

Full report of the CBD COP16' Women Forum





Introduction

The Women Forum, held on October 25th and 29th, 2024, at the Pacific Valley Events Centre in Cali, Colombia, within the Blue Zone of COP16, marked a significant milestone in advancing gender-responsive biodiversity conservation. This event was organized by the CBD Women's Caucus in collaboration with the Government of Colombia and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Its primary aim was to emphasize the critical link between gender equality and environmental sustainability, underlining the pivotal role women and girls play in biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource management.

The Forum sought to promote the effective implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GPA) under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF). It specifically addressed the challenges and opportunities related to achieving Target 23, which advocates for the integration of gender equality in biodiversity conservation efforts. With a diverse array of high-level speakers, experts, and government representatives in attendance, the Forum provided a platform for global key stakeholders to explore the disproportionate impacts of biodiversity loss on women and girls while celebrating their leadership in environmental stewardship.





Key objectives



Amplifying the Voices of Women and Girls in Biodiversity Decision-Making

Ensuring the full, equitable, meaningful, and informed participation and leadership of women and girls at all levels of action, engagement, policy, and decision-making related to biodiversity



Highlighting the Intersection of Gender Equality, Human Rights, **Environmental Sustainability**

Focusing on the interconnectedness between gender equality, human rights, and environmental sustainability, and advocating for their integration into global biodiversity efforts.



Facilitating Stakeholder Collaboration

Creating opportunities for connections between diverse stakeholders of the Convention, fostering collaboration and shared efforts towards achieving gender equality in biodiversity conservation.



Sharing Tools and Strategies for **Gender-Responsive Implementation**

Providing resources, tools, and strategies to ensure the gender-responsive implementation of national biodiversity strategies and policies, enabling effective action towards gender equality in biodiversity conservation.

H.E. Francia Márquez, Vice-President of Colombia . Picture credit: UN Women.





Highlights

Significant Panels and Discussions

The Forum hosted high-profile speakers such as H.E. Francia Márquez, Vice-President of Colombia, and Ms. Susana Muhamad, COP16 President, alongside representatives from UN Women, UNEP, and Indigenous organizations. Discussions centered on critical topics, including resource mobilization, monitoring frameworks, and the integration of gender equality into national biodiversity strategies and action plans. These panels provided vital insights into the ongoing work and challenges surrounding gender-responsive biodiversity conservation.



Launch of the Gender and Biodiversity **Champions Platform**

A major achievement was the official launch of the "Be a Gender and Biodiversity Champion" platform, a collective initiative aimed at advocating for the full implementation of the Gender Plan of Action (GPA). This platform brings together a diverse range of stakeholders committed to embedding gender equality within biodiversity actions. During the Forum, representatives from governments, international organizations, and NGOs made pledges to prioritize gender in biodiversity initiatives. The Forum also honored exceptional women leaders whose work has significantly contributed to biodiversity advocacy, recognizing their vital role in shaping inclusive, gender-responsive policies.



Media Engagement

The Forum garnered significant media attention across prominent biodiversity and gender-focused platforms, broadening awareness of the Forum's outcomes. Social media campaigns amplified the Caucus's priority messages and key agenda items under negotiation at COP16. To further engage participants, the Forum distributed a range of campaign materials—such as stickers, pins, bags, and frames—ensuring the Forum's messages reached a wide audience, including delegates and parties from diverse sectors and regions.



Notable Connections

The Forum facilitated the development of new collaborations among governments, UN agencies, and civil society organizations. Key partnerships focused on advancing capacity-building initiatives for women-led biodiversity projects. These partnerships are crucial for fostering gender-responsive policies and ensuring the effective implementation of the Gender Plan of Action, enabling stronger, more inclusive progress toward biodiversity conservation goals.





Recommendations



Permanent Space at Future COPs

The Women Forum should become a permanent space at future COPs, reinforcing its role as a critical space for amplifying women's voices and gender-focused discussions in global biodiversity negotiations.

