



UNITED NATIONS SUMMIT ON BIODIVERSITY

30 September 2020



Summary of the President of the General Assembly

I. Introduction

The summit on biodiversity at the level of Heads of State and Government, convened by the President of the General Assembly, was held on Wednesday, 30 September 2020, in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 74/269 and decision 74/562. The theme of the summit was “Urgent action on biodiversity for sustainable development”. The summit was also guided by the theme of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations “The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism”.

The summit consisted of an opening segment, a plenary segment for general discussion, two leaders’ dialogues on “Addressing biodiversity loss and mainstreaming biodiversity for sustainable development” and “Harnessing science, technology and innovation, capacity-building, access and benefit-sharing, financing and partnerships for biodiversity”, and a brief closing segment. Two spillover events were organized by the President of the General Assembly to accommodate statements of Member States.

Heads of State and Government, Ministers, intergovernmental organizations, the UN system and stakeholder representatives engaged in the summit via pre-recorded statements, livestream or in-person presentations.

As an initiative of the President of the General Assembly, the summit also provided an online platform “Voices for Nature”, which featured statements, messages and commitments from a wider range of stakeholders.

The summit demonstrated strong commitment and highlighted the need for urgent action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework that contributes to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and places the global community on a path towards making a reality of the goal of the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, “Living in harmony with nature”.

The present summary was prepared by the President of the General Assembly, in accordance with resolution 74/269, to reflect the discussions of the summit.¹

¹ Paragraph 13, A/RES/74/269.

II. Opening segment

During the opening segment, statements were made by H.E. Mr. Volkan BOZKIR, President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Munir Akram, President of the Economic and Social Council, H.E. Mr. Abdel Fattah Al Sisi, President of Egypt and Host of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and H.E. Mr. Xi Jinping, President of China and Host of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

A fireside chat was held between Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and Ms. Ana María Hernández Salgar, Chair of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), moderated by Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). H.R.H. Prince Charles as the eminent champion of biodiversity, and Ms. Archana Sareng, the youth representative, also delivered statements during the opening session.

Speakers during the opening session set the stage for the summit and discussed how biodiversity and ecosystems are essential for human progress, prosperity, food security, nutrition and health, and underlined how reaching the targets of biodiversity are important for achieving the 2030 Agenda and implementing the Paris Agreement on climate change. However, despite repeated commitments, national and global efforts have not been sufficient to meet the biodiversity targets set for 2020.

Biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation are currently among the top threats facing humanity. As the impacts of climate change are becoming more visible, biodiversity loss will also become pervasive and ultimately devastating. If current trends continue, the Earth could lose the natural wealth of its ecosystems, which would in turn jeopardize global food security, water supplies, and livelihoods; weaken human ability to fight diseases and face extreme weather events; and exacerbate geopolitical tensions and conflicts. Such impacts of biodiversity loss and degradation are already being seen around the world.

The emergence of deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and COVID-19 are a consequence of human imbalance with nature and demonstrate the intimate interconnection between the health of the planet and human health. There is an urgent need to realign humanity's relationship with nature in a more balanced and sustainable way. The recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic present an opportunity to emphasize actions to protect biodiversity and build a more sustainable, resilient world.

Nature-based solutions must be embedded in the COVID-19 recovery and wider development plans. It is time to transition to a new economic and social paradigm that values nature; one that enshrines sustainability as an integral part of development. Gross natural product and per capita income does not reflect the value of nature or natural capital.

Opening speakers asserted that the summit must build political momentum to secure an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework at COP-15 in Kunming, China. They proposed that COP-15 should do for biodiversity what COP-21 in Paris did for climate change – to elevate the discourse on biodiversity and ecosystem conservation to the mainstream, place it firmly on the global political agenda, and help ensure that halting biodiversity loss and sustainably managing Earth’s ecosystems are understood as the foundation for achieving the SDGs.

The Leaders Pledge for Nature, and coalitions such as the Campaign for Nature launched at the Climate Action Summit in 2019, were welcomed with appreciation. Such coalitions of leaders send a strong signal to raise political ambition in the run-up to COP-15 and commit to addressing the causes of biodiversity loss. The Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the targets of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework should become a central component of the national sustainable development plans and SDG implementation strategies of all countries, and fully reflected in the Voluntary National Reviews prepared annually for the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF).

