

**Message of CITES Secretary-General Ivonne Higuero for  
International Day for Biological Diversity  
22 May 2020**



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**INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**  
**Our solutions are in nature**

A planet with a rich biological diversity has numerous and immense values and we should take the time to reflect on these and fully recognise them today, on the International Day for Biological Diversity.

“Our solutions are in nature,” the theme of this year’s International Day for Biological Diversity, is a simple message, yet it is a most timely one. It comes as a vital reminder that, though we may believe that we have achieved a full dominion over our natural environment, we remain entirely dependent on the vast - but not unlimited - wealth of our biosphere for our survival and well-being.

This message also carries an important warning: ignoring the needs of nature is not without consequences for planet, people and prosperity.

Last year’s Global Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) shed light on the gravity and intensity of the biodiversity loss crisis our planet faces: a million species in danger of disappearing and a potential cascade of accelerating extinctions that could irreversibly alter life on Earth. The report also pointed to humanity’s primary role in amplifying this crisis: unsustainable economic activities, habitat destruction and overexploitation of species and vital ecosystems around the world.

These analyses keep ringing true as we continue to witness abnormal climate events in weakened, neglected or overexploited ecosystems. They still ring true now, as we struggle to overcome a pandemic that has largely been linked to land use changes, increased human encroachment on wildlife habitats, including as a result of the illegal wildlife trade, and risky interactions with wild fauna and flora. A solution to help decrease the risk of another costly pandemic in both human lives and economic losses is in nature: we need to take care of nature so nature can take care of us.



CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES  
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Don't give up hope. There still is time to listen to the urgent calls of nature. There is time still to gear our work towards imagining and enacting bold, transformative policies to halt biodiversity loss and pave the way towards a sustainable future.

CITES Parties make efforts to implement a global framework to ensure that the international trade of valuable animal and plant species can benefit their economies and citizens and provide those living closest to nature with an incentive to conserve them, without endangering the survival of these wild species or compromising the ecosystems of which they are a part.

Continuing to implement and enforce such frameworks, whether those of CITES, CBD, or other major Conventions and treaties on biodiversity, is vital to mend our relationship with nature and keep it sustainable, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, most notably Goals 1 (No Poverty), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water) and 15 (Life on Land).

We are determined to contribute to and support efforts to inform governments, international organizations, civil society and all stakeholders in their decision-making towards conserving our world's biodiversity. We join in the call for all to work towards ensuring that future generations can continue to enjoy and sustainably benefit from our planet's rich and vibrant biological diversity.

All of us at the CITES Secretariat wish you a happy International Day for Biological Diversity!