Sustaining collaborations

- Formalize the commitments made by key stakeholders during the Forum and provide ongoing support to gender & biodiversity champions. Expand the platform's network to include more stakeholders and increase its reach and impact.
- Advocate for developing comprehensive gender-responsive indicators to track progress on biodiversity policies, including the Gender Plan of Action (GPA). Support capacitybuilding initiatives to improve the quality of monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Community engagement

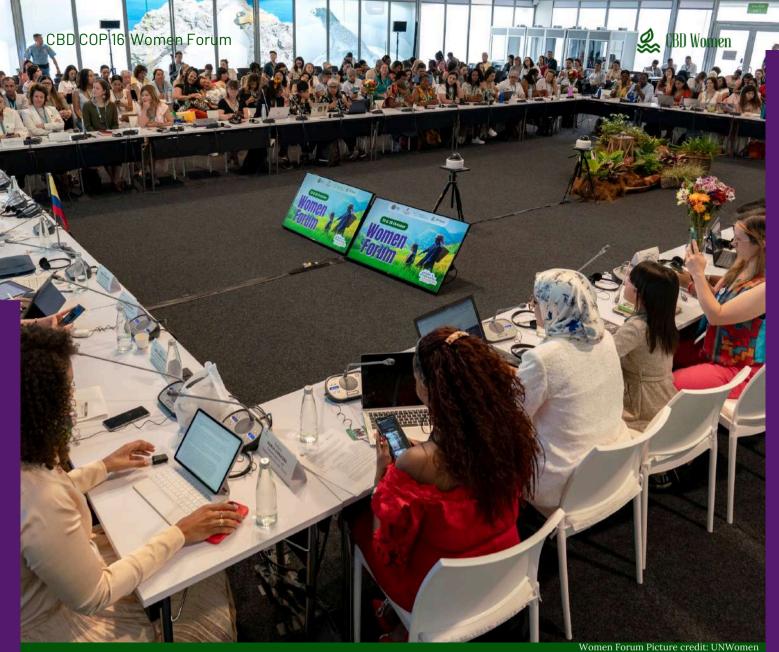
- · Increase outreach to grassroots women's organizations, ensuring their perspectives are integrated into biodiversity policymaking. Develop capacity-building mechanisms to train and empower women, enabling them to leverage their skills in conservation and advocacy.
- Use digital platforms to facilitate the exchange of best practices among women-led organizations and individuals working on the frontlines of biodiversity conservation. Promote knowledge-sharing and collaboration to amplify the impact of community-led initiatives.



Real-Time Interpretation Services

Secure in person interpretation services will ensure the Forum is accessible to participants from diverse linguistic backgrounds, fostering greater inclusivity and cross-cultural dialogue, avoiding connectivity difficulties.





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Session 1:

High-Level Opening Panel

The High-Level Opening Panel emphasized the pivotal role of the Gender Action Plan (GAP) in achieving biodiversity goals. Moderated by Mr. *Olivier Rukundo*, Head of the People and Biodiversity Unit at the CBD Secretariat, the session featured prominent speakers, including Ms. *Susana Muhamad*, COP16 President and Colombia's Minister of Environment; Mr. Luis Gilberto Murillo, Colombia's Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Ms. *Tamara Ospina*, Vice-Minister of Women of Colombia, who highlighted Colombia's leadership in promoting gender equity in biodiversity policies.

Ms. Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the CBD, and Ms. Maria Noel Vaeza, UN Women Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean, emphasized the need for gender-responsive approaches in implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Ms. Fany Kuiru Castro from COICA and Ms. Amelia Arreguín of the CBD Women's Caucus stressed the transformative impact of Indigenous women's leadership in biodiversity conservation.

