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2021 United Nations Biodiversity Conference

Closing statement

“Ecological Civilization — Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth”

Kunming, China

15 October 2021

H.E. Mr. Huang Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment of China, President of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties,
Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen,

This has been an extraordinary United Nations Biodiversity Conference.

It has been an intense week for participants joining meetings in person and virtually, and for those working behind the scenes. Despite the exceptional nature of the circumstances arising from the pandemic, we have addressed critical areas of work, demonstrating our capacity to adjust to changes and to advance on our journey to part two of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, in 2022.

Over the past five days, we have adopted an interim integrated budget for 2022 for the Convention, the Cartagena Protocol and the Nagoya Protocol. We have had a progress report from the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and from the Chairs of our subsidiary bodies, and we heard their expectations leading to 2022. And, because of the high-level segment, with the endorsement of the Kunming Declaration and the groundswell of commitments for biodiversity, we can all feel a renewed sense of optimism.

My appreciation to all of you for delivering these positive outcomes and for establishing the guide rails for the path ahead.

To our host Government, Vice-Premier Han Zheng, Minister Huang, Vice Minister Zhao Yingmin and the COP-15 Executive Committee, thank you for your leadership and resolve to organize this first part of the conference.

We leave the city of Kunming with a collective political impetus to place biodiversity on the path to recovery, moving forward and stirring together further and faster.

My deep thanks to the people of the Province of Yunnan and the City of Kunming. This province and this city have become a symbol of an ecological civilization. As a global community, our convening here in Kunming reminds us of our responsibility to safeguard our cultural, traditional and biological diversity and to build our shared future for all life on Earth.

To all delegations from 154 Parties to the Convention, including those that are Parties to the two Protocols, at this meeting, I applaud your resilience and resolve to rise to this moment in history — setting the stage for the adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework next year in Kunming, at the second part of COP-15. The engagement of many non-State actors has also inspired us to be bold and inclusive. All of society must be engaged in responding to this urgent call to action.

I would also like to thank all the dedicated staff and the many volunteers at the venue and outside as well as throughout the City of Kunming for facilitating our work, accommodation, transportation and many other activities during our meeting. To the IT operators, for the online platforms and to the interpreters, thank you all for your tireless support and assistance, which is so essential for any successful meeting.

And I want to thank my staff; their continued hard work and dedication made for a seamless, flawless and productive meeting. I am honoured to lead and be a part of such a committed group representing the United Nations.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Today also marks a significant occasion, the eleventh anniversary of the adoption of the Nagoya-Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. In 2018, the Supplementary Protocol entered into force as an international treaty providing international rules and procedures on liability and redress related to living modified organisms.

I urge and invite all Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety yet to do so to consider ratifying or acceding to the Supplementary Protocol.

I equally call upon Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity that have yet to do so to ratify the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety as well as the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing so that we can together take further steps to strengthen multilateralism.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The journey ahead to the second part of COP-15 presents a unique opportunity to write a new chapter for our planet and future generations.

Our collective journey calls for a collective vision across the whole of government and the whole of society.

An early challenge is to confront the biodiversity crises alongside the climate and land degradation crises. Our journey must include a coherent message at UNFCCC COP-26 and beyond to UNCCD COP-15. And, to ensure equitable and sustainable benefits for all people, we must solve both biodiversity loss and climate change as well as land degradation. They must be treated as mutually supporting goals. We cannot treat these issues separately; either we solve both or we solve neither.

In preparing for the resumed meetings of the Convention's subsidiary bodies and the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, in Geneva, Switzerland, in January 2022, we must continue to press ahead on several outstanding issues.

Let me outline our three challenges.

First, we must ensure that the framework is sufficiently ambitious to meet our goals and achieve our vision, addressing all the drivers of biodiversity loss.

Second, this must be matched by commensurate ambition in finance and other fields, and, thus, a robust replenishment for biodiversity from the Global Environment Facility, which is the Convention's financial mechanism, becomes opportune.

At this point I would like to acknowledge with thanks the just announced contribution from the Government of United Kingdom to support the ongoing processes.

Third, the framework must include a mechanism to ensure that we stay on track to achieve our targets and goals, to reach our 2050 Vision.

I believe these are essential to shape and advance a meaningful post-2020 global framework for biodiversity to be finalized in Kunming next spring.

And, to do that, we need a step change in the negotiations to make concrete the vision and commitments expressed this week by our leaders.

I trust that we will each do our part to engage in constructive negotiations, with the vision and courage to adopt a bold, inclusive and ambitious new framework – one that drives us forward with the necessary means of implementation and catalyses engagement and actions by all, to accelerate the shifts needed and to reach our 2030 targets and 2050 goals. The time is now for all of us to show leadership commensurate with the challenge.

This is our opportunity – and, indeed, our responsibility – to work together to build a shared future for all life on Earth.

Thank you.
