

**CPR, 12 January 2022**

Your excellency, Ambassador Pirkka Tapiola, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassadors and Excellencies, colleagues,

Let me begin by wishing you all a happy and prosperous new year. I hope you all had the chance to recharge and relax after what was a very busy 2022.

The last time we spoke, I was in Montreal at the negotiations of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. My connection with you was, unfortunately, cut short due to technical gremlins. My apologies for that, and my thanks to Sonja for delivering my remarks.

As Sonja already covered much of the ground, today I would like to give you a short debrief on the biodiversity negotiations, which, while intense and sometimes fraught, delivered the outcomes that nature and biodiversity so desperately need.

My deep thanks go to China and the Minister of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China, Honorable Huang Runqiu, for leading on the delivery of the new framework. Also to Canada – and Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Honorable Steven Guilbeault – for hosting the negotiations. And to Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and her team.

This moment for nature was many years in the making. We had complexities along the way, from the pandemic to a forest of brackets on the text. But the nations of the world agreed, in the end, a full package deal for nature.

We saw agreement on stronger means of implementation, including more financing on the table for developing countries. Agreement on a fair and equitable share of the benefits from genetic resources. Agreement to reduce the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half. Agreement on addressing harmful subsidies, scaling up incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and so much more.

The wide-ranging nature of the framework shows that nature and biodiversity is everybody's business – from member states to businesses and investors to indigenous peoples and local communities. But, of course, it is what we do next that really matters. We need to take the appropriate actions to deliver on the framework by 2030.

UNEP has long to-do list in supporting member states implementing the framework, which gives us the opportunity to help reset humanity's relationship with nature. We at UNEP need to ensure that the implementation of our programme of work supports member states' priorities in the implementation of the framework and its goals. 2023 and the years that follow will be about implementation: on nature, yes, but also climate and pollution.

We do of course need a whole-of-UN approach, and I see the framework as a real opportunity to mainstream action on nature across the UN system. With the Common Approach to Biodiversity the

development of which UNEP supported in 2021 – under the umbrella of the Environment Management Group – UNEP is well placed to support UN Country Teams and fellow UN agencies in implementation. UNEP will look to lead and develop strategic alliances across the broader UN system to support countries with solutions to deliver on the commitments made, particularly for developing countries.

Everybody at UNEP thanks you for your commitment and support. We all look forward to working closely with you and for you to make the Global Biodiversity Framework a huge success.

Before I close, please allow me to recall the decision taken by the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, on 27 December, to appoint Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema as Deputy Executive Director of UNEP. Elizabeth Mrema is no stranger to the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and I very much look forward to working closely with her as soon as she joins on 15 February. I also wish to express my deepest appreciation to Ms. Sonja Leighton-Kone for her service as Acting Deputy Executive Director since February 2022 – a role she has performed superbly and diligently, in addition to her role as Director for the Corporate Services Division.

Thank you.