity building in the field of green economy addresses critical barriers to green economy transformation and supports the process of governance to achieve SDGs aligned with the National Development Strategies;
- c. To ensure the inclusiveness of a green economy through improving individual, institutional and planning capacities for the action of the Green and Inclusive Economy. These actions must be supported by networks woven among all the stakeholders: the national and local government, civil society and communities, and the private sector: companies and workers.
- d. To bring multiple partners to the table at different levels, including the community level, engage them in effective multi-sector dialogue, identify and address capacity gaps, and test iteratively to have a proof of concept that can be more effectively articulated for upscaling/replication;
- e. To open innovation, landscape-based platforms, bring together private enterprise, local communities, local and national government as well as civil society, to accelerate solutions to local development priorities; to address the most complex development challenges associated with persisting inequalities within countries, the platform approach aims to catalyze sustainable development through integration and multi-stakeholder collaboration around nature-based solutions, sustainable livelihoods and economic development, participatory governance, and public-private partnerships;
- f. To develop and promote public-private partnership programs, integrating the academies (in research and technological innovation), business associations, businesses and the financial sector;
- g. To ensure that addressing specific sectors with the capacity building efforts includes: (i) planning for development, through collaboration with multiple actors; (ii) Circular economy, greening of MSMEs and green and inclusive production and services.

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