



**Statement by Ms. Cristiana Paşca Palmer
Executive Secretary
Convention on Biological Diversity
At the closing of the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the
Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework
Nairobi, 30 August 2019**

Distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

The ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu had a well-known saying: “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.”

Together, we have taken the critical first step on our journey to Kunming, China, and to a new post-2020 global biodiversity framework that the world needs and deserves.

I would like to congratulate you all on a successful first meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group.

Over these past four days, you have worked with diligence, patience and a shared spirit of cooperation. Through your active engagement, you have made progress on shaping the scope and the key elements of the structure for the Global Biodiversity Framework.

I would like to thank again our colleagues in UNEP for hosting us in Nairobi.

I likewise, would like to congratulate our Co-Chairs, Basile and Francis, who have facilitated a broad set of inputs that provided a basis for these constructive discussions. I am certain that continued use of an inclusive approach will ensure our success throughout the coming year.

A special and deep felt thank you also goes to the Governments of Austria, Finland, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, as well as to the European Commission, for their generous support of this conference.

Delegates, together you have reached some important conclusions on the path ahead. We had very good discussions on scope and elements and how the elements could be developed further, provides a good basis for us to prepare a zero draft with our support for the second working group. Also, I would like to note the very good spirit of collaboration and exchange of ideas.

I would like to thank the Governments of China and Colombia for their generous offers to host, respectively, the second and third meetings of the Open-ended Working Group in Kunming in February and Cali in July. The path ahead is clear. As you have decided, we will continue a transparent and participatory, Party-led and multi-stakeholder process. In addition to the two meetings of the Open-ended Working Group, we will continue with the broad array of thematic and regional consultations to further develop the framework.

As you all know, the framework will be a major global agreement that addresses a host of complex issues, and so, I am pleased to see that the Parties are eager to move ahead on all fronts.

Meanwhile, we will continue to elevate biodiversity into the heart of the international agenda through outreach and engagement with all partners, stakeholders and the global public.

We are witnessing unprecedented awareness and calls for action from the global public and civil society, many of whom have been here with us in Nairobi.

To our delegates from civil society, from indigenous peoples and local communities, from women and youth and so many others — thank you for your presence and your voice and your partnership.

You are always welcome and always needed at the heart of this process!

Now, the journey continues. It is a critical year ahead, full of exciting opportunities and developments.

This upcoming week, the Government of China will host the Secretariat in Beijing and Kunming, where we will announce the theme of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and advance our common work to prepare for this critical conference and deliver a transformative agreement.

This upcoming week also sees the start of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of our fellow Rio Convention, UNCCD, where we will also be present to emphasize the critical links between biodiversity, land management and climate.

Nature-based solutions will likewise be emphasized at the twenty-fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC, in December, where we will be actively engaged.

Meanwhile, in Montreal at the end of November, we will host the twenty-third meeting of our Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, where we will have the chance to advance important technical and scientific considerations on the road to Kunming.

I won't outline the full slate of the year's agenda for you now, but I'll just briefly touch on a few of the major highlights on the international agenda beyond our own processes, to which we will contribute heavily with sustainable and nature-based solutions in 2020:

- The coming into force of the Paris Agreement;
- The start of the final 10 years of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- The IUCN Congress in Marseilles in June;
- The hosting of the first United Nations Nature Summit, to be held at the Head-of-State level under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly.

These meetings and milestones will also build the path towards the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in Kunming.

The 8 million species of the world — a million of which are under immediate threat, as has been so well documented by IPBES — cannot wait.

The people of the world — whose future depends in no small part on the actions we take — cannot wait.

The eyes of the world are upon us. And so, together we will deliver.

Thank you.
