

A respite for the planet?



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By María Josefina Arce

The agreement to protect biodiversity of the recently concluded UN Summit in Montreal, Canada, should mark a change in man's relationship with the planet, in view of the threat looming over plants, animals and ecosystems in general.

According to specialists, a million species are in danger of extinction, a third of the earth is seriously degraded and fertile soils are disappearing, while pollution and climate change are accelerating the devastation of the oceans.

Latin America tops the list of regions with the greatest loss of mammals, birds, reptiles and fish. The rate of decline of these species is 94%.

The Living Planet 2022 report of the World Wildlife Fund, an independent organization, emphasizes that the world is facing a double human-induced emergency, the climate crisis and the loss of biodiversity,

which endangers the well-being of humanity.

UN Secretary General António Guterres made this statement at the opening of the Summit, which lasted two weeks, denouncing that humanity has become a weapon of mass extinction, due, he said, to its bottomless appetite for unbridled and unequal economic growth.

The negotiations to reach the agreement, which has as a key point the commitment to protect 30% of land and water, considered important for biodiversity, until 2030, were difficult. Currently, only 17% of land and 10% of marine areas are protected.

As always, one of the most contentious aspects of the debates was the financing to help conserve the planet. Finally, it was established to provide at least 20 billion dollars in annual international aid for biodiversity to poor countries by 2025 and at least 30 billion by the year 2030.

A relevant aspect is that the safeguarding of native peoples, guardians of 80% of the earth's biodiversity, a demand widely demanded by representatives of these ethnic groups, is mentioned.

It cannot be ignored that indigenous communities have a respectful relationship with nature in which conservation is essential. In addition, they have valuable knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation and which is relevant to avoid natural disasters.

The agreement, very well received, has been described as a first step to reestablish our relationship with nature. However, as specialists have pointed out, its success will depend on its rapid and consistent implementation, as it lacks a binding mechanism for governments to adopt more ambitious measures if the objectives are not achieved.

It is now in everyone's hands to reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030 and to ensure that nature thrives once again for the good of humanity.

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