



Uruwalige Wanniyalaththo
Universal Statement

The Message of Vishwakeerthi Vanaspathi Uruvarige Vanniyala Aththo, Indigenous Chief of Sri Lanka for the Earth Summit 2025 The Message of Vishwakeerthi Vanaspathi Uruvarige Vanniyala Aththo, Indigenous Chief of Sri Lanka for the Earth Summit 2025.

On this grand day of the 2025 Earth Summit, I am delighted to share a piece of the encyclopedia of nature handed down to us by our Indigenous ancestors. I bring this message to you today, not just as an indigenous leader but as a voice for all the creatures living in this giant universe's forests, rivers, and mountain peaks. Through this special message, I aim to convey the wisdom of my Indigenous ancestors who hold the key to saving Mother Earth upon which we stand.

First, we must understand that we and nature are not two separate entities but one. Like a vine climbing along a tree, we and nature are deeply interconnected. The greenery around us provides the breath that sustains us, our bodies are nourished by the food and water drawn from her bounty, and our wisdom and abilities are shaped by the energies of the Sun. All of you who join the Earth Summit 2025 must recognize the profound truth that we share a deep, unbreakable bond with nature, a relationship attached to blood ties. With this perspective, we see that forests are not merely a collection of trees but the lungs of the Earth. They are vast factories that enrich the soil, produce sustenance for countless living beings, and shelter uncountable visible and invisible creatures, all of whom struggle to survive, just like us.

The plant and animal communities are vital inheritors of the bond I mentioned earlier. Wild animals are not our enemies, they are essential allies in maintaining nature's balance, just as we are. If you pause to reflect, you may find that in many ways, they surpass humans in their role as guardians of the environment. Who is a man without animals? Can the soul of humanity endure if all plants and animals were to vanish?

The most important point of my message is this, in all our efforts to protect the Earth, we must act thoughtfully and with foresight. We must ensure that our actions do not create conflicts with humans or with the Earth's rightful co-heirs. Just as you have the right to live in your home, so too do the elephant, the tiger, the deer, and even the invisible microorganisms have the right to their habitats. Fences and boundaries are not the solution. Instead, we must develop a deeper understanding of their needs and limitations, creating ways to coexist harmoniously while respecting their niche in nature. I believe that if you read this message at least once in your life, every step you take from this moment forward will be shaped by a renewed understanding of nature. There is no need for rulers to govern decisions about nature because all who live on Earth are co-custodians of its wellbeing. Legal regulations alone cannot suffice. What is required is a heartfelt commitment, a recognition that if we do justice to the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the ground we stand upon, everything will fall into balance.

Henceforth, let us set aside our pretensions of being the ultimate mystery of life on Earth. Let us rise as its stewards, embracing our responsibility to pass on to our children and their children, a future where humanity and nature coexist in harmony. Let us proceed with the profound understanding that the Earth is not ours; rather, we are its humble guests.