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Closing statement

on behalf of the CBD Alliance

We warmly welcome the decision to realise the promise of Cali to operationalise the SB8J. The rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are central to the protection of biodiversity.

At the same time, the Global Review shows that the implementation of the GBF is dangerously off track. The lack of implementation on Target 22, particularly on environmental defenders, is further putting communities, territories and ecosystems at risk.

Importantly, the review has failed to address the underlying structural drivers of biodiversity loss, the elephants in the room.

The international economic and financial system compels countries in the Global South to prioritise financial stability and debt servicing at the expense of sustainable development, resulting in increased extractivism.

Public and private capital flows into destructive extractivism remain unregulated. Corporate legal regimes allow investors and companies to sue governments for billions. simply for strengthening biodiversity regulation.

Marketisation of biodiversity through offsets, credits and other mechanisms turn living territories into tradeable assets, and create permissions to destroy. Biodiversity cannot be offset, and communities' rights cannot be traded away.

These structural drivers rest on systems of exploitation and injustice. Their roots are also colonial. Developed countries bear historical and continuing responsibility for global ecological breakdown and must pay the ecological debt owed to developing countries and their peoples. The multilateral mechanism must not become another route for extracting, digitising and commercialising genetic resources from the Global South without accountability, prior informed consent or fair and equitable benefit-sharing. Provider countries, Indigenous Peoples and local communities must have a real voice in decisions on how DSI is generated, accessed, governed and used.

Finally, climate change is accelerating biodiversity loss, through worsening fires, droughts and floods. Yet climate action itself can cause harm when it is carbon-centric, ignores biodiversity and overrides human rights. This COP could have adopted effective safeguards to ensure that mitigation action protects nature and respects human rights; unfortunately this has been postponed.

COP17 will be judged by whether it begins to confront the systems driving extinction, and whether it delivers justice to those who protect biodiversity, while bearing the greatest costs of its destruction. We call on you to close the justice gap.

The biodiversity crisis is an inequality, impunity and power crisis. Justice, equity, rights and accountability are not optional additions to implementation. They are its very foundation.