

**AFRICAN UNION**  
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## **STATEMENT**

by **Albert M. Muchanga**

**Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism,  
Industry and Minerals**

**Delivered**

**At the**

**AFRICA HIGH-LEVEL BIODIVERSITY CONFERENCE**

**2 June 2023**

**09h00**

**Medium Conference Hall**

***Honourable Madam Pilda Nani Kereng, Minister of Environment and  
Tourism***

***Honourable Ministers***

**H.E. Birgitte Markussen, Ambassador and Head of EU Delegation to the African Union**

**H.E. Hans Lundquist, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to Ethiopia and to the African Union**

**H.E. Mrs Kira Sindbjerg, Ambassador of Denmark**

**H.E. *David Cooper*, Ag Executive Secretary of the CBD Secretariat**

**H.E. Madeleine Garlick, Ambassador and Deputy Head of Mission, United Kingdom.**

**H.E. Goerges Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, Secretary-General, Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States, represented by Ms Cristelle Pritt, Assistant Secretary-General**

**H.E. Ivonne Higuero, Executive Secretary of CITES Secretariat**

***Your Excellencies Ambassadors and Head of Missions***

***Distinguished Participants***

***Ladies and Gentlemen***

It is my honour to welcome you all to your home, the African Union Headquarter for a conference that prioritizes the Implementation of the Outcomes of the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) that adopted the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** and the 19<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES COP19).

Honourable Ministers, your dedication to the biodiversity agenda speaks volumes and serves as a catalyst for raising the profile of the sector within Africa and beyond.

As a continent, we are known to be a champion of biodiversity conservation. Biodiversity is an integral part of our livelihoods and we draw from it resources for medicines, food and other raw materials for multiple uses in addition to diverse ecosystem services. Therefore, conserving biodiversity for Africa should not be an option but rather a necessity. As a Commissioner responsible for trade, industry and tourism among other sectors, I have no doubt that sustainable management and utilisation of biodiversity in Africa will go a long way in accelerating inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. This will take us a step further to the realisation of goal 7 of Agenda 2063, “***Environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities***”.

### **Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Participants**

The relevance of this conference to the biodiversity agenda of our continent cannot be over emphasized. Its outcomes stand to strengthen on-going efforts in our continent to protect its rich biodiversity and diverse ecosystems, for the wellbeing of our people. Furthermore, it has provided an opportunity for defining ways and mechanisms to domesticate the global frameworks and resolutions taking into consideration the realities of Africa. As always, Africa is ahead in translating these recent frameworks and decisions into actions. We should commend ourselves for this bold step accomplished by 2022.

### ***Your Excellencies, Honorable Ministers;***

**The draft African Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan** is our new vehicle for addressing the triple crises of biodiversity loss; the impacts of climate change; and, disasters on ecosystem resilience. It is thus a significant contribution to ensuring a coordinated approach in the implementation of

biodiversity actions across the continent, and to strengthen the efforts by Member States. Therefore, an urgent need arises for us to step up ambition across the continent in implementing policies as well as putting in place sustainable practices that will halt the loss of Africa's biodiversity. In doing so, we shall reduce the threats to ecosystems from climate change and other adverse factors.

***Your Excellencies, Honorable Ministers;***

Achieving this goal calls for a wide range of interdependent processes. This includes:

- sustainable use of biological resources,
- increasing efforts in conservation and restoration of degraded ecosystems,
- enhancing inclusion especially of vulnerable groups,
- equity and fairness in sharing the benefits from biological and genetic resources, including traditional knowledge and digital sequence information,
- integrating ecosystem based approaches into all development sectors,
- raising awareness on the values of biodiversity and its contribution to people, and
- mobilising an increased flow of finances from all sources to Africa's biodiversity.

These constitute key pillars for sustainability in Africa's development pathway. It is our collective task to take appropriate actions to translate these aspirations into concrete results.

***Your Excellencies, Honorable Ministers;***

One of the fundamental principles for success in the green transition is global solidarity and partnerships. Africa is not an island and the benefits of biodiversity conservation in Africa are of global nature. Therefore, I would like to call upon our partners present in this auditorium to join us in the implementation of the African Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for the benefit of all humanity and our physical environment.

Let me also take this opportunity to recognize the financial support that has made this conference a reality from Sweden, European Union and OACPS. In addition, I would also like to express our gratitude to partners who supported technically and logistically. These include UNECA, TRAFFIC, WWF, GIZ, FAO, UNEP and the CITES and CBD Secretariats.

I also like to thank all the other partners who provided technical and financial support for the successful organisation of this conference.

And finally, special thanks to all the Experts from the Member States of the African Union and staff of the African Union Commission for their commitment in ensuring that this meeting convenes.

I wish you safe journeys back to your respective duty stations.

I end here and thank you for your kind attention.