

Welcoming remarks by Minister HUANG Runqiu
at the CBD COP15 side event
Recognizing and Managing the Value of Nature's Contribution to People through
Food Systems Transformation
14 December 2022, Montreal, Canada

Honorable Minister van der Wal, Ms. Schomaker, Ms. Robinson:

Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, friends:

Good afternoon!

It is a pleasure to participate in the side event on “Recognizing and managing the value of nature’s contribution to people through food systems transformation”. First, on behalf of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all colleagues participating in this side event.

Biodiversity is the basis for human survival and development and is the bloodline and foundation of the Earth's living community. Promoting the mainstreaming of the value of nature is imperative to reverse the situation of global biodiversity under threat. The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has played an important role in promoting the recognition and assessment of biodiversity values by all parties and their integration into decision-making.

As one of the most biodiversity-rich countries in the world and one of the first to join the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), China insists on taking Xi Jinping’s vision of ecological civilization as its guide to deeply practice the concept of “Lucid Water and Lush Mountains are Invaluable Assets” (i.e., Green is Gold), actively implements the TEEB approach, and devotes itself to strengthening the transformation of the value of ecosystem services and promoting the global biodiversity conservation process.

First, continuously promoting the mainstreaming of the TEEB. In 2014, the “China Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service Valuation Initiative”, or the China TEEB Initiative, was launched. In 2021, the “*Opinions on Establishing a Sound Mechanism for Realizing the Value of Ecological Products*” was issued, which provides general guidance at the national level for the valuation and transformation of ecosystem services.

Second, widely carrying out local practices. A total of 187 “Green is Gold” practice innovation bases have been established across the country, forming several typical ecological product value realization cases. TEEB demonstrations have been carried out in Pu'er City, Yunnan Province, Taishun County, Zhejiang Province, and Chengdu City, Sichuan Province. The concept that natural ecosystems and their ecosystem services have value is gaining popularity.

Third, strengthening force through international collaboration. We have implemented international cooperation projects such as the China-EU Biodiversity Project and organized seminars and workshops on TEEB with the EU and Germany, promoting the synchronization of China's biodiversity valuation methodologies with international ones.

Colleagues!

With the world's population reaching 8 billion today, integrated promotion of biodiversity conservation and safeguarding the global population's needs is an important issue facing the international community. Last month, the *G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration* called for accelerated transformation towards sustainable and resilient agriculture and food systems and supply chains. We are pleased to see that the TEEB for Agriculture and Food hosted by UNEP has further enriched and developed the TEEB initiative and successfully expanded its application to the agriculture sector, which is a positive step towards building a biodiversity-friendly agriculture and food system. It also fits well with China's philosophy of harmony between humans and nature. Currently, under the organization and coordination of the UNEP International Ecosystem Management Partnership (UNEP-IEMP), the TEEBAgriFood's application is being carried out in Tengchong, Yunnan Province, China, which is a concrete practice to implement the Bali Leaders' Declaration and a positive exploration of the transformation of global agri-food systems.

In the past, TEEB has played a leading role in "waking up" people to the value of ecosystems and biodiversity. Nowadays, the concept of "Green is Glod" has become a universal consciousness, and it is worthwhile to explore how to leverage the important role of the TEEB further. In this regard, I have two expectations.

On the one hand, I look forward to further enriching the application scenarios. In China, the understanding and application of the TEEB approach by some local governments are still confined to the calculation of big numbers of ecological values on the books. We look forward to more guidance and suggestions from UNEP on applying the TEEB method in specific areas and scenarios to make socio-economic activities more friendly to biodiversity. I believe that the TEEBAgriFood Program will play an important role in this regard.

On the other hand, I look forward to a bridging role. We will continue to use the TEEB as an important platform for cooperation among governments, international organizations, and scientific institutions, and contribute new wisdom, explore new paths and provide new solutions for building a mutually beneficial and win-win global biodiversity governance system.

Colleagues!

In the face of global challenges such as biodiversity loss, countries are a community with shared destiny that stands together. China is willing to join hands with all parties to actively apply the TEEB approach and carry out TEEB national actions, and to work together to reverse the global trend of biodiversity loss and build a community of life on earth and a beautiful home where people and nature live in harmony!

Finally, I wish this conference a great success! Thank you all!