

**Statement by
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**Extended 45th session of the World Heritage Committee
Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Side-event
How to Leverage World Heritage to Meet the Biodiversity Challenge of the
Decade
Friday, 15 September 2023**

Distinguished delegates, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I'd like to start by thanking the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and IUCN for inviting me to speak at this event that aims to highlight opportunities to leverage World Heritage to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

I am pleased to be speaking alongside representatives of the Governments of China and Canada, that spared no effort to ensure the historic success of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Montreal last December, and that have both been remarkable leaders in the early implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework adopted in Montreal.

The historic agreement in Montreal was just the start. Urgent action is needed over the next six years to ensure that the mission and 23 targets of the Framework are met by 2030 as an essential contribution to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

While negotiated and adopted under the Convention on Biological Diversity, it is a GLOBAL Framework, intended to be embraced by all other organizations and conventions that relate to the drivers of biodiversity loss or to the safeguard of biodiversity.

The Framework recognizes the essential role in its implementation of biodiversity-related conventions, including the World Heritage Convention and the Convention on Wetlands (both represented at today's event), the Rio Conventions, and other multilateral environment agreements.

The Conference of the Parties to the CBD therefore called on the governing bodies of all related organizations and conventions to endorse the GBF and take measures to contribute to its implementation and its monitoring, according to their respective mandates.

The present session of the World Heritage Committee is one of the first governing meetings of the biodiversity-related conventions following COP 15 and I am encouraged by the attention it is giving to the relationship between the World Heritage Convention and the GBF.

The World Heritage Convention is a unique convention addressing the intersection between natural and cultural heritage; nature and people; biodiversity and culture. As the custodian to the World Heritage sites, the World Heritage Convention is a very important ally in the implementation of the GBF.

As will be highlighted at this event, the World Heritage Sites protect immense biological diversity – 20% of the mapped species richness in the world in only 1% of the earth's surface. The preservation and effective management of these properties will contribute to achieving many of the targets of the GBF, not only those related to protected areas.

As one of their first actions in implementing the Framework, governments are updating their national biodiversity strategies and action plans and setting national targets aligned with the GBF and its goals and targets.

I urge governments to integrate World Heritage into their NBSAPs and call on the State Parties to our respective conventions to ensure internal cooperation and synergies in implementing all biodiversity-related conventions, in particular through the national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

The experience and perspective shared by panelists in today's event, representing different countries, ministries, levels of government, conventions, indigenous peoples and local communities, will be a significant contribution to promoting such an approach.

The GBF will require the involvement of the whole of society and the whole of government in its implementation. We need to ensure cooperation across government, at all levels of governance (global, national and subnational), across sectors, and across generations.

COP 15 recognized the important interlinkages between cultural and biological diversity in support of the goals and targets of the GBF and its vision of living in harmony with nature. The CBD looks forward to working with UNESCO, IUCN and other partners, with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, to operationalize and implement the joint programme of work on cultural and biological diversity endorsed by COP 15 and to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

I'd like to thank you for your attention, wish you rich discussions and I greatly look forward to the outcomes of this event as well as to those of the ongoing session of the World Heritage Committee.

Thank you.
