

International Day for Biological Diversity 2020

“Biodiversity: building blocks for resilience and inclusive development”, statement by **H.E. Mr Carlos Manuel Rodríguez**, Minister of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica



Thank you, Ambassador.

Good day, good afternoon, Excellencies, and good friends, I hope that you are all safe during this pandemic.

Definitely, humankind is going through very rough conditions these days. We are like surfers, surfing in the ocean and, as surfers, we are looking at the horizon where we see the sets, the waves that are coming towards us. The first wave that we see in the set is a medium-size wave that is called COVID-19; and as surfers, we tend to believe that we can surf that wave perfectly, without understanding that behind of that first wave, COVID-19, we will have bigger and stronger waves. The second wave is the social inequality wave that we humans, in this analogy, need to be able to surf properly. And behind that social inequality wave there is a third wave, bigger and stronger, that wave is called the loss of biodiversity, and behind that wave, the fourth wave that humankind will be confronted with very soon is the biggest of all, which is climate change.

In this respect, we need to be able to understand that to surf all of those waves properly and to be able to survive them we need to really have a comprehensive approach on how we generate positive synergies within social and economic policies in the context of nature conservation. I think that two things are quite important in this stage, at this moment: in order to address the big waves of biodiversity loss and climate change, we need to be able to be really flexible and very well focused on how we mobilize resources at the global level. Many reports indicate that in order to protect nature (and when I say protect nature I'm responding to what the scientific community tells us that by 2030 we should be protecting at least 30 percent of the oceans and the planet) we need to be able to mobilize around 140 billion dollars annually, in order to consolidate that 30 percent of the planet. You may believe that 140 billion dollars is a lot of money but if we compare that to global GDP, that is nothing. Global GDP stands around 87 trillion dollars. So, 140 billion dollars for nature conservation by 2030 is just 0.008 percent of global GDP. Unfortunately, we only invest in nature conservation around 82 billion dollars annually. This is again a small fraction of global GDP.

So how do we align societies, businesses, policies and governments in a way that we can mobilize resources from all sources? I think that we need to concentrate on five elements. One is that governments should continue to raise the level of ambition and be able to allocate resources from all sources in a way that it can help us implement particularly the new post 2020 CBD framework. The second point that I believe we need to concentrate on is that public and private actors must coordinate and scale up finance in sectors beyond conservation. We will never achieve our conservation goals if we do not do a cross-cutting approach. The third point is that all financial sectors should seek full alignment with the Paris Agreement and the new post 2020 framework. The fourth element is that capital markets and banks should shift rapidly towards green finance. And lastly but not less important, we need to really phase out negative investments and subsidies.

I think that bringing those policy approaches, being able to understand that investing in nature conservation gives us a high profit return, particularly in terms of human wellbeing; and understanding that there are enough resources at the global level to achieve a high ambition in terms of climate and biodiversity should be the approach in the aftermath of COVID-19.

Thank you all. Have a good day, and I wish you all a happy Global Biodiversity Day.

[End of the Intervention]