



Biodiversity of Dry and Sub-humid Lands

Biodiversity under Pressure

Dry and sub-humid lands, which encompass some 47% of the Earth's terrestrial area, include many fragile environments that need priority attention to avoid irreversible biodiversity loss. These lands also include areas of extraordinary endemism — species found exclusively in a certain place, such as the Mediterranean Basin, home to some 11,700 endemic plant species. To date 2,311 known species in dry and sub-humid lands are endangered or threatened with extinction due to pressures caused by habitat conversion, climate change, grazing, introduced species, changes in fire regimes, changes in water availability, over-harvesting and soil management.

The largest areas of dry and sub-humid lands, which include arid and semi-arid regions, grasslands, savannahs, and Mediterranean landscapes, are found in Australia, China, Russia, the United States and Kazakhstan. There are six countries with at least 99% of their area classified as dry and sub-humid lands: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Iraq, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova and Turkmenistan.

Why it is important:

- Dry and sub-humid lands are home to around two billion people, 35% of the global population, and encompass approximately 44% of the world's cultivated systems.
- 90% of people inhabiting dry and sub-humid lands live in developing countries.
- Dry and sub-humid lands have great biological value and are the original source of many of the world's food crops and livestock, including wheat, barley and olives.
- Conservation and sustainable use of dry and sub-humid lands biodiversity is central to livelihood development and poverty alleviation.
- The biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands is of particular significance because it includes many unique biomes. Wetland areas in drylands, for instance, are often crucial to migratory bird species as well as local species.

What the CBD is doing:

Parties to the CBD have endorsed a series of measures aimed at promoting the conservation and sustainable use of dry and sub-humid lands biodiversity. This work has been supported by a number of regional and international efforts, including the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) environment initiative and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Drylands Development Centre. The CBD is also working with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as parties to both conventions have acknowledged that biodiversity loss can be both a cause and a consequence of desertification. The joint work programme seeks to address the multiple and increasing threats to dry and sub-humid lands biodiversity, including climate change.

At COP 9, Parties to the CBD will review progress in assessing the status, trends and threats to biodiversity in dry and sub-humid lands and in working with relevant partners in order to fill gaps in



information and data that will be needed to measure achievement towards the 2010 target of reversing the global decline in biodiversity.

For more information:

Dry and sub-humid lands biodiversity: <http://www.cbd.int/drylands>

CBD COP decisions on dry and sub-humid lands: <http://www.cbd.int/drylands/decisions.shtml>

Tools and guidelines: <http://www.cbd.int/drylands/tools.shtml>

Documents: <http://www.cbd.int/drylands/documents.shtml>



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Convention on Biological Diversity