It is important to strengthen multilateral cooperation and build synergies for global governance on the environment. Economic systems and financial markets must account for and invest in nature, and governments must include biodiversity as a criterion in financial decision-making. There was a call for governments to: set out concrete and measurable targets; include means of implementation, particularly finance and monitoring mechanisms; and mobilize a full and effective partnership across States and societies, engaging all relevant businesses and consumers, youth, women, indigenous peoples and local communities. Living in harmony with nature should be promoted through education, science, technology, and traditional knowledge, while at the same time safeguarding the rights of indigenous peoples, and empowering local authorities, women and youth.

III. Plenary

The plenary segment included statements by States Members of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies, parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and observers of the General Assembly.

The main issues addressed included the following:

Political commitment and guidance to support terrestrial and marine biodiversity and their integration into national sustainable development plans and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

Member States expressed their commitment to the successful elaboration of an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework. They recognized that biodiversity is a key element for achieving the 2030 Agenda, and supported updating the relevant targets within the SDGs.

Multiple speakers stressed the urgency of actions needed to halt the loss of biodiversity, and praised the communities that are increasing efforts to make progress, including the development

and humanitarian organizations, companies and cities, youth and faith-based organizations, and all countries and regions around the world that have committed to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. Some called upon all countries to provide determined leadership and to hold each other to account.

While many countries reiterated their willingness to continue to protect, conserve and restore their natural resources, some said they would do so while considering the need to boost their economies and provide for the livelihoods of their people. Several mentioned difficulties in fully implementing their biodiversity strategies due to conflict and lack of resources.

Countries reported on their actions to mainstream biodiversity and environmental protection strategies in their national development plans and provided details on their establishment or expansion of terrestrial, freshwater and marine protected areas. Many also affirmed that they are internalizing biodiversity targets into their national legislation. Several announced national and international financial support for biodiversity.

Many countries renewed their pledge for the realization of the 2050 Vision of Living in Harmony with Nature. There was a wide reiteration of commitment to preserve land and marine ecosystems, reduce pollution, increase climate mitigation and adaptation, fight land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Countries frequently described national goals on conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial and marine resources, digital transitions, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, among others. National development plans have been formulated to enhance institutional capacity of biodiversity protection and management, promote clean energy and ecotourism, strengthen environmental education, promote green and blue investments, and shift to a more circular economy. Countries also reported that they had stepped up efforts to conserve threatened species and save them from extinction. National legislation exists for environmental conservation, and programmes of conserving endangered species have been launched in numerous countries, with some facilitating innovation in marine technology related to mangroves and breeding of corals.

Connections between biodiversity, societies and economies

Biodiversity and other environmental issues link intricately with economic and social issues. Most speakers recognized the inseparable link between environment and human health, acknowledging that biodiversity loss entails enormous risks to human wellbeing. For example, the destruction of animal habitats increases risks associated with contact between people and wildlife that can endanger public health, as evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impacts.

The rapid loss of biodiversity has many causes, such as agricultural and industrial expansion, pollution, climate change, and unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. Many countries emphasized the link between biodiversity and the economy, highlighting for instance how sustainable food systems depend upon the biodiversity of agricultural crops, fisheries, livestock, and forests. The rise in the temperature of oceans has a devastating impact on coral reefs. Burning fossil fuels and deforestation are drivers of climate change leading to species extinction and reduction of nature's resilience. The decline of pollinator populations around the world is an

alarming indicator of biodiversity loss that has catastrophic implications for food security in the near future. The least developed countries are likely to suffer the worst of these effects.

Landlocked developing countries noted suffering from deforestation and land degradation, with limited capacity to deal with economic and social shocks, and called for a renewed commitment to adopt holistic and equitable approaches to sustainable development.

