

**Statement by
David Cooper
Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
City of Montreal Press Conference: Expansion of Mount Royal Park
13 September 2023**

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Mayor Plante,
honorable guests,

I would first like to point out that the lands on which we are gathered are part of the traditional unceded territory of the Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawks), which has long served as a place of gathering and exchange between nations.

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is proud to be hosted by the beautiful city of Montreal.

I would like to thank Mayor Plante for your commitment to building a sustainable future and for the resources you mobilized to make the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 15) not only possible, but memorable.

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention recognized the role of the City of Montreal in its processes by giving its name to the long-awaited Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the road map for the protection of biodiversity for all actors around the world.

Montreal has been and continues to be a strong voice advocating for the importance of cities and local authorities as front-line actors in the fight against climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

Before and after the adoption of the Framework, Montreal has been leading by example, demonstrating how cities can successfully translate global goals into concrete actions.

Montreal has launched a series of initiatives, such as protecting pollinators, integrating nature into urban planning, raising awareness and promoting sustainable lifestyles.

Mayor Plante,

As President of the Convention's Advisory Committee on Local Authorities and as ICLEI Global Ambassador for Local Biodiversity, your influence has extended around the world. Over 60 cities have now signed the Montreal Pledge that you launched at COP 15.

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Thank you for your leadership.

Today, that leadership continues with the announcement of the Mount Royal Park expansion.

Transforming this car road into a public space is incredible news for citizens of Montreal and for biodiversity.

This bold action will improve the air quality and the overall quality of life here in Montreal.

At COP 15, countries agreed to protect at least 30% of their territories and improve access to urban green spaces by 2030.

This bold announcement confirms the engagement of the City of Montreal in succeeding in this important international goal.

Again, I thank you.
