



**Statement by Elizabeth Maruma Mrema**  
**Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity**  
**on the occasion of**  
**United Nations Day**

*“Building Back Together for Peace and Prosperity”*

Healthy biodiversity and ecosystems go hand-in-hand with peace and prosperity.

The imperative of conserving nature and mitigating conflict is formalised in three of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals: 14 (Life below water), 15 (Life on land), and 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

The root causes of conflict do not only include political and socio-economic factors; environmental factors play a major role. The linkages between conflict and natural resource scarcity and degradation are evident, with the added dimension of rapid climate change and biodiversity loss.

According to IUCN, 40 per cent of civil wars between 1950 and 2010 were associated with natural resources. Countries with scarce availability and low productivity of natural resources, especially agricultural lands, tend to be more conflict-prone, as are those more dependent on natural resources and at greater risk of drought.

Environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, weak institutional and governance frameworks, inequalities in access to key resources such as water and food, and poverty, all serve to increase conflicts within and between countries. This further exacerbates environmental degradation, threatening the safety, security, and well-being of societies.

One way forward is through the development of transboundary protected areas and Peace Parks that promote cooperation for biodiversity conservation and peacebuilding. They can substantially contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 16, as well as the post-2020 global biodiversity framework presently under negotiation.

The effective management of such areas requires dialogue among different stakeholders and nations, as well as participatory, inclusive, and transparent multi-stakeholder processes.

For instance, transboundary marine conservation has been used to contribute to peacebuilding and cooperation between countries through marine Peace Parks, which have been proposed for several regions where maritime boundaries are still in dispute and peacebuilding is needed.

Terrestrial areas which require cooperation and protection, including mountains shared by different countries, provide 60 to 80 per cent of all freshwater resources for our planet, and are important for disaster risk reduction and food security, among many others.



The Peace and Biodiversity Dialogue Initiative (PBDI) by the Republic of Korea, is an example of ways to establish peace and enhance biodiversity conservation through Peace Parks and transboundary protected areas.

Peace is required for green recovery, including ambitious targets in the post-2020 period and achievement of the Convention's 2050 Vision, whereby biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.

The post-2020 global biodiversity framework is our roadmap. Its implementation a necessity for human wellbeing. Let us collectively strive to live in peace, sustainably use our resources, and share the benefits with equity. It's time to give living in harmony with nature a chance.

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