# Submission by Colombia on behalf of the Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean about the Sixth Global Dialogue and Investment-focused Event of the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme.

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**Introduction**

The *Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean* (AILAC) is honoured to present its views on behalf of its member states. This submission outlines our suggested approach and views on opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers relevant to the Sixth Global Dialogue and Investment-focused Event of the Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme.

AILAC once again expresses its confidence in Co-Chairs Ms Angela Churie Kallhauge and Mr Gao Xiang, for their guidance in developing the global dialogues and investment-focused events under the Sharm El-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme.

AILAC must recall that the main purpose of the Sharm El-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme is to *urgently scale up mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade*; and reiterates that the Programme is far from delivering results commensurate with its mandate. AILAC urges Parties to uphold to our agreements: the Mitigation Work Programme (MWP) can and needs to be aligned with the outcomes of the Global Stocktake (GST), taking into account that:

- Decision 1/CMA.3, paragraph 27 establishes the MWP "to urgently scale up mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade so as to complement the GST."
- Decision 4/CMA.4 reaffirms that the MWP's objective is to complement the GST and, in paragraph 14, invites Parties and observers to provide inputs and to link MWP dialogues with other processes, including the GST.
- Decision 1/CMA.5, paragraph 186 invites all work programmes and constituted bodies, including the MWP, to integrate the GST findings into the planning of their future work.
- Decision 4/CMA.5 instructs the MWP Co-Chairs to determine annual themes taking account of the GST results.

Also taking into account that (i) global warming is driven by anthropogenic greenhouse-gas emissions, (ii) carbon dioxide accounts for 74 per cent of total GHG emissions, and (iii) 92 per cent of those $CO_2$ emissions come from fossil-fuel use, we believe that the MWP must address this reality, as acknowledged in paragraph 28(d) of Decision 1/CMA.5.

As in previous submissions, AILAC reiterates its call for the establishment, under the MWP, of a seventh Global Dialogue entitled: "*Transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems, in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade so as to achieve net-zero by 2050 in line with the science*."

**The importance of the waste sector for AILAC Countries**

In this submission, AILAC will share views for the upcoming Dialogue on the waste sector, defined as all anthropogenic GHG emissions arising from the management and disposal of solid waste and wastewater, while also integrating circular-economy approaches, as indicated by the co-Chairs. However, it is important to clarify that circular economy extends far beyond waste management. It represents a shift towards a restorative and regenerative development model that safeguards natural capital and promotes resource efficiency, consistent with the Paris Agreement recognition that "sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of consumption and production, with developed country Parties taking the lead, play an important role in addressing climate change".

Anthropogenic methane has contributed around 0.5 °C of the observed global temperature rise since pre-industrial times, within an assessed uncertainty range of approximately 0.3–0.8 °C (IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report). Decision 1/CMA.5, paragraph 28(f), urges Parties to support global efforts to cut non-$CO_2$ greenhouse-gas emissions, including methane, by 2030.

Because the waste sector (landfills and wastewater) generates close to 20 % of global human-induced methane emissions, AILAC welcomes the convening of the Sixth Global Dialogue on Waste as a timely opportunity to accelerate action in this high-impact area.

For AILAC, addressing this topic represents multiple opportunities for basic sanitation, public health, just transitions and local economies; while acknowledging that the sector is a significant source of methane and nitrous oxide, GHGs with high global-warming potential and relatively short atmospheric lifetimes. Mitigating these gases therefore delivers faster progress toward the UNFCCC's ultimate objective of stabilising atmospheric GHG concentrations at levels that prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

The Latin American and Caribbean region faces the climate crisis from an asymmetric position. As noted in the latest CEPAL report on climate-related statistics and indicators (United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025), the region's GHG emissions peaked in 2014, earlier than the global average, and represent only 7 % of cumulative global emissions, while the region remains highly vulnerable to climate impacts. Between 1990 and 2023, 90 % of disasters in the region were linked to hydrometeorological events such as droughts, floods, storms, extreme temperatures and wildfires.

In our region, the waste sector gained prominence in the second half of the twentieth century. Rapid urbanisation and population growth concentrated waste generation, and urban lifestyles correlate increased waste production. Coupled with economic-growth patterns, development models and rising consumption and production, this has created pressing waste-management challenges.

Recognising methane's high mitigation potential and the immediate climate gains from cutting it, AILAC countries are considering improved organic-waste management (such as composting, anaerobic digestion, and landfill-gas capture and use) as a core element of their short-lived climate-pollutant strategies, nature-based-solutions portfolios, and the measurable targets of their updated and future NDCs. These actions embody circular-economy principles and deliver scalable, low-cost mitigation with added benefits for public health, soil rehabilitation, and sustainable livelihoods.

