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Dear Mr. LI,

ECLAC welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the themes for the Interactive Dialogues of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference. We welcome this new multilateral forum, which calls on us to renew our commitments and propose transformative pathways for tackling global water challenges, through an approach that combines urgency, innovation, sustainability and social justice. In line with our mandate and mindful of the specific challenges facing the Latin America and Caribbean region, we propose that the Interactive Dialogues prominently incorporate the following four strategic approaches that ECLAC is currently developing:

**1. Multi-dimensional valuation of water to transform economic decision-making and policy fostering sustainable development**

The valuation of water must go beyond conventional economic considerations to include ecological, social, cultural, and governance dimensions. ECLAC advocates for adopting robust methodologies that highlight water's strategic importance as an essential public good, a productive input, a key element for ecosystem resilience, and a human right. We suggest that one of the Interactive Dialogues explores mechanisms for embedding such valuation in development planning, fiscal frameworks, and national statistical systems. This focus is essential for bridging the gap between political commitments and the effective allocation of resources.

**2. Implementation of a circular economy in the Water and Sanitation sector for a sustainable water transition**

The circular economy offers a unique opportunity to transform water management in the region. ECLAC has supported the design of investment plans in wastewater treatment plants that integrate methane recovery, showing strong cost-benefit performance in both medium-sized and small municipalities. These include notable experiences in El Salvador, Colombia, and Mexico, where recovery of investment has been achieved in under five years and internal rates of return have reached up to 35%. We propose a dialogue focused on circular strategies (reducing water losses, reusing treated water, recovering energy and nutrients, and integrating nature-based solutions) to promote and strengthen regulatory frameworks, innovative financing, and public-private partnerships that enable a just and climate-smart transition.

Mr. LI Junhua  
Under-Secretary-General  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
United Nations

### **3. Mobilizing financing for resilient infrastructure and universal water and sanitation services**

The region must close a long-standing investment gap in water infrastructure. However, this challenge is not purely financial; it is structural. ECLAC underscores the need to strengthen water-financing mechanisms through blended instruments, partnerships with development banks, and prioritization criteria linked to universal access, the reduction of inequalities, and climate resilience. We propose that one of the Dialogues focus on innovative financing strategies, including payment mechanisms for ecosystem services, green bonds, climate financing, and progressive tariff systems that ensure sustainability without compromising equity.

### **4. Water cycle management for ecosystem restoration and climate adaptation to secure continuation of environmental services to society**

Climate change adaptation is deeply embedded in key actions of water management, and at the same time water plays a fundamental role in ecosystem restoration beyond water, including those servicing forestry, agriculture, fisheries, industries and human settlements. Water based ecosystems need to provide biomass and ecosystem services to the whole of economic activities and livelihoods to continue to foster development in a sustainable, inclusive manner. Amid the climate and biodiversity loss crisis facing our planet, water is the connecting vector for restoration of ecosystem functions and transformation of economic modalities of production. Therefore, we propose that a specific Dialogue can be organized along these issues.

In sum, the proposed prioritized topics are key elements to an important discussion at the global and regional levels, fostering a relevant perspective, complementing the thematic agendas presented by other UN system agencies. They align with a transformative vision of sustainable development that integrates social justice, environmental sustainability, and economic efficiency.

ECLAC reaffirms its commitment to actively supporting the preparatory process for the Conference and to jointly designing an ambitious, actionable agenda for 2026 and beyond.

Sincerely yours,



José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs  
Executive Secretary