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CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Fourteenth meeting
Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 17–29 November 2018

REPORT ON THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT 14–15 NOVEMBER 2018

A. Introduction

1. A high-level ministerial segment of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity was held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on 14 and 15 November 2018. The high-level segment, on the theme of “Investing in biodiversity for people and planet”, was attended by ministers of environment, other heads of delegation and ministers, and other high-level representatives of the infrastructure, manufacturing and processing, energy and mining and health sectors, as well as representatives of national and international organizations, local authorities and subnational governments, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities and youth.

B. Opening statements

2. The high-level segment was chaired by Ms. Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment of Egypt, who opened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. on 14 November 2018. Recalling that the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties had focused on mainstreaming biodiversity in the agriculture, tourism, fisheries and forestry sectors, Ms. Fouad emphasized the focus of the current meeting, which was to mainstream biodiversity into the energy and mining, infrastructure, manufacturing and health sectors. Biodiversity should also be mainstreamed into national policies, budgets and plans, and she welcomed the participation of the Minister of Finance of Egypt at the meeting. She pledged her country’s support for other African countries through partnerships, policy and sharing of experiences and full cooperation with international organizations and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The aim of the current meeting should be not only to set priorities for the future but also to adopt initiatives and innovative mechanisms for mainstreaming biodiversity. A new initiative to address biodiversity loss and climate change through the use of natural approaches would be submitted prior to the start of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Recalling that the Convention had originally been the vision of an Egyptian scientist, Mr. Mostafa Tolba, for the sustainable use and equitable sharing of resources, she called upon the participants to set priorities, take executive steps and create a road map aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and with national programmes and policies, for the benefit of young people and future generations.

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3. Opening statements were also made by: Mr. Khaled Fouda, Governor of the South Sinai Governorate; Mr. José Octavio Tripp Villanueva, Ambassador of Mexico to Egypt; Mr. Erik Solheim, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Ms. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity; and Mr. Siim Kiisler, Minister of Environment of Estonia and President of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

4. Mr. Fouda welcomed participants to Sharm El-Sheikh, the “green city”. He said there was global respect for the role of Egypt in both culture and conservation of the environment. The city prioritized fraternity, openness, tolerance and respect for the environment; it was surrounded by natural reserves, such as Ras Um El Sid and Nabq.

5. Mr. Tripp Villanueva said that accelerated effort was needed to fulfil all undertakings by 2020 and 2030, with the participation of ministers of environment, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism, international processes, such as the United Nations Environment Assembly, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Intergovernmental Science–Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Sustainable management of energy, mining and other sectors was essential for overcoming poverty and inequality. The high-level segment was an important opportunity for constructive dialogue among those sectors, to find alternatives for local and regional development.

6. Mr. Solheim began by announcing some good news, including prohibition of the sale of rhinoceros horn and an increase in the number of pandas in China, a peatland centre in Indonesia and removal of snow leopards from the list of critically endangered species. Nevertheless, the success of humans still represented a danger to others. For a “new deal for nature”, political leadership was needed, with business models. Conservation was a win–win proposition; for example, in Botswana, tourism was the second largest source of revenue. Conservation could be effective, however, only if it was viewed as beneficial by the population. In Andhra Pradesh, India, agriculture was being combined with nature in “zero-budget” natural farming, with less fertilizer and pesticides but larger yields and protection of nature. Clear communication was essential. The language used in the biodiversity community, with its multiple acronyms, was incomprehensible to the outside world. Everyone loved nature and would support a political movement for nature.

7. Ms. Paşca Palmer said that not enough had been done to arrest the loss of nature and biodiversity. All sectors of society and the economy should be involved to bend the curve of biodiversity loss and contribute to the Vision of the Convention by 2050 to live in harmony with nature. That could be carried out in different ways and among different actors. As a community, we need to make the economic, social, ecological and moral case for biodiversity conservation, and provide scientific evidence and studies to support that discourse. Accelerated actions are required to meet the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, with cross-cutting thematic plans, programmes and policies. All relevant actors should be involved. The process for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework should be transformative and adequate to respond to the challenges and growing opportunities to realize the vision of living in harmony with nature by 2050. There was little time to act. We need collective wisdom and courage to steer the change needed forward.

8. Mr. Kiisler emphasized the importance of innovative solutions for sustainable consumption and production, with increased resource efficiency, efficient environmental policies, accessible environmental data systems, sustainable resource management and partnerships among all actors. Incentives should be provided for sustainable land management, including new business opportunities for a responsible private sector. To ensure support from all citizens, children should receive environmental education in sustainable living and consumption. The steps should be: a global environment data strategy, sustainable land management, improved waste management and plastics policies, sustainable financing for ecosystem services, sustainable public procurement and markets and a healthy environment for healthy people.

C. Moderated panel: The importance of investing in biodiversity for people and planet

9. During the opening plenary of the high-level segment, a panel discussion was held on the importance of investing in biodiversity, moderated by Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Minister of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica. In his introductory remarks, Mr. Rodriguez characterized biodiversity loss as an invisible crisis, where the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services was not reflected in market prices and therefore not considered in policy development and overall decision-making. He asked the panellists to address the importance of investing in biodiversity from the perspectives of both government and non-government sectors and to identify concrete opportunities for scaling up biodiversity policy actions to deliver nature-based solutions for pressing economic and social challenges and to contribute to sustainable development.

10. An introductory presentation was made by Mr. Jonathan Baillie, Executive Vice-President and Chief Scientist, National Geographic Society. Mr. Baillie said that, while 20 per cent of the world biodiversity was threatened with extinction, only 4 per cent of the Earth's mammals were wild animals; the rest were human beings and livestock. Humans had converted the biomes of over half the planet, with major implications for the world's species and ecosystems and the benefits they provided. Nevertheless, the Aichi Biodiversity target of protecting 15 per cent of land had essentially been reached, and the target of protecting 10 per cent of oceans, up from the current 4 to 7 per cent, could be reached by 2020.

