

Biodiversity's Role in Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality



Biodiversity and nature's contributions to people are essential for a good quality of life and play a critical role in: providing food, clean water, energy, medicines and securing livelihoods; and for regulating climate, air quality, freshwater quantity and quality, and pollination services. Biodiversity is also fundamental to social cohesion, spiritual fulfillment, preservation of cultural heritage, mental and physical well-being, and identity and sense of place.¹

Biodiversity in all its forms and levels (genes, species, and ecosystems) is therefore a strategic asset for sustainable long-term development. However, the benefits resulting from ecosystems and biodiversity can be distributed unevenly.

Biodiversity and Climate Action

The thematic focus of the 2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is 'Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality'. In this context and in view of the six Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under review at the HLPF (including SDG 13 on Climate Action), the fourteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) encouraged Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to:

*"when undertaking the design, implementation and monitoring of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, to conduct such activities, recognizing that the effects of climate change are disproportionate, with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth and elders, appropriately recognizing and supporting the governance, management and conservation of the territories and areas of indigenous peoples and local communities, and, as appropriate, in coordination with the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform."*²

Biodiversity and Decent Work and Economic Growth

In the context of SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, the UN Human Rights Council at its 34th Session, issued a Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Specifically, the report noted that:

*"the loss of biodiversity-dependent ecosystem services is likely to accentuate inequality and marginalization of the most vulnerable sectors of society, by decreasing their access to basic materials for a healthy life and by reducing their freedom of choice and action...Economic development that does not consider effects on these ecosystem services may decrease the quality of life of these vulnerable populations, even if other segments of society benefit (page 9)."*³



Biodiversity and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Given the need for biodiversity and healthy ecosystems to achieve the 2030 Agenda, it is not surprising that fourteen of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals include targets that directly reflect their important role.⁴ For SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth, biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are reflected in Target 8.4 on decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation and Target 8.9 relating to sustainable tourism. An analysis of how biodiversity supports the achievement of all SDGs was published jointly in 2017 by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Development Programme.⁵

1 Source: CBD/COP/14/INF/24 2 November 2018. Key Findings from The Four IPBES Regional Assessments of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

2 CBD/COP/14/L.23, para 3.

3 Source: UN Human Rights Council, 34th Session, Available at: http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/34/49

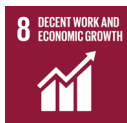
4 Including SDG targets 1.4, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.A, 3.3, 3.9, 4.7, 5.A, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 7.A, 8.4, 8.9, 9.4, 11.4, 11.6, 11.7, 11.A, 11.B, 12.2, 12.4, 12.8, 12.C, 13 (all), 14 (all), 15 (all).

5 Available at: www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-technical-note-en.pdf

The Role of Biodiversity in Supporting the Focal SDGs of the 2019 High-level Political Forum



Raising awareness of the importance of biodiversity for sustainable development through education systems will be a key element to achieving this SDG, and in particular target 4.7 (ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles...). In particular, a significant amount of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities is relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.



Various components of biodiversity directly support major economic activity and jobs in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, pharmaceuticals, pulp and paper, cosmetics, horticulture, construction and biotechnology.

Biodiversity is the basis for sustainable livelihoods that are based on healthy ecosystems. The benefits of biodiversity are especially important to poor and vulnerable groups: the goods and services derived from biodiversity constitute social safety nets and can mean the difference between misery and well-being.



Recognizing rights to sustainable management of natural resources, enhancing values of biodiversity and related knowledge, and building an environment for fair and equitable benefit-sharing has the potential to

improve socioeconomic and political inequality among social groups.



Biodiversity plays a major role in mitigating climate change by contributing to long-term sequestration of carbon in a number of biomes. Biodiversity also underpins ecosystem resilience and thus plays a critical role in climate change adaptation, for instance as part of disaster risk reduction and peace-building strategies.



Conflicts over natural resources, environmental degradation and contamination can be one of the factors leading to social insecurity and violence. Vulnerable people are often disproportionately affected.

Strengthening the rights of communities over natural resources management, combating illegal exploitation and corruption, and ensuring transparent decision-making on social and environmental issues constitute an important process toward building an inclusive and peaceful society based on justice.



The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the process in developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework provide opportunities for strengthening global partnership on science, technology and innovation, dissemination of environmentally sound technologies, and for building national capacity for monitoring the progress of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For more information, see www.cbd.int/sp.

The State of Biodiversity

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) recently published four landmark Regional Assessment Reports.¹ The findings, based on thousands of sources of scientific as well as indigenous and local knowledge, revealed that “biodiversity (genes, species and ecosystems)

continues to be degraded in all parts of the world, with a corresponding loss of nature’s contributions to people, hence undermining people’s quality of life.”

Furthermore, “few of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are likely to be met anywhere in the world. The evidence suggests that some progress towards many of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets is being made in most regions of the

world, but this progress appears often to be at an insufficient rate, and for a number of targets there appears to be either no significant change or worse, there is movement away from the target.”



For more information:

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