Several Member States also highlighted the unique and intimate interconnections between land, water and coastal systems with regard to the high vulnerability of small island developing States (SIDS) to climatic changes and limited human resource capacity. SIDS often stressed their dependence on the ocean and their efforts to protect its resources for the wellbeing of current and future generations. The detrimental impact of oil spills to marine biodiversity and habitats was stressed by one country.

Countries agreed that collective measures must be taken immediately to stop the ongoing loss and degradation of biodiversity, and to build a global economy that is more sustainable. This implies incorporating the reduction of inequalities into development models; enhancing access and benefit sharing mechanisms; reducing unsustainable production and consumption; avoiding rampant wastage; and addressing climate change and wider environmental degradation.

Several speakers emphasized the importance of converting to a circular economy and introducing sustainable production and consumption patterns, for example in banning single-use plastics. One country mentioned that the financial sector can be a force for positive change in biodiversity, and noted its supervisory authority is charting the financial risks associated with the loss of nature. Another country requested to be financially compensated for efforts in protecting nature to benefit the entire planet, while another affirmed its commitment to continue to do so despite the immense costs.

Linkages between the 2030 Agenda and other biodiversity-related Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

Biodiversity underpins almost all SDGs and is crucial to sustainable development. The three Rio Conventions—on biodiversity, climate, and desertification—are also interconnected. The rapid acceleration of biodiversity loss continues to hinder the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and is evident in its adverse impacts on the planet's ecosystems and its people, and on our ability to stabilize the global climate system. Likewise, the downward trends in the achievement of many other SDG targets, including on extreme poverty, now place additional burdens on the environment and efforts to halt biodiversity loss.

Many countries expressed regret over the failure to reach the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets agreed in the 2010 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, which are reflected in and supported by the SDGs, with a goal of completion by 2020. The fifth *Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-5)* launched in September 2020 reported that none of the 2020 targets were achieved in full, and only six were partially achieved.

Developing countries reported difficulty in tackling the challenges related to the protection of biodiversity and, consequently, implementing the 2030 Agenda, but are making efforts to address these challenges through, for instance, coordinating and streamlining government actions. Many countries shared a focus on restoring biodiversity, and are making efforts to modify existing policies to avoid further biodiversity loss. One country said the post-2020 biodiversity framework should set effective goals that can supplement, but not substitute for, other internationally agreed goals, taking into consideration different national capacities on a non-discriminatory basis.

There was agreement that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework should be consistent with the 2030 Agenda, and many called for inclusion of a strong resource mobilization component, expressing hope that the summit could help to propel the global community along a path towards realizing the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, “Living in Harmony with Nature”. Some stated that this could be achieved only by addressing, in a balanced manner, the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, namely: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

Biodiversity and climate change

A majority of Member States recognized the intrinsic link between biodiversity and climate change. Climate change contributes to the loss of biodiversity, and the increasing and continuous challenges from climate change and natural disasters are connected to the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Nature-based solutions anchored in biodiversity can help address climate change and achieve sustainable development, protect and generate livelihoods and ensure food security, combat desertification and recover biodiversity, and achieve land degradation neutrality.

The majority of countries emphasized the need for urgent action toward ambitious goals and targets at COP-15, comparable to the goals of the Paris Agreement. The host country of the next COP of UNFCCC committed to deal with biodiversity loss and climate change as intrinsically linked crises. Many countries introduced clean energy and carbon-neutral initiatives and stressing the importance of nature-based solutions to tackle global warming and fulfill the Paris Agreement. One group of countries remarked that climate change and biodiversity loss reinforce each other, and emphasized that this vicious cycle must be broken.

Zoonotic diseases and COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the importance of the relationship between people and nature. Healthy ecosystems are the foundation of human development and wellbeing, and development challenges have been gravely exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Its impacts are certain to be felt well beyond 2020, eroding the development gains achieved over many decades, and could hinder efforts to halt global biodiversity loss. COVID-19, together with biodiversity loss and climate change, may undermine the world’s efforts to implement sustainable and equitable development, and the effects of the pandemic may also result in substantial increases in global poverty, also undermining the financial capacity of developing countries to implement the sustainable development agenda.

