



Statement by

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at the closing of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

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Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends,

It is an honour to speak to you at such a pivotal moment for our planet and for all its peoples and other living beings.

This report, that you have developed is a call that is clear, that is loud, and that we need to make sure will be heard around the world. A call that will only grow and grow until we gather the determination, strength, wisdom and ultimately political and economic courage to act on it.

I want to thank the co-chairs Sandra Diaz, Eduardo Brondizio, and Sepp Settele and the hundreds of colleagues from over 50 countries who contributed their passion, their expertise, their hearts, their souls and their minds to this landmark global assessment of the status of biodiversity and ecosystems.

I also want to congratulate IPBES itself on this tremendous accomplishment, not only in producing such a comprehensive report, but in shepherding an intergovernmental, scientific study of the highest complexity and value. Congratulations to Bob Watson and Anne Larigauderie and their teams on this magnum opus.

The challenging task now is to translate your hard work into concrete and meaningful action.

The call for action we hear from IPBES is no less clear and no less urgent than that which has begun to galvanize the international community following the *IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C*.

The accelerating loss of biodiversity also has untold consequences for humanity: by destroying nature, we are undermining the fundamental bedrock that enables our health and well-being, our clean water and clean air, our food and medicine supply, our economic prosperity and social progress, and, indeed, our very survival here on Earth. It has dramatic economic and social consequences as well. Above all, this loss is a great moral tragedy, it is a failure of our human species to harness our life and well-being in harmony with nature and all the other forms of life with which we share the Planet.

This report echoes the call for action from youth, and from the future they represent. I acknowledge the millions of students from every corner of the world who have stood up and positioned their voice demanding actions to prevent the threat of a global extinction.

The good news is that, out of all species, we humans possess the ability to articulate a vision of where we want to go, and to reach for it collectively. As the most powerful agents in our ecosystems, we also possess the ability to restore its balance — if we put our minds to it. While the window of time to reverse and repair some of the destruction is fast narrowing, this report shows that the possibilities for positive change are numerous and are still within our grasp!

To reach them, though, we need to completely rethink the way we approach the problem and its solutions. As the report indicates, we must address the root causes of the current environmental crisis — many of which stem from the economic development models — the unsustainable production patterns, and frankly, above all, our own unsustainable consumption patterns.

But, as Einstein said, “we can’t solve the problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them”. And so, even in the midst of this crisis, I argue that we must move from a crisis management, linear approach, trying to resolve each crisis — be it climate, or biodiversity, or water — in its own silo, to a systemic, holistic, and transformative approach, recognizing the deep interconnections between all natural systems of the planet, and their interlinkages with the human and social systems.

We must recognize that we are dealing with complex interrelated problems that require a complex systems approach to find effective solutions. I believe this is still within our reach!

As the IPBES report demonstrates, we have the knowledge, and we have the scientific evidence — what we need is stronger political will and the courage and determination to move away from the status quo and associated vested interests and begin to address these matters through new lenses and innovative thinking. Above all, we need leadership from the top and from the bottom.

Over the next two years, we have a unique opportunity. This IPBES report is a springboard and a key marker in a larger road map. A series of high-level meetings could help build the momentum and pave the way to indeed achieve the ambition and transformation that we need to safeguard life on Earth in the coming decades, through the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in China in October 2020.

From here in Paris, we go to Metz, where the G7 Environment Ministers will meet next week. For the first time, biodiversity will be on the political agenda of such a high political body. And I would like to commend France and President Macron for his leadership in bringing together biodiversity, climate change and oceans at G7, a clear sign of moving away from the siloed approach that dominated the international agenda. Just last week, in Montreal, Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada hosted the Nature Champions Summit, again making a very strong call to address climate and biodiversity as two sides of the same coin. The resulting Call for Action will help build forward momentum. The Trondheim Conference in Norway in July will discuss scientific building blocks and approaches to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework which Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity will adopt in October 2020 in China.

This fall, we have the Secretary-General’s Climate Summit and the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to our fellow Rio conventions, UNFCCC and UNCCD, working side by side with CBD to promote “nature-based solutions”.

Next year, we will engage the global business community directly at the World Economic Forum, and the conservation community will assemble in Marseille at the World Conservation Congress. At the CBD Secretariat, we worked intensely over the last two years to respond to the call of our Parties for a vision of change and for raising the political profile of biodiversity internationally. We will continue working, and with the Office of the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations, to organize a Nature Summit at the level of Heads of State and Government at the General Assembly in September 2020, right before the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in China.

The task in front of us is nothing less than to develop, adopt and then implement a framework that:

- Conserves enough space for nature to allow terrestrial and marine ecosystems to continue to provide their functions and services; Science and this report will help identify targets;
- Is ambitious in improving the way we manage and restore degraded lands and ecosystems;

- Transforms our economic and business models, as well as our consumption and production patterns, to recognize that there are limits to our growth and that complex systems dynamics, and not linear models, are the matrix of nature's work.

At CBD, we are working to accelerate actions to achieve the current global biodiversity targets (namely the Aichi Targets) by 2020, leverage engagement among a broad range of actors through the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People, and build momentum and high ambition in support of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, leading to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties through, among other things, voluntary national contributions.

We are working with and counting on all people, everywhere — as individuals, consumers, producers, and citizens and participants, from our families to our firms to our respective countries to the global community, and especially indigenous peoples and local communities — those who are closest to the land, whose survival is most at risk, and those whose traditional knowledge and practices can also show us the way forward.

Thank you again for all your excellent work on this report and for recognizing that we are at a historical crossroads for humanity. Together, let us answer in word and in collective and individual deed the call to protect nature and our planet, and indeed protect all forms of life who call it home.
