



**STATEMENT BY MS. ELIZABETH MARUMA MREMA,
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**AT THE OPENING OF THE
TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY ON SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL
AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE**

Mr. Chairman,
Delegates,
Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be with you today to address the twenty-fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-24) to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

It is an honour for me to support you, along with my team at the Secretariat, as we take steps towards the United Nations Biodiversity Conference and the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. I have already made remarks at the informal session of SBSTTA held in February, and so, to save time, my comments today will be brief.

Honourable Chair, Hesiquio,

I would like to sincerely thank you and, through you, our colleagues in the Bureau, for your excellent leadership in preparing for this formal online meeting during these difficult times.

I would also like to thank the Government of Canada, our host country, for generously providing the financial resources that support additional costs incurred for our virtual meetings, including the services of our dedicated team of volunteers. From all of us, thanks a million.

We have more than 1,569 registered participants representing 101 countries and many organizations online with us for this meeting. I look forward to your active participation. Welcome to you all.

Dear participants,

I hope you all had a chance to attend the information session webinars and the informal session of SBSTTA earlier this year, which helped us to prepare for this meeting. The webinars were very informative and helped set the scene for our discussions. At the informal session of SBSTTA, we heard initial views of Parties and observers on most agenda items, and we received many valuable and important comments through your statements and written submissions. The Secretariat has collected them all and will take them into account when supporting the Chair of the meeting in developing conference room papers.

At this session of SBSTTA, we have before us eight substantive agenda items. These include:

- *The post-2020 global biodiversity framework*, whereby we invite scientific and technical advice related to the updated goals and targets, and indicators and baselines of the draft framework. Under this item, the fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* will be considered.

- *Synthetic biology and risk assessment and risk management of living modified organisms*, which will inform the need for further guidance to be developed, and any adjustments to the process for identification and prioritization of specific issues of risk assessment, established through a specific decision



of the Parties at their last meeting. Inputs will also inform the discussion on the potential benefits and adverse effects of synthetic biology as it relates to the work of the Convention.

- *Marine and coastal biodiversity*, whereby proposed approaches for the future of the CBD process on ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (or “EBSAs”) will be considered.
- *Biodiversity and agriculture*, whereby the draft plan of action 2020-2030 for the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity will be discussed.
- *The programme of work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, whereby proposals for a further request to be considered in the IPBES programme of work towards 2030 with a view to supporting the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be discussed.
- *Biodiversity and health*, under which progress made in response to requests by the Conference of the Parties at its fourteenth meeting and the draft global plan of action on health and biodiversity will be deliberated upon.

And last but certainly not least,

- *Invasive alien species*, discussion of which will focus on the additional advice provided by the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group and through its report on broader sectors’ collaboration on classification and labelling on environmentally hazardous organisms.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our colleagues and partners for their support and contributions to the preparation of the documents for these agenda items.

Before I close, I must also recognize the Secretariat staff team who have fully dedicated themselves to the successful delivery of these meetings. They have my heartfelt gratitude. It has been very demanding for my team to ensure that all preparations were duly completed and seamlessly ready for your deliberations. I would urge empathy and flexibility on your demands to the Secretariat, as we do our best to respond to them within the existing constraints.

I look forward to your interventions over the coming weeks. With the support of the Secretariat and the guidance of the SBSTTA Chair and the SBSTTA Bureau, this meeting will help advance the further development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and our preparations for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

I wish you all a successful meeting.
