



## PRESS RELEASE

### Theme announced for landmark 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference: "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth"

- *Government of the People's Republic of China and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) announce theme for 2020 Biodiversity Conference*
- *Theme reinforces the vision of "Ecological Civilization", drawing from traditional to new eco-based innovations, to inspire sustainability pathways for the future*
- *Representatives address the urgency of action, mainstreaming of biodiversity into economic sectors and society, and emphasize the need for transformative changes in all systems – governance, innovation, finance, consumption and production to address the root causes of this crisis*
- *Discussions in preparation for the 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN CBD already underway to develop the new global policy framework on biodiversity, to be adopted by Parties to the Convention at the 2020 Biodiversity Conference in Kunming, China*

**5 September 2019, Beijing, China** – "Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth" is set to frame next year's UN Biodiversity Conference, to be held in October in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China. On Tuesday a special press conference, between the Minister of Ecology and Environment of China, Li Ganjie, and the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Dr Cristiana Paşca Palmer, unveiled the theme for this landmark conference in China.

Speaking to reporters during the announcement of the theme, the Minister of Ecology and Environment of China, and the CBD Executive Secretary said that the theme of the 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference gives voice to the aspirations of people around the world to build a global society in which economic, social, cultural and environmental concerns are addressed in a truly holistic way, by recognizing that nature is the fundamental infrastructure supporting life on earth, and that the UN CBD Vision of Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050 can be achieved through a renewed relationship between humans and nature.

"This theme is intended to promote the building of a common future for all life on Earth and to stress that human beings and nature share only one planet. Nature must be respected, sustainably used and conserved to achieve the Vision of the Convention on Biological Diversity 'Living in Harmony with Nature' by 2050, and to advance on the three objectives of the Convention," Minister Li said. "We believe that this theme embodies the will of the international community to leverage green sustainable development approaches, in an inclusive manner, to build a shared future for all life on Earth."



The Executive Secretary of the Convention noted the unique and historic opportunity for the international community to come together at the 2020 Biodiversity Conference in Kunming, China, to set a new course that enables humanity to reconcile its relationship with nature by recognizing its dependence on the good functioning of the natural systems that provide the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe in addition to multiple other benefits for our health and well-being.

As part of the 2020 Biodiversity Conference, the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the UN CBD will be a historic occasion. 2020 sets high expectations for a rise in ambition on multiple agendas that require active and broad engagement from all sectors of society to make urgent progress.

“We need to reach a transformative turning point, for many interconnected challenges, relating to the loss of biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, food security, human health, among others. We have the tools and the knowledge, but we need greater leadership and political will to take bold action now,” said Dr Paşca Palmer.

The CBD COP 15 will set the course for the next 10 years and the decades to come. Dr Paşca Palmer explained: “The most recent scientific reports from IPBES and IPCC show us what needs to be done. At this critical juncture for the planet and people, when we are faced with a planetary emergency, as a global community, we need determined and coherent actions to conserve and protect the remaining areas of intact nature, but also to restore degraded land and habitats to their original state. We need greater investments and metrics to sustainably use our lands, our forests, our seas and oceans, our food systems, to name just a few. Above all, we must tackle seriously the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and reorient economic development pathways towards an economy that recognizes the ecological limits of the planet. Such a transformative paradigm could secure a future for all life on Earth, maintain the integrity and resilience of the planetary systems, and in turn generate more equitable societal and economic benefits for all people. Indeed, the ecological civilization pathway holds the promise to build a shared future for all life on Earth and Live in Harmony with Nature. We have a lot of work in front of us, and perhaps never in our history were human innovation, creativity and collaboration more important. After all, we don’t have a planet B!”

Hosting the Conference in China provides an exceptional opportunity to showcase the transformations in different sectors already underway. China’s experience provides lessons that can help deliver transformative progress for biodiversity and for the many global challenges that nature-based solutions support.

During the 2020 Biodiversity Conference, the 196 Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity are expected to adopt a new global framework to safeguard nature and its contributions to human well-being. The agreement will serve as a roadmap to achieve the Convention’s three objectives: conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of its components, and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources.

The 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference will hopefully set the world on a socio-ecologically centred development pathway for the decades to come, inspired by the theme of COP15, “Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth”.

Negotiations for the new global biodiversity framework officially got under way last week with the first session of the Open-Ended-Working Group, under the UN CBD, held from 27-30 August, in Nairobi, Kenya. The next round of negotiations is scheduled for February 2020, in Kunming, China, and the third round in Colombia in July 2020.

“Launching the theme of the 2020 Biodiversity Conference today is critical. It reaffirms our political commitment and encourages the international community to protect biodiversity and accelerate actions on the existing global biodiversity targets, while guiding the direction of next year’s negotiations in the lead up to the Conference in Kunming, China next fall,” Minister Li said.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

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### **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 171 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 120 Parties. [www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int) , [@UNBiodiversity](https://twitter.com/UNBiodiversity)

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