Keynote speaker H.E. Ms. Francia Márquez, Vice-President of Colombia, delivered a powerful address on "Anti-racism, Gender, and Peace with Nature," linking social justice and environmental action. The session underscored the GAP's significance as a framework for inclusive biodiversity governance, critical for realizing the GBF and national targets, beyond Target 23.





Session 2: Presentation of the Green Zone Women Forum' outcomes

The session highlighting the outcomes of the Women's Forumheld earlier in the Green Zone featured impactful reflections from key grassroots women leaders, including Ana Rosa Perea from the Red de Mujeres Afroamericanas, Magaly Belalcazar from the Comisión Nacional de Mujeres Rurales Colombianas, Yolyz Correa Días from the Asociación Nacional de Zonas de Reserva Campesina, and Sara Sofía Díaz, a young girl from Colombia.

The panelists discussed the vital role women play in environmental defense, particularly those in rural and marginalized communities, and the challenges they face, such as limited resources, decision-making power, and gender biases.

Sara emphasized that the forum was not only for women but also for girls, ensuring their voices are heard in global biodiversity and climate discussions.

From left to right: Sara Sofía Díaz (Defensora de la Biodiversidad y de la Vida), Yolyz Correa Díaz (Asociación Nacional de Zonas de Reserva Campesina), and Magaly Belalcázar (Comisionada Nacional de Mujeres Rurales Colombianas). Picture credit: UN Women.





Session 3: COP16 priorities through the lens of the GPA: NBSAPs and resource mobilisation

The session featured a distinguished panel of experts who discussed strategies to overcome barriers faced by women, especially those from indigenous and local communities, in participating in biodiversity decision-making. The panelists included Ms. Rodah Rotino, Director of the Pastoral Communities Empowerment Programme (PACEP); Ms. Edda Fernandez, CBD Women's Caucus Representative to the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund; and Ms. Tanya McGregor, Programme Management Officer with the Transformation and Mainstreaming Nature Unit at UNEP.

The discussion focused on identifying challenges women face in accessing decision-making spaces and securing funding for biodiversity initiatives. The panelists emphasized the importance of ensuring that biodiversity funds, especially those allocated through the Global Environment Facility (GEF), are effectively directed to women-led projects. They also highlighted the need for capacity-building opportunities and more accessible, equitable funding mechanisms for women in biodiversity conservation and restoration efforts.

From left to right: Ms. Nubia Carolina Córdoba Curi (Governor of Chocó), Ms. Tamara Ospina (Women's Vice Minister of Colombia), Sara Sofia Díaz, Ms. Edda Fernández (CBD WC Representative to the GBFF), Ms. Tanya McGregor (UNEP), Ms. Rodah Rotino (PACEP), and Ms. Amelia Arreguín Prado (CBD Women's Caucus Coordinator). Picture credit: UN Women.





Session 4: COP16 Priorities through the lens of the GPA: Monitoring, reporting and capacity building.

This session explored strategies for enhancing biodiversity initiatives through gender-responsive monitoring, reporting, and capacity building. Speakers included Ms. Marina Leticia Lopez Sincal, Gender and Biodiversity Focal Point of Guatemala; Ms. Katherine Despot-Belmonte, Nature, Gender, and Rights Lead at UNEP-WCMC; Ms. Eva Hershaw, Head of Global Data and Land Monitoring at the International Land Coalition; and Ms. Maria Josee Artist, Programme Coordinator for the Association of Indigenous Village Leaders in Suriname (VIDS.

Panelists emphasized the need for gender-sensitive indicators to evaluate policy success and ensure alignment with the Gender Action Plan (GAP). They also highlighted the importance of robust data systems and inclusive frameworks to address gaps and strengthen accountability.





Session 5: Importance of the Gender Plan of Action (GPA) for women and girls from Indigenous Peoples and local communities.



From left to right: Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim (Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues), Rufina Román (CNMI). Picture credit: UN Women.

