

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY!*

**United Nations Biodiversity Summit 2020**

**30 September 2020**

**General Assembly Hall**

**Pre-Recodred Statement by**

**H.E. Mr. János Áder President of Hungary**

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all know that biological diversity is declining on the planet at a pace, which is without precedent since the 5th wave of mass extinction 65 million years ago.

We all know that sustainable development doesn’t exist without biological diversity and natural services.

We all know that human welfare and the status of nature’s health are closely related.

We all know what is at stake is not only preserving our natural environment but also the future of the human species.

We all known this and have known this for a long time.

Political decisions have been made on several occasions in the past to stop further degradation.

Yet, the situation today is even more tragic than ever.

Many see saving emblematic plants and species as a means to stopping the decline of biological diversity.

This is what the media conveys to us.

We know the alarming stories of the white rhino, the snow leopard, the giant turtles, or orangutans.

These are stories that are graphic and arouse our emotions.

But, what is the life of an insect worth?

For example, the life of a pollinator bee, which during its entire lifespan gathers only a single coffee spoonful of honey?

Perhaps the gloomy prediction of Einstein – that if bees become extinct, humanity will follow them 4 years later – is an exaggeration.

It is sure that if the clearly evident extinction of pollinator insects continues, then we will have to say goodbye to half of all the foodstuff we consume today, while at the same time, we will have to feed an extra two billion people during the next 30 years.

But what is the life of the so-called mycorrhiza worth, a fungus growing on plant roots in the soil?

We know even less about this than about bees, despite the fact that these fungi can be considered to be the internet of soil.

Without them, the nutrition, absorption capacity of plants declines, and soil quality decreases.

And we are witnessing the silent extinction of root fungi in the soil in most regions of the world.

And there are many other examples.

We should finally acknowledge that we do not have the right to destroy sensitively balanced natural systems, which have developed over several millions of years.

We have no right to destroy the life chances of our children and grandchildren.

It is our moral imperative to change.

Many have been warning for a long time about the decline of biological diversity.

We do not have time to lose until the biodiversity conference in May 2021.

I offer the motto of Ernest Hemingway for the work that awaits us in the coming months:

*„No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend’s or of thine own were: any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.”*