

**Statement by
David Cooper
Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
World Habitat Day
2 October 2023
"Resilient urban economies. Cities as drivers of growth and recovery"**

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On this 2 October 2023, we commemorate the Global Observance of World Habitat Day and the beginning of Urban October. This year's theme, "Resilient urban economies. Cities as drivers of growth and recovery", focuses our attention on the pivotal role of resilient cities in fostering economic development and post-pandemic recovery.

Adequate shelter remains a fundamental human right, and it is intrinsically linked to prosperity and well-being. However, to fully satisfy human well-being, we also need to look at the role of biodiversity in providing all the ecosystem services that contribute to a good life.

In the context of cities driving growth, it is essential to recognize the symbiotic relationship between urban development and biodiversity conservation. The biodiversity within and around cities not only enhances the quality of life for urban residents but also provides critical ecosystem services, including clean air, water purification, disaster risk control and mitigation, - all of which are essential to human wellbeing.

We must also be mindful of the potential threats that unsustainable urban development poses to biodiversity. It is estimated that around 56% of the world population live in urban areas. As we strive to provide essential services to urban populations worldwide, our solutions must not only protect existing biodiversity but actively contribute to its preservation, ensuring a sustainable future for all.

As we look ahead to the future and work towards the successful implementation of the [Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), it is imperative that we fully understand that this Framework offers a comprehensive blueprint for transformative change, redefining how we value biodiversity and how we protect our planet for future generations.

It sets forth specific targets to harness the potential of cities as engines of growth and recovery as well as the benefits of green and blue spaces to urban dwellers, halt biodiversity loss, bolster climate action, strengthen urban planning, and redirect financial resources to support these critical objectives. Realizing this vision demands a collaborative effort, encompassing governments and civil society alike.

Let us work together to move the Framework from agreement to action and bring about tangible, lasting change.