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Havana, 30 October (RHC) United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres attended the opening of the United Nations Conference on Biodiversity (COP16) in the Colombian city of Cali on Tuesday, calling for a greater commitment to the protection of nature through the mobilization of resources.

Biodiversity is humanity's ally. We must move from plundering it to preserving it," Guterres urged.

He said that "we cannot afford to leave Cali without commitments to use the substance of the biodiversity framework and without commitments to mobilize other sources of private and public finance to develop the framework to its full potential".

In the same vein, he called on the private sector to get involved in caring for nature, "they cannot treat it as an infinite and free resource, they must stand up and contribute".

He affirmed that 'making peace with nature is the defining challenge of the 21st century, and this is the spirit of today's declaration of the Global Coalition for Peace with Nature'.

A call to action to strengthen national and international efforts towards a balanced and harmonious relationship with nature - protecting nature and conserving, restoring, using and sustainably sharing our

global biodiversity," Guterres stressed.

For her part, Colombia's Environment Minister Susana Muhammad said: "Today we reaffirm that biodiversity is not just an issue for environmentalists, but a global political priority that must be at the center of public policy.

She reported that at the start of the high-level segment of COP16 in the Blue Zone, six heads of state, five foreign ministers, 114 ministers, 33 deputy ministers and 25 other representatives also arrived in Cali, with a total of 150 countries and 81 international organizations taking part. (Source: TeleSur)

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