



**STATEMENT BY**

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**ACTING EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

**AT THE FIFTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF**

**THE COUNCIL OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**

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**Washington D.C., United States of America**

Ms. Co-Chair,  
Ms. Ishii,  
Distinguished members of the GEF Council,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a distinct pleasure for me to address this meeting of the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) at this critical juncture in the life of the Convention on Biological Diversity. In just two weeks' time, we are stepping into a new year, which is being called by many as "the biodiversity super year".

Indeed, the international community has already started to review what has been achieved on the global strategy on biodiversity for the period 2011-2020 and its associated Aichi Targets and debate on what needs to be done in the next 10 years and beyond.

We have seen strong scientific evidence for a global biodiversity framework with a higher-level ambition. From the special reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and to the recent *Production Gap Report* and *Emissions Gap Report*, all points to the same message: business as usual does not help and is no longer an option.

The political momentum is building up. We have seen that the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, last month in Durban, South Africa, established a core group to articulate African perspectives, priorities and common positions. We have also seen that, for the first time, the presidents of France and China jointly issued a communiqué on biodiversity and climate change, clearly also showing the nexus between the two themes.

Inside the CBD process itself, with the participation of the GEF Secretariat, we have already completed a series of regionally based consultations, as well as the first meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Several theme-based consultations have been unfolding. The second meeting of the Working Group will be held next February in Kunming, China, and, at its third meeting, to be held next July in Cali, Colombia, the Working Group will finalize the draft post-



2020 framework for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth meeting; I recognize that one of the Co-Chairs of the Working Group is with us in the room. A new website for CBD is also being launched today. If you go to the website [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int), you will see a new face.

Dear friends,

The regional and thematic consultations held so far all considered GEF support to be critically important to a successful post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Three of the four paragraphs of Article 21 of the Convention are about the financial mechanism, and GEF is the core financial mechanism under the Convention. At its meeting last year, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, by decision 14/23, encouraged the Executive Secretary to work closely with GEF in the transition to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and to work closely with agencies associated with GEF in that transition, taking into account the need to promote greater synergies between GEF and other financing mechanisms. I come here, therefore, to seek your help and guidance on exactly how countries implementing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in the future will continue to receive financial support from GEF.

The future framework will likely have two reference timelines: there is a timeline aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which will seek to promote transformative changes consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals; and the second long-term timeline will lead to our 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature. This time framework will present an opportunity for the CBD and GEF to reflect on a longer-term perspective that will enable the successive GEF replenishment cycles to deliver a whole that will be greater than the sum of individual GEF replenishment cycles, and greater than the sum of individual GEF global focal area programming.

Let us look at country readiness.

Looking back to the past decade, the fifth replenishment of GEF ran from mid-2010 until mid-2014, with generously allocated sizable amount of funding to assist with updating and revising national biodiversity strategies and action plans for recipient countries. Approximately 66 per cent of recipient countries had their updated and revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans in place for implementation at the time of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in late 2016.

You may have noted that late 2016 was already beyond the mid-point of this decade, and little time was therefore available for recipient countries to actually undertake implementation of updated and revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Even if national biodiversity strategies and action plans had been developed and adopted as a national policy document, time was still inadequate.

We hope that, looking into the future, we have learned the lesson and we can learn further. Three quarters of national biodiversity strategies and action plans of GEF recipient countries have a time span up to 2020, which is the end of next year, and the remaining one quarter needs to be aligned with the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Taking these into consideration, I understand that the GEF-7 replenishment package already took into account the need to update and revise national planning documents in response to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and with the intent to maximize the effectiveness of the utilization of this funding allocation, it is better to capitalize on the political momentum now, and we hope to make the funding available for implementation immediately upon the adoption of the framework and avoid losing more time.

Let us look at integration.

Dear colleagues,

The financial mechanism is integral to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and I am pleased to note the integrating efforts between the two secretariats.

The GEF-7 biodiversity focal area strategy has aligned seamlessly with the four-year framework of programme priorities (2018-2022) adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its thirteenth meeting, in decision 13/21, leaving no gap in the international policy consensus or implementation. The fifth review of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism by the Conference of the Parties used the sixth comprehensive

evaluation of GEF as its basis, and many recommendations contained therein were taken up by the Conference of the Parties. We hope we'll continue to be able to complement each other.

There is still more to be achieved. For instance, the profiles of GEF and CBD are inherently linked and interlinked, but each secretariat has limited staffing on communication and a limited reach. There should be, we hope, more mutually beneficial communication and outreach efforts. This is very important in the biodiversity super year as there will be a need for urgent action, a need for enhanced action, a need for comprehensive transformative action, and a need for communication with the general public as well as high-level decision makers.

To conclude, distinguished Council members,

We have come to a historic moment in biodiversity. In September 2020, the United Nations General Assembly will also convene a summit on biodiversity at the level of Heads of State and Government, probably a month ahead of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention itself, in order to highlight the urgency of action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework that contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and places the global community on a path towards realizing the 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature.

In October 2020, the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention will be convened together with a high-level segment to adopt the final text of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework that we hope will be ambitious, innovative, transformative and practical. The theme of the Conference will be "Ecological civilization – Building a shared future for all life on Earth". It will be, we hope, one of the largest gatherings on biodiversity in the history and life of the Convention.

The post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be of generational importance and will likely shape the world not just for the next few years, but for decades to come.

I look forward to your engagement with your participation in the year-long process and look forward to seeing you all in Kunming, China, in October next year.

Thank you very much, Ms. Co-Chair.

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