Joint statement on behalf of Regions4 and High Ambition Coalition Subnational Government Task Force members attending Biodiversity COP17

Nearly 200 countries just convened in Yerevan, Armenia for the Seventeenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP17). COP17 was intended to provide the first global assessment of progress toward the targets in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which was heralded after its adoption in 2022 as a "Paris Agreement for Nature."

The United Nations' recent report on collective progress toward implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, *State of Biodiversity Action*, indicates that the world is not on track to meet the Framework's ambitious targets. However, despite this clear and urgent call to action, COP17 highlighted the need for accelerated implementation and stronger cooperation across all levels of government.

The strong subnational government presence at COP17 demonstrates the important contributions that local and subnational governments – states, provinces, and cities – can make alongside national governments. All around the world, subnational governments are accelerating implementation on the ground: providing durable protection to our lands and waters, bringing back healthy ecosystems, and partnering with indigenous peoples and local communities to ensure that conservation provides meaningful benefits to people. Our leadership must be matched by formal recognition of subnational governments as essential partners in the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework.

Additionally, as international cooperation is increasingly threatened around the world, we are building strong partnerships at the subnational level to advance our work. Many of us are members of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, a global network of governments working to conserve 30% of the planet's lands and waters by 2030; the Coalition's Subnational Government Task Force provides a critical platform to elevate subnational leadership, share practical lessons, and strengthen collaboration across borders. We believe that by bringing together implementers from across the globe, we can learn from each other, identify common challenges, and replicate approaches that are working.

We therefore call on Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to strengthen multilevel governance for biodiversity, establishing improved mechanisms for dialogue and coordination with subnational governments and ensuring that our contributions are recognized in national implementation and reporting processes. We also call for adequate

and accessible financial and technical support to enable subnational governments to scale up effective action, particularly where responsibilities for implementation are not matched by sufficient resources.

Finally, we know that nature and climate are inextricably linked. In our jurisdictions, we are working to break down silos and build synergies between actions to protect and restore nature and combat climate change. This includes doubling down on nature-based solutions that provide multiple benefits, managing protected areas to maximize climate resilience for local communities, monitoring our ecosystems to ensure they can adapt to a changing climate, and working to harmonize our clean energy and nature conservation goals.

The Convention on Biological Diversity continues to be essential to achieve the Global Biodiversity Framework targets in these last remaining years before 2030. However, as governments on the front lines of climate change and biodiversity loss, we are not waiting for permission to take bold action for nature. Now that COP17 has concluded and the world prepares for the upcoming climate COP next month, we reaffirm our commitment to protecting and restoring ecosystems, building partnerships across the globe to share knowledge and accelerate progress, synergizing our biodiversity and climate goals, and ultimately ensuring that our nature and our people can thrive together for generations to come.

Issued with the support of High Ambition Coalition Subnational Government Task Force members and partners:

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