

**Statement by Cristelle Pratt,  
Assistant Secretary General for Environment and  
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Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific  
States (OACPS) At the  
Ministerial Segment of the Bio-Diversity  
Conference**

**Honourable Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Senior Officials, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) - HE Georges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, I am honoured to stand before you today to make a few remarks at the opening of the High-Level Ministerial segment of this important "Africa Conference on the implementation of the outcomes of the CBD COP15 and CITES COP19"

Our biodiversity, which is the cornerstone of our existence, is unequivocally at a critical crossroads. The urgency of addressing biodiversity loss cannot be overstated. With the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework, States Parties have set for themselves ambitious targets that, if fully implemented, will usher in transformative changes to conserve, restore, and sustainably use biodiversity to meet our societal goals.

Permit me, therefore, to recognise the commendable leadership and exemplary commitment of the African Union Commission for convening this Conference just six months after the CBD COP15 and CITES COP19, to establish a solid, strategic road map to galvanise member states' efforts and intent to fulfill the commitments made in 2023.

The OACPS views this Conference as a critical catalyst for summoning the collective efforts of the 79 members and regions of the OACPS, to provide the requisite solutions to ensure our shared natural heritage thrives - for our health and wellbeing, for our livelihoods and economy, including for all of our generations to come.

To our minds, the three Regions of the OACPS share common challenges and development needs, which calls for close collaboration and synergies to better advance the priorities and interests of members in various multilateral forums and to implement their related outcomes.

There is great potential for amplifying Africa's voice – in solidarity and unity with OACPS members from the Caribbean and Pacific regions. The OACPS is convinced that we will work and deliver more for our members states if we strengthened our structured intra-regional coordination and collaboration between the OACPS and the African Union, the Caribbean Community and the Pacific Islands Forum - for negotiations and implementation of MEAs - with the AU, CARICOM and PIF coordinating efforts and initiatives at regional level.

Please be assured of OACPS' ongoing commitment to work with our Partners to see how the much needed additional resources could be recruited to support members and regional priorities. As many would be aware, the long-standing partnership with the EU spanning more than 4.5 decades has been instrumental in providing targeted development and capacity-building initiatives to reinforce the sustainable use and

conservation of biodiversity. For example the current portfolio of Intra-ACP programmes under the 11th and final cycle of the EDF includes the ACP MEA3 Programme aims to build the capacity of members states to effectively implement their obligations of the various Multilateral Environment Agreements (including chemicals and biodiversity clusters); The Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme assists our beneficiary member states to conserve wildlife and ecosystems while improving the livelihoods of dependent indigenous peoples and rural communities; and the BIOPAMA Programme seeks to build capacity for effective protected area management, and the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity.

In closing let me extend our heartfelt appreciation to our hosts, the African Union Commission, for the warm welcome and for generously extending their facilities to all of us over the last week.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.