

ENGLISH for:

Reunión la Alianza para las Montañas

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Texto enviado por el señor Ramiro Espino, Secretario de Estado, Vicepresidente Ejecutivo del Consejo Nacional para las Comunidades Dominicanas en el Exterior

Good morning, I will be reading the following text sent by Mr. Ramiro Espino, Secretary of State, Executive Vice President of the National Council for Dominican Communities Abroad.

Dear colleagues and friends:

I apologize for my absence, unfortunately, due to institutional reasons that force me to stay on the other side of the Atlantic this week, I am unable to take a part in this exchange of ideas but I must emphasize the good intentions through the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations in Rome.

In this important committee we assume the commitment to seek and find consensus solutions to safeguard mountain ecosystems and the populations that are an integral part of them.

Mountain ecosystems are a key element in the gearing of food security and nutrition.

Mountain ecosystems occupy more than a fifth of the surface of the entire planet and have the capacity to provide up to 80% of the water resources for domestic, agricultural and industrial consumption.

Its vital importance is also manifested by providing valuable genetic resources for crops and livestock.

Today more than ever, tourism is becoming a solidarity activity; The contemporary tourist, in search of knowledge on lifestyles and culture, finds in the mountains, especially when interacting with those who live in them, a space of leisure and awareness.

It is also true that, while we are seeing this awareness through processes of cultural evolution and sensitivity towards mountainous ecosystems, we face two great challenges.

The first is climate change; to verify that climate patterns are undergoing major changes, it is not necessary to read the reports that the scientific community presents to us, including the alarming reports emanating from the competent bodies of the United Nations system: it is enough to remember that a few years back the summers were less hot and the winters less cold, that the life cycles of plants and animals were adjusted to the seasonal calendar, or that the rainy seasons took place in a predictable and routine way.

Today we can confirm that extreme weather events multiply in number and grow in strength. That periods of drought lengthen and worsen and that, when the rain arrives, it produces catastrophic floods.

Farmers around the world report alterations in climate patterns that they have known for generations, so that the new situation, forces them to modify normal patterns of action and, in many cases, they see their crops lost.

At this precise moment, the region suffers the consequences of prolonged droughts, not only in the so-called Central American Dry Corridor. Also, the atmospheric conditions that have caused so much damage in recent years in Mesoamerica - from Mexico to Panama, passing through Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica- extend to the Caribbean islands.

Numerous Small Developing Island States in the Caribbean - including my own, the Dominican Republic, as well as our sister Republic of Haiti - are suffering from a catastrophic drought that annihilates livestock and threatens the harvests planned for this summer.

This unusual period of drought has unleashed forest fires, dried up large rivers and their tributaries, and has depleted underground reserves, creating a vicious circle where other factors also contribute to the detriment of mountain communities: the concentration of pollution from residual spills, eutrophication and thermal pollution of rivers, as well as soil degradation.

The concern increases because we are on the verge of a new hurricane season, and we know the destructive power of these phenomena has been increased by the progressive warming of the oceans and climate change; populations in mountainous areas are particularly vulnerable to these meteors.

A second challenge to which we must pay urgent attention is the socioeconomic conditions of mountain populations.

We are facing an urgent task: to create opportunities for social and economic development in the agricultural and commercial fields, stimulating the intelligent use of natural environments, adopting agro ecological solutions and other innovations, promoting and spreading the cultural values associated with mountain ecosystems, including the customs and traditions of the populations that live there.

For all these reasons, it is our duty to work towards reducing and eradicating negative environmental effects, as well as to preserve and reforest forests, increase the absorption of carbon dioxide, reverse environmental degradation, correct hydro-geological instability and stimulate the creation of quality rural jobs in mountain areas.

To do this, however, the sensitization and training of the rural population is extremely important because those who build their existence in the mountains are the natural guardians of these territories.

The participation of the mountain population guarantees that, beyond simple beneficiaries, the foundations for a sustainable improvement for the quality of life; The rebalancing of natural ecosystems can only occur with the active participation of the inhabitants of the mountain.

In this sense, I take advantage of the experiences we have had in the Dominican Republic when it comes to crystallizing projects aimed at achieving the objectives that have been enumerated; when it comes to safeguarding the mountain and its populations through public-private partnerships in the

territory, with the active and enthusiastic participation of the civil society, the academic world and, of course, the beneficiaries, we find the obstacle of scarcity of international resources.

We know that other developing countries in our region and other continents face similar problems: such as being ready to implement projects designed to the highest international standards and with the widest participation of all actors; the implementations being delayed or canceled due to lack of funds; These are pending tasks for everyone.

The Alliance for Mountains is doing a great job to attract global attention, share and strengthen knowledge, and to mobilize wills, as well as human and financial resources that make technical cooperation for development a reality.

We must double these efforts, and focus on the actions we must take - without further delay - to guarantee the future of mountains, which is also the path towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you.