Natural resources: challenges and opportunities for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean is endowed with abundant natural resources, but these are distributed unevenly. ECLAC supports effective and democratic governance of natural resources to achieve the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Forests and Oceans**
In some parts of the region, deforestation rates are among the highest in the world. Six countries reached SDG target 14.5 of conserving at least 10% of their coastal and marine areas, but the average in the rest is only 1.5%.

- 23% of forest area
- Almost 50% forest cover (95% tropical forests)

**Agricultural Resources**
The region can contribute to global food security by increasing agricultural production, but decoupling agricultural production from environmental degradation while adapting to climate change is a challenge.

- 2 centres of origin
- 12% arable land
- 15% agricultural land

**Freshwater**
Addressing trade-offs and enhancing synergies, through Nexus approaches, increasing safe drinking water coverage and treatment of waste water are all still challenges.

- 1/3 global resources
- 86% piped water coverage
- 65% sanitation services coverage

**Fossil Resources**
A challenge in the transition to renewable clean energy alternatives is to use the rents from fossil resources to diversify the economies, while protecting critical ecosystems.

- 20% oil reserves
- 4% natural gas reserves
- Uneven distribution

**Renewable Energy**
Increasing the share of non-conventional sustainable sources in the energy mix is a challenge in most countries of the region.

- 25% regional energy supply
- 10 GW of installed capacity

**Mineral Resources**
Reducing environmental impacts and managing social conflicts are critical for the governance of mineral resources.

- Shares of global reserves: 72% lithium, 40% copper, 48% silver

**Biodiversity**
The Latin American and Caribbean region is extraordinarily biodiverse; however, biodiversity loss is increasing continuously. The main challenge is to promote development models that incorporate nature’s processes and cycles.

- 6 of 17 megadiverse countries
- Almost all world’s ecosystems represented

**Nexus policy approaches**
Democratic governance