



**Statement by Ms. Cristiana Paşca Palmer,
Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity
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Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Biodiversity lies at the heart of the theme of this UNEA4 Assembly.

Biodiversity, as the totality of all forms of life on the planet, has an intrinsic value, but it is also the essential fabric and infrastructure that supports human development and well-being. Healthy biodiversity and ecosystems are critical to the health of the planet and all its peoples. They provide nature-based solutions and opportunities on many of the most critical environmental, economic, and social challenges that we face as a global society, including climate change and land degradation, sustainable economic development, human health and well-being, water and food security.

Despite this recognition, biodiversity continues to decline at an alarming rate. Unsustainable practices in agriculture, forestry and mining, urban expansion and infrastructure development, but also fragmented governance models both at the national and international levels continue to destroy habitats and species.

But hope is not lost. As with any human-made crisis, we humans also have the ability to innovate solutions. And nature-based solutions, backed by science, offer tremendous opportunities for all segments of global society.

We all must expand our engagement and outreach beyond the walls of this room. The biodiversity narrative needs to broaden and resonate with all society. It must expand from treating biodiversity solely as an environmental concern to recognizing that biodiversity is essential to sustainable development and opportunity and necessity for humans. Biodiversity also needs to gain more political relevance and visibility as a fundamental topic for human existence on the global agenda.

At the Convention on Biological Diversity, we started in earnest the consultative process and working with all Parties and key stakeholders to prepare the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, a transformative pathway of innovation and impactful actions to enable humanity to reach the vision of Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050.

I urge all of you here, delegates to UNEA, many of whom are also Parties to and stakeholders of the Biodiversity Convention to do your fair share and actively engage in the process. I encourage Governments to convene national consultations that involve indigenous peoples and local communities, subnational governments, the business and finance sectors, and civil society, including youth, women. We must co-design the future we want for ourselves, our children and the planet, mindful that what is at stake in the next decade is our own survival on Earth.

The entire CBD Secretariat and I personally stand ready to work together at this critical moment for nature and for all peoples. Thank you.

