On the occasion of the first United Nations Summit on Biodiversity, organized virtually in New York on 30th September 2020, by the President of the UN General Assembly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Expatriates, M. Nasser Bourita, in a speech communicated at the Summit, pleaded for urgent global action to face the worrying deterioration of biodiversity that threatens ecosystems across the planet.

“While biodiversity is part of our multilateral agenda, it is high time that this issue found its equivalent in the context of concerted collective action, solidarity cooperation and a sustainable human way of life that could stop the current bleeding. Our survival and that of future generations are at stake”, underlined the Minister in this speech.

The current context marked by Covid-19 has reminded us to what extent human health and nature are intrinsically linked, noted Mr. Bourita in his speech sent to the Summit Secretariat. “The protection of ecosystems through the preservation of biodiversity constitutes, in fact, a means of prevention and the fight against the pandemic”, he said.

“While global attention is currently focused on the consequences of the health crisis, biodiversity must not lose its primordial importance. The protection of ecosystems is not only a necessity, it is an emergency”, insisted Mr. Bourita, stressing that the data on the degradation of biodiversity in the world are“ dizzying ”, and should“ not only challenge our conscience, they must call to action ”. He also observed that Morocco, under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, has adopted a pioneering national policy on biodiversity, specifying that it is within this framework that the Strategy and the National Action Plan for Biological Diversity, as well as the National Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

More recently, His Majesty the King launched, in February 2020, two new strategies called “Green Generation 2020-2030” and “Forests of Morocco”, aiming, among other things, to consolidate achievements and involve all stakeholders and actors in the preservation of biodiversity, recalled the Minister, adding that in the same perspective, a flagship project of planting 10,000 ha of Argan tree, over a period of 6 years has started, with a total budget of 49.2 million dollars, co-financed by the Kingdom of Morocco and the Green Climate Fund.

Morocco has also committed to present to the United Nations General Assembly a draft resolution to proclaim an international day of the Argan tree, an endemic

plant, symbol of its ancestral biodiversity, he added, recalled, noting that the Kingdom has introduced among its priorities, the establishment of good governance, the promotion of partnerships, the development of an intelligent mapping of biodiversity, as well as a control and prevention system.

Aware that biodiversity is an indivisible universal heritage, Morocco has joined with other African countries in placing its preservation at the heart of the operationalization of the three Climate Commissions, resulting from the African Summit of Action in favor of a co- continental emergence, held at the initiative of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, in November 2016, on the sidelines of the COP22, in Marrakech, underlined Mr. Bourita.

And to regret that the African continent, whose ecosystems are of global importance, does not receive all of the dividends arising from its natural capital, explaining that Africa’s biodiversity is experiencing an alarming decline. Overexploitation and degradation will lead to the loss of 50% of bird and mammal species, and 20 to 30% of the productivity of its lakes by the end of the century.

According to the UN, the main stake of this first Biodiversity Summit held in New York is to create a “political dynamic” leading to the establishment of an ambitious framework for biodiversity for the post-2020 period and which can be adopted at the next United Nations conference on biodiversity (COP15) to be held in May next year, in Kunming, China.

A commitment from world leaders for nature, aiming to implement decisive measures to preserve human health and planetary biodiversity by 2030, was endorsed this week by more than 70 countries, including Morocco, at the eve of the Biodiversity Summit.