

Special session - The Escazú Agreement: An instrument for cooperation  
9<sup>th</sup> December

*Saint John's/virtual, 9 and 10 December 2020*

It is an honor for me to participate on behalf of UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean, in the Second Meeting of the Signatory Countries to the Escazú Agreement with focus on cooperation.

I would like to thank the host Government of Antigua and Barbuda, the ECLAC, all signatories' countries and organizations involved. Especially, I would like to thank all the Youth Champions of Escazu who yesterday led an inspiring Youth Forum. - It was encouraging to see how these young people commitments to environmental protection and Escazu Agreement.

This is the first time that an entire generation will be born and raised in a world that has become much more dangerous and uncertain as a result of a changing climate and environmental degradation. The climate crisis is also a crisis of children's rights, and there is an imperative for intergenerational justice.

But, far from assuming a role of victims, they have assumed an important role as agents of change, fighting for the defense of the environment, demanding real changes and taking action.

Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the regions with the highest number of young voices raised in defense of nature, but also a tough place to be a young climate activist. It is crucial that we secure a protected environment for those young activists.

The Escazu Agreement is a unique mechanism that builds together a community that can change the rules of the game and ensuring the full, safe, and informed participation of young people in climate action and environmental advocacy.

The implementation of the Escazu Agreement must be understood in conjunction with young people, ensuring that their age, gender, ability and ethnic diversity are included to achieve the universality of the agreement.

UNICEF has a wide experience in providing spaces for dialogue among young people and with policymakers, such as the ongoing revision of the Nationally Determined Contributions.

Just recently UNICEF, has launched a [Toolkit for Climate Youth Activists](#), including a specific booklet about the Escazu Agreement, with the objective to enable an access to climate and environmental information in a simple manner - This we hope, will allow a wider participation of young people in climate actions.

In conclusion, UNICEF encourages all members and actors engaged in the Principle 10, to advocate for a child and youth inclusive and ensuring a meaningful youth participation and engagement with the implementations of the Escazu agreement.

The COVID-19 crisis has presented us with a unique window of time and an unprecedented moment in our lifetime to reimagine what a new global social contract looks like. It has shown us that together we have the tools and the experience to fight climate change.

Together, we can harness science, evidence and momentum to reimagine and build back a more sustainable, greener and fairer world, for every child in the region - by placing environmental, human and child rights in the centre.

UNICEF stands ready to support you all as you do so.

Thank you and wishing a fruitful continuation of the meeting.

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