

**Message from Mr Mikołaj Dorożala, Undersecretary of State, Chief Conservator
of Nature in Poland on the occasion of International Biodiversity Day 22 May 2025
“Harmony with nature and sustainable development”**

Biodiversity is crucial to sustaining life on Earth. The protection of natural resources is a priority issue for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of climate change, global warming, and reduced access to clean water and food for millions of people around the world. Social and economic activities over the past century has led to the transformation of human-environment relations, the loss of biodiversity, changes in ecosystems and the services they provide, and permanent changes in the distribution of species.

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework shows us the directions of our actions necessary to preserve biodiversity. Many activities are undertaken in Poland to protect areas and species. Poland currently has 23 national parks and more than 3,000 other area forms of nature protection, of which more than a thousand are the valuable Natura 2000 areas. A total of 10 million hectares of land are legally protected, which is about 33% of the country. 1840 species of animals, plants and fungi are under legal protection. We are currently creating a new national park in the Lower Odra Valley, establishing 100 new forest reserves, and limiting the felling of valuable tree stands. Numerous efforts are also being made to integrate climate, soil, water management and biodiversity policies.

Proper management of ecosystems such as marine areas, wetlands and forests remains an effective solution for mitigating climate change due to their high sequestration potential, while well-managed and protected greenery helps retain life-giving water in the soil. These valuable ecosystems, such as forests and peatlands, are part of nature, so in addition to being susceptible to human activity, they are also subject to natural processes. They require care and active measures, such as sustainable forest management, as well as measures involving their restoration. We have just started a big project on Nature Restoration Plan, in which we need to include particular ecosystems targets for terrestrial, marine, river, urban, agricultural and forest ecosystems as well as pollinator populations. It outlines the essential and additional elements taking into account our national circumstances and availability of data.

But legislative, administrative and policy measures are not sufficient. It is necessary to include all entities, stakeholders and the entire society in biodiversity protection activities. Understanding and appreciating the importance of nature is a big challenge, both for decision-makers and every person. We still notice inappropriate behaviors resulting from ignorance or conscious disregard for the needs of the environment.

This year we have launched a major educational campaign for biodiversity. I believe that actions aimed at raising ecological awareness will contribute to achieving a state where everyone will be deeply convinced of the need to preserve biodiversity, and the slogan of living in harmony with nature will be widely accepted.