

**Statement by
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Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
International Human Rights Day
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It is with great pleasure that the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is commemorating the International Day of Human Rights. This year's theme – Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All – echoes a key objective of the Convention and the guiding themes of the global biodiversity framework, a true framework for all, currently under consideration by the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP 15).

The preservation of nature is fundamental to enable all human beings to live with dignity. The UN General Assembly's recognition of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right, provided a concrete framework and message on the linkages between environment/biodiversity and human rights. Sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems ensure the enjoyment of fundamental rights such as the right to clean air, safe water, and nutritious food for everyone. Similarly, a human rights-based approach to biodiversity governance, including gender equality, equitable and intergenerational participation, and cultural rights, contributes to the promotion of the objectives of the Convention. This relationship is even more pronounced and visible in the context of indigenous peoples and local communities, who have preserved and sustainably used biodiversity and ecosystems for millennia. Indigenous peoples are among the most affected by biodiversity loss and other environmental harm because of their close relationship with and reliance on nature.

The global community has the responsibility to cater to the needs of future generations and to ensure that the generations to come have their equitable share of the different values of nature. The protection of human rights to a clean and healthy environment, thriving biodiversity and healthy habitats result in guaranteeing such inter and intra generational equity. It also serves in creating the right conditions where the empowerment of women and youth, particularly indigenous women and youth, is guaranteed.

Biodiversity loss can result in violations of human rights as well as the dignity and freedom of all people who depend on biodiversity for their lives and livelihoods, in particular indigenous peoples and local communities. It can aggravate existing inequalities, including along gender lines.

All sectors, public as well as private sectors, have the obligations and responsibilities to address adverse effects of biodiversity and habitat loss, and to prevent its negative impacts on human rights. Humanity needs to tackle the widening inequality that is also being exacerbated by the increasing loss of biodiversity and wild habitats.

Let us aspire and work hard to realize a world where the interdependent economical, environmental, social, and cultural rights are increasingly safeguarded for the benefit of all.

As we commemorate this International Day of Human Rights, let us all remember that we will be able to attain our vision to live in harmony with nature if we increasingly uphold human rights and adopt a rights-based approach in the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

Thank you all.