11. A decision on how much biodiversity to protect could not be answered by science: it should be based on values. The National Geographic Society considered that intrinsic value, namely that species had a right to exist and humans had an obligation to protect them, was the first argument to be made; he showed a video prepared by photographers and storytellers to communicate the importance of intrinsic value. The intrinsic value argument was not enough, however; and a utilitarian view of the world should be prepared, demonstrating the usefulness of biodiversity to humanity. The most important narrative was that the thin biosphere enveloping the earth contained life support systems that were imperilled and that, if they became degraded, there would be terrible consequences for all life. It was important, however, to create a vision of hope and to show the next generation a clear path to a world that could feed 10 billion people by 2050 yet also make space for other forms of life.

12. In terms of investment, the gap between the US\$ 52 billion invested each year and the US\$ 400 billion needed must be closed. Other ways of creating value in the natural world should be explored. Natural capital was one possibility, in which ecosystem value was integrated into the economic system, so that the sustainability of development could be assessed. Payment for ecosystem services was another possibility, but it had been proven effective only for reducing deforestation and maintaining watersheds and water benefits for people downstream. Impact investment was a truly exciting option, in which investment provided not only a financial return but also a social or environmental return; the GEF-funded Rhino Impact Investment Project was an example. Ultimately, what was needed was a clear narrative, with the right story told to the right community. If the business community became involved, funds could be raised on a scale not yet seen to invest in securing the biosphere.

13. Mr. Rodriguez then addressed questions to the panellists: Mr. Mohamed Maait, Minister of Finance of Egypt; Ms. Emmanuelle Wargon, Secretary of State to the Minister of Ecological and Inclusive Transition of France; Ms. Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; Ms. Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of GEF; Mr. Rene Castro Salazar, Assistant Secretary-General, Climate, Biodiversity, Land and Water, FAO; Ms. Adriana Dinu, Deputy Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and Mr. Emad El Din Adly, General Coordinator, Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED).

14. Mr. Maait spoke about governments' options for mobilizing domestic resources to finance achievement of biodiversity targets. He said that the environment was an important element of Egypt's Vision 2030, and a working group had been formed to explore ways to mobilize resources to implement

the vision. Examples of new resource mobilization initiatives in Egypt were a law stipulating that Governmental procurement had to be compatible with national environmental priorities, a measure eliminating customs duties on electric cars and environmentally friendly equipment, such as solar energy panels, and the issuance of green bonds incorporating elements of biodiversity and environmental preservation to finance the national budget.

15. Ms. Wargon described how France was addressing Aichi Target 3 for the elimination of incentives harmful to biodiversity. France had enacted an ambitious biodiversity law in 2016 based on the no-net-loss principle. Related activities included collection of reliable data followed by the reduction or the mitigation of the impact on biodiversity to arrive at no net loss. The Government was also supporting the introduction of renewable energy to ensure that negative effects on biodiversity were avoided. In its work with the European Commission, the Government of France was lobbying for a larger budget for addressing climate change and biodiversity loss. Agricultural subsidies had recently been changed to encourage practices that respected the protection of biodiversity, and credits were provided for practices that benefited the environment. The Government also encouraged the private sector to reflect on its accountability and apply policies that protected biodiversity.

16. Ms. Espinosa was asked what could be done under the Convention on Biological Diversity to mobilize more funds for climate change through nature-based solutions, as well as to increase investment to stop deforestation, accelerate forest restoration and better manage tropical primary forests. She said that, in fighting climate change, it was important to bear in mind biodiversity loss from habitat destruction. The conventions were clearly linked, and many countries had identified biodiversity as a priority in their Paris Agreement contributions. A recent study by the National Academy of Sciences in the United States of America had indicated that nature-based solutions could reduce total greenhouse gas emissions by up to 50 per cent by 2030 and that protection of ecosystems, particularly in forests and coasts, was one of the most cost-effective means of reducing emissions. Such priorities should be incorporated into national planning, programmes and budgets.

17. Ms. Ishii addressed the question of mainstreaming biodiversity into a context of planetary boundaries and provided insight into the concept of the “global commons”. She pointed to Costa Rica’s success in arresting deforestation by placing a value on its natural capital as an example of truly successful mainstreaming; however, few countries were following its example. The mainstreaming projects seen to date did not reflect systemic change. Another lesson she had learned in her time with GEF was the limitations to what could be achieved by transferring funds from countries in the northern to southern hemispheres. Making ministers of environment responsible for the huge task of transformation was neither fair nor realistic. A multisectoral, multi-stakeholder coalition that included government, business and citizens was needed, and the time was right to reflect on the approach to be taken in the future. The concept of the global commons called for thinking in terms of global systems; however, while everyone benefited from such systems, no one was responsible for taking care of them. A social contract was needed for governance of the global commons.

18. Mr. Castro Salazar reacted to the observation that the rate of deforestation was higher when the forestry service was under the ministry of agriculture than when it was under the ministry of environment and whether that called for transformation of institutional frameworks. Deforestation had decreased but was still occurring, mainly in the tropics, where sustainable management proved elusive due to the complexity of the canopy. He was not sure that institutional arrangements were the problem. Deforestation was attributed to the need for agriculture; yet, at least 21 countries had demonstrated that it was not necessary to cut forests in order to increase food production. He noted that the human diet had narrowed to virtually a monoculture. Furthermore, after years of fighting hunger, FAO was seeing fast-growing malnutrition in the form of overweight and obesity, and the current hypothesis was that it was the result of the narrowing of dietary biodiversity, forests were essential to natural dietary biodiversity.

19. As UNDP financed nature conservation and had introduced the Biodiversity Finance (Biofin) Initiative, Ms. Dinu was asked how finance with positive impacts on nature could be increased. She began by outlining the state of poverty in the world: 10 per cent of people lived in extreme poverty and more than half lived on less than US\$ 2.50 a day. More than half the poor relied on nature-based livelihoods, including agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Very few had bank accounts or knew how to obtain or use credit. Investment agencies saw nature-based enterprises as risky and charged high interest rates, creating an additional entry challenge. Furthermore, they were interested in investing millions, whereas nature-based enterprises required only thousands. Governments were not yet fully exploiting their policies to attract private-sector investment. Impact investing, a rise in microfinance and growing access to credit for the rural poor were reasons for hope, however. Clear signals were emerging that investors were interested in financing small, nature-based enterprises, and aggregators – companies that bundled micro- and small initiatives into higher-value propositions with a higher return and lower risk – would help with access and scaling up. The way in which companies sourced material had been revolutionized, with investment in sustainable supply chains. Ministers of finance around the world were becoming much more involved. Ms. Dinu closed her remarks with a mention of the new Lion's Share initiative of UNDP, whereby companies that used an animal in their advertising paid 0.5 per cent of their budget to environmental causes.

