

Kenya commits to be part of the plan to deepen biodiversity conservation



Hon. Soipan Tuyah, EGH

MESSAGE FROM THE CABINET SECRETARY

This year, the celebration of International Day for Biodiversity (IDB) coincides with two meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity, both taking place here in Nairobi at the UNON campus from May 13-29, 2024. They are the 26th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.

During the meetings, global biodiversity experts, negotiators and policy makers, will converge in Nairobi to take stock of the progress made by parties in reviewing and aligning their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans to the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and

conduct negotiations on agenda items in preparation for the Conference of Parties to the convention later in the year.

The Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework now referred to as the **Biodiversity Plan**, has set out a transformative pathway for sustainable development to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

This year's theme: "**Be Part of the Plan**", amplifies the need to act together and refocus our attention on nationally driven action that embraces the whole of government and whole of society approach in planning, implementing, and monitoring of the biodiversity plan.

This calls upon all stakeholders to accelerate their momentum of actions through translating the biodiversity plan to resolute national actions, enhance efforts to mobilise adequate means of implementation and ensure

that the way in which genetic resources are accessed and used maximises the benefits for users, providers and the ecology, and communities where they are found. This will make biodiversity conservation meaningful to all, including the indigenous people and local communities who are earnest custodians of biodiversity.

The importance of championing biodiversity conservation and by extension halting the loss, cannot be overemphasised, since biodiversity is essential for the processes that support all life on Earth, including humans and food security, and sustains livelihoods through overall genetic diversity.

Kenya joins the rest of the world in being part of the plan by strengthening our nature-based economy, which relies significantly on the utilisation of natural resources for goods and services, by renewing our resolve to

conservation, sustainable use and prudent access and benefit sharing of genetic resources.

This will be strongly articulated in the revised National Biodiversity Strategy and Action plan (NBSAP) and supported by the strategy developed to coordinate restoration of the degraded landscape ecosystems in Kenya.

The later will aim to: increase national tree cover by 17.8 percent through selected ecosystem interventions on public, community and private lands; promote community climate resilient livelihoods through nature-based solutions and enhancing land management practices for sustainability; improve landscape and ecosystem governance by strengthening policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks; promote sustainable financing mechanisms and private sector investment for restoration of degraded landscapes and ecosystems; and strengthen capacity, research and knowledge management, including Monitoring and Evaluation.

We reaffirm our commitment to be part of the plan and to strengthen our conservation and restoration intensity across sectors, ecosystems and landscapes to benefit all, including inter-generational populations.

REMARKS BY PRINCIPAL SECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

On this International Day of Biodiversity, Kenya, under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, reiterates her commitment to the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). For Kenya, the framework offers clear and ambitious targets, guiding efforts to conserve biodiversity and promote sustainable use. The theme of the day "**Be Part of the Plan**", aligns with our all-inclusive and participatory approach to conservation.

Kenya is undertaking a robust process of integrating its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), with the overarching goals of the KMGBF. Currently, efforts are focused on reviewing and aligning the NBSAP with the KMGBF, developing national targets consistent with the 23 global targets, developing national indicators, and crafting a resource mobilisation strategy to support KMGBF implementation. This process will enable the evaluation of conservation measures' effectiveness, allowing policymakers to adjust strategies as needed.

The KMGBF presents a strategic roadmap for the Nation to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, with a key objective being to restore at least 30 percent of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine ecosystems by 2030.

Kenya's implementation of the framework is tailored to setting clear targets at a national level with the unique national circumstances, focusing on capacity building, stakeholder engagement, science-based deci-



Eng. Festus Ng'eno

sion-making, resource mobilisation, and mainstreaming biodiversity considerations across sectors.

Adopting the whole of government-whole of society approach, stakeholder engagement has been at the core of NBSAP revision and GBF implementation in Kenya. Involving government agencies, local communities, indigenous peoples, civil society organisations, and the private sector ensures that conservation efforts are inclusive, garnering ownership and fostering partnerships for collective action.

The NBSAP revision and implementation will emphasise science-based decision-making in order to facilitate accurate assessment by providing the necessary tools and methodologies to gauge biodiversity's state, including data on species populations, ecosystem health, and habitat degradation. Further, science informs policymaking by analysing research findings, guiding decisions on conservation priorities, protected areas designation, and other strategies.

Kenya's NBSAP will put in place a comprehensive Resource Mobilisation Strategy that will explore innovative

financing mechanisms, engaging international donors and development partners, and mobilising domestic resources will ensure adequate funding, technology transfer, and capacity-building support for conservation activities.

Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations across sectors is a priority for Kenya. As guided by Target 14 of the Global Biodiversity Framework, mainstreaming will be achieved by ensuring the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes, poverty eradication strategies, strategic environmental assessments, environmental impact assessments and, as appropriate, national accounting within and across all levels of government, and in sectors with particularly significant impacts on biodiversity.

Establishing robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms while strengthening the existing ones is vital for tracking progress towards GBF targets in Kenya. Developing clear indicators, collecting relevant data, and regularly reporting on conservation efforts, will enable Kenya to assess achievements and identify areas for improvement.

Given the dynamic nature of biodiversity and the evolving challenges it faces, flexibility and adaptability will allow Kenya to learn from experience, adjust strategies based on new information, and respond effectively to emerging threats and opportunities.

As we celebrate the richness of biodiversity on this international day, Kenya reaffirms its dedication to the conservation and sustainable use of our natural heritage, contributing to global efforts for a more biodiverse and resilient world.

REMARKS BY PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR FORESTRY

Introduction

Biodiversity is the foundation of life on Earth, providing us with essential ecosystem services, from clean air and water to food security and climate regulation.

However, human activities such as deforestation, pollution, and habitat destruction, have pushed countless species to the brink of extinction, threatening the delicate balance of our ecosystems.

Call to Action

Today, we stand at a pivotal moment in history. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) offers a roadmap for concerted action to safeguard biodiversity for present and future generations. It calls upon all stakeholders – governments, civil society, businesses, and individuals – to join forces in a unified effort to protect and restore our natural heritage.

Kenya's Commitment

I am proud to reaffirm Kenya's unwavering commitment to biodiversity conservation. Our nation boasts a wealth of diverse ecosystems, including lowland and mountain forests, wooded and open grasslands, semi-arid scrubland, dry woodlands, inland aquatic, as well as coastal and marine ecosystems. However, we recognise that these invaluable resources are under threat, and decisive action is needed to ensure their survival.

Government Initiatives

Under the visionary leadership of His Excellency President Dr William Samoei Ruto, we have launched ambitious initiatives to safeguard our ecosystems. They include the National Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Strategy that is geared to preserving and enhancing for-



Gitonga Mugambi, EBS

est ecosystems, which serve as a home for 80 percent of all terrestrial organisms.

The strategy will oversee restoration of 10.6 million hectares of degraded landscapes by the year 2032 through the Bottom Up Economic Transformation Agenda. This will not only help meet the 30 percent tree cover in Kenya, but will also help Kenya to meet the KM-GBF targets 2, 3, 6, 10, 11 and 12.

Empowerment of Stakeholders

But we cannot achieve our goals alone. We need the support and collaboration of all stakeholders, including local communities, indigenous peoples, and international partners. By empowering grassroots initiatives and fostering inclusive decision-making processes, we can build a more resilient and equitable future for all.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us heed the call to action and become champions of biodiversity conservation. Together, we can forge a path towards a healthier planet and a brighter tomorrow. As we celebrate the International Day of Biodiversity, let us reaffirm our commitment to being part of the plan for a more sustainable and biodiverse world.

Theme: 'Be Part of the Plan'

We have a plan to halt biodiversity loss and we want you to be part of it

BY DAVID COOPER



Today, we mark the International Day for Biodiversity (IDB), a universal annual celebration commemorating the adoption of the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on May 22, 1992.

Biodiversity – the diversity within species, between species, and of ecosystems, including plants, animals, and microorganisms – is the foundation of human existence on this planet. Without it, Earth would not be the cherished, hospitable planet that we humans call home.

Biodiversity supports everything that nature gives us: Food, clean air and water, medicine, shelter, spiritual comfort, and so much more. Thus, biodiversity loss causes massive disruptions to ecosystem functioning, causing human suffering, and heightened vulnerability. It is estimated that over half of the world's global Gross Domestic Product is moderately or highly dependent on biodiversity. Put simply, there is no economy without biodiversity.

Biodiversity loss is enmeshed with pollution and climate change. We know what is causing this infamous triple crisis that has befallen our world. It can all be summed up in one sentence: Humans' dysfunctional relationship with nature. We are part of nature, and it is time we act like it.

The theme of our celebration today is **"Be part of the Plan"**, a call to action aimed at everyone to help implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (which we have branded "The Biodiversity Plan"), to foster its uptake by the public at large.

Kenya and 195 other Parties to the CBD adopted the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at COP 15 in December 2022. That was an extraordinary feat demonstrating the ability of environmental multilateralism to bring nations and peoples together. It is now time to turn that agreement into action.