This afternoon session featured compelling insights from Ms. Rufina Román, National Commission of Indigenous Women (CNMI), and Ms. Doris Munyingi, GROOTS Kenya, with an introduction by Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The discussion centreed on how the GAP can address the unique challenges faced by Indigenous peoples and local community women in biodiversity conservation.

Panellists emphasized including Indigenous women in decision-making, valuing their knowledge, and creating localized, gender-responsive policies. They highlighted the GPA's role in empowering Indigenous women for conservation and gender equality.





Session 6: Progress, opportunities and challenges implementing GPA Outcome One.



From the left to the right : Ms. Zoila Bustamante Cárdenas (CONAPACH), Scovia Ampumuza Faraja (CBD Women's Caucus, Pamela Tapia (CBD Women's Caucus), Picture credit: UN Women.

This session, focused on Gender Plan of Action (GPA) Outcome 1, featured dynamic contributions from Ms. *Zoila Bustamante Cárdenas*, President of the National Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen of Chile (CONAPACH); Ms. *Kauna Schroder*, ABS Focal Point at the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Namibia; and Ms. *Eliana Rojas Torres*, Project Manager at TINTA: The Invisible Thread.

Panellists stressed equitable access to resources, women's leadership, and capacity-building to overcome barriers and ensure equal opportunities in biodiversity action.





Session 7: Stories from the territories on the GPA Outcome One.

In this session, Ms. Alumita Talei Sekinairai, Coordinator of Itaukei Women, shared powerful stories from the grassroots level, highlighting the vital role women in Indigenous communities play in biodiversity conservation. She discussed the collective efforts of women working in the territories to preserve their environment, while also navigating the challenges of limited access to resources and decision-making spaces.





Pictures credit to : Itaukei Women



To know more about Itaukei Women visit: https://www.facebook.com/iTWC1





Session 8: Progress, opportunities and challenges implementing GPA Outcome Two.



From right to left: Ms. Ana di Pangracio, FARN Argentina; Mr. Venge Nyriongo, UN Women; and Laura Bermudez, Ministry of Environment, Colombia | Picture Credit: UN Women

This session brought together experts to explore how biodiversity policies and planning can equally address the perspectives, interests, needs, and human rights of all people, with a particular focus on women and girls.

Panelists included Ms. Laura Bermudez, Advisor to the Vice-Minister of Environmental Policies at the Ministry of Environment in Colombia; Ms. Ana di Pangracio, Deputy Director at FARN, Argentina; and Mr. Venge Nyriongo, Intergovernmental Specialist at the UN Women Intergovernmental Support Section.

Panelists discussed integrating gender equality into biodiversity policies, emphasizing land rights, decision-making, resource access, and inclusive governance to advance GPA Outcome 2



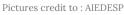


Session 9: Stories from the territories on the GPA Outcome Two.

Ms. *Nelsith Sangama*, a Kichwa indigenous leader from Peru, representing the organisation AIDESEP, shared compelling stories from the territories, emphasizing the critical role of indigenous women in biodiversity conservation.

She highlighted the need for policies that recognize their perspectives, traditional knowledge, and land stewardship practices. Despite challenges, indigenous women are leading conservation efforts,







