



Convention on  
Biological Diversity

**Statement by Astrid Schomaker,  
Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity  
Closing ceremony of the fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on  
Implementation**

**18 October 2024**

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to reiterate my gratitude to the authorities and people of Colombia for the warm welcome in the Valle del Cauca and its crown jewel, Cali.

I would like to acknowledge the donors that have supported the participation of 204 delegates from 130 developing country Parties through the Special Voluntary Trust Fund for Facilitating the Participation of Parties.

Thank you, Austria, Belgium, Canada, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Secretariat is also grateful to the donors that supported the participation of 45 representatives of indigenous peoples and local communities through the Special Voluntary Trust Fund for Facilitating the Participation of Indigenous and Local Communities.

Thank you, Australia, Finland, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

Distinguished delegates,

As the countdown to the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties is coming to an end, your engagement in the open-ended forum for voluntary country review of implementation has helped us to distil a clearer picture of what needs to be done, and what needs to be done better.

I think we can all agree that we are standing at a critical juncture.

If action to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework is not taken with the required urgency, we run the risk of dropping the ball on achieving the 2050 vision.

To date, 31 Parties have submitted national biodiversity strategies and actions plans and 103 have submitted national targets.

The speed with which Parties are going about the alignment of their national biodiversity strategies and actions plans and national targets is higher than what we witnessed under the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

In many of the submissions that we have received, there is evidence of efforts to activate the whole-of-government approach with the involvement of many departments alongside ministries of the environment.

Breaking the silos and elevating the planning and implementation to pan-governmental level are the strongest expression of political will and commitment to the implementation of the Framework.

All these positive developments bode well for the journey ahead.

But we have also heard about gaps and challenges, from communication to participation and financing.

From our perspective as the Secretariat of the Convention, the continued existence of gaps and challenges also points to the need to do things differently, not just for the sake of innovation, but in pursuit of better outcomes.

The open-ended forum for voluntary country review of implementation was an attempt to do just that.

There may be diverging opinions on its format and its outcomes, but what is clear is that just meeting to negotiate has not taken us where we want to be, where we should be.

So let us be open to new approaches and improve them as we go along.

We now have a weekend to ponder this together before the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol and the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as

the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol get under way. And when they do, let us move forward, because that is why we are all here.

Peace with nature, like time, won't wait.

Thank you.

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