



Convention on  
Biological Diversity

Mountain environments cover about **27% OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE**. Many species adapt and specialize in these ecosystems, providing essential goods and services to people living in mountain regions.

# MOUNTAIN BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**CLIMATE CHANGE HAS SERIOUS IMPACTS ON MOUNTAIN ECOSYSTEMS** as it causes the retreat and sometimes disappearance of alpine species that become trapped on mountain summits.



In the **ALPS**, some plant species have been **MIGRATING UPWARD BY ONE TO FOUR METRES PER DECADE**, and some plants previously found only on mountaintops have disappeared.

During the 20th century, the overall **VOLUME OF GLACIERS IN SWITZERLAND DECREASED BY 2/3**.

During that period, **MOUNT KENYA** and **MOUNT KILIMANJARO** lost **92%** and **82%** of their **ICE MASS** respectively.

In addition, **67% OF GLACIERS** are currently **RETREATING AT A RAPID RATE IN THE HIMALAYAS** and the major causal factor has been identified as climate change.

Over **50% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION IS DIRECTLY DEPENDENT ON FRESHWATER FROM THE MOUNTAINS**.

The shrinking of glaciers modifies the water-holding capacities of mountains, affecting the quantity of freshwater available to both humans and biodiversity.

The conservation of mountain biodiversity is a key option for the adaptation to climate change. Adaptation options include the establishment of additional protected areas, mountain watershed management and the establishment of migration corridors, both horizontal and vertical.