All Parties to the CBD are expected to align their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) ahead of COP 16, which will take place this year from October 21- November 1 in Cali, Colombia. Several Parties have already submitted their revised NBSAPs. We expect the other Parties to follow suit in the next few months before COP 16. We do not have much time. The targets of The Biodiversity Plan must be achieved by 2030.

I am delighted to see that Kenya is undertaking a robust process of

aligning its NBSAP with the targets of The Biodiversity Plan. This exercise is crucial. It is important that Kenya and the other Parties to the Convention pursue the global Biodiversity Plan by setting nationally adequate targets that consider the country's circumstances. Through these commendable efforts, the Government of Kenya aims to effectively contribute to global biodiversity conservation while fostering sustainable development domestically.

Government-led action is essential. But for the Plan to work, we need a whole-of-society approach that includes everyone. We need civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities, business and finance communities, women, youth, and academia. We need everyone to contribute, including you.

Through informed purchasing decisions, citizens can abate the pressure exerted on biodiversity, one shopping cart at a time. Through their votes and engagement in the political process, citizens can prompt politicians to embrace The Biodiversity Plan as a domestic policy priority. The private sector can take responsibility to align their business and investment decisions with human wellbeing and nature's health. Civil society and youth can continue playing their important role in holding policymakers to account and in enhancing communication, education, and public awareness.

While working together in the pursuit of The Biodiversity Plan, we must empower the youth and women, and respect the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities. That is the message we are delivering this year on the International Day for Biodiversity, as we celebrate in Nairobi while the fourth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the CBD is underway at the UNEP headquarters in Gigiri. Representatives of the 196 Parties to the CBD and observer organisations will join this celebration in the environment capital of the world.

COP 16 in Colombia is on the horizon. This meeting, which will unfold under the compelling theme of "Peace with nature", must, among other things, resolve pending issues related to capacity building, technology transfer and finance, the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits that arise from the use of digital sequence information on genetic resources, and empower indigenous peoples and local communities, so that all countries of the world have the means to achieve the 23 action targets that The Biodiversity Plan contains.

This is humanity's best chance to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and live in harmony with nature.

David Cooper is the Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

BY MOHAMED AWER

Kenya is endowed with rich biodiversity and a unique variety of ecosystems that play a critical role in economic and human well-being. In the face of climate change, for instance, healthy ecosystems help mitigate the effects of extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, and storms, and increase community resilience.

Kenya's economy is heavily dependent on climate-sensitive and nature-based sectors, but the country's biodiversity and ecosystems are under threat mainly from human activity and climate change, according to *Kenya National Climate Change Response Strategy, 2010*. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services warned in its 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services that the continued loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems will undermine progress towards 80 percent of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Many areas in Kenya are just emerging from the recent devastation caused by flooding, which followed a long drought. The President of Kenya, in his Address to the Nation, attributed the catastrophe that resulted in the loss of over 200 lives and the displacement of over 200,000 people, to our failure to protect nature, which in turn aggravated climate change and its impacts.

This year's celebration of the **International Day for Biological Diversity**



comes at an opportune moment. Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity are meeting under its Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) for the first time since the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF), to follow up on the progress by parties to translate the global framework into national roadmaps commonly referred to as **National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)**.

At WWF-Kenya, we are pleased to work closely and jointly with the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry towards the development of a robust NBSAP that fosters effective, inclusive, and equitable governance of biodiversity and promotes the sustainable utilisation of genetic resources, ensuring mutual benefits for people and nature.

In our 2030 strategic goals, we are committed to ensuring thriving wildlife, functioning habitats, tangible benefits for people, greening our footprint, and enhancing natural resource governance,

and we recognise the importance of working with all stakeholders to achieve the KM-GBF targets.

As we strive to achieve the ambitious targets of the KM-GBF by 2030, WWF-Kenya believes that by strengthening the mainstreaming of biodiversity and its integral values into all relevant policies, including fiscal policies and measures, regulations, programmes, and finance systems, Kenya can promote long-term sustainability and resilience across all levels of government and sectors.

On this important day, let us remember that every single sector and indeed everyone, has a role to play in halting biodiversity loss, no matter how seemingly small. We urge every Kenyan to **"Be Part of the Plan"**, and believe that forging strong, strategic partnerships will be instrumental in achieving the ambitious targets. Collectively, our efforts will make a significant difference for the country and the planet.

We commend the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry for the progress made in revising Kenya's NBSAP in accordance with KM-GBF and the commitment to a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. This aligns with the principles outlined in various key resources, including WWF's **The NBSAPs We Need**. We believe a strong, inclusive national coordination mechanism will be crucial for ensuring successful implementation, leaving no one behind.

Mohamed Awer is the Chief Executive Officer of World Wide Fund for Nature-Kenya (WWF-Kenya)