20. The final panellist, Mr. Adly, said that non-governmental organizations could work more effectively with government to link water to economic and social development. Water was a cross-cutting issue of the Sustainable Development Goals, he said, and there were clear indicators to measure achievement of both socioeconomic development and resource protection. In the same way that governments should mainstream biodiversity into national policies, non-governmental organizations should apply their strategies in the field. Building dialogue and partnerships among stakeholders was essential for scaling up small projects; local work could improve the quality of local lives. His organization was part of a strong network that discussed policy with government partners, particularly with respect to the important nexus of water, food and energy security. Involving youth was important so that they could learn how to engage.

D. Launch of the global initiative of Egypt to promote the use of nature-based ecosystem approaches to coherently address biodiversity loss, climate change and land and ecosystem degradation

21. Ms. Fouad closed the morning plenary session by launching a global initiative to promote the use of nature-based ecosystem approaches to address biodiversity loss, climate change and land and ecosystem degradation coherently. She said that everyone recognized that the challenges presented by biodiversity loss, climate change and land degradation were huge and interrelated. The Conventions that addressed those issues had been born together and were the backbone of sustainable development. Egypt was advocating for work under any of the conventions to take the others into account, to generate maximum value and build on each other's success. The new initiative was designed to support that approach.

E. Statement by Mr. Mostafa Madbouly, Prime Minister of Egypt

22. On 14 November 2018, the afternoon session of the high-level segment opened with a plenary address by Mr. Mostafa Madbouly, Prime Minister of Egypt. Mr. Madbouly said that the environment, nature, biodiversity and ecosystems were very important for Egypt and the country had made a considerable effort to protect them. Protected areas now made up nearly 15 per cent of the country's surface area, and special programmes were in place to engage young people, local communities and women in protecting the environment.

23. Given the challenges facing the world, a paradigm shift was needed to mainstream biodiversity into the energy, infrastructure, industry, health, minerals sectors, as well as into urban development and finance, all of which suffered when biodiversity and ecosystem services deteriorated. Infrastructure was of particular concern, as urban populations were forecast to grow significantly by 2050 and cities would

require extensive infrastructure development. Governments should properly assess urbanization needs and plan development by taking climate change and biodiversity priorities into account to ensure a healthy life for all future generations.

24. The African Ministerial Summit held the previous day had resulted in an ambitious action plan of the priorities for the African continent, particularly slowing biodiversity loss, restoring degraded land and providing healthier ecosystems. Egypt had developed its own vision for 2030 in which the environment was mainstreamed into all national programmes and policies and addressing economic and social issues. The “Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030” respected equality of opportunity and optimal use and equitable distribution of resources and constituted the framework for all partnerships among stakeholders in Egypt.

25. The participants in the high-level segment represented a wide range of sectors, including the private sector, which ensured that opportunities for mainstreaming biodiversity into all development sectors would be thoroughly explored during the two-day meeting. The outcome of the meeting, the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration, was an important initiative that would enrich the discussions over the coming two weeks of the 2018 United Nations Biodiversity Conference.

F. Round tables

26. Two round-table discussions were held on the first day, 14 November 2018, one on mainstreaming biodiversity into the infrastructure sector and the other on mainstreaming biodiversity into the manufacturing and processing sector. On 15 November 2018, two further round tables were held during the morning session, one on mainstreaming biodiversity into the health sector and the other on mainstreaming biodiversity into the mining and energy sectors. The summaries of the discussions are contained in the annex to the present report.

G. Closing

27. The closing plenary session, on 15 November 2018, began with the presentation by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity of a commemorative publication to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention.

28. Representatives then heard summary reports of the round-table discussions by the round-table co-chairs. The summaries are contained in the annex to the present report.

29. The Chair then presented the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration on Investing in Biodiversity for People and Planet, prepared by the Government of Egypt after extensive consultation with the Parties to the Convention. The Declaration was a strong statement about addressing biodiversity loss and taking more effective action, particularly in the four sectors addressed in the round-table discussions. The Declaration was adopted by acclamation.

30. A panel discussion then took place on “the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and Vision to 2050”, moderated by Ms. Fouad. The panellists were: Mr. Ahmed Kamali, Deputy Minister of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform of Egypt; Mr. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner, European Union; Mr. Huang Runqiu, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China; Mr. Manuel Pulgar Vidal, Global Lead, Climate and Energy, World Wide Fund for Nature International (WWF); Ms. Claire Tutenuit, Executive Director, Entreprises pour l’Environnement; and Ms. Mirna Ines Fernandez, Steering Committee, Global Youth Biodiversity Network, and Ms. Martha Rojas Urrego, Secretary General of Ramsar on behalf of the Liaison Group of Biodiversity-related Conventions.

31. Ms. Paşca Palmer described “the fierce urgency of now” for the Convention. The choice faced was between continuing on the pathway of a fast-approaching tipping point of rising global temperatures and biodiversity loss or that of reversing biodiversity loss through global technology, nature-based solutions and changes in production and consumption. By 2020, increased work will be needed to make

the course correction to attain the existing Aichi Targets. By 2030, the curve of loss of biodiversity should have measures to ensure that loss is on track to be lower and reversed; and by 2050, the vision of living in harmony with nature should be on track to be reached. Urgent action is needed to resolve the interlocking crises of nature and development. Both can co-exist. A comprehensive agenda is required, to be implemented by a global coalition of governments, businesses, the media, the technological sector, non-governmental organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities and youth. The Sharm El-Sheikh to Beijing Action Agenda for Nature and People can change the narrative through effective communication to ensure ownership and accountability through champions, multi-stakeholder platforms and coalitions.

