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H.E. Antonio José Ardila

Colombian Ambassador to the United Kingdom  
of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

3 Hans Crescent  
London

12 November 2021

Dear Ambassador,

I recently heard about the Guardians of the Atrato River and the ground-breaking ruling (T-622) issued by the Colombian Constitutional Court which gave biocultural rights to the river Atrato in Chocó. This ruling on the rights of nature is an important one in relation to the targets that are being set for the reduction of CO2.

Chocó’s high rates of vegetation cover, forests, mangroves, and jungles make it a **key carbon storage epicenter** **to combat the effects of climate change**. It is also crucial to the migration patterns of hundreds of species, including humpback whales off its Pacific coastline. Chocó reports one of the highest rates of rainfall and freshwater circulation on the planet. Its territory has over 50 sub-basins that drain towards the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean, the most important is the Atrato River. Its waters flow into the Caribbean Sea where it forms a complex deltaic system, known for being the nesting and birthplace of sea turtles.

I was pleased to learn that Colombia, in September 2020, at the UN Biodiversity Summit signed the Leaders Pledge on the Rights of Nature, and at COP26 Colombia signed the Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forests and Land Use which commits to end and reverse deforestation by 2030. Both commitments together with the landmark ruling of the Constitutional Court, make Choco an ideal place for these to be realised.

I would be very interested to know how the implementation of the Constitutional Court ruling T-622 is progressing. As I understand it, the former Environment Mininster together with the Guardians of the Atrato River have developed an Environmental Action Plan, but it has no budget for its implementation. I hope that the commitments being made on Climate Finance for Colombia will ensure that there is an adequate budget to implement this Action Plan.

Please could you inform me of what is happening with the implementation of the T-622 ruling made by the Constitutional Court

Yours sincerely,

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