

Colombia's environment chief demands money for conservation as UN Biodiversity Conference opens

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Bogota, October 23 (RHC)-- The United Nations Biodiversity Conference, known as COP16, has opened in Cali, Colombia, as Indigenous and environmentalist activists demand world leaders enact bolder actions to protect an estimated 1 million plant and animal species threatened by extinction — most of them due to human activity.

The conference is taking place as experts warn humanity is “on the precipice” due to worsening biodiversity loss and the catastrophic impacts of the climate crisis.

Colombia’s environment minister, Susana Muhamad, told reporters: “This should be an international priority. Resources for war, trillions of dollars, are immediately handed out. In one week, billions of dollars were given for military weapons and bombs. But we take years to obtain fair financing at the scale we need it when we talk about the most important issue: to defend life. This is what creates inclusive safety for everyone and provides a chance of survival for younger generations.”

Among the demands are the implementation of a \$20 billion fund for global biodiversity protection that was approved in 2022, which wealthier nations have failed to contribute to as promised, as well as financial support for Indigenous communities that are on the frontlines of biodiversity protection.

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