To know more about AIEDESP visit: https://www.facebook.com/aidesep





Session 10: Closing of the Wor

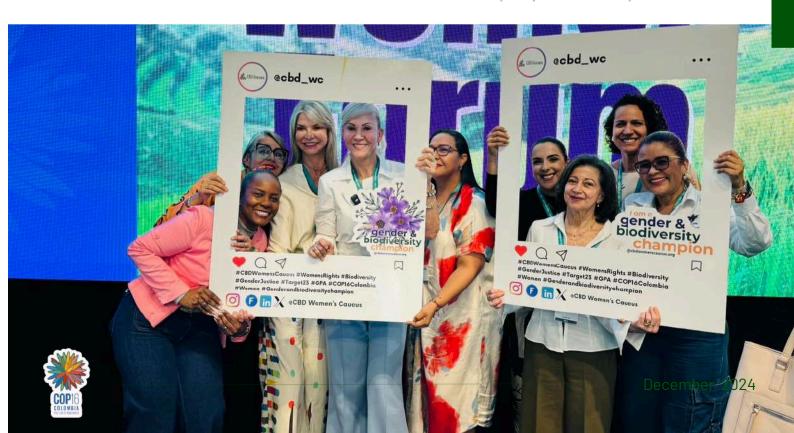
Closing of the Women Forum' Part One

Ms. Dilian Francisca Toro Torres, Governor of Valle del Cauca, closed the first part of the Women Forum with a powerful address, emphasizing the importance of gender equality in biodiversity action.

She highlighted the role of women in driving meaningful change in environmental conservation and underscored the need for continued collaboration to address barriers to women's participation in biodiversity initiatives. Her closing remarks set the stage for further discussions on empowering women and ensuring their contributions are recognized in shaping sustainable environmental policies.

Ms. Dilian Toro emphasized gender equality, women's leadership in conservation, and collaboration to overcome barriers, setting the stage for further discussions on empowering women in biodiversity action.

Ms. Dilian Francisca Toro Torres, Governor of Valle del Cauca, with the Women Forum participants, taking pictures with the Gender & Biodiversity Champion frames. Picture by CBD Women's Caucus.





An artist drawing at the Women Forum. PictureCredit: UN Women

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Session 11: Women's Rights and the Global Biodiversity Framework

This session centered on the critical intersection of women's rights, the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), and the importance of addressing human rights in biodiversity conservation. The discussion emphasized the need to integrate women's rights, particularly those of environmental defenders, into biodiversity policies and frameworks.

Panellists highlighted actionable steps to safeguard the rights of women, especially Indigenous and local community women, and ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making processes related to biodiversity governance.

The session underscored the vital role of gender equality in advancing effective and inclusive biodiversity conservation strategies.

From right to left: Ms. Bibiana Aido Almagro, UN Women Representative in Colombia; Ms. Uslaini, Walhi; Ms. Nury Yagari, Indigenous environmental human rights defender. Picture credit: UN Women.





Session 12: Launch of the Gender and Biodiversity Champions Platform



The second session: Launch of the Gender & Biodiversity Champion Platform. Picture credit: UN Women.

The Launch of the Gender and Biodiversity Champions Platform, an initiative by the CBD Women's Caucus, was a key moment in driving the full implementation of the Gender Plan of Action (GPA) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The platform emphasizes that gender equality, equity, and justice are fundamental for achieving sustainable biodiversity outcomes. The session expressed an urgent call for global commitments to fully implement the GPA and ensure women's contributions are recognized and supported in biodiversity policy and action

High-level speakers included H.E. Meas Chanthyda, Under Secretary of State, Cambodia; Mrs. Bopreang Ken, Director of the Department of Biodiversity, Cambodia; OBE Dr. Gemma Harper, Chief Executive of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, UK and Northern Ireland; Ms. Tamara Ospina Posse, Vice-Minister of Women, Colombia; Dr. Gnido Amandine Assogba Deleke, Directorate of the Fauna, Biodiversity and Nature Conservation, Benin; Ms. Paulina Stowhas, Ministry of Environment, Chile; Ms. Nanthaya Nittaphonh, Senior Official, Environmental Policy Division, Lao PDR; Ms. Hindou Ibrahim, Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; Ms. Catarina Carvalho, Intergovernmental Division of UN Women; Ms. Katrin Münch, Project Manager for GIZ's Capacity Development Initiative ABS; Ms. Jimena Puyana, Environment Programme Officer, UNDP; and Dr. Adriana Moreira, Global Environment Facility (GEF). Moderated by Ms. Amelia Arreguín, Coordinator of the CBD Women's Caucus.



















Pictures by CBD Women's Caucus.

Be a Gender & Biodiversity Champion!

