

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT OF ECUADOR, MR.
PAULO PROAÑO ON THE OCASSION OF “A VIRTUAL HIGH-LEVEL
DISCUSSION ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY”**



Thanks for giving me the floor. It is an honor for Ecuador to be able to participate in this Virtual High-Level discussion on the occasion of the International Day for Biological Diversity, under the theme “Our Solutions are in nature”, especially under the current circumstances we are all facing with the pandemic. I would like to start by thanking the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity, the Permanent Mission of Norway, and the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nation, for organizing this event.

It is now more important than ever to evaluate the contribution of biological diversity in our common agenda. Not only do we need to evaluate our economic model, but also to guarantee social welfare and conservation of natural resources. The spread of COVID-19 has taught us about the direct link between human health and health in ecosystems. Protecting biodiversity, combating climate change, ending illegal wildlife trade, ensuring the safe management of chemicals and waste, are some examples that prevent the destruction of the natural buffer zones that normally separate humans from animals and build a harmonious relationship between humans and nature.

More than a quarter of a century has passed since the adoption of the Convention of Biological Diversity. Ecuador was one of the first countries to ratify it. Since then, many national efforts have been done to reach its objectives. We have established protected areas as one of the main strategies of conservation which is directly linked to the first CBD’s objective. In fact, 51% of our natural forests are under

conservation. Nevertheless, it is not enough as additional national efforts are still needed. International cooperation is needed to consolidate the areas that make up the National System of Protected Areas.

Regarding the second and third objectives of the CBD, we are going through an initial phase with our national actions aiming at promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity and developing projects oriented at the fair and equitable distribution of the benefits generated by biodiversity and its components.

The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Aichi Targets have become a guide for the elaboration and implementation of various national biodiversity planning instruments, one of them being the National Biodiversity Strategy and its Action Plan 2015-2030.

As we are now building the post-2020 biodiversity framework, we call for an ambitious, strong and realistic Plan, in line with current challenges including economic reactivation, the strengthening of public health systems and the provision of essential services, thus we don't jeopardize the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. By 2020, the country has directly aligned each SDG with the objectives, policies and goals of the National Development Plan, identifying responsible actors, prioritizing and targeting resources, as well as strengthening national planning, monitoring and evaluation exercises.

It is important that the post-2020 biodiversity framework includes a reference of the three objectives of the Convention and its Protocols and establishes synergies with other international instruments such as the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030.

Ecuador is one of the 20 worldwide megadiverse countries. Biodiversity and its new framework must consider elements such as environmental justice, the linkage between biodiversity, food security and climate change, provide special attention to local communities and indigenous peoples, promote gender equality, foster ecosystem restoration, access and benefit-sharing, and governance. The role of civil society, academia and private sector in this process has the foremost importance.

On the occasion of the International Day for Biological Diversity, Ecuador remains committed to work at the national, regional and international level to develop and implement nature based solutions, prioritizing the development of science and knowledge, health and wellbeing and the economic strengthening based on a bioeconomy, aspects that allow us to live in harmony with nature.