32. Mr. Kamali said that governments and civil society should work together to “bend the curve” by 2030. Policies must therefore be designed to include the private sector and transform mindsets, involving the most important elements of governments. Biodiversity should not be considered a separate topic but as essential to achieving food security, poverty alleviation, human health and community development. Projects should be approved by ministers of planning only if they included an environmental dimension. Biodiversity should be seen not as a cost but as an opportunity, including for the private sector.

33. Ms. Tutenuit commented that the business mentality had changed and no longer considered biodiversity an issue that was separate from their work. Surveys had shown that 80 per cent of the population was aware of and worried about biodiversity loss. It had therefore become a political issue also affecting businesses through their investors and shareholders. “Big business” was therefore taking voluntary action, and more than 50 per cent of those enterprises were conducting ambitious, relevant activities with scientists and local communities to find innovative, nature-based solutions. They emphasized accountability and had made firm individual commitments to eliminate polluting companies from their portfolios.

34. Mr. Vella observed that the pressures and demands on biodiversity were increasing; yet, targets continued to be missed. More ambitious goals and priorities should be set, with time-bound follow-up and a high-priority framework for implementation, building on what had already been achieved. Targets should be set to address the causes of decreasing biodiversity, such as the use of pesticides. Implementation should be strengthened by voluntary commitments from the public, private and non-governmental organization sectors, with pledges to fight biodiversity loss and increase the numbers of protected areas and monitoring of delivery of the commitments. He proposed that a high-level United Nations summit of heads of State be organized at which they should make commitments to reverse the current trends.

35. Mr. Huang said that the environment should be protected like life, in harmony with nature. Lifestyles and production models should be transformed so that they preserved nature and maximized ecosystems. Green financing, carbon markets and green development in China had already reduced carbon levels by 4 billion tons. In the fight against desertification in the far west of the country, tree cover had been increased from 13 per cent to 30 per cent and the lives of farmers improved. The number of protected areas had been increased, and, in 2016, pandas had been removed from the list of severely endangered species maintained by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The 2050 framework for global action should be based on the principle of harmony between humans and nature in green development and low-carbon economies. Biodiversity should be mainstreamed in a global partnership, with a system of quantifiable benchmarks and indicators and the involvement of business and civil society.

36. Mr. Pulgar Vidal commented that the post-2020 framework should specify a strong mandate, with four elements: strengthen clear implementation, foster the commitment of each actor, ensure political momentum and encourage voluntary commitments. A transformational change was required to stop biodiversity loss; however, the vision should be measurable. Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals would require behavioural change, but disruptive interventions should be avoided. Governments should

include biodiversity in their plans and provide enabling conditions, structures, policies and incentives. The “new deal” for biodiversity would require the involvement of non-State actors and the business sector, which should consider nature as a shareholder. The economic importance of biodiversity and nature should be stressed, and nature should be mainstreamed into the financial sector.

37. Ms. Fernandez highlighted the discrepancy between words and actions. She regretted the lack of trust and support for the involvement of young people in decision-making. She noted that the young people of today were the most highly educated in history. Many were not close to nature, although those who lived in fragile ecosystems were bravely defending them. Traditional ecological knowledge was a wasted asset and should be formally recognized and mainstreamed by “western” science. The precautionary principle should be applied before the introduction of new technologies. Measurable targets should be set to ensure accountability. She asked that young people be involved in national and regional discussions before international decisions were made, so that they were equal partners in implementation.

38. Ms. Martha Rojas Urrego, Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention), spoke on behalf of the other seven biodiversity-related conventions of the Biodiversity Liaison Group, outlining their priorities for the post-2020 framework. The priority of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was to consider relevant CITES provisions, including evidence that could support the scale and scope of the required action. For the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the role of culture in biodiversity conservation should be further highlighted. The Ramsar Convention was gaining attention with regard to coastal ecosystems but called for further prioritization of freshwater wetlands. The Conservation Committee of the International Whaling Commission had already adopted a long-term vision for healthy, well-managed populations, while the working group for the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals considered that the needs of migratory species could best be represented through recognition of the connectivity of landscape, ecology, habitat and evolution. The focus of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was the role of biodiversity in ensuring global food security and sustainable agriculture and the importance of sustainable use of plant genetic diversity in adapting agriculture to climate change. Ms. Urrego said that the post-2020 framework should reflect the priorities and contributions of all eight biodiversity-related conventions.

39. Ms. Fouad, Ms. Paşca Palmer and Mr. Huang closed the panel discussion with the joint launch, by the Governments of Egypt and China and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, of the Sharm El-Sheikh to Beijing Action Agenda for Nature and People. The aim of the action agenda, which would be hosted on an online platform, was to catalyse a groundswell of action by all sectors and stakeholders in support of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the two years leading up to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. It would contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and to the design of the post-2020 biodiversity framework to be adopted in Beijing.

40. Ms. Paşca Palmer then introduced the “The Initiative Towards an Alliance for Nature and Culture” initiative, noting that the everyday practices of indigenous peoples and local communities were highly effective in maintaining biodiversity. The close links between cultural and biological diversity were central to the resilience of both human communities and local ecosystems, and both cultural and biological diversity must be protected. The aim of the initiative was to explore links between nature and culture and bring about a rapprochement between nature and culture in the post-2020 period.

41. Statements on the initiative were made by Mr. Ghaith Fariz, Director of the Regional Bureau for Sciences in the Arab States of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Ms. Inger Andersen, Director General, International Union for Conservation of Nature; Mr. Mohamed Salem, Director, Nature Conservation Sector, Ministry of Environment of Egypt; and Ms. Yeshing Upün Yos, Indigenous Youth Representative.

42. Mr. Fariz emphasized the importance of cooperation with the Convention on the links between biological and cultural diversity and said that UNESCO would contribute substantively to preparing the post-2020 framework. To halt the decline in biodiversity, it was vital to transform people's roles, actions and relationships with biodiversity through their cultural knowledge and perceptions. The Man and the Biosphere programme, launched in 1971, had pioneered understanding of the interactions between people and their environment, and the 1972 World Heritage Convention covered both cultural and natural diversity. The global vision of living in harmony with nature would require greater cooperation and diverse knowledge systems. He looked forward to continuing work with the Convention.

