



**STATEMENT BY ELIZABETH MARUMA MREMA**  
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**on the occasion of**  
**WORLD WILDLIFE DAY**

*“Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet”*

Forest ecosystems are the place we find most of the Earth’s terrestrial biodiversity, including many unique species.

Because forests and trees provide food, materials and so much for people across seasons and years, they also play a crucial role in preventing the poor from sinking even deeper into poverty. In fact, more than 25 per cent of the world’s population rely on forest resources for their livelihoods.

Wild animals are an integral part of this biodiversity. They play key roles and are also an important source of food and clothing, as well as are important for recreation, tourism and cultural uses.

All is not well with forests and wildlife. An estimated 178 million hectares of forest has been lost in the last 30 years<sup>1</sup>, forest-dwelling wildlife populations have shrunk on average by more than half since 1970, and habitat loss and degradation, primarily caused by human activity, is the cause of 60 per cent of threats to forests and forest species.<sup>2</sup>

This loss has ecological consequences and severe socioeconomic impacts. The loss of certain wildlife species can affect forest regeneration, through lack of seed dispersal for some trees, while the loss of key predators can lead to elevated herbivore numbers with consequent damage to habitats.

As Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity discuss the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, to be agreed later this year in Kunming, China, we have an important opportunity before us to highlight “sustainable wildlife management” as an essential tool to conserve biodiversity and for maintaining and enhancing forest ecosystem services.

It is important that the new biodiversity framework considers the different uses, drivers, impacts and perceptions of sustainable use, and that it encompasses a wide range of practices that apply to various natural resource sectors, including wildlife and forest management.

<sup>1</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CA8642EN.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/belowthecanopy\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://wwfint.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/belowthecanopy_full_report.pdf)



Promoting sustainable use will be integral to achieving the 2050 Vision of “living in harmony with nature”.

To fully ensure a sustainable future for forests and livelihoods, indigenous peoples and local communities also need to be engaged and their knowledge, innovations, practices recognized.

We also need to recognize their institutions, lands, and values, and ensure participatory environmental governance for the protection of forests and wildlife including through co-management regimes.

The CBD, together with our colleagues at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, will continue to play an active role in safeguarding biodiversity and sustainably using wildlife in forest ecosystems today and for the benefit of future generations.

Happy World Wildlife Day!