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Closing Session - Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

27 January 2022 – Virtual session

It is an honor for UN Women to participate in this closing event of the 62nd Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

I once again greet my fellow closing participants, my dear Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC, and Mónica Zalaquett, Minister of Women and Gender Equality of Chile, in her capacity as President of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

I send my deepest gratitude to all the Ministers of Women for their permanent commitment and active participation, to the agencies of the United Nations system that accompanied us, and especially to UNDRR for the co-organization of this morning's session and the joint work towards CSW66.

Thank you and all our appreciation to the representatives of feminist, women's, and civil society organizations who have accompanied us over the past two days and who push us with a sense of urgency to take concrete measures to improve, in a real and tangible way, the lives of women and girls in the region.

We at UN Women read carefully the Declaration of the forum that was presented to us, and we listened with great attention to all your proposals and demands, and



we will continue to work together to achieve a region where women and girls can fully exercise their rights and autonomy.

We are at a critical juncture, and taking action to mainstream gender equality and the full and effective participation of women in climate change adaptation and mitigation, environmental care, and disaster risk reduction is a matter of survival and priorities.

It is urgent to ensure that climate change financing incorporates a gender perspective, both in global and regional mechanisms, as well as throughout the innovative financing ecosystem. And it is essential that this funding reaches feminist and women's organizations on the ground.

As our Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres alerts us, climate change is an emergency, and we must act accordingly.

Therefore, I extend my sincere congratulations to the ministers and authorities of the mechanisms for the advancement of women for the adoption of the Declaration that will bring the region's voice to the 66th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66).

The Declaration recognizes the differentiated effects of climate change on women and girls, as well as the greater impact of disasters on women and girls, highlighting the region's vulnerability to both climate change and disasters. In this context, you, as ministers and authorities, have adopted a Declaration that proposes concrete measures so that the climate and environmental challenges we face do not mean a new deepening of inequality for women and girls but rather an opportunity to implement initiatives that place them at the center.



As I did yesterday, I want to reaffirm the importance and responsibility we have to women human rights and environmental defenders once again. These women, many of them indigenous, face enormous risks for defending something that we all need and that benefits all of us. The threats and violence faced by women defenders must stop immediately, and their role as guardians of the earth must be recognized and respected.

I especially call on GRULAC and the Santiago group to bring the region's voice to the CSW in March so that the voices of Latin American and Caribbean women contribute to strengthening global agreements.

I believe it is essential to reaffirm our commitment to take all necessary measures to accelerate the effective implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda and international commitments on gender equality, women's economic, physical, and decision-making autonomy, and the full guarantee of their human rights.

Our common goal is to advance towards achieving sustainable development, climate action, disaster risk management and reduction, and strengthening the resilience of all women, leaving no one behind.

In this regard, I congratulate the adoption of the Agreements of the 62nd Meeting of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference.

This two-day meeting has allowed us to establish clear links between the solidarity-based society we want to build and how caring for the planet must be a central part of sustainable development, as reflected in the 2030 Agenda and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

I would like to thank again and reiterate my most sincere congratulations to Alicia Bárcena for her legacy. I am very proud of the decisive cooperation between UN



Women and ECLAC in the region over the past few years to contribute to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

I am convinced that we will sustain this strategic collaboration to continue strengthening the regional gender agenda in preparation for the XV Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which we will jointly hold in Argentina next November.

This is also a moment to recognize the role of Minister Mónica Zalaquett, who is with us today for the last time as President of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference. In this sense, UN Women recognizes the strong commitment to transform the objectives we have set in our Gender Agenda into concrete initiatives that substantially benefit the lives of women in the region, such as the Regional Alliance for Digitalization, whose progress we have been informed about these days, as well as her efforts to implement the Regional Fund to Support Women's and Feminist Organizations and Movements.

Dear Monica, thank you very much for your support and joint work and many successes in your future projects. I am sure you will continue to advocate for a society in which women and girls are true protagonists.

I would especially like to thank the Secretariat of the Regional Conference, Luis Yáñez, and the Gender Affairs Division and its excellent team, led by Ana Güzmes. I would also like to thank, of course, the entire UN Women team at the Regional Office, and in particular the Deputy Regional Director, Cecilia Alemany, Barbara Ortiz and the teams in each of our Offices in the countries of the region who work tirelessly alongside each of you to make our mandate a reality.



Before concluding, I would like to thank Alicia Bárcena once again in particular, for this joint journey and for the progress achieved with your transforming vision, as we mentioned yesterday, together with Sima Bahous, our Executive Director.

Alicia, we will continue to meet in your next steps, and congratulations on this stage that we are closing today with nostalgia.

From the different places we occupy, those of us who are gathered here, despite the difficulties of this crisis, let us continue to build a more inclusive and egalitarian future to end the multiple structural discriminations faced by women and girls in our region.

Let us continue working for a future in which we achieve physical, political, and economic autonomy and human rights for women in all their diversity.

Thank you very much.