

Message of CITES Secretary-General Ivonne Higuero for International Day for Biological Diversity, 22 May 2021



We are fortunate to benefit from the goods and services provided by wild species that are an intrinsic part of our planet's biological diversity. Though we may not always recognize it, these services and the species that provide them are the principal source of all elements of human well-being, from our food, to our medicines and our shelter.

At CITES, we are very aware of the extent to which many people around the world rely on wildlife for their livelihoods and to meet their basic needs. CITES Parties work tirelessly to ensure that international trade in wild fauna and flora can benefit their environment, their citizens and their economies, without putting at risk the survival of the species in the wild.

Today, on the international day of biodiversity I ask you to join me in addressing the biodiversity challenge facing us today and commit, as a citizen of this planet, to engage in a relationship with nature and biodiversity focusing on the underlying goal of sustainability. As we continue to grapple with the consequences of climate change and with ever-increasing biodiversity loss, all in the middle of a global pandemic, we must take bold actions that support us to see through these planetary crises.

This year, governments and other principal stakeholders will take part in crucial discussions that will decide on our future relationship with the planet's biodiversity. We are determined to support the work towards setting a robust new Global Framework for Biodiversity to put us firmly on the path to living in harmony with nature.

We will continue to encourage all stakeholders to set and stick to ambitious goals that profoundly reform our use of biodiversity-based resources. We will also push for the reinforcement and full implementation of existing frameworks such as those of CITES, CBD and all environmental Conventions. With existing tools, and new ones being developed all the time, and the strong resolve of governments and societies everywhere, we truly have the power and the opportunity to conserve the tapestry of life upon which we all depend.

On this International Day for Biological Diversity, I say a resounding yes to the call to be part of the solution towards conserving our planet's rich biodiversity and ask you to do the same.