43. Ms. Andersen said that nature and culture were inextricably linked. Stewardship of nature–culture required understanding of agricultural practices, the rights of indigenous and local communities in practising sound biodiversity management and the role of language. Although populations were increasingly urbanized, it was important to maintain a connection with nature to avoid the erosion of society. Nature-based solutions were based on cultural diversity.

44. Mr. Salem said that people's connection with their cultural heritage increased their respect for biodiversity. Old papyrus texts and traditional knowledge demonstrated strong ties to nature and practical solutions to its degradation. The Government of Egypt used and preserved traditional knowledge to maintain biodiversity and in formulating legislation on, for example, ecotourism.

45. Ms. Upún Yos noted that, because of the life systems, indigenous lands held 80 per cent of the world's biodiversity. The valuable contribution of indigenous peoples and local communities made them natural allies in the fight to reverse biodiversity loss. Traditional knowledge should be revitalized so that it could be transmitted to future generations. The commitments made in various conventions should result in progress in recognition of indigenous peoples' lands, resources and languages and their right to informed consent for use of plants and other resources. She proposed that a voluntary fund be established to ensure the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the Convention processes.

46. The Chair then invited representatives of regional groups to make statements. Statements were made by the representative of Rwanda on behalf of the African Group, the representative of Samoa on behalf of the Asian and Pacific Group, the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group and the European Union on behalf of Western European and Others Group. A statement was also made by the representative of Canada on behalf of the JUSCANZ.

47. The representative of Rwanda, speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that all countries should work together to achieve a better planet and should commit themselves to do their best to meet that goal.

48. The representative of Samoa, speaking on behalf of the Asian and Pacific Group, said that the post-2020 framework should make bold, ambitious commitments for transformational changes to improve global biodiversity, with adequate financial resources.

49. The representative of Argentina, speaking on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, stressed the importance of recognizing the specificities of countries, such as the mega-diverse in the region. Harmonious protocols should be found to ensure just and equal benefits. The high-level segment had been useful for ensuring harmonious collaboration among sectors.

50. The representative of the European Union and its 28 member States expressed full support for the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration. Effective mainstreaming of biodiversity would ensure achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. He proposed that commitments made be monitored and that a high-level summit be held before the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. All sectors should work together to achieve transformational change.

51. The representative of Canada reported that a new protected area had been established in British Columbia, covering 8,000 hectares and 40 at-risk species. A new approach had been taken to project assessment, requiring strong accountability and achievable targets.

52. Closing remarks were delivered by Mr. Huang on behalf of the Government of China and as President of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. While notable results had been achieved over the past 25 years of the Convention, much remained to be done. China was aware of the significance of the post-2020 global framework, to be adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, and of the effort required to prepare it. He appealed to all stakeholders to work together to agree on the procedures so that substantive work could start on an ambitious, transformative post-2020 framework compatible with the Sustainable Development Goals. The Government of China firmly supported hosting the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and was committed to engaging in extensive consultation and accommodating the concerns of all stakeholders to the greatest possible extent.

53. Ms. Fouad, in her closing remarks, recalled that the Sharm El-Sheikh Peace Park had been inaugurated the previous day with the planting of olive trees, a symbol of peace, and invited the representatives to a reception at the park on Saturday, 17 November 2018, to celebrate the cultural and biological diversity of Egypt. Emphasizing the importance of the role of Africa in global biodiversity, she asked participants to observe a minute of silence as a tribute to Ms. Edna Molewa, the late Minister of Water and Environment of South Africa, who had died in September 2018.

54. Ms. Fouad declared the meeting closed at 6:55 p.m. on Thursday, 15 November 2018.

H. Associated event

55. On 14 November 2018, a special ministerial lunch was held on the theme of “Biodiversity: Solution to climate change and land degradation”. The discussion was moderated by Ms. Inger Andersen, Director General of IUCN, and interventions were made by key representatives, including Ms. Anne Larigauderie, Executive Director of IPBES, H.E. Ms. Lina Polh, Minister of Environment of El Salvador and H.E. Mr. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner, European Union.

*Annex***SUMMARY OF ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSIONS****I. MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE SECTOR****A. Introduction**

1. The round-table discussion was co-chaired by Ms. Randa Elmenshawy, Vice-Minister of Housing, Utilities and Urban Development of Egypt, and by Mr. Thulas Nxesi, Minister of Public Works of South Africa. In her opening remarks, Ms. Elmenshawy drew attention to the opportunities arising from infrastructure investments for appropriate urban development as called for in Strategic Development Plan 2030 of Egypt. Mr. Nxesi called for a common shared trajectory towards a just and sustainable future in which biodiversity is fully recognized as an asset.

2. The participants then heard some key presentations from different countries and organizations on the how best to mainstream biodiversity in the infrastructure sector.

3. Mr. Huang Runqiu, Vice-Minister of Ecology and Environment of China, highlighted the opportunities arising from international cooperation in infrastructure development. Ms. Emmanuelle Wargon, State Minister of Ecological and Inclusive Transition of France, noted the strict approval process with the underlying principle to avoid net loss of biodiversity. Ms. Mary Porter Pechka, Director of Environment, Social and Governance of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), drew attention to the need for addressing biodiversity issues at the earliest stage of project planning and design and noted in that context IFC Performance Standard No. 6. Mr. Yun Liang, Vice-President of the China Harbour Engineering Company, highlighted the importance of adhering with existing legislation and of monitoring environmental issues throughout project implementation.

4. Following the opening presentations, the co-chair called on ministers, heads of delegation and other high-level representatives to make interventions. Interventions were made by ministers or high-level representatives of 29 Governments.¹

B. Summary of discussions

5. In their interventions, several speakers noted their countries' commitment towards sustainable development and constitutional or other legal provisions supporting a transformational change towards a future in which biodiversity issues are fully recognized. Good governance and the will to implement existing policies, as well as public participation, awareness-raising and access to data and information were considered key to support such a change. Several speakers also pointed out the need to apply the precautionary principle. Moreover, better integration of biodiversity and climate change issues was called for.