Several countries stated that the pandemic has shown that economies, wealth and health are dependent on nature, and that a lack of harmony with nature can have catastrophic results. One country said that the post-2020 global biodiversity framework must consider the devastating impact of the coronavirus crisis on the world economy, particularly in developing countries. A number of countries perceived the challenge of the pandemic as an opportunity to re-conceptualize, reprioritize and recalibrate approaches to sustainable development, highlighting signs of unexpected environmental recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic such as reduced air and water pollution due to the decline in human mobility as a result of quarantine measures. Others called for recognition and increased awareness of the need to ensure a harmonious balance between human activity and nature, and underscored the need to emphasize the importance of biological diversity to present and future generations.

Linkages with other meetings

The timing of the summit on biodiversity coincided with the end of the UN Decade on Biodiversity (2011-2020), and the beginning of the Decade of Action and Delivery for sustainable development (2020-2030). Heads of State and Government from several countries signed the Leaders Pledge for Nature, and many countries called on the international community to remain committed, to work together and to support countries to take the necessary action to halt biodiversity loss. A number stressed the importance of multilateralism, echoing the theme of the UN's 75th anniversary celebrations.

In addition to terrestrial biodiversity, the importance of marine biodiversity and the oceans' vital role in absorbing greenhouse gases was also highlighted, with many countries noting the establishment of new marine protected areas. Many countries called for concluding the negotiations for an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Accelerated actions and initiatives in providing benefits and solutions to people from biodiversity

Halting biodiversity loss is a common goal of humanity. Countries called for urgent global actions that hold everyone accountable and ensure that all citizens participate in preserving and restoring biodiversity. The special needs of small island developing States, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries were often highlighted, and speakers often stressed that these countries must be taken into consideration in negotiating the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Indigenous peoples must also play a central role in its conceptualization and implementation, to integrate nature-based solutions and strategies in policymaking. Traditional knowledge is particularly important, especially at the local level.

All countries reported on their national commitments and initiatives, including expansion and establishment of protected areas such as national parks, and national ecological sites to restore endemic biodiversity; mainstreaming of biodiversity within national development plans and establishment of biodiversity units within ministries of environment; national strategies on access

to genetic resources and benefit sharing; and transitions to new economic models for carbon neutrality.

Many countries also emphasized the need for redoubled efforts to counter negative trends and protect ecosystems, including through restoration of degraded forests, and substantially increasing conservation and restoration globally, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Many countries also reported their national strategies, policies and actions to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt biodiversity loss, protect threatened species and prevent their extinction. Measures to protect biodiversity were defined within policies to address deforestation through moratoriums on licenses for forest exploitation; restoration of degraded lands; support for alternative cooking fuels; and campaigns for forest restoration. A number of countries have also joined regional coalitions and initiatives as an effort to preserve and sustainably use natural resources. The Great Green Wall was highlighted as a successful initiative in the African region.

Some countries called for increasing the mobilization of resources to support the actions necessary to halt biodiversity loss, stating that developed countries should substantially increase their financial commitments to enable the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in developing countries. These countries also emphasized the need for mobilizing both public and private finance, as well as technology and knowledge, including indigenous knowledge. Some further called for support in financing, capacity building and technology transfer to least developed countries for sustainable biodiversity conservation and restoration.

IV. Leaders' dialogue 1: Addressing biodiversity loss and mainstreaming biodiversity for sustainable development

The first Leaders' Dialogue focused on a broad recognition of the urgent need to halt and reverse the global crisis of biodiversity loss. Biodiversity loss undermines the ecosystem services that support society in a multitude of ways. Many said that the COVID-19 pandemic serves a wake-up call regarding human vulnerability and the link between environmental degradation and health.

The main issues addressed included the following:

Detrimental effects of biodiversity loss to people and environment

There was a broad recognition of the urgent need to halt and reverse the global crisis of biodiversity loss. Biodiversity loss undermines the economy, as well as human health and welfare, which all depend on biodiversity and ecosystem services in a multitude of ways.

Some speakers noted the links between related global crises and the need to address them in an integrated manner. In this regard, several speakers drew attention to the links between biodiversity and climate change.

