



**Statement by Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema,
Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
on the occasion of**

**The 75th session of the
General Assembly of the United Nations
Second Committee**

**Agenda item 19(f)
Sustainable Development: Convention on Biological Diversity**

Report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

New York, United States of America, 12 October 2020

Thank you, Ambassador Amrit Bahadur Rai,

I am honoured to address the Second Committee of the General Assembly under your chairmanship.

Mr. Chairman,

It is a pleasure for me to introduce the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its 75th session on the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/75/256, sect. III). As you are aware, 2020 was meant to be the super year for nature, with a number of meetings being scheduled to be held, particularly the Summit on Biodiversity, leading up to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, where the post-2020 global biodiversity framework would have been finalized and adopted. Many of these meetings, including those of the subsidiary bodies of the Convention, such as the Subsidiary Body on Implementation and the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and even the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties itself had to be postponed due to the uncertainties and challenges arising from the pandemic. Permit me, therefore, to dwell instead on the major development since the submission of report.

The most significant development has been the unprecedented success of the Summit on Biodiversity, which was held on 30 September. At its fourteenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties had invited the General Assembly to convene a summit on biodiversity at the level of Heads of State and Government, before the fifteenth meeting. The purpose of the Summit was to highlight the urgency of action at the highest levels in support of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which would contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and place the global community on a path towards realizing the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity. These aims were realized when over 150 high-level speakers participated in the Summit, including over 72 Heads of State or Government. This was despite the many challenges and uncertainties arising from the pandemic and the rationale for organizing the Summit virtually.



The interventions clearly demonstrated the heightened awareness of the importance of conserving and restoring biodiversity to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the unhealthy consequences of persisting with the current growth trajectories, based on a dysfunctional relationship with nature. Above all, most statements called for recovery efforts in the post-pandemic period to be based on greener economic models that mainstream and integrate biodiversity into all sectors of the economy. We have also noted the strong broad-based support for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the signals on biodiversity as a bulwark in the fight against climate change. We have also taken note of the messages from indigenous peoples and local communities, youth, business and civil society organizations that participated in the plenary and two leadership dialogues.

Events in the run-up to the Summit include the launch of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* and the Nature for Life Hub, organized by UNDP in collaboration with partners, also generated momentum and awareness about the need to prioritize biodiversity. The collaboration with other UN entities, particularly the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNEP, IPBES, FAO and UNESCO, including the extensive consultations with the biodiversity-related conventions and the Rio conventions, to mention just a few, to assist the President of the General Assembly in the preparation of all aspects of the Summit and deliver as one UN, was also in the keeping with the letter and spirit of the mandate entrusted by Member States in resolution 74/269.

The messages from the Summit will guide our work going forward as we prepare for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties and the finalization of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

I thank you for your attention.