6. Integrated planning processes and policies, including land use planning, strategic environmental assessments, integrated river basin and coastal management and sector-specific frameworks, as well as the adoption and application of standards and codes were listed among the approaches to safeguard biodiversity. The need for budgetary allocations to implement such processes effectively was highlighted.

7. International cooperation, investments in research, the promotion of technology transfer and the sharing of experiences and expertise were listed as critical in advancing best practices in infrastructure development.

¹ Algeria, Austria, Belarus, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Congo, Djibouti, Ecuador, El Salvador, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, State of Palestine, Poland, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Rwanda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

8. Many speakers raised issues related to urban development as particularly challenging, noting difficulties related to urban expansion, waste and water management and health. Efforts to plan for green belts and create green spaces, such as urban parks, botanical gardens and arboretums as well as other recreational opportunities, and to promote green buildings were viewed as particularly promising approaches. One speaker referred to a pledge by developers to achieve net gains in biodiversity associated with their activities.

9. Habitat fragmentation and associated disruptions of migration routes for wildlife were considered by many to be an inherent problem in infrastructure development. By planning corridors, ranging from local wildlife crossings, bridges and tunnels to large-scale transboundary spatial planning processes, such disruptions could be minimized or mitigated. The establishment and effective management of protected areas, habitat restoration and the enhancement of the resilience of natural systems were considered to be key approaches to balancing development needs with environmental considerations, noting the need to prioritize the most fragile ecosystems. The management of the pathways for the introduction of invasive alien species was also considered a priority.

10. In conclusion, speakers noted the opportunities arising from the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to achieve a better integration of environmental and development priorities.

II. MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN THE MANUFACTURING AND PROCESSING SECTOR

A. Introduction

11. The round table was co-chaired by Mr. Amr Nassar, Minister of Industry and Trade of Egypt, and Ms. Eugenie Sage, Minister of Conservation of New Zealand. In their introductory remarks, Mr. Nassar highlighted the impacts that the manufacturing and processing sectors have on biodiversity and the efforts of Egypt to develop and support the sector through legislative frameworks and cooperation between ministries and industry, while Ms. Sage presented the move to a circular economy and the impacts of a paradigm shift towards supporting nature affect the sector.

12. Opening presentations were made by six representatives. Mr. Derek Hanekom, Minister of Tourism of South Africa, began by emphasizing that biodiversity is in everyone's interest and that we depend on its proper management. The State Secretary of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany, Mr. Jochen Flasbarth, then made a presentation and highlighted the importance of understanding the value of biodiversity from an economic dimension and the importance of including biodiversity considerations in the supply chain industries. The Minister of Environment of Brazil, Mr. Edson Gonçalves Duarte, emphasized that the participation of the private sector is indispensable in the efforts towards biodiversity mainstreaming. He mentioned that business management tools to assess dependence on ecosystems increase awareness of their impacts.

13. Following the presentation of the Brazilian representative, Mr. C.K. Mishra, Secretary of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India delivered an opening presentation where he introduced the "Make in India" campaign launched in 2014 and which has the objective of job creation and skill enhancement in 25 sectors, aimed at transforming India into a global design manufacturing hub. Following India's intervention, the State Minister of Environment of Japan, Mr. Minoru Kiuchi shared his country's experience in the area of mainstreaming in the manufacturing sector, highlighting that the resource cycle is important and that their Satoyama Initiative is important for sectoral use. The last opening presentation was delivered by Mr. Peter White, Chief Operating Officer, World Business Council on Sustainable Development. He offered five quick proposals to the round table, including to think about systems rather than sectors, to set targets and to identify and implement solutions. He emphasized that the private sector and non-state actors can develop and implement nature-based solutions using their natural infrastructure.

14. Following several opening presentations, the co-chairs called on ministers, heads of delegation and other high-level representatives to make interventions. Interventions were made by ministers or high-level representatives of 15 Governments and 3 organizations.²

B. Summary of discussions

15. The participants confirmed that manufacturing and processing are sectors that have begun to mainstream biodiversity considerations into their processes, procedures and policies in order to minimize unnecessary biodiversity loss, both in their inputs and outputs. The immense scale of the sectors, including the increasing globalization of manufacturing and the related supply chains, are challenges to the implementation of biodiversity-preserving actions. Additionally, the sectors include industries that produce, manufacture and process a wide variety of goods that increase the complexity of and the need for a range of potential approaches.

16. All speakers supported the idea that it is essential to increase collaboration and cooperation among governments and regulators on the one hand and the business community in these sectors on the other. interministerial collaboration could also provide a starting point for increased policy coherence and awareness of the environmental impacts of manufacturing and processing. A variety of ecosystem services support those sectors and policymaking and planning must reflect that.

17. Additionally, enhanced efforts would be needed to raise the awareness of the business community regarding its impacts on ecosystem services. Several countries noted the development of business and biodiversity platforms that work to foster such connections and increase awareness. The need for effective information and data sharing was also highlighted as a means of support to both business and policymakers. Speakers noted the public and business community's increased understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals and their interlinkages. They shared examples of how greater attention to sustainable production and consumption (Sustainable Development Goal 12) can have direct impacts on ocean health (Sustainable Development Goal 14), such as through bans on single-use plastic, microplastics and similar policy measures. It was noted that such policy measures would require additional innovation in those sectors to provide substitutes for raw materials with high environmental impact.

18. The public sector is a large consumer of goods. The need for governments at all levels to model sustainable consumption practices in their public procurement processes was therefore highlighted by several speakers. Those practices could be supported by information technology to share information on approaches and lessons learned among those responsible for public procurement.

19. Additionally, for both the public sector and the general public, it was noted that it is difficult to find information about the sustainability of many manufactured or processed products available for purchase. Tracking such information through a product "passport", website or product labelling was suggested as a measure to enhance transparency and improve awareness. Due to the often global nature of the supply chain, this information can be difficult to source. It would therefore be helpful if biodiversity-related interests and considerations could be included in existing supply chain standards.