The Gender & Biodiversity Champions are agents of change committed to implement the Gender Plan of Action (GPA) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

It brings together leaders from various sectors: national and local governments, intergovernmental agencies, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, civil society, funders, private sector, academia & more!



+ info: https://cbdwomenscaucus.org/gender-and-biodiversity-champions/









Session 13: Progress, opportunities and challenges implementing GPA Outcome Three.

The session on GAP Outcome 3: Enabling conditions are created to ensure gender-responsive implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework featured insightful contributions from Ms. *Cristiane Juliao Pankararu*, of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities, Mr. *Juan Casado Asensio*, Policy Analyst at the OECD, and Ms. *Tiffany Straza*, Consultant to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

The discussion focused on identifying the key challenges and opportunities to ensure equal opportunities for women and girls in biodiversity action as outlined in Outcome 3 of the Gender Action Plan (GPA). The panellists discussed enabling gender-responsive Global Biodiversity Framework by empowering women, fostering gender-equal policies, and ensuring inclusive decision-making.

From the left to the right: Ursula Fernanda Tovilla Sánchez; Ms. Cristiane Juliao Pankararu (Global Alliance of Territorial Communities); Ms. Tiffany Straza (Consultant to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme); Mr. Juan Casado Asensio (Policy Analyst, Development Cooperation Directorate, OECD). Picture by CBD Women's Caucus.





Session 14: Stories from the territories on the GPA Outcome Three.

Ms. Nancy Marangu from Kenya, Director of the Chemichemi Foundation from Kenya, shared powerful stories from the grassroots, focusing on how biodiversity policies at the local level impact women and girls. She highlighted the role of local women in biodiversity conservation and their crucial contributions to community resilience and sustainable practices.

The session emphasized the importance of ensuring that biodiversity policies are inclusive and reflect the diverse perspectives, needs, and rights of women and girls, particularly in rural and Indigenous communities. Ms. Marangu's stories underscored the urgent need for gender-responsive policies to support these women as key players in biodiversity and climate action.



Pictures credit to : Chemichemi Foundation



To know more about Chemichemi Foundation visit: https://www.facebook.com/ChemichemiF





Session 15: COP16 Women Forum closing and next steps towards COP17

The session on **COP16 Women's Forum Recap and Commitments Towards COP17** featured Ms. *Tamara Ospina*, Vice-Minister of Women of Colombia, Mr. *Olivier Rukundo*, Leader of the People and Biodiversity Unit at the CBD Secretariat, and Ms. *Cicilia Githaiga*, Board member of the CBD Women's Caucus. The session reflected on the achievements of the Women's Forum, which catalysed actionable commitments, strengthened collaboration, and enhanced advocacy for gender equality in biodiversity governance.

Panellists highlighted the importance of ensuring that women and girls remain central to the global biodiversity agenda. They emphasised the role the Women Forum have played key step between COP15 when the Gender Plan of Action was adopted and towards COP17 when it has to undergo a mid-term review. These sessions served the CBD community to pay closer attention to the Gender Plan of Action, ensuring more inclusive and equitable implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Participant during the Women Forum . Picture credit: UN Biodiversity.

