

**Ambassador's Remarks for the Opening Ceremony of the Exhibition,
"The Beauty of Life on Earth: Man and Biodiversity in Protected
Areas"**

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Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to participate today in the opening ceremony of the exhibition named: 'Beauty of Life on Earth: Man and Biodiversity in Protected Areas'.

It is also an apt occasion to celebrate the 50th anniversary of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme and for exchanging views on the 15th meeting of Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity being held in Kunming later this year.

Distinguished Guests,

Mother Nature has blessed planet earth with various forms of life which constitute the foundation of human civilisation. The earth's biological resources are vital to humanity's economic and social development and a global asset of tremendous value for the present and future generations. The biological diversity adds richness to life, makes it meaningful and ensures that the great journey of life progresses steadily unfettered from the fear of extinction.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Biodiversity is the knowledge that various species have learned during the painful process of evolution to survive and perpetuate themselves in an ever-changing environment. It is nevertheless painful to observe that this library of life is being set ablaze at a rate unprecedented in the history of our evolution. The intricate jigsaw of life perfected over course of millennia has been thrown into disarray and disorder by the human greed and lust.

The loss of biodiversity is so alarming that some experts view it as a beginning of the 6th mass extinction of biodiversity on earth.

The abrupt and arbitrary change in the climate as seen in raging wildfires from Amazon to Australia and Mediterranean to Rockies has only accentuated the crises that all forms of life face today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Faced with such serious challenges to biodiversity, it is imperative that humanity should act in a dispassionate, concerted and organised manner to reverse this steep decline. There is a pressing need to make continuous efforts to safeguarding natural ecosystems and developing a sustainable relationship between humans and natural environment.

It is satisfying to note that under the broad framework of Convention on Biological Diversity and its Man and Biosphere Programme, UNESCO has spearheaded efforts to preserve biological diversity all across the globe and for promoting innovative approaches to economic development that is socially and culturally acceptable and environmentally sustainable. It is indeed a success of these efforts that World Network of Biosphere Reserves has risen to 714 sites in 129 countries and we are expecting more sites being included into it.

Distinguished Guests,

Pakistan is blessed with great variety of landscapes. While the riverine forests and mangrove dot the fertile plains of Pakistan, the mighty mountain ranges of Himalaya, Karakoram and Hindu Kush in the north serve as the sentinel of the subcontinent. This variation in relief and climate has bestowed Pakistan with rich biodiversity and many ecosystems, habitats and species of global significance.

The efforts of conservation of biodiversity, ecosystems and genes have got appreciable momentum in Pakistan for the last few years. “The Biodiversity Action plan” outlining strategic goals, objectives and plan of actions has now entered in implementation.

Pakistan hosted World Environment Day on June 5 this year which was an international acknowledgement of its transition towards a clean and green future. This year’s World Environment Day carried special significance because it also witnessed the formal launch of “United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030”.

Going forward, Pakistan is working to include 15 national parks under the list of protected areas. We are also working to include many sites into World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Pakistan is already in the midst of one of the world’s most ambitious efforts to expand and restore its forests, having already planted a billion trees as part of its 10 Billion Tree Tsunami Project. We hope that this initiative will contribute to preventing, halting

and reversing the degradation of ecosystems in Pakistan as well as of the entire world.

China is leading the cause of developing countries in climate change. President Xi's vision of a "prosperous, clean and beautiful world" resonates with Prime Minister Imran Khan's Clean and Green Initiative. Pakistan is committed to working closely with China to achieve shared goals to mitigate the dangers posed by climate change to biodiversity.

In order to deepen our joint efforts for preserving biodiversity, Pakistan has proposed a 'Leadership Alliance for Eco-system Restoration' which we plan to launch during the forthcoming Climate Change Conference of Parties being held in Glasgow in October this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Of all the blessings of nature endowed upon us, the feeling of existence however for a fleeting moment, is the most admirable and worthy of preservation. As the cause of human civilisation is served by a diversity of thought and cultures; similarly, the world of existence could only endure if the diversity of life is preserved.

Let us take a step for preserving the diversity of both human civilisation and life on earth.

I thank you all!