20. Several speakers noted the need for effective legislative frameworks and policies to ensure that adherence to environmental standards and requirements is considered at the earliest stage of planning the establishment of factories and plants and that monitoring and data capture of air quality, emissions and waste disposal, among other things, is considered in the project design. Speakers highlighted the

² Belgium, Brazil, Chad, Estonia, Finland, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Madagascar, Malta, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and Union for the Mediterranean.

possibility of applying information technology to many of these needs, as the cost for technology is declining.

21. The physical location of manufacturing and processing plants, particularly with the rapid increase in urbanization, is a necessary consideration when granting permits for new construction. Some countries discussed the designation of industrial locations that were far from urban areas.

22. Finally, many speakers supported the principles of the circular economy and the need to keep materials for as long as possible in the consumption cycle. This would require fundamental changes not only in economic practices, but also in human consumption and use patterns. Speakers highlighted the importance, therefore, of awareness-raising campaigns, both with the general public and among sectors, of the impacts that manufacturing and processing have on biodiversity and the environment. Several speakers noted the increasing public awareness of the environmental impacts of plastics as a positive indicator of awareness of biodiversity issues. However, even more fundamental change would need to occur to move beyond an economic philosophy prioritizing consumption. The economic values of biodiversity and the environment would need to be internalized as well if these sectors were to better understand and value their impacts on the environment.

23. One of the approaches suggested for both increasing awareness among the public and business and measuring progress was the development of clear science-based biodiversity targets and goals. Speakers discussed the need for awareness-raising by using clear, plain language that is accessible to the public.

24. In conclusion, speakers supported the need to continue to pursue efforts on mainstreaming biodiversity into the manufacturing and processing sectors. There was consensus that there are many interconnected approaches to do so. Clear goals and targets and the building of collaboration among the business and biodiversity spheres were considered important to progress towards investing in biodiversity for people and the planet. The impacts of manufacturing and processing on biodiversity need to be better recognized. As one speaker noted, “We are all in this canoe together”.

III. MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

A. Introduction

25. The round table was co-chaired by Ms. Hala Zayed, Minister of Health of Egypt, and Ms. Karolina Skog, Minister of Environment of Sweden.

26. In her introductory remarks, Ms. Zayed highlighted the negative impacts of environmental drivers, including air pollution, on health outcomes. She also noted emerging efforts in Egypt to mainstream biodiversity in the health sector, explaining that the Ministry of Health had adopted clear and integrated policies to integrate a range of different elements. Examples included measuring air pollution and its consequences for human health, through more systematic use of environmental impact assessment, cataloguing of medicinal plants, and implementing measures to monitor water quality and contamination.

27. In her remarks, Ms. Skog discussed the mental health benefits of exposure to nature, including among children, particularly in urban settings. She highlighted national measures and financial incentives to support urban planning, noting that urban green spaces contributed to building resilience while also conserving a range of ecosystem services and reducing the impacts of other environmental determinants of health such as air and noise pollution.

28. Following the opening presentations by the co-chairs, a presentation was delivered by Ms. Barbara Thompson, Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs of South Africa, and Ms. Joy St. John, Assistant Director-General, Climate and other Determinants for Health, World Health Organization.

Interventions were then made by ministers or high-level representatives of an additional 26 Parties to the Convention and 7 organizations.³

B. Summary of discussions

29. The participants confirmed that biodiversity is the foundational pillar for the delivery of ecosystem services essential to health, well-being and development, and, as such, health is a critical sector in which to mainstream biodiversity. They also confirmed that increased cross-sectoral coordination on biodiversity and health and incorporating health and biodiversity linkages and health-related targets into the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be essential to achieving several Sustainable Development Goals, including Goals 3 and 15, and to sustainable economic and social development for the health and well-being of present and future generations alike. In the words of one participant, there is a “need to ensure that the crucial work of the Convention receives full recognition in the health policy sectors at all levels”.

30. In line with these acknowledgements, participants shared national and regional experiences of cross-sectoral policies and initiatives across a range of issues at the biodiversity and health nexus, several of which offer potential for mainstreaming, replication and upscaling. Legislative and regulatory frameworks that jointly support sound ecosystem management and improved health outcomes were also presented.

31. Shared experiences confirmed that while national efforts aimed at cross-sectoral integration are increasing, significant efforts are still needed: to raise public awareness of the health benefits of biodiversity conservation; to scale-up financing for and national implementation of cross-sectoral plans and policies that focus on prevention; to develop mutually supportive legislative, fiscal, and financial instruments; and to support mutually reinforcing behavioural measures aimed at biodiversity conservation and improved health outcomes.

32. There was also consensus that greater emphasis must be placed on biodiversity conservation for health promotion, to support a coherent and coordinated Health in All Policies approach.⁴ It was also agreed that targeted tools such as environmental impact assessments, cross-sector data sharing, coordinated monitoring and surveillance systems that support early detection of infectious disease outbreaks, and risk communication tools for policy-makers and the general public, require increased coordination and strengthening. The importance of transdisciplinary research to support the implementation of coherent, evidence-based measures was also emphasized. Awareness-raising, capacity-building, and education of the health benefits associated with the sustainable management, conservation and use of biodiversity as well as cross-sectoral approaches to health were all identified as fundamental to the achievement of these shared objectives. One participant emphasized that the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to support health outcomes could no longer be limited to voluntary national measures, noting the need for a global legally-binding agreement, equivalent to Nationally Determined Contributions under the UNFCCC. Another participant emphasized that awareness-raising within the public health community should be prioritized as the most important priority action because the co-benefits of biodiversity protection for human health are substantial but often poorly understood by health policy practitioners.

33. Among other measures, it was also agreed that the development of legislative frameworks and guidelines that enhance the use of biodiversity in agricultural systems, increased production and

³ Angola, Austria, Brazil, Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, Gabon, Ghana, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, State of Palestine, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Viet Nam, European Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Centre for Biodiversity, Bioversity International, IUCN, Mediterranean Information Office for Environment, Culture and Sustainable Development (MIO-ECSDE), SPREP, UNESCO and WHO.

