



STATEMENT BY

ELIZABETH MARUMA MREMA

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

AT THE OPENING OF THE

**VIRTUAL EXPERT FORUM ON SEA EXPERIMENTAL
ECOSYSTEM ACCOUNTING 2020**

24-25 AUGUST 2020

Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I start, I would like to thank the United Nations Statistics Division and its Director, Stefan Schweinfest, and the United Nations Committee on Environmental Economic Accounting and its Chair, Bert Kroese, Director General of Statistics Netherlands, for the invitation to be here today.

As we are now five years into the Sustainable Development Goals, there is growing recognition that we cannot separate economic development, social development and the environment into siloed dimensions of development, but that protecting biodiversity and sustainably using natural resources is at the heart of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

There is also a growing recognition among leaders that the Sustainable Development Goals will fail without “Urgent Action on Biodiversity for Sustainable Development” – this is the theme of the high-level Biodiversity Summit next month. The Biodiversity Summit will be held against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has amplified the vital role that nature plays in achieving human health and well-being. The Biodiversity Summit will not only elevate the profile of biodiversity in the Sustainable Development Goals, but it also aims to elevate the awareness of, and ambition towards, developing a new post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

The Convention on Biological Diversity is the global multilateral environment agreement which aims to conserve and protect biodiversity; ensure the sustainable of biodiversity; and promote the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. Currently, Parties to the Convention, in collaboration with stakeholders, have embarked on developing a robust and ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework to build a resilient and sustainable future for all people.



The global biodiversity framework will set a path to achieve an ambitious 2050 Vision for living in harmony with nature and will include a series of aspirational goals related to:

- (a) Improving the connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems supporting healthy and resilient populations of all species while reducing the number of species that are threatened and maintaining genetic diversity;
- (b) Valuing, maintaining and enhancing nature's contributions to people through conservation and sustainable use, supporting the global development agenda for the benefit of all people;
- (c) Ensuring that the benefits, from the utilization of genetic resources are shared fairly and equitably;
- (d) Promoting means of implementation for achieving the global biodiversity framework.

The post-2020 global biodiversity framework will also establish action-oriented targets which aim to provide a transformational pathway for realizing these goals, as well as means of implementation.

To achieve the global biodiversity framework, we need to be able to monitor and track progress towards these goals and targets. Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, donors and the international community need better, faster, information to be able to identify trends in terms of the state of biodiversity and ecosystems, to measure the nexus between nature and socio-economic development, to monitor threats, to track the impact of interventions and to target investment and policy.

If we are to succeed in finding a way to live in harmony with nature, we, as a global community, need to be able to identify threats to biodiversity in real time. We need data which can be used to develop policies at the national level and target interventions at the local level, to ensure that efficient, effective action is taken at the right place and the right time.

Currently, the Convention on Biological Diversity is working to develop a bold monitoring framework which will aim at improving global, regional and national monitoring and promoting the use of data and indicators for global, regional and national decision-making and policy development.

A draft monitoring framework for the 2050 goals and the 2030 targets was developed as a result of a review of existing indicators of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership and the Sustainable Development Goals. This draft aimed to provide a starting point for determining an approach for monitoring the global biodiversity framework. This draft framework was open for peer review from 24 June to 15 August 2020. I know that many of you engaged in this peer review process and I would like to thank those of you that took the time to provide comments on the draft monitoring framework on the Global Biodiversity Framework. Additionally, I would like to thank the United Nations Statistical Division for sending a message out to the National Statistical Office of every United Nations member State inviting them to engage in the peer review on the Monitoring Framework.

There was already recognition of the importance of environmental economic accounting for biodiversity which was recognized in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 through Aichi Biodiversity Target 2, which was subsequently transformed into Sustainable Development Goal target 15.9.1, "by 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts". However, the Aichi framework did not formally include a set of indicators for monitoring the framework. With the monitoring framework for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, we aim to elevate national, regional and global biodiversity monitoring. For monitoring to be successful, increased collaboration between the biodiversity and data and statistical community is essential.

I would like to share with you some of the feedback from this peer review and the approach that we will be taking to revise the monitoring framework before it is presented to the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice in November. Note that the Subsidiary Body is expected to provide technical guidance on the monitoring framework, but the monitoring framework will be formally discussed by the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework in 2021 and subsequently adopted by the Conference of the Parties in 2021:

(a) The monitoring framework should be fit-for-purpose in order to better contribute to national monitoring and use in national reports and national biodiversity strategies and action plans as well as global monitoring. There is also a need to align with existing processes to ensure uptake of biodiversity monitoring information in the Sustainable Development Goals and other processes;

(b) The monitoring framework needs to be simple and easy to understand. We hope to accomplish this by proposing a small number of headline indicators which can be adopted for use in national reports. At the same time, there is a continued need to ensure that we have detailed information on different components of the framework and also to include guidance related to specific and thematic indicators which can be used at the global level and at the national level, when relevant;

(c) National statistical offices play a central role in mainstreaming environmental data in national monitoring systems, in ensuring that standard methodologies and quality assurance procedures are in place and in promoting the use of data for informing policy and tracking progress towards the 2030 Agenda and national development. This will not only inform how we can build a monitoring framework for the global biodiversity framework which is relevant for national monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystem extent, condition and valuation, but it also helps us to better connect biodiversity data producers and users;

(d) The System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) Ecosystem Accounts provides a way for countries to mainstream biodiversity monitoring in their national statistical systems and to track progress over time. Thus far, every national statistical office engaged in the global biodiversity monitoring framework peer review has mentioned the importance of aligning with SEEA as the existing statistical standard for national monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystems;

(e) By bringing together SEEA methodologies and advancements in technology (machine learning, satellite imagery analysis, cloud computing and other advancements in data science), we will be in a better position to not only develop the monitoring framework for the global biodiversity framework, but also to realize global and local level real-time monitoring.

Collaboration with the United Nations statistical community is critical for us to be able to develop a framework which responds to the needs which have been elaborated by Parties and other stakeholders. I am excited to be here today as I see this meeting as a step towards our continued collaboration and partnership.

After the monitoring framework is adopted, this does not mean that our collaboration is over – it is just starting as, once the framework is adopted, we will need to work together to build awareness and national capacity to compile and use these biodiversity indicators.

Thank you again for inviting me today, and I wish you the best in your deliberations over the next two days. I will not be able to stay with you this whole time. However, my colleague who is leading the team working on the monitoring framework, Jillian Campbell, will join you for the full two days.

Thank you.
