



PRESS RELEASE

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema appointed head of UN Biodiversity Convention

- *Elizabeth Maruma Mrema becomes seventh Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.*
- *Mrema has served as CBD Acting Executive Secretary since 1 December 2019.*
- *Immediate priority to shepherd the CBD through the post-2020 global biodiversity framework negotiations.*

8 June 2020 – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today appointed Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, a national of the United Republic of Tanzania, as the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Ms. Mrema has served as the CBD Acting Executive Secretary since 1 December 2019. She becomes the seventh Executive Secretary to head the UN Biodiversity Convention.

“It is my great honour to assume the leadership of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity at this critical time for biodiversity,” said Ms. Maruma. “The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has reaffirmed what we already know – that biodiversity is fundamental for human health - and has given us all a new urgency to protect it.”

“My immediate priority is to ensure successful negotiations in developing a robust and ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework.”

The appointment of Ms. Mrema coincides with the transition from the present Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets to a new post-2020 global biodiversity framework expected to be agreed by the Conference of the Parties (COP) next year in Kunming, China.

The Zero Draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, released earlier this year, outlines five long-term goals related to the Convention’s 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, which aims at living in harmony with nature. The post-2020 framework can play a significant role in building the resilience needed in the face of growing environmental, health and development challenges, and will be relevant for the period of reconstruction following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Mrema brings with her a wealth of experience working for over two decades with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). Prior to joining the CBD, Ms. Mrema was the Director of the Law Division. From 2012 to 2014 she was the Deputy Director of the Ecosystems Division, in charge of coordination, operations and programme delivery, and for one year, also serviced as Acting Director to the same Division. In 2018, in addition to her role as the Law Division Director, she was also the Acting Director of the Corporate Services Division



In 2007, she received the first-ever UNEP-wide Best Manager of the Year Award, the UNEP Baobab Staff Award, for exceptional performance and dedication towards achieving the Organization's goals. In 2009, she was appointed the Executive Secretary of the UNEP/Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), Acting Executive Secretary of the UNEP/ASCOBANS and Interim Executive Secretary of the UNEP/Gorilla Agreement, all based in Bonn, Germany and held that position until 2012, thereafter joined the UNEP/Ecosystems Division in Nairobi, Kenya.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema: www.cbd.int/secretariat/executive-secretary/

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 172 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 124 Parties.

For more information visit: www.cbd.int. For media inquiries, please contact David Ainsworth on +1 514 833 0196 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int.
