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## **SPECIAL DECLARATION ON THE CONSERVATION OF THE OCEANS AND THEIR SUSTAINABLE USE**

The Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), meeting in the City of Buenos Aires, Argentine Republic, on January 24, 2023, observe with concern the environmental challenges that affect the planet, especially the region, and the need for transformative change to address the underlying factors of nature's deterioration.

HIGHLIGHTED the importance that the oceans have for sustainable development, providing us with innumerable ecosystems, economic and social services, and taking a key part of the lives of millions of people in Latin America, the Caribbean and around the world.

REITERATED the importance of protecting our marine and coastal ecosystems, as well as the biodiversity that inhabits them, and recommended developing actions to protect them from the harmful impacts of human activity, and from the different threats that affect them today, including pollution by plastics and microplastics from terrestrial and marine sources, climate change, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, overexploitation, among others.

RECOGNIZED the adverse impacts of climate change on the oceans and marine biodiversity, which has resulted in an increase in sea level and temperature, deoxygenation, and acidification of the oceans and coasts, as well as a decrease in polar ice cover, coastal erosion and extreme weather events.

REAFFIRMED the commitment to achieve the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 14 "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources." Taking into account that the crisis in the health of the oceans reduces its intrinsic capacity to contribute to the mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

REITERATED the need to strengthen the conservation of marine and coastal areas, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from the use of marine genetic resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction, and to promote capacity building and the transfer of technologies for the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity, in accordance with the relevant international conventions to which the States are parties and the negotiations on the Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), which also stands out for its importance in the protection of the oceans.

RECOGNIZED the importance of the works at the intergovernmental conference for the development of a binding international instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction and the need to protect the oceans and ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of marine genetic resources.

HIGHLIGHTED the importance of working together to advance the conservation of the oceans and their sustainable use.

CONGRATULATED Panama for hosting the eighth edition of the *Conference "Our Ocean"*, in March 2023.

EXPRESSED their support for the success of the 2025 United Nations High-Level Conference to help implement Sustainable Development 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, which will be cosponsored by Costa Rica and France.