

Biodiversity: Supporting the Transformation to Sustainable and Resilient Societies



Convention on Biological Diversity

Biodiversity – the variety of life on Earth, including species and ecosystems – is essential for sustainable development and human well-being. It underpins food, fibre, and water supply, mitigates and provides resilience to climate change, supports human health, and provides jobs in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and many other sectors. Without effective measures to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not be achievable.

Leaving No One Behind

Biodiversity plays an important role in the 2030 Agenda's imperative to 'leave no one behind'. For example, ecosystem services are estimated to make up between 50% and 90% of

the livelihoods of poor rural and forest-dwelling households¹. Additionally, the UN Human Rights Council at its 34th Session noted that the loss of biodiversity-dependent ecosystem services has a disproportionate effect on people who are vulnerable for other reasons, including gender, age, disability, poverty or minority status and 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 action².

Biodiversity for Resilient Societies

Biodiversity supports resilient societies in various ways. Urban and rural ecosystem services provide fresh water, and contribute to climate-change mitigation and adaptation, pollution reduction and resilience to natural disasters.

The State of Biodiversity

Despite such progress and the important linkages between biodiversity and the SDGs, biodiversity continues to be lost at an accelerated rate. A review of progress toward achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the current Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020³ projected that out of 53 target elements, only 5 were on track to be reached by 2020.

The recent regional assessment reports by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) found that biodiversity is in decline in all regions of the world.



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 many sustainable development goals (SDGs) include targets that reflect their important role. Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are thus included not only in SDG 14 on oceans and coasts, and SDG 15 on terrestrial ecosystems, but also in many other goals and targets. For an analysis of how biodiversity supports the achievement of all SDGs, published jointly by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological diversity (CBD), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the United Nations Development Programme, visit www.cbd.int/development/doc/biodiversity-2030-agenda-technical-note-en.pdf.

¹ Source: Biodiversity and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2016.

² Source: UN Human Rights Council, 34th Session.

³ Source: Global Biodiversity Outlook 4, 2014.

The Role of Biodiversity in Supporting the Focal SDGs of the 2018 High-level Political Forum



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION Ecosystems provide reliable sources of freshwater. Ecosystems also function as natural infrastructure, frequently costing less than technological solutions. For instance, wetlands regulate flooding, and healthy soils increase water and nutrient availability for crops and help reduce off-farm impacts. U.N. Water underscores the importance of nature-based solutions in water management in its flagship report, the 2018 World Water Development Report⁴.



7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY Bio-energy produced from renewable biomass such as forestry by-products and agricultural residues can provide major opportunities for supplying cleaner and affordable energy. Ecosystem services are also important for clean energy, e.g., providing sources of water needed for energy production.



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES Ecosystems help secure freshwater supplies on which cities rely, and can provide natural solutions for urban water run-off, regulating temperature, clean air, and providing resilience to climate change and natural disasters. Greener cities are healthier cities.



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION Utilizing more resource-efficient approaches is essential for the sustainable use of biodiversity. Reducing wastes and pollutants is also important to reduce adverse impacts on biodiversity.



15 LIFE ON LAND The conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems is essential for sustainable development and for achieving the 2030 Agenda and all of the SDGs. Targets under this goal include a call to integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local development planning, poverty reduction strategies and accounts (Target 15.9). Other targets highlight the importance of particular ecosystems, including wetlands, forests and mountains, while others focus on specific challenges, such as desertification and land degradation, as well as poaching and trafficking of protected species.

We need biodiversity for sustainable development!



⁴ www.unwater.org/publications/world-water-development-report-2018

Transformative Change for 2030

The United Nations Decade on Biodiversity and the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 will come to a close at the end of 2020. Despite the significant accomplishments by governments and stakeholders in the last decade, biodiversity

continues to be lost. Additional urgent actions are needed, including identifying opportunities for transformational change that can ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into the future. The next two and a half years before the end of the decade provides an opportunity to reflect on achievements, take stock of ongoing challenges,

and bring new perspectives to advance the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals as we move to shaping a new global framework on biodiversity that will be adopted in 2020.



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