



STATEMENT BY

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on the occasion of

**World Wetlands Day**

*“Wetlands and Biodiversity”*

Later this year, Parties, with the engagement of other stakeholders, to the Convention on Biological Diversity will gather to adopt the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and take the steps needed to bend the curve on biodiversity loss. We know that investing in nature is one of the best ways to address climate change and restore our natural life support systems. Concrete actions to prevent wetlands loss and degradation is an investment that allow us all to build a future of life in harmony with nature.

Wetlands are a critical part of our environment. While covering only 6 per cent of the Earth's land surface, wetlands provide a high number of ecosystem services. They mitigate floods, protect coastal areas from storms, improve water quality, recharge groundwater aquifers, serve as sinks, sources, or transformers of materials, and produce food and goods for human use. In addition, up to 40 per cent of the world's species live and breed in wetlands. Wetlands are also Earth's greatest natural carbon stores. Peatlands alone, for instance, store more than twice as much carbon as all the world's forests.

Yet, despite all these benefits, wetlands are disappearing three times faster than forests. More than 25 per cent of all wetlands plants and animals are now at risk of extinction. Approximately 35 per cent of the world's wetlands were lost between 1970-2015 and the loss rate is accelerating annually since 2000.

The main drivers of wetlands loss include climate change, population increase, urbanization, particularly of coastal zones and river deltas, and changing consumption patterns that fuel changes to land and water use and to agriculture.

We need to take meaningful action to restore and conserve these incredible environments. Simply designating new sites for protection is not enough. Legislative bodies need to make investments for sustainability. The recent *Global Wetland Outlook* emphasized the need to develop effective wetland management plans and integrate wetlands into the planning and implementation of national plans on sustainable development, climate change and other key global commitments.

In this Super Year for Biodiversity, on World Wetlands Day, let us commit to making these investments and work to conserve and sustainably use wetlands.

