



# මාධ්‍ය නිවේදනය ஊடக வெளியீடு PRESS RELEASE



Tel : 011 2 386572 Fax : 011 2 333717  
ජනාධිපති මාධ්‍ය අංශය, ජනාධිපති කාර්යාලය, කොළඹ 01  
ஐனாதிபதி ஊடகப் பிரிவு, ஐனாதிபதி அலுவலகம், கொழும்பு 01  
President's Media Division, President's Office, Colombo 01

## **We are committed to protect and sustainably manage natural resources – President tells UN Biodiversity Summit**

The Government of Sri Lanka is committed to protect and sustainably manage natural resources, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said addressing the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity today (30).

"Sri Lanka is home to two UNESCO Natural Heritage Sites: the Central Highlands, and the Sinharaja Rain Forest Reserve. We are also proud of our six sites recognized under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Sri Lanka firmly stands committed to protect and sustainably manage these natural assets that contribute to our unique and rich biodiversity" President Rajapaksa told the virtual gathering held under the theme of *Urgent action on biodiversity for sustainable development*.

The Summit will highlight the crisis facing humanity from the degradation of biodiversity and the urgent need to accelerate action on biodiversity for sustainable development. It will provide an opportunity for Heads of State and Government and other leaders to raise ambition for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2021.

Emphasizing that the concept of biodiversity must be at the very core of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, President Rajapaksa pointed out that despite the rapid decline seen in biodiversity globally, over the recent decades, Sri Lanka is deeply committed to uphold the overarching spirit of the Convention on Biodiversity.

"There is a critical need for a transformational change in the relationship between nature and people and contemporary global environmental governance," he remarked.

The ancient governance of Sri Lanka was built on the concept that the ruler is never the owner of the land; he is merely its caretaker on behalf of his countrymen and all living beings. This is the very principle that my Government has adopted in our development agenda said the President while stressing as mere trustees of this planet and its resources we must resolve to protect what is in our trust and pass it to future generations as best as we could.

### **Full text of the speech:**

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Ayubowan !

I am deeply honoured to represent the people of Sri Lanka at this High-Level Summit on Biodiversity.

The concept of biodiversity must be at the very core of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Despite the rapid decline seen in biodiversity globally, over the recent decades, Sri Lanka is deeply committed to uphold the overarching spirit of the Convention on Biodiversity.

There is a critical need for a transformational change in the relationship between nature and people and contemporary global environmental governance.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

As a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, Sri Lanka endorsed the Commonwealth Blue Charter in 2018 and as such we will champion the Commonwealth Blue Charter Action Group on Mangrove Ecosystems and Livelihoods.

Further, the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management was adopted last year. We as world leaders, must better manage nitrogen, ensuring the sustenance of humankind.

Sri Lanka is home to two UNESCO Natural Heritage Sites: the Central Highlands, and the Sinharaja Rain Forest Reserve. We are also proud of our six sites recognized under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Sri Lanka firmly stands committed to protect and sustainably manage these natural assets that contribute to our unique and rich biodiversity.

We have been mindful of conserving ecosystems to the highest extent possible, even during the redesigning of cities and urban areas. The wetland parks that we have created in cities, especially in and around our Capital Sri Jayawardhanapura Kotte, are home to an array of plant and animal species, offering a 'mini-rainforest experience' within crowded cities.

The ancient governance of Sri Lanka was built on the concept that the ruler is never the owner of the land; he is merely its caretaker on behalf of his countrymen and all living beings. This is the very principle that my Government has adopted in our development agenda.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

As mere trustees of this planet and its resources we must resolve to protect what is in our trust and pass it to future generations as best as we could.

Thank you.

President's Media Division

30.09.2020