



Talking Points

AMBASSADOR GUILLERMO FERNANDEZ DE SOTO
2021 Celebration of the International Day of Forest
Theme: “Forest Restoration: A Path to Recovery and Wellbeing”
March 19th, 2021, 10:00-13:00 hrs

3 minutes

Madam Chair,

- Allow me to begin my thanking you for convening this important meeting.
- Colombia acknowledges that the conservation, sustainable management and restoration of forests are critical to address climate change and biodiversity loss, as well as to ensure a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- As a country with 52% of its territory covered by forests, Colombia has set ambitious forest-related targets, which form the basis of an approach that places nature at the forefront of decision-making; across all sectors and levels of government.
- At the national level, in 2019 Colombia reduced by 28% its rate of deforestation, compared to the levels registered in 2017. Our objective is to reach zero net deforestation by 2030.
- In parallel, efforts on restoration advance with nearly 54 million trees planted since 2018, with the goal of reaching 120 million by the end of this year, and a total of 180 million by the end of the Government’s term.

Dear colleagues,

- As an Amazonian country, Colombia has spared no effort in the protection and sustainable development of the biome.
- Under the Leticia Pact, a strategic initiative for Colombia, we have designed a Protocol for Forest Fires in the Amazon, and more recently –just yesterday– we have launched the IDB Group’s Amazon Initiative that will mobilize public and private resources for investing in bio-economy in the region.

COLOMBIA



- Colombia seeks to ensure that such an important regional effort is coherent with initiatives of a global scope, like the Alliance for the Conservation of Rainforests. Guided by the respect for the sovereignty of every member State, the Alliance strives for their conservation, restoration and sustainable management.
- But our aspirations don't stop there. Our commitment with the protection of forests goes further.
- Mindful of the inter-linkages between climate and biodiversity related challenges, Colombia has also endorsed other initiatives, such as the High Level Coalition for Nature and People and the Leader's Pledge for Nature. They will be critical for the adoption of an effective global biodiversity framework post-2020.
- These national, regional and global efforts allow us to tackle the challenges faced by forests, understood as vital ecosystems of our planet. A topic that requires the highest levels of ambition for the sake of our own existence.

Madam Chair,

- Allow me to celebrate the International Day of Forests by reaffirming the commitment of Colombia with the protection of forests, and recalling the urgent need to catalyze transformative change to live in harmony with nature.
- Higher levels of international cooperation, as well as renovated and innovative resource mobilization strategies, will be required if we intend to build back better in sync with nature.
- Forests must play a relevant role in this path of recovery. They are essential for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda, particularly, in the context of the Decade of Action and Ecosystem Restoration.

Thank you very much.