



**Closing speech by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity,
Astrid Schomaker**

**Second resumed sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention,
eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to
the Cartagena Protocol and fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the
meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This has been an exceptional United Nations Biodiversity Conference with the largest mobilization for biodiversity in the history of the Convention and its Protocols.

A huge thank you goes to Colombia, our outstanding President, and you, the Parties and stakeholders that made it happen.

As of today, we can speak of the Kunming-Montreal-Cali-Rome spirit, which delivered a historic Global Biodiversity Framework and groundbreaking decisions on digital sequence information on genetic resources and on elevating the role of indigenous peoples and local communities.

In the same spirit, you tackled the biodiversity finance gap head-on.

You have demonstrated that multilateralism will endure. On behalf of all my colleagues in the Secretariat, I thank you for keeping hope alive.

But as the Secretary-General of the United Nations reminded us earlier this week, nature cannot wait.

Implementing the Framework at all levels remains our defining task.

Your agreement on mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review and on the monitoring framework will help us to steer and correct course on this journey.

The resource mobilization strategy, with its road map and guidance, will push us all to achieve the goal of closing the significant finance gap, which all Parties recognize, by 2030.

We are now on our way to the first global stocktake. Let us find inspiration in the majestic mountains of Armenia and reach for ambitious outcomes in Yerevan too.

What keeps environmental multilateralism alive are the actions that you take at home, based on what you agreed here.

And so, I hope that with the boost that Cali and Rome have given us, we will arrive in Yerevan with an action-oriented mindset.

May this boost also help the submission of updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans aligned with the Framework.

That would be an overdue great step forward towards what we are trying to accomplish together.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am coming to perhaps my most important message: to acknowledge the outstanding Susana Muhamad, President of the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a remarkable leader and champion of biodiversity.

Thank you, Madame President, dear Susana, for leading us to where we are now and for organizing with your national team in Colombia a memorable, a historic *COP de la gente* in Cali.

The achievements speak for themselves. We and the world will remember with gratitude.

Dear distinguished delegates, please join me in applauding what our Convention stands for and what you have accomplished for it.

While you are in applauding mode, my gratitude also goes to the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Qu Dongyu, and all FAO colleagues and staff who have hosted us in their stately premises over the past three days.

Last, a heartfelt thank you goes to everyone who contributed to the meetings in Cali and Rome, including Neil and David, who will soon be leaving the Secretariat.

Neil Prat will retire after several decades of dedication to environmental multilateralism and the work of this Convention. Thank you for your service, Neil. Wishing you a happy retirement.

David Ainsworth, our Head of communications, is moving on to a new role, after more than 21 years with the Secretariat. Thank you, David, for everything.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Be well and see you in Yerevan.