

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE MARKING THE ENTRY INTO FORCE
OF THE ESCAZÚ AGREEMENT**

22 April 2021

On this International Mother Earth Day, I am delighted to join you in celebrating the entry into force of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Escazú Agreement.

This is a historic achievement for the region and for the world. In addition to being the most recent Multilateral Environmental Agreement to have been negotiated and adopted under the auspices of the United Nations, the Escazú Agreement is also Latin America and the Caribbean's first regional environmental treaty.

Perhaps most notably, it is the first such treaty to include specific provisions for the protection and promotion of human rights defenders in environmental matters.

As we continue to tackle the shattering impacts of COVID-19 and step up efforts to curb the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity collapse and pollution of the natural environment, the Escazú Agreement's entry into force provides hope and inspiration, and sets the stage for sustainable and resilient recovery. By adopting a rights-based approach, fostering capacity-building and cooperation, and focusing on the most vulnerable, this regional treaty is a major leap forward in forging transformative pathways for people and our planet.

I commend the Latin American and Caribbean States that have ratified the treaty and urge all countries to join them as soon as possible. Congratulations to the countries of the region, to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and to everyone that made this ground-breaking treaty a reality.