

**Opening Remarks by
Mr. David Cooper
Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
GEF Council, Brasilia, June 26, 2023**

Thank you, Tom, and thank you Carlos Manuel.

Distinguished Council Members and Observers,

I am very pleased to have the opportunity address this meeting of the GEF Council on behalf of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

I'd like to add my appreciation to the Government of Brazil -- for hosting us here in Brasilia, in the heart of Cerrado one of the most biodiverse biomes in the world. And also for their leadership on biodiversity -- both in global negotiations and through national implementation as well as through championing gender equality and the leadership of indigenous peoples and local communities, as we heard from the speeches of Minister Marina Silva and Minister Sonja Guajajara and vice ministers earlier this morning. Their presence, representing seven ministries, underlines Brazil's commitment across government to addressing the biodiversity and climate crises.

Allow me also to pay tribute to Gustavo Fonseca for his invaluable contributions to biodiversity conservation here in Brazil and globally. Let us build on his legacy here this week.

Colleagues,

As the Co-Chairs have just indicated, we expect this 64th GEF Council to be a landmark event.

Six months ago in Montreal, the global community adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework – a major achievement for multilateralism. Now, we are looking to *this meeting* to give serious impetus to the implementation of that ambitious agreement.

We are looking forward to seeing two outcomes in particular:

Firstly, the approval under GEF-8, of GEF's largest programme of work – and the largest for biodiversity – ever. Coming in addition to the early action grants under GEF-7, this will help countries make a rapid start to implementation.

Secondly, agreement on the establishment, and the programming directions, of the new global biodiversity framework fund. This is an essential complement to existing support and will help to scale up financing to ensure the timely implementation of the Framework.

The importance of these matters cannot be overstated.

As you all know the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and to put nature on a path to recovery by 2030.

This is hugely ambitious. But it is also necessary.

It's necessary to maintain the web of life on planet Earth. It's also an essential part of climate action. And it's a fundamental pre-requisite to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We know this from the IPBES global assessment and from all the other evidence.

We have the remaining years of this decade to put biodiversity on a path to recovery.

And that means action now.

Countries are now facing the challenges of implementation. They have to translate the plan into national targets and NBSAPs, integrate biodiversity across all decision making, and implement the policy measures and concrete actions needed to deliver results by 2030. They must do this through a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach with the full engagement of indigenous people and local communities.

To do this, countries need a substantial increase in resources, as was clearly recognized at COP 15, both in Goal D and Target 19 of the Framework itself, and in related decisions on resource mobilization and on the financial mechanism.

Agreement on these matters was the most difficult part of the negotiations in Montreal. The establishment of the GBF Fund will be a first test on the robustness of that agreement.

The new fund is to be dedicated uniquely to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It will provide an opportunity to receive funding from all sources and to quickly disburse them through streamlined procedures, and with enhanced access for indigenous peoples and local communities, building on earlier experience.

I would like to express my appreciation for the prompt actions taken by the Secretariat and by Council members to respond to the request from the Conference of the Parties to establish the new GBF fund under the GEF. For our part, together with the GEF Secretariat, the CBD Secretariat has encouraged the CBD community, including CBD focal points to engage directly in the consultations that have been made in preparation for this Council meeting.

The constructive and positive spirit of the consultations sets the scene for their successful finalization and for an agreement to establish the fund to be taken here in Brasilia, so that the new fund can be launched at the GEF Assembly in Vancouver in two months from now.

Colleagues,

In the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework we have a good agreement -- a good plan that builds upon the experience of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets as well as the earlier strategic plan of the Convention. While the global community did not achieve those earlier targets, much progress has been made and many lessons have been learned.

The GEF has been a constant and trusted partner over this time. Many of the advances made have been enabled by the GEF and the additional resources it has leveraged directly and indirectly.

In the coming days, you will have an opportunity to chart the next chapter in this partnership. One that helps countries move from agreement to action. One that takes us all one step closer towards putting biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030.

The CBD Secretariat stands alongside the GEF Secretariat in offering you full support in this endeavor.

I wish you productive and successful discussions.

I thank you.