

# *Cuba warns about impact environmental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic*

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**Elba Rosa Pérez Montoya, Cuba's Minister of Science, Technology, and Environment (CITMA),**

Havana, October 1 (RHC)-- Despite the US economic, financial and commercial blockade, tightened by the current administration, Cuba will continue to make progress in fulfilling its National Economic and Social Development Plan until 2030, prioritizing the enjoyment of a healthy and balanced environment with the support of the new Constitution.

Elba Rosa Pérez Montoya, Cuba's Minister of Science, Technology, and Environment (CITMA), ratified this in an address on Wednesday to the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity, which is being held virtually because of the COVID-19 world health crisis.

She recalled UN Secretary-General António Guterres's recent remarks when he warned that the pandemic had caused a 25-year setback in the search for solutions to major global problems.

"It is not difficult to predict then that the disease will cause new and greater damage to biodiversity, aggravating the already existing deterioration of ecosystems," said the Minister.

In this context, she stressed, the post-2020 Global Strategic Framework for Biodiversity being negotiated, should improve the performance of the productive sectors and establish a real commitment of financial resources, knowledge, and technologies in favor of developing countries.

The Minister added that by 2030, Cuba aspires to increase the nation's forest area to 33%, reusing water by 15%, gradually reducing single-use plastic and other land-based sources of pollution, generating 24% of electricity with renewable energy, and applying financial solutions that contribute to meeting national biodiversity objectives.

Pérez Montoya stressed that, without a blockade, the country would have more access to financial resources, inputs, and technologies for these purposes, and fewer limitations on the development of its international cooperation, especially that known as South-South.

The implementation of the National Program for Biological Diversity in the 2016-2020 period has allowed for progress in the sustainable management and restoration of coastal and land ecosystems; actions to prevent and confront illegalities that affect biological diversity have increased, with the adoption of a Government Plan to address this problem, and the National System of Protected Areas has been strengthened, covering 20.4% of the national territory, she said.

The Minister of Citma expressed her conviction that humanity will react to the enormous challenges we have, and that "man will fight to keep nature safe, as an inseparable part of our lives, its waters, its resources, its flora, and fauna. If we unite and work in a supportive and sustained manner at the global level, we will achieve this," she said.

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