To reinforce this agenda, the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, building on its 2018 Voluntary Coalition and the 2021 *Roadmap for the Progressive Closure of Dumpsites in LAC*, endorsed in September 2024 the "Regional Cooperation Programme for the Progressive Closure of Illegal Dumpsites." Launched through a ministerial Declaration at COP 29 with support from UNEP and the Climate & Clean Air Coalition, the Programme aims to fast-track the region's shift to circular waste systems while sharply cutting methane emissions from landfills.

While waste-related emissions, especially methane and nitrous oxide, account for roughly 3.4 % of total global GHG emissions (about 2 % from landfills and 1.3 % from wastewater), in AILAC countries, this sector's share is higher than the global average, ranging from 6 % to 20 % depending on the country (World Resources Institute, 2025). This reflects not only the significant urbanization and the persistent management and technological challenges of the waste sector, but also the relatively low absolute and proportional contribution of our countries' energy sectors, in comparison with the global landscape.

AILAC countries have significantly invested in sanitation and waste management during the last decades and have included a variety of measures to curb emissions from the solid-waste sector in their most recent NDCs, as well as in those now under preparation, though not all have yet adopted explicit measures on wastewater in their current NDCs. All countries have, at different levels, circular economy initiatives, with many having created Circular Economy Strategies or roadmaps as part of a broader set of policies and legislation to address waste generation and waste management. Those initiatives may take part of the NDCs either as a dedicated or as a crosscutting issue.

Several AILAC countries, as well, are strengthening the human dimension of waste management by promoting public awareness, education, around sustainable practices, while fostering inclusive policies that recognize the role of local communities, women, youth, and informal waste workers in achieving circular economy goals.

AILAC wishes to contribute to this dialogue by sharing experiences and challenges related to all the topics; including the integration, empowerment and inclusion of informal recyclers ensuring environmental justice and supporting livelihoods; the deployment of technologies for integrated waste management; extended producer responsibility; as well as other critical measures to reduce emissions from the waste sector in accordance to our national circumstances. We expect the dialogue to examine the waste sector in depth and to cover every stage of a circular-economy approach, producing clear, actionable recommendations that genuinely raise mitigation ambition and accelerate implementation.

**Suggested topics for the dialogue**

In most countries of our region, waste management is a complex reality that involves multiple actors, including municipal governments, environmental authorities, and private entities. In turn, circular-economy solutions also require a decisive contribution from the private sector. We therefore expect both sets of actors playing a central role in the dialogue. At the same time, it is

important that the dialogue is not limited solely to urban domestic waste, but also addresses rural waste (e.g. from agrochemicals).

The proposed sub-topics follow the internationally recognized waste-management hierarchy: **(i)** prevention at source, **(ii)** material recovery and recycling, and **(iii)** final treatment and disposal, supplemented by cross-cutting topics on enabling instruments and the circular economy **(iv)**.

1. **Waste prevention and minimization** – promoting responsible production and consumption patterns and circular business models as well as extended producer responsibility schemes that avoid waste generation at source.
2. **Material valorization, segregation and recycling** – implementing source-segregation schemes, efficient collection logistics according to classification, quantity and properties of the waste, organic-waste composting or anaerobic digestion, and formal integration of the informal recycling workforce.
3. **Waste and wastewater treatment and final disposal** – optimized operation of sanitary landfills and wastewater-treatment facilities, including capture and energy recovery from landfill gas and digester biogas.
4. **Circular-economy frameworks and enabling instruments** – policy, regulatory and financial mechanisms that create systemic incentives for resource efficiency and waste management; as well as technology transfer, capacity-building at all levels, and targeted support for planning and implementation, especially in developing countries.

**Opportunities, best practices, actionable solutions, challenges and barriers**

**1 - Waste prevention and minimisation**

Every AILAC member has introduced upstream measures that address the generation of waste. Chile's Law 21100 on the Elimination of Plastic Bags and Costa Rica's Law 9786 on Single-Use Plastics phase out disposable carriers and utensils, while Colombia's Law 1990 of 2019 requires food businesses to quantify, prevent and redistribute edible surpluses, cutting the single largest stream of organic waste; Extended producer responsibility is becoming the rule rather than the exception: Chile's Law 20920 on Extended Producer Responsibility and Promotion of Recycling obliges producers of packaging, tyres and electronics to meet rising collection and recycling quotas; Peru incorporated a similar principle into its Legislative Decree 1278 (2016) and its supreme decree 014-2017-MINAM, and Guatemala's Governmental Agreement No. 164-2021, effective 2025, mandates nationwide sorting of waste into three streams—organic, recyclable and non-recyclable. The "Guatemala más limpia" National Strategy, promotes circular-economy initiatives through public-private partnerships behaviour change, as well as stronger legal and institutional frameworks for waste management. Governments are complementing legal bans with positive price signals: Colombia applies a national levy on lightweight plastic bags that rises annually and has established the progressive elimination of 21 single-use plastic products through Law 2232 of 2022, Costa Rica ties tax rebates to reusable packaging, and Panamá's "Basura Cero" policy offers fee reductions for firms that demonstrate waste-avoidance plans. The main hurdles remain weak municipal inspection capacity and consumer habits, but linking extended producer responsibility

fees to eco-design performance and mandating circular-criteria in public procurement are widely viewed as fast, scalable measures.