Progress and efforts on biodiversity goals and targets, especially those with a 2020 maturity date

Countries have adopted many measures to protect biodiversity and ensure its use is sustainable. Progress was reported on streamlining biodiversity goals and targets into legislation and national policies.

Several countries highlighted the lack of capacity and financial resources to implement the Aichi biodiversity targets, and that this capacity risked further weakening due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while harmful activities, including detrimental subsidies for use of fossil fuels and unsustainable agricultural practices, remained high.

Speakers gave examples of measures taken by their countries to address biodiversity loss, and to provide support for other countries to protect biodiversity, including through both private and public funding.

In addition to the support for the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, “Living in harmony with nature”, and an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework, several countries emphasized the importance of support for the Leaders Pledge for Nature, as well as the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People and its aim to protect 30 per cent of the planet’s terrestrial and marine ecosystems by 2030, and for ensuring sufficient financial resources, capacity-building, technology transfer, and access and benefit sharing.

Risks and underlying causes of biodiversity loss and general points on solutions

Consistent challenges related to direct and indirect drivers of loss of biodiversity were reported, as documented by IPBES. Activities in sectors including extractives, agriculture, infrastructure, forestry and fisheries can negatively affect biodiversity, and those activities must change to have a contributing role in biodiversity conservation. All these drivers for biodiversity loss are exacerbated by climate change.

Marine pollution and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing are undermining sustainable ocean management. Globally, over 30 per cent of fish stocks have been fished at biologically unsustainable levels and marine and coastal ecosystems are threatened by pollution, which was often cited as an especially pressing concern for SIDS. Illegal wildlife harvesting and trade remains a threat to the diversity and survival of megafauna, and several countries noted new enforcement measures in this regard.

The overexploitation of terrestrial and marine ecosystems is preventable. Current production and consumption models also do not account for biodiversity and ecosystem services, and measures for positive changes are often fragmented.

Accelerated actions and initiatives

Unsustainable food systems are considered a primary driver of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. Many speakers highlighted links between the summit and the upcoming UN Food System Summit taking place in 2021. The future of global food systems depends on terrestrial and marine biodiversity, and the future of biodiversity depends on sustainable food systems.

Countries stressed the importance of delivering on commitments under the Paris agreement to limit the impacts of climate change. There was also a call for support in the negotiations of the international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Countries have succeeded in adopting many measures to protect biodiversity and have integrated biodiversity into legislation, strategies and policies for different sectors and for national development; however, enhanced capacity, strengthened whole-of-government efforts and transformative change are also needed to address direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss at the scale necessary to achieve lasting results. Several speakers emphasized the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity into different sectors and gave examples of actions taken.

Circular economy and sustainable public procurement

Countries are exploring incentives for economic and ecological progress, while also using existing institutions and mechanisms. Some reported on their efforts to work with the private sector to adopt strategies and policies for a more circular economy, and many speakers recognized that investment in nature is an investment in a better future for people and for the planet.

There was a call for a green recovery that put countries on track to overcome the biodiversity crisis through systemic change and long-term planning, including redirecting financial flows to support nature and eliminate subsidies harmful to the environment, shift to a circular economy, support sustainable food systems, and engage other industrial sectors to become part of the solution. In addition, many speakers highlighted the need to change behavior and lifestyles, respond to the science, and scale up ambitions. Sustainable management practices and certification processes in industries such as agriculture were highlighted.

Roles of all stakeholders and their integration and contribution in fighting biodiversity loss

Fragmentation of measures was cited as a key reason for lack of global efficiency in tackling the biodiversity crisis. There is a need for holistic policy approaches. As such, mainstreaming environmental policy can only be successful through a “whole-of-society” approach that includes government, private sector, civil society, indigenous people, youth, women and local communities, as well as recognizing the role of education to provide the next generation with tools for biodiversity protection.

Many speakers stressed that the world is now in a state of planetary emergency that requires a global response from everyone, and sounded a call to action by all stakeholders. Countries reported on efforts to protect biodiversity through enlisting the help of local communities for restoration

initiatives, education programmes, creating jobs to protect nature, and increasing terrestrial and marine protected areas.

