



## Opening Statement

**Dr. Cristiana Paşca Palmer**

**Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity**

**9<sup>th</sup> Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity**

**2 - 5 July 2019**

*Excellencies,*

*Mr. Ola Elvestuen, Minister of Climate and Environment, Norway*

*Ms. Siti Nurbaya Bakar, Minister of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia*

*Mr. Zhai Qing, Vice Minister of Ecology and Environment, China*

*Mr. Ola Lund Renolen, Deputy Mayor of Trondheim*

*Mr. Henrik Olsen, Council Member, Saami Parliament*

*Distinguished Ministers, Dear Colleagues,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This ninth Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity is being held at a time of rising ecological and climate emergencies, which not only challenges us through the increasing frequencies and geographic extent, but also with the limited time to respond rapidly using existing knowledge and tools for far reaching systemic positive impact.

Given the strong determination to develop an ambitious, meaningful and inclusive post 2020 global biodiversity framework , using the existing scientific and traditional knowledge to deepen our understanding about how to conserve, sustainably use and ensure equitable access and benefits associated with biodiversity, I am honoured to be here today, as a partner working with the Norwegian government on this ninth Conference, which I hope will be a landmark milestone on our journey to set a transformative agenda for nature in the coming decades.

Throughout the years, the Trondheim conferences have brought to the forefront vision, commitment and cooperation. I want to thank the Government of Norway and all the national institutions involved for organizing this conference in support of the post-2020 process and for hosting us this week. I would also like to congratulate Norway and the city of Oslo, in particular, for receiving the title of European Green Capital 2019 due to its demonstration of good environmental and climate emissions reduction solutions. The suite of educational and self-awareness activities carried out in Oslo represent a “nature



based perspective” that creates greener innovative potentials here in Norway while also stimulating other countries abroad.

To this end, I also want to acknowledge the bold actions to reduce biodiversity loss taking shape in Indonesia and China.

After many years of tireless work by so many of you in this room, documenting the loss of biodiversity, raising awareness, and calling for action to protect our planet and all its peoples, we are as a community getting greater high-level attention from every sector of society on this critical global issue. I am pleased to report to you that the issue of biodiversity is moving where it deserves to be: at the centre of the global agenda and inextricably linked to climate change, sustainable economic development, health, food security and so many other critical global issues.

Just this past week, on the margins of the G20, the foreign ministers of France and China, together with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, emphasized the link between climate change and biodiversity, and the need for a prompt global response to biodiversity loss. They “reiterated their determination to actively contribute to the comprehensive and participatory process of developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.” Furthermore, they emphasized the need to scale up financing for nature-based solutions, especially when considering the key role they play on major international challenges, such as climate change and sustainable development.

I also want to acknowledge that the Government of France has placed biodiversity together with climate change at the agenda of next month’s G7. In addition, the G7 Ministers of Environment issued a landmark call in Metz to fight inequality through the protection of biodiversity and the climate. While these are important steps forward, a lot more still needs to be done.

As you can see, the international momentum to address the biodiversity crisis is gaining speed.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The scientific case for our work has become more clear, convincing and connecting with other significant findings. Current trends and “business-as-usual” scenarios, for example, show continued loss of biodiversity, with 1 million species threatened with extinction, with major negative consequences for human well-being, including changes that may be irreversible.

The global comprehensive report on biodiversity and ecosystem services launched in May 2019 by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) scientifically documented the extent of the crisis, and boldly called for transformative change to halt and reverse it.

Other reports including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report on the finance, business and economic case, also document some projections on the costs of inaction for particular sectors. Globally, the world lost an estimated USD 10 -30 trillion per year in ecosystem services from 1997 to 2011, due to land-cover change and from land degradation together (OECD 2019). Potential financial investments that could arise through nature-based solutions are also being estimated and signal opportunities. For example, the annual market value of crop dependent on animal pollination ranges from USD 235 billion to USD 577 billion.

Further landmark reports have examined other critical facets of the crisis from biodiversity loss, including *The State of the World’s Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture* by FAO; *Global Environment*

*Outlook 6* by UN Environment; and the *Global Resources Outlook 2019* prepared by the International Resource Panel, as well as the EAT-Lancet Commission report.

The 5th edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, prepared by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, will report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and provide an analysis of progress made towards reaching the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, including their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.

All in all, the facts, figures and projections issued through these reports, and their direct sources of information, have helped generate a new narrative of our human-nature relationship and what we need to do to ensure the integrity and functionality of our natural ecosystems.

Representatives from civil society — many of whom are in this room — have been making the case to governments and the public at large of existing measures, approaches and tools that can be applied to conserve, restore and sustainably use biodiversity. I encourage you to continue to participate, report and engage through initiatives and partnerships with Parties to the Convention. We all need to be accountable and responsible for our planet's health and all the forms of life on it.