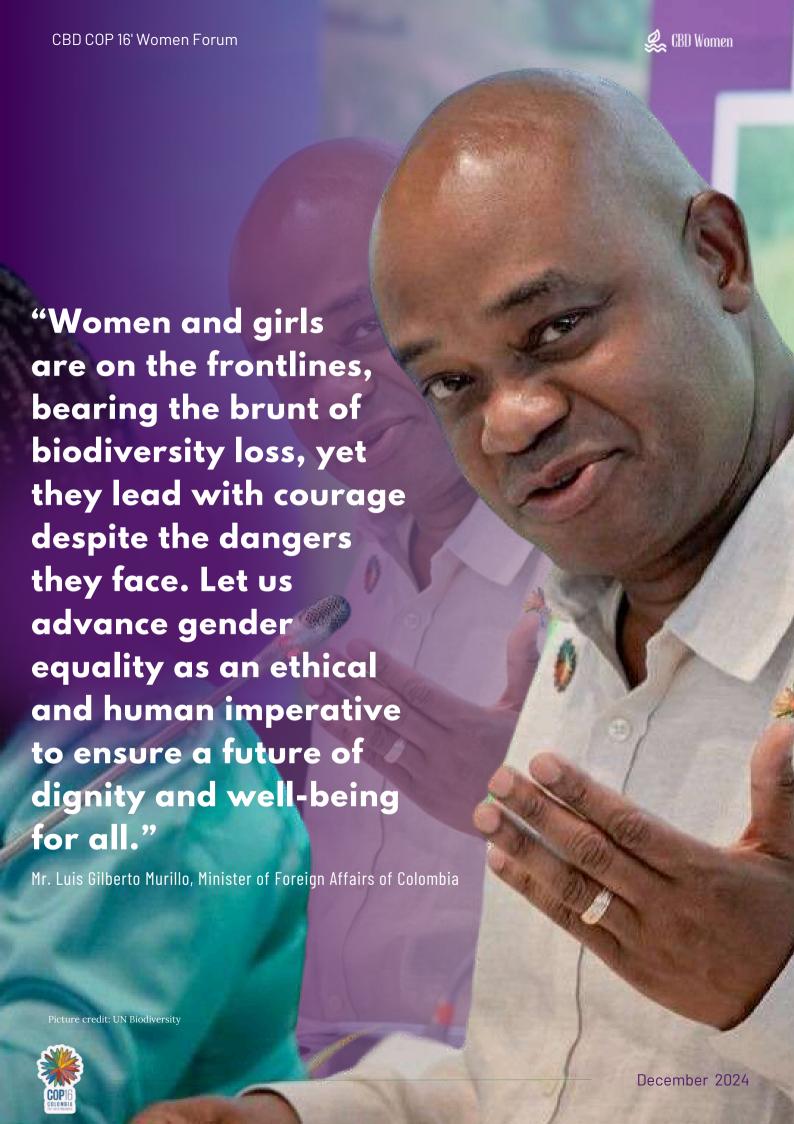
December 2024



Sara Sofía Díaz (Defensora de la Biodiversidad y de la Vida)Picture credit: UN Women

Quotes TO REMEMBER & FOLLOW UP













"We cannot act without resources stop offering crumbs. Put your hands in your pockets and invest where your promises are. Women deserve more than words; we need action and funding to transform commitments into reality. Nothing without us!" Ms. Maria Noel Vaeza, UN Women Regional director

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Convenio de Diversidad

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Picture credit: UN Women



December 2024







Conclusions

The CBD COP16 Women Forum highlighted the critical role of women and girls in biodiversity conservation and advocated for integrating gender equality into global environmental policies. Through discussions on the Gender Action Plan (GPA), stakeholders emphasized removing systemic barriers, amplifying women's leadership, and valuing traditional knowledge. The Forum showcased the transformative potential of inclusive strategies for sustainable biodiversity outcomes.

To advance these goals, the Forum called for sustained funding, strengthened collaborations, and capacity-building initiatives to empower women in environmental stewardship. Its outcomes reaffirm the urgency of embedding gender perspectives in biodiversity frameworks, ensuring equitable and effective action for global environmental resilience and justice.

Acknowledgement

The CBD Women's Caucus extends heartfelt gratitude to the CBD Secretariat and the Colombian Government for their unwavering commitment to this cause.

Our deep appreciation goes to FARN, WWF, WEDO, Avaaz and UN Women Colombia for their generous support in making this event a reality.

With the dedication and collective efforts of our partners, we continue to make significant strides toward fostering an inclusive, gender-responsive approach to biodiversity conservation and achieving gender justice through the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.



For more info visit https://cbdwomenscaucus.org