V. Leaders' dialogue 2: Harnessing science, technology and innovation, capacity building, access and benefit-sharing, financing and partnerships for biodiversity

The second leaders' dialogue reiterated the call for a successful CBD COP-15, on par with the UNFCCC COP-21, and an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework to protect and restore nature, to ensure that people benefit from nature, to fight against climate change, and to achieve the SDGs.

Several speakers referred to the severity of the loss of biodiversity and its consequences, as demonstrated in recent assessments. A number of speakers reported their progress in implementing biodiversity policies and their commitments to do more, with some referencing the Leaders' Pledge for Nature. Many speakers noted the significance of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some speakers also noted the importance of multilateral cooperation to achieve shared objectives.

The main issues addressed included the following:

Importance of multilateral action and collaboration

Many speakers underscored the importance of science, capacity building, technology transfer, and adequate financial resources from all sources for the effective implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in the coming decade.

Some speakers noted the importance of cooperation and synergies among related conventions and policy instruments, including in respect to biodiversity and climate change. Many speakers noted the importance of multilateral action and collaboration in these areas, and several highlighted the interlinkages among various global environmental challenges, especially between biodiversity and climate change.

Role of science, technology and innovation in preventing biodiversity loss

A number of countries highlighted the need to harness scientific knowledge and technology to implement sustainable and restorative development strategies and to achieve the SDGs.

Small island developing States have limited capacity to respond to external shocks, especially those resulting from crises such as climate change, and these countries called for greater opportunities for access to and transfer of technology and innovative solutions.

Some speakers underscored the role of indigenous peoples and local communities, including the importance of recognizing traditional knowledge in addition to conventional science as a basis for action to address the loss of biodiversity.

Examples of capacity building for preventing biodiversity loss

A number of countries reported on capacity building efforts, including for protecting, managing and sustaining marine resources and enhancing blue economies. Initiatives targeting youth in biodiversity conservation, with involvement of environmental clubs, communities and business schools, and empowering non-governmental actors to take part in the conservation of biodiversity through strategic partnerships were presented. One country reported its effort to help develop the capacity of tropical countries to reduce deforestation and foster sustainable forest management. Several speakers emphasized the responsibility to invest in young people and future generations.

Most speakers gave examples of measures that their countries had taken for the conservation of biodiversity and towards objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including in the context of their national biodiversity strategies and action plans but also in the context of related sustainable development objectives, including those related to climate change, and research.

Incentives for scientific research and technology transfer

Some countries reported ongoing efforts to enhance science, technology and innovation in biodiversity objectives, including through supporting research and development and science programmes.

Some called for enhanced collection and sharing of knowledge and data to support science-based policymaking, and one speaker noted a partnership to provide data on biodiversity risk.

Measures undertaken for fair and equitable sharing of benefits while facilitating access to genetic resources

Several speakers noted the importance of the third objective of the Convention on Biological Diversity, on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of their utilization, and called for better implementation in leveraging contributions to technological innovation and improving the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities.

Several speakers noted measures that their countries had taken to implement access and benefit sharing in the context of the Nagoya Protocol.

Economic recovery after COVID-19

All speakers underscored the grave socio-economic consequences of the current pandemic. Many noted the opportunities of building back better, including efforts to spend more resources for sustainability and greener and bluer economies while ensuring equity and improving the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and local communities.

It was emphasized that the recovery plans must be people-centered and rooted in rebuilding a more balanced relationship with nature, focusing on innovative technological solutions to ensure a sustainable and resilient economy.

Many developing countries underscored the ongoing and increasing importance of international finance for developing countries and flexibility of access, in particular for the least developed countries, small island developing States, and countries with economies in transition, and called for commitments to increase such funding in the coming decade. Some also called for a doubling of such flows for least developed countries in the coming decade.

Effective and new financing instruments to change global financial and trade flows and ensure they are positive for nature

Some speakers emphasized the importance of mobilizing additional financial resources, including from international sources, and to improve availability of finance from public and private sectors to support developing countries. Innovative solutions such as debt for nature swaps and the issuance of blue bonds were also mentioned.