The private sector have also elevated their engagement in the process, leveraging environmental and corporate social responsibility initiatives and testing approaches to focus on areas of sustainability, without compromising nature. In many sectors, including food systems, agriculture, tourism and other industries, we have seen commitments to mainstreaming biodiversity into business practices and reporting. While business goals for sustainability may be motivated by different factors and interests, we must continue to make the economic and business case that conserving, sustainably managing and restoring biodiversity can actually reduce costs, be good for business and attract a growing consumer base, while equally doing good for biodiversity and helping to invest in an economy that benefit all peoples. One example is in the organic food and beverage sector with is expected to grow 16 per cent per year, reaching USD 327 billion by 2022.

Most importantly of all, we have seen the people of the world — and most especially the youth of the world — raise their voices and demand a better future.

We must proactively encourage all stakeholders to act boldly, which is why together with the governments of China and Egypt, we have launched the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People.

*Colleagues*, nature is dynamic and interconnected, and so too must be the solutions we develop. We need to recognize that the challenge is currently outpacing many of our efforts. While we have advanced on some global targets, in a larger context we still face major risks presented by growing levels of consumption that lead to land system change, ocean acidification and increasing nitrogen fixation, pollution, among other challenges.

We no longer have the luxury of incremental progress. We must focus on transformative solutions. We must aim high to reverse the drivers of ecosystem and biodiversity change, such as climate change, overexploitation, pollution, invasive alien species and habitat loss, including land-use change.

A systemic transition that will lead to a shift in human behaviour, our consumption and production patterns, pollution and waste management, conservation and restoration techniques, is emerging as a stark necessity.

As we map, analyse and institutionally address these drivers affecting biodiversity loss, we must ensure the appropriate enabling framework that leads to higher ambition, broader engagement across sectors and meaningful and achievable goals and targets based on science.

I know that with the expertise and experience as well as national representation at this conference, we can together further drive these ambitious but absolutely imperative paradigm shifts.

The ideas and solutions that we put forward here are going to be taken to the highest levels of government, business, civil society, and decision-makers from all key stakeholders.

*Colleagues*, we are on a journey to a momentous multilateral agreement in Kunming, China: on the one hand, accelerating achievement of the existing Aichi Biodiversity Targets to give us a strong start for the post-2020 era and, on the other, setting the direction to 2050, as defined by a new global biodiversity framework.

We need to continue to build — and indeed exponentially expand — this growing movement of civil society, business, indigenous peoples and local communities, youth and others, all advocating for harmony between humankind and nature and reducing biodiversity loss.

We must prepare the way for a ground-breaking agreement and for its quick and comprehensive adoption and accelerated adherence. The objective is perfectly clear. We must ensure the agreement bends the curve of biodiversity loss and climate destruction while ensuring it contributes to all the Sustainable Development Goals.

Most importantly we must speak to all of those outside this room, many of whom have never heard of “biodiversity”, but all of whom intrinsically understand the importance of nature in their lives, and indeed the fact that they are themselves — like all of us — part of nature.

Building on the outcomes of the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention, held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt last November, you may be aware that the process for the crafting of the science-based post-2020 global biodiversity framework, including a series of regional and thematic consultations for Parties and stakeholders, formally started in January of this year.

The Secretariat with close guidance from the co-chairs of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) have completed regional consultations in all five regions, with some thematic consultations already begun. These meetings will be instrumental for our common understanding of status, trends and ways forward, especially in support of the OEWG on the post-2020 process. The first meeting of the OEWG will be convened in Nairobi at the end of August 2019.

In addition, the UN Secretary-General will be hosting a UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019 in New York, where nature-based solutions will have a prime role. Many governments have been championing the work stream on nature-based solutions which can create a profound political signal on the close interconnections between nature and climate action in the lead up to the Convention on Biological Diversity’s COP 15, in 2020, and the Climate Change Conference in 2020 (26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)).

In this regard, the upcoming COPs of our fellow Rio Conventions, respectively of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and UNFCCC, in New Delhi and Santiago this fall, will allow for a renewed emphasis on cooperation across our interconnected areas of work.

Additionally, we are working closely with our sister biodiversity related conventions to promote and align practices and measures that can support the architectural shaping of the post-2020 framework. The IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille in June 2020 offers another important moment to further shape the process leading to COP 15 in 2020. Perhaps most importantly, we have a call to work with the President of the General Assembly for a UN Nature Summit to be led at the head-of-state level in September 2020.

This is an unparalleled opportunity, right before Kunming, to focus the world's attention on biodiversity. Together we can prepare and galvanize further action and awareness on the political impetus to nature for people, prosperity and our planet.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

We have a unique opportunity to connect this growing movement of ideas and solutions to deliberately accelerate biodiversity positive practices, bridging networks, knowledge and capacities to make biodiversity and nature a priority for all.

Your determination and commitment on this journey towards the vision of Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050 can truly have a transformative impact at the local and regional scales. As citizens, with personal as well as collective concerns and commitment to the future of life on Earth – each of you are well aware of the dire consequences of inaction. And so I also call on you for the next three days to set aside any political, national and institutional affiliations in order to contribute to building a shared and global framework for biodiversity.

At this conference we are not in negotiation mode, we are here for an exchange of ideas, opinions and suggestions. And so be bold, be brave, and be, as you have been, partners with us to build a more inclusive, equitable and sustainable socio-ecological pathway to achieve the Convention's 2050 Vision.

Thank you for your partnership and leadership!

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