

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO COALITION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT EVENT ON  
“BIODIVERSITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ROLE OF THE  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS”**

**New York, 14 September 2015**

I am pleased to send greetings to this meeting on biodiversity, climate change and the role of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In August, United Nations Member States reached a historic agreement on a universal agenda for sustainable development over the next 15 years. It will be adopted by world leaders later this month.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It is a shared vision of humanity strengthened by the commitment to leave no one behind.

The new Agenda, which includes the Sustainable Development Goals, aims to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty in all its forms, reduce inequality within and between states, and achieve gender equality. It encompasses action to combat climate change, halt biodiversity loss and address desertification and unsustainable land use.

We must protect biodiversity, terrestrial and marine ecosystems and the atmosphere as part of an essential global heritage for all societies, now and in the future.

Biodiversity is declining due to habitat destruction and climate change, which is affecting ecosystems, and the many services they provide. These include the diversity of our crops and livestock, which is essential to the resilience of our agricultural systems and their capacity to sustainably meet the world's growing needs for food.

We cannot risk losing this vital resource to humanity. That is why climate change and biodiversity loss are specifically addressed in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and the conservation and use of agricultural diversity is covered in two Targets under the Food Security Goal.

The adverse impacts of climate change, in particular, will undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty. The 2030 Agenda acknowledges this and underscores the need for all States to work for an ambitious and universal climate agreement at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris, in December 2015.

Many world leaders have shown a strong response to the UN call for climate action. For instance, the United States and China have announced their agreement to work towards an ambitious outcome in Paris and to increase practical cooperation and dialogue on climate change.

The imperative for action on climate and the environment has drawn support from many quarters, including the growing voice of faith groups. Pope Francis has made a strong call for a radical transformation of politics, economics and individual lifestyles to confront environmental degradation and climate change, and he has made a plea for swift and unified global action.

Such action is embodied in the 2030 Agenda. Our challenge is to implement it in its entirety.

We must move from business as usual. Affordable and scalable solutions exist that will enable us to leapfrog to cleaner, more resilient, low-carbon economies that provide shared prosperity for all our peoples. We also understand better the policies that can help eradicate poverty and improve people's lives.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can and must lead us towards a new social compact between citizens and leaders – and between humanity and the environment that sustains us. Only then will we be able to transform our world and build a safer, more prosperous and sustainable future for all.

I wish you a fruitful meeting.