Santiago Gowland's script – 4 per 1000 initiative – 09 . Dec . 2020
Speech length: 3´00 – 3´15

Hello everyone, and thanks for offering us this space. As you might already know, Latin America is the most biodiverse regions on the planet. It is home of 40% of all species. The region holds 1/3 of the world's freshwater resources. These natural assets have paved the way for Latin America to become a global breadbasket, with the world's largest net food exports.

But the convert-and-deplete approach to food production has taken a heavy toll on the environment. Agriculture and ranching consume 70% of freshwater resources and account for 70% of the region's habitat conversion. Deforestation is now 3 times the global rate, making the agriculture sector the leading contributor to Latin America's greenhouse gas emissions. The resulting biodiversity loss and soil degradation have had a severe impact on the very assets upon which this agricultural productivity depends.

However, there is a sustainable way to produce food. Our science at The Nature Conservancy shows that TNC´s Regenerative Food Systems global strategy aims at creating positive impact on nature conservation, on climate adaptation and mitigation, and food production by supporting the relationship between natural ecosystems (water, soil, biodiversity and habitat) and agricultural yield.

We have great examples and success cases in Mexico, Central America, Argentina, Colombia and Brazil, where thousands of small-scale producers are working with TNC to adopt regenerative agricultural practices. We are showing that agriculture actually prospers when managed hand in hand with preserving the delicate ecological balance essential to our planet's future.

Building soil carbon is a fundamental aspect of regenerative agriculture. Healthier soils store more carbon and produce more food. Investing in better soil management makes our farming systems more productive and resilient to future impacts and stresses. It also yields benefits for biodiversity, ecosystems and agriculture itself.

One great example is what we have done in Colombia, the world's second most biodiverse country. TNC and partners just concluded a 10-year project that helped more than 4,000 family farms adopt regenerative practices that combine trees with pasture, in a beneficial combination for farmers and the environment. They obtained an annual increased income by up to $150 per ha and boosted milk production by an average of 36%. Monitoring studies confirmed biodiversity increases and reduced

pollution of water sources. The climate impact of this approach is equally impressive. These practices helped sequester 1.6 million tons of carbon and avoided additional emissions by planting secondary forests and by preserving the natural forest on their farms.

As you can see, it is possible to both nourish and save the planet. With a focus on soil health, as recognized by the **4 per 1000 Initiative**, agriculture can become a pro-climate activity that is more sustainable, and more productive.

Our aim in Latin America is to scale regenerative ranching and agriculture systems and catalyze a systemic change in the whole Food Systems chain. And this is a collective work. We need companies, producers and public entities to work hand-in-hand to make this change a reality.

Thank you for your time.