

**Statement by
David Cooper
Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
World Food Day
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“Water is life, water is food.”**

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Food and water are basic needs, fundamental human rights. Still, close to 12 per cent of the global population was severely food insecure in 2020, representing 928 million people. In addition to that, 2.4 billion people live in water-stressed countries. There is a connection.

Water covers approximately 71% of the Earth's surface, but only 2.5% of that water is suitable for drinking, agriculture, and industrial uses. Food production and supply are sensitive systems and the food system's global footprint is continuously expanding. In fact, agriculture accounts for 72% of global freshwater withdrawals.

If we continue business as usual, we will stretch this vital resource to a point of no return.

The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is key to ecosystem functioning that sustains both food production and the water cycle. Forests and wetlands, among other ecosystems, are vital to regulate the quality and availability of fresh water. Without action, the ongoing loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems will disrupt the water cycle, jeopardizing sustainable development.

The [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), adopted by the global community in December 2022, has the mission to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity and put nature on a path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people and the planet. It includes action-oriented targets to protect the species and ecosystems that sustain the water cycle, tackle pollution and invasive species and promote sustainable production and consumption, notably in food systems.

Now, we must urgently move the Framework from agreement to action. Countries are developing their own national targets that align with those of the Framework and are integrating them into national biodiversity strategies and action plans. It is critical that they also be linked with national strategies for food security and water security.

It will take a whole-of-society approach; we all have a role to play. So this World Food Day, I encourage each of us to [take action](#) and start building a sustainable future with both water and food security.