

**11<sup>th</sup> Annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of  
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment  
Programme**

**Colombia's Opening Statement**

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor. Since this is the first time our delegation is taking the floor, we would like to extend our greetings to all the distinguished delegates and express our sincerest gratitude to the Executive Director, her team, the Chair and the dedicated staff of the UNEP Secretariat for their efforts in organizing this meeting.

In this meeting, according to item 3 of the agenda, a review of the implementation of the UNEP Work Programme will be undertaken, where progress on the three strategic objectives will be analyzed, with "Living in harmony with nature" being one of them.

In this regard, I would like to remind you that in October, the world will gather in Colombia for the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP16)

On this occasion, the theme of the Conference will be 'Peace with Nature': a call to the whole world to find effective ways of reconciling humanity with its environment. It is also based on the conviction that protecting strategic ecosystems vital for our survival will encourage the search for peaceful societies.

The slogan also calls for action to improve our relationship with the environment and invites to reconsider the economic approaches that continue producing overexploitation and pollution of nature. Instead, we need a relationship with nature that promotes its care with a whole-of-society approach.

COP16 will be also the People's COP, highlighting that biodiversity provides invaluable ecosystem services and natural contributions to humankind. Many of these areas are inhabited by Indigenous Peoples, People of African Descent, and local communities with a rich cultural heritage. They integrate their traditional knowledge into the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. We recognize the intrinsic relationship of ethnic groups with the territories they inhabit, their livelihoods and their belief systems, which are indissolubly linked to their existence.

Finally, we hope that COP16 achieves significant progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), its monitoring scheme, and all associated decisions. Furthermore, in identifying opportunities for cooperation and synergies with other relevant multilateral environmental agreements, processes, and international organizations, as envisaged by the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy and Work Programme that will be reviewed in this meeting.

I wish we have a very productive meeting, and we look forward to seeing you in Cali. You are all warmly welcome!

Thank you!