

Message from the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

By Astrid Schomaker (CBD)

In a time of accelerating environmental degradation, the protection, restoration and sustain of biodiversity has emerged as a defining global challenge—one that calls for urgent, collective and decisive action. As Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), I welcome the growing engagement of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and its Member States in supporting efforts to halt biodiversity loss. Your participation in this global endeavor is not only timely—it is essential.

Biodiversity is the foundation of life on Earth. It sustains vital ecosystem services, supports climate stability, and underpins the resilience of our economies and societies. Yet biodiversity is being lost at an alarming rate, with profound consequences for people and planet alike. The adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in 2022 marked a historic moment of international consensus and commitment. Now, the world must translate that vision into coordinated action which requires both intersectoral and multistakeholder collaboration on a scale we have not seen before.

The drivers of biodiversity loss are complex, interconnected, and deeply embedded in our economies and our lives. Reversing this trend demands bold, system-wide responses. It also demands that all segments of society—governments, industries, civil society, indigenous people and local communities, women, youth, scientists, and international bodies—work together with shared purpose and mutual accountability.

In this context, ICAO's leadership in working towards aligning aviation with sustainability goals is very timely and welcome. But we must go further. The aviation sector has a powerful platform to convene and collaborate—bringing together policymakers, regulators, technology developers, financiers, and communities to explore solutions that protect ecosystems while enabling connectivity and economic development. This kind of broad-based, inclusive engagement is precisely what the Global Biodiversity Framework calls for.

I urge ICAO and its stakeholders to continue fostering partnerships—not only within the transport and environment sectors but across the full spectrum of actors whose decisions shape land use, infrastructure, technology, finance, and resource governance. Enhancing transparency, sharing data, aligning investments, and embedding biodiversity considerations across all levels of planning and operation will be key to success.

As we navigate the path ahead, let us remember that safeguarding nature is not a task for a few—it is a shared responsibility for all. Through deeper cooperation, collective ambition, and inclusive governance, we can chart a course where aviation thrives as part of a sustainable future.