



Convention on
Biological Diversity

**Statement by Astrid Schomaker,
Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity**

**Opening ceremony of the fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on
Implementation**

**16 October 2024
Cali, Colombia**

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the fifth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity. I would like to express my gratitude to the authorities and people of Colombia for the warm welcome in Cali, the gem of the mega-biodiverse Cauca Valley.

I am delighted to be here with you today at my first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation as the Executive Secretary of the Convention.

The agenda before you this week makes this fifth meeting stand out: it will be our first opportunity to review progress towards the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework since its adoption two years ago.

Over the past two years, we have seen Parties focus on developing national biodiversity strategies and action plans and setting national targets in alignment with the Framework.

Over the next few days, you will review what has been accomplished in the last biennium, examining the submissions through a forward-looking lens. Now that many Parties have targets in place, the focus must shift to implementation.

Translating the objectives of the Convention into action is the very *raison d'être* of Subsidiary Body on Implementation.

If we are to achieve the Framework by 2030, we must all deliver more and faster. Let us take a step back and consider the big picture.

The planet is being pummelled by climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, pollution and waste. These crises are accelerating and mutually reinforcing in complex ways that science continues to reveal.

The Framework is humanity's blueprint to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, and it recognizes those linkages. Your work on these premises has a bearing on the big picture.

In delivering our work, we must reckon with the inherent complexity of gauging the effectiveness of action to protect biodiversity.

While a ton of CO₂ equivalent serves as a proxy for measuring the effectiveness of greenhouse gas mitigation interventions, no single metric can serve the same purpose for action to protect biodiversity.

The adoption of the Framework was historic on many counts. One of them was the fact that it tamed the inherent complexity by introducing 23 measurable targets grounded in science and in policy lessons learned from the pursuit of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

We are now looking at the adoption of the Framework in 2022 in the rear-view mirror. Keeping hands on the steering wheel of our electric vehicle, this is the time to glance at the dashboard:

Where do we stand on implementation and where do we go from here?

One reliable gauge of progress, which this body will convey to the Conference of the Parties at its the sixteenth meeting, is the state of play in the alignment of national biodiversity strategies and actions plans and national targets with the Framework.

In 2023 and 2024, the Secretariat of the Convention convened a series of dialogues on national biodiversity strategies and actions plans to facilitate the sharing of experiences and peer learning related to the revision and updating of the strategies and plans, including national targets.

Those dialogues provided incentive and propulsion. We believe that they were instrumental in setting the alignment wheels in motion in many countries.

The outcomes of the dialogues will now feed into the discussions that we are about to have at this promising meeting in Cali.

As at today, 91 Parties had submitted national targets, and 67 of them had submitted one or more national targets aligned with every single target of the Framework. Twenty-nine Parties had also submitted national biodiversity strategies and actions plans.

This is encouraging, especially when compared with the pace of submission under the Aichi Targets and knowing that many more are in the pipeline.

Still, let us aim higher.

We hope that the next few days will bring pointers as to what action is needed to address alignment challenges identified by Parties.

The first order of business for the present meeting is, and I quote from the relevant decision from the twelfth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, to review relevant information on progress in the implementation of the Convention, including in the provision of support for the implementation of the Convention, as well as of any strategic plans and other relevant decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties, and on progress in the achievement of targets established under the Convention.

I look forward to hearing your accounts and experiences in this promising chapter of our common endeavour. I am sure that I am not the only one.

Peer exchange and learning from other Parties is a staple feature of any listing of the most wanted forms of support for implementation.

So, this time, we are trying to do things a little differently, we are trying to really focus on what is going well and what is not. This is the first time that we will have taken this approach during a formal meeting, and this is what the open-ended forum for voluntary country review is about.

Let us take the time to listen, share and learn from one another.

May our discussions at the present meeting inspire thinking and action to overcome obstacles and accelerate implementation, for nature and for people.

Thank you.