Convention on Biological Diversity

2026 United Nations Biodiversity Conference
Closing statement by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Yerevan,
30 October 2026

Your Excellency Hambardzum Matevosyan, President of the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and Minister of Environment of the Republic of Armenia,

Distinguished delegates,

As the meeting draws to a close, my heartfelt gratitude goes to the Government and people of Armenia for their exceptional hospitality, vision and leadership. Thank you for making us feel at home in beautiful Yerevan.

And thank you to you, dear Parties and stakeholders, for making us remember Yerevan not only as a beautiful city but as the start of the Yerevan Pathway towards 2030.

This has been a pivotal meeting, during which we have collectively faced up to the unequivocal global report that we are not yet on track to achieve our 2030 targets.

The Yerevan Pathway charts our course towards halting and reversing biodiversity loss. It also challenges us to confront many elephants in the room: the overlooked targets, the misalignment between ambition and action, the sluggish transformation of economic systems and the persistent scourge of subsidies harming biodiversity.

Now is the time to correct course.

And there are reasons for hope. The decisions adopted at this meeting and at those of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meetings of the Parties to the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols bring important momentum.

The whole-of-society approach woven into the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework has never been more relevant. The decisions that you adopted on education, on biodiversity and gender-responsive biodiversity action will stimulate action and help to unlock potential.

Some unfinished business will have to be addressed at the eighteenth meeting, but what is clear is that taking action for nature cannot wait.

This meeting has already produced the spark that will ignite the much-needed acceleration: a host of new initiatives were launched during the past two weeks. Armenia's rich tradition of carpet weaving offers a fitting metaphor for what we have witnessed here in Yerevan. Just as each thread contributes to the beauty and strength of a tapestry, every initiative, every partnership and every commitment have a role to play in protecting biodiversity.

Together, we are weaving a tapestry of action for nature. From the Nature and Culture Summit to the Women's Forum, the Business and Biodiversity Forum, Finance Day, the Cities and Subnational Governments Summit and the very first edition of Judges' Day, actors from across society are stepping up.

The meeting presidency's initiatives on biodiversity monitoring, mountain and freshwater ecosystems, conservation measures and positive incentives add further momentum.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Once again, my sincere appreciation to the President of the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Hambardzum Matevosyan, for the wonderful collaboration, and to everyone who has made this meeting possible: our Armenian hosts, security and cleaning personnel, catering teams, colleagues from the United Nations Environment Programme, interpreters, translators, report writers and Secretariat staff. I especially thank the Chairs of the Working Groups and the many co-chairs of contact groups and various other formations for their dedication and perseverance.

As we leave Yerevan, our responsibility is not to admire the tapestry that we have woven but to continue to add to it through concrete action. Let us return home with renewed determination, innovation and resolve. The Yerevan Pathway begins here and now. Let us walk it together for nature and for all people. I look forward to continuing this journey with you at COP 18 in Ecuador!

Thank you.