⁴ <http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/frameworkforcountryaction/en/>

commercialization of local species high in nutritional content, the development of dietary guidelines, reduced use of genetically modified organisms, harmful chemicals and pesticides, and a mix of measures targeting the whole food supply chain are critical building blocks to more resilient food systems better able to support food security, diversified diets and nutrition. Those and other measures, such as urban gardens, were also highlighted as effective ways to support the delivery of other ecosystem services that indirectly influence health outcomes, such as pollination, soil quality and pest regulation, and to reduce the rising burden of non-communicable diseases, such as obesity, diabetes and malnutrition. Moreover, participants agreed that improved ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation offers significant potential to reduce outbreaks of zoonotic and vector-borne diseases.

34. Nature-based solutions and holistic approaches to health, such as One Health and Planetary Health, in which biodiversity and ecosystem health are effectively integrated with national strategies, were identified as particularly effective entry points for biodiversity mainstreaming, cross-sectoral policy coherence and to align national objectives with global commitments such as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Nature-based solutions were also acknowledged as a cost-effective measure to enhance resilience in the face of climate change and to mitigate disaster risk.

35. Several Governments also emphasized the value of biodiversity as a source of traditional medicines, cultural and spiritual enrichment, traditional knowledge and biomedical discovery, underscoring the need for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from its use while also noting the importance of sustainable harvesting, trade and cataloguing of medicinal plants. More judicious use of water resources, and the reduction of pollution and waste were also identified as measures to maximize co-benefits for biodiversity and human health.

36. Finally, a number of participants supported the integration of biodiversity into spatial planning and promotion of the development of green infrastructure and contact with nature from childhood, particularly in urban areas, which would also maximize the health benefits associated with exposure to microbial diversity in the environment and reduce a range of non-communicable diseases. Related policies to facilitate contact with nature were also presented, such as national policies that strengthen outdoor recreational activities and promote social inclusion.

37. Broad alliances between the health and biodiversity-related sectors at the national level, as well as support for local communities, partnerships with the private sector and increased cooperation between WHO, the secretariat of the Convention and Governments were all considered important to achieving policy coherence and the transformational change required to meet the greatest environmental, global health and development challenges of the age.

38. As many noted, the links between biodiversity and health are at the heart of the theme of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, “Investing in biodiversity for people and planet”. As others further noted, “healthy ecosystems should be viewed as a fundamental pillar of cost-effective health care”.

IV. MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY IN THE MINING AND ENERGY SECTOR

A. Introduction

39. The round table was co-chaired by Mr. Tarek El-Molla, Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources of Egypt, and Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica. In his opening remarks, Mr. El-Molla noted that, while the mining and energy sectors provide many economic benefits, there is an urgent need to reduce the adverse direct and indirect effects on biodiversity and ecosystem services resulting from their activities. Mr. Rodriguez addressed the institutional challenges associated with mainstreaming biodiversity in the mining and energy sectors, calling for a more comprehensive and integrated approach at the national level. He noted the positive experiences in

Costa Rica since responsibility for environment, water, energy and mining had been combined in one ministry in 1986.

40. Participants subsequently heard several presentations by representatives from different countries and organizations on the how best to mainstream biodiversity in the mining and energy sectors.

41. Mr. Denis Sandy, Minister of Lands, Housing, and Environment of Sierra Leone, presented an overview of the challenges faced by many developing countries, citing poverty, population growth and urban expansion, combined with a lack of capacity by regulators to enforce social and environmental compliance by energy and mining companies all of which were posing increasing pressures on biodiversity-rich areas. He urged actors from different sectors (relevant ministries, agencies, non-governmental organizations, businesses) to work together to enhance the incorporation of biodiversity-related considerations into the energy and mining sectors.

42. Mr. Thulas Nxesi, Minister of Public Works of South Africa, drew attention to the need to balance the economic benefits of the mining and energy sectors with the need to ensure just and equitable social and economic development. He also noted the importance of innovation, technology transfer and knowledge-sharing as drivers for reducing the pressures of those sectors on biodiversity and ecosystems.

43. Mr. Brian Sullivan, Executive Director of the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA), presented an overview of the role of his organization in helping the oil and gas industry improve its environmental and social performance by sharing good practices and knowledge among industry players, engaging diverse stakeholders, understanding risks and encouraging transparent reporting on biodiversity indicators against established baselines, thereby aiming to scale up good practice.

44. Interventions were made by ministers and high-level representatives of 33 countries.⁵

B. Summary of discussions

45. In their interventions, many representatives highlighted the concrete actions taken by their Governments to mainstream biodiversity into the energy and mining sectors, aligning with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The increase of renewables in the energy mix to reduce greenhouse gas emissions was identified as a key priority for many countries. In that context, speakers noted that the transition to a low-carbon economy must be well-planned to minimize negative effects on biodiversity.

46. In that regard, the incorporation of biodiversity considerations at the earliest planning stages was considered to be key in minimizing impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services and to avoid conflicts with local communities. Many speakers reported on national legislative and regulatory provisions requiring operators to undertake extensive consultations with indigenous peoples and local communities and to demonstrate sound environmental management throughout the lifetime of the project, including the decommissioning phase.

47. Some of the measures, tools and policies highlighted to reduce negative impacts on nature included the implementation of mining codes and legislations, strict adherence to environmental assessments by industry players, multi-stakeholder dialogues and monitoring. The establishment of international and regional agreements, as well as international standards and codes, was considered

⁵ Algeria, Andorra, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ecuador, Germany, Guinea, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lithuania, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Samoa, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

essential for guiding the implementation of sound environmental practices and social safeguards in those sectors at the national and local levels.

48. Furthermore, cooperation on the sharing of knowledge, best practices and innovative technologies were seen as important factors in bringing the global community on a truly sustainable development pathway.

49. In conclusion, while the energy and mining sectors were important sources of economic growth, employment and development, the round table highlighted the necessity for enhanced policies and practices by Governments, industry and other stakeholders to minimize or mitigate biodiversity loss effectively, compensate for damage and ensure human and planetary well-being.
