



**Remarks
by**

**H.E. Mr. Michel Tommo Monthe
Vice-President**

on behalf of

**H.E. Mr. John W. Ashe
President of the 68th Session of the United Nations
General Assembly**

**Fourth Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly
on Harmony with Nature
Closing Session**

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Excellencies,
Assistant Secretary General,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we come to the end of this interactive dialogue on harmony with nature, I am pleased to deliver a statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

At the outset, allow me to express my appreciation to the Permanent Missions of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Ecuador for their efforts to put this important issue on the agenda of the General Assembly. I would also like to thank our moderator and panellists for their informative and enlightening presentations.

Today, many of you voiced concerns about the consequences of increasing environmental degradation and expressed a sense of urgency to take decisive action. The discussions brought forth many interesting experiences and ideas suggesting how we can work towards restoring a harmonious relation between Earth and its inhabitants. Our dialogue will certainly be an important contribution to our ongoing work to balance the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, particularly in the context of the elaboration of the post-2015 agenda.

In the coming weeks, a summary of these discussions will be distributed; however on behalf of the PGA, I would like to share a few highlights from this morning's debate.

We heard about Earth system governance as a way to forward sustainable development in harmony with nature. It implies going beyond environmental legislation to a holistic policy making approach involving all populations including indigenous peoples, women, youth and people with disabilities.

We also heard that philosophy, arts and religion can contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between humans and nature, supporting the work of scientists and informing political and social decision making.

The benefits of organic farming were highlighted. Emulating the natural rhythms of Mother Earth through crop rotation and a seamless integration of livestock and crop production, organic agriculture focuses on long term benefits. Organic farming seeks to preserve the quality of soils and to produce nutritious and healthy food. Yet, we also heard concerns over many political, legal and economic challenges.

The importance of collective action as well as political will was also underscored. We need to change both our behaviour and our way of thinking if we are to build equitable, fair and sustainable societies respectful of the environment.

Excellencies,

These discussions remind us that there is abundant evidence that our world is currently running an unsustainable course. As we consume the natural resources of our planet at such rapid rate, we not only compromise the health of our environment, we also jeopardize our very own wellbeing as well as the future of our children. The elaboration post-2015 framework is a once in a generation opportunity to turn the tide. We must seize the momentum and define a new paradigm that integrates in a balanced manner the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. I hope that today's dialogue will inspire all of us in our efforts to craft an ambitious post-2015 agenda that will ensure a better future for mankind and our Mother Earth.

Thank you.