**2 - Material valorisation, segregation and recycling**

Mandatory source-segregation rules are spreading in our countries. Guatemala's Government Agreement 164-2021 on Integrated Waste Management establishes a three-bin system (organics, recyclables, non-recyclables) for all households as of 2025, joining Colombia's colour-coded standard under Resolution 2184 of 2019 and the separation provisions in Panamá's "Basura Cero" law. Organic matter, roughly one-half of municipal refuse, is being redirected into composting and small-scale anaerobic digestion hubs: Costa Rica's national Composting Plan deploys decentralised digesters in coffee districts; municipal markets in Panamá City and Santiago de Chile are installing in-vessel composters that supply urban agriculture. Material-recovery facilities around Bogotá, Lima and Santiago are expanding capacity for paper, metals and polyethylene terephthalate, while digital traceability platforms piloted in Costa Rica and Panamá match clean feedstock with domestic manufacturers. In Colombia, producers and importers are compelled to run e-waste take-back schemes. Social inclusion is integral: in Chile, projects financed by the national Recycling Fund must hire accredited waste-picker co-operatives; Colombia's tariff model pays organised recyclers per tonne officially recovered; Honduras' forthcoming Waste Management Bill reserves collection routes for worker co-operatives, and Guatemala's last technical Working Group for the just transition of informal waste picker, building synergies between government entities, stakeholders and organized waste pickers. Price volatility for secondary materials, inadequate logistics in thinly populated areas, irregular quality control for compost and limited market demand for products derived from material recovery and composting remain the principal constraints.

**3 - Waste and wastewater treatment and final disposal**

Engineered landfills now serve the most main urban areas of AILAC countries, and several already extract methane for energy. The biogas facility at Doña Juana in Bogotá produces roughly two megawatts of electricity and finances community programmes through carbon-credit revenues; Loma Los Colorados and Santa Marta in Chile, and Cerro Patacón in Panamá, follow similar business models anchored in power-purchase agreements. Guatemala is designing regional sanitary landfills to replace its Zone 3 megadump, and Honduras is negotiating climate-fund grants for the same purpose. In parallel, wastewater treatment coverage is expanding. Los Tajos in San José treats over one million inhabitants' effluent, while Lima's twin plants Taboada and La Chira and Colombia's planned Canoas facility together shift millions of cubic metres of sewage from rivers to advanced treatment. Digesters in these plants are increasingly configured to run blowers and pumps on recovered biogas, lowering operating costs and emissions. However, widespread deployment of such solutions remains limited by barriers including high upfront capital requirements, long-term operational costs and local opposition to new facilities. Bundling several small landfill-gas schemes into a single carbon programme and dedicating part of electricity revenues to community funds are emerging finance solutions. Smaller municipalities and mid-sized cities still use open dumps or rudimentary disposal sites that need closure or upgrading. Limited technical capacity, small waste volumes, and financing gaps, despite some carbon-market incentives, limit access to suitable technologies. Energy-recovery options are often unviable

because of dispersed, mixed waste streams. To extend the successes seen nationally, countries must tailor solutions to local conditions, match technologies to on-the-ground realities, and remove structural barriers to technology transfer and financing, especially in underserved areas.

**4 - Circular-economy frameworks and enabling instruments**

Strategic roadmaps now frame national action. Colombia's National Circular Economy Strategy, Chile's Circular Economy Roadmap 2020-2040, Costa Rica's National Circular Economy Strategy, and Peru's Sectoral Circular Industry Plan, as well as Guatemala National Strategy for the transition to a Circular Economy (under development) embed quantitative waste targets in broader resource-efficiency agendas. Fiscal tools complement the palette: landfill-disposal charges under discussion in Costa Rica, differentiated collection tariffs already applied in several Colombian cities, and sovereign green bonds in Panamá and Peru that channel proceeds into recycling parks, composting plants and biogas engines. Chile will establish a methane emissions standard for landfills complementing both domestic and international market incentives (e.g., Article 6 of the Paris Agreement).Robust measurement, reporting and verification systems and cross-ministerial coordination platforms, such as Colombia's Inter-sectoral Commission on Circular Economy, are considered essential to translate policy intent into verifiable emission cuts. Equally crucial is a just transition for informal recyclers, safeguarded in Chile's and Colombia's extended producer responsibility by-laws. Nevertheless, MRV systems for mitigation actions in the waste sector still require further development—particularly regarding methane baseline estimations, which are critical for assessing the real mitigation potential of waste interventions. In parallel, there is a need to identify specific barriers and opportunities linked to the implementation of circular economy strategies, including the development of clear indicators to evaluate their contribution to greenhouse gas mitigation. Strengthening these technical elements will be vital to ensure the environmental integrity and climate relevance of circular economy approaches across AILAC countries.

***References***

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