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Steffi Lemke, Germany's Minister of the Environment.

FOTO: Klaus Mellenthin

The official spoke to EL TIEMPO about her participation in the environmental summit in Cali. She stressed the importance of protecting the Amazon and implementing the Montreal agreements.

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The German Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, **Steffi Lemke**, spoke to EL TIEMPO about her participation in COP16.

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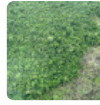
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(Lea esta historia en español, aquí)

At COP16, Colombia will promote greater synergy between the COP on Climate Change and the COP on Biodiversity, how do you see this proposal?

Germany and Colombia agree that the extinction of species and the climate crisis can only be solved together. Intact ecosystems are natural protectors of the climate and also help us adapt to climate change: for example, green spaces in cities not only provide cooling but also protect against flooding. We need to link the two. For example, when it comes to harnessing and promoting the potential of nature-based solutions for climate protection. At the last climate conference, it was decided to strengthen synergies between the Paris Agreement and the global biodiversity framework. National climate and biodiversity strategies need to be better articulated and implemented. Together with Colombia, we strongly support this goal.

What discussions on biodiversity will Germany support or push for at COP16?

The entire international community must now demonstrate that it is taking the Montreal Agreements seriously and implementing them successfully. To do this, we need an effective verification mechanism to make conservation success more measurable. Financing targets should also be met as comprehensively as possible. For me personally, it is particularly important to strengthen the role of indigenous peoples, as they play an extremely important role in the global protection of biodiversity. The protection of nature can only be achieved together with people, never above them. And to emphasize this once again, for us the articulation of biodiversity protection with climate protection is a central issue.

In June 2023, Germany and Colombia signed the "Partnership for Climate and Just Energy Transition". How is this agreement progressing?

We have already set up a joint working group on environmental protection and biodiversity, which has already produced results, for example in strengthening cooperation on projects. So I am very optimistic that after **COP16** we will be able to continue this work with great commitment from both sides.

Biodiversity conservation, and the protection of the Amazon in particular, is a key issue for Germany and Europe in general. Why are you so concerned about the conservation of these forests?

Tropical forests are the green lungs of the planet. They are essential to the global water cycle, providing clean water, clean air, fertile soils, raw materials, medicines, natural climate protection, and drought and flood control. At the same time, they support the livelihoods of millions of people, including many indigenous peoples and local communities. We are all connected to and part of this complex system.

A few weeks ago, you met with Minister Muhamad and discussed, among other things, the proposal to create a Global Coalition for Peace with Nature. Will Germany support the creation of such a coalition?

I very much welcome Colombia's initiative; the declaration of the 'Global Coalition for Peace with Nature: A Call for Life' is an important contribution to further national and international efforts to protect nature and to solve the climate and biodiversity crisis together. Reconciliation between people and nature is an important key to this: people need a healthy nature. Only if we protect it can it protect us by providing us with food and clean air. Together with the European Union and its member countries, we are working on an ambitious text.



Steffi Lemke, Germany's Minister of the Environment.

FOTO: Klaus Mellenthin

In the specific case of Colombia, how is Germany working with our country on the environment and climate agenda?

On the one hand, we work with our Colombian partners on projects funded by the International Climate Initiative. This contributes to Colombia's climate and biodiversity goals, such as decarbonization, forest conservation through alternative livelihoods, and coastal and marine protection. Together, we will soon select two ambitious projects related to a just energy transition and landscape restoration in the Colombian mountain range. Together with the Colombian government, we also chair the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, which aims to promote measures for a future in harmony with nature.

Germany recently spoke of "intensifying environmental and climate cooperation" after signing a memorandum of understanding with China. How will this cooperation be intensified globally?

Germany and China have been cooperating closely on environmental protection and nature conservation for many years. In this context, the implementation of the Montreal Convention on Biological Diversity is also an important issue - this is how we contribute to global environmental protection.

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Editor's note: This text is an artificially intelligent English translation of the original Spanish version, which can be found [here](#). Any comment, please write to berdav@eltiempo.com

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