Several developed country speakers highlighted their recent progress to increase international funding, as well as recent commitments and concrete initiatives including the establishment of funds in partnerships with the private sector, and a fund for circular agriculture. One country announced its target to double the share of climate finance in its international development policy.

A number of speakers reported their country's progress in mobilizing resources domestically, from both public and private sources. One country reported the establishment of a national biodiversity fund and synergized funding for climate change; another announced the launch of the first sustainable sovereign bond in Europe.

Several speakers noted the linkages among resource mobilization and finance and the broader mainstreaming agenda, including adopting a whole-of-government approach, pursuing integrated development frameworks, evolving economic and financial systems, achieving sustainable production and consumption, and redirecting resources from supporting harmful activities towards sustainability.

Nature-based solutions

Many speakers discussed the importance of nature-based solutions for climate change and other development priorities. Some suggested that lasting climate action requires greater attention to nature-based solutions, and others suggested that nature-based solutions be included in nationally determined contributions for long-term resilience and stability.

A partnership was highlighted that includes the launching of a biodiversity and climate “Impact Investment” fund dedicated to nature-based solutions.

Partnerships for biodiversity across public and private sectors and with civil society

Many speakers emphasized the importance of partnerships to address existing challenges, including partnerships between governments and non-State actors, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities, research institutions and NGOs.

Many speakers discussed partnerships at the community level, and the importance of cooperation among all stakeholders. Public and private investments both play crucial roles in facilitating access to and transfer of eco-friendly technologies that help conserve and sustainably use biodiversity.

Several speakers highlighted the urgent need to mobilize more finance from private sources for biodiversity and climate investments including nature-based solutions, by building public-private partnerships at all levels and strengthening enabling environments.

Some speakers highlighted recent initiatives, such as the establishment of the Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures, and noted recent commitments to scale-up efforts, such as the Finance for Biodiversity Pledge signed by 26 financial institutions.

VI. Closing segment

Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, in her closing remarks said that the summit had highlighted the urgency of addressing global biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. This was a concern shared by more than one million respondents of the global consultation organized for the UN 75th anniversary. She stressed that ecosystem destruction and biodiversity loss threaten the attainment of the SDGs and the objectives of the Paris Agreement, and reminded participants that nature-based solutions offer an important remedy for global warming and its impact on societies.

She commended the summit for highlighting actions and commitments around the world towards living in harmony with nature, noting that the challenges have been recognized, the scale of the planetary emergency is understood, and the tools to address many of the challenges are available. Conserving and sustainably managing nature is a fundamental sustainable development issue. Investing in nature means investing in a sustainable future for all.

She noted that statements at the summit set ambitions high, and actions are now needed to ensure that these ambitions are taken forward within the multilateral system, including through the development and subsequent implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that these ambitions are delivered on the ground, and to guarantee that urgent and ambitious actions for nature are taken across all sectors.

H.E. Mr. Volkan BOZKIR, President of the General Assembly, concluded the summit by stating that the initiatives and commitments heard would help lay the foundation for COP-15 in Kunming. He noted that addressing the loss of biodiversity would require transformational changes in both economies and societies, and said that while this would be difficult, it was far from impossible. He concluded the summit with four key messages:

First, COVID-19 presents a unique opportunity for a “green reset”. The international community could protect biodiversity and boost economic growth through a green recovery. This would require efforts to mobilize public and private financing to support socio-economic recovery that embrace nature-based solutions and disaster risk reduction.

Second, without a transformative approach to food production and distribution, there is a high risk of damaging biodiversity and global food security. It is important to forward the initiatives and gains from this summit to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and to the second UN Oceans Conference, to galvanize action. Education and science must include indigenous peoples and learn from them, integrating local and indigenous knowledge to restore the relationship between people and the natural world, on land and at sea.

Third, countries must undertake whole-of-society responses in protecting biodiversity, and engage all stakeholders. Voluntary action is not enough. Political will and leadership is needed in creating pro-nature laws and regulations.

Finally, actions at all levels are needed, particularly in the urban context. The Edinburgh Declaration for subnational governments, cities and local authorities, in support of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, was noted in the discussions as an example in this regard.
