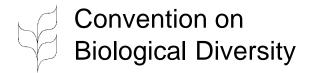
Secretariat



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PRESS RELEASE

International Day for Biological Diversity

Biodiversity and poverty alleviation – challenges for sustainable development

Montreal, 22 May 2003 – On the occasion of this year's International Day for Biological Diversity, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan is reminding the world that, "Biological diversity is essential for human existence and has a crucial role to play in sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. Biodiversity provides millions of people with livelihoods, helps to ensure food security and is a rich source of both traditional medicines and modern pharmaceuticals."

The Millennium Development Goals, proclaimed by the United Nations Millennium Summit of 2000, establish the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger as the pre-eminent goal in responding to the most vital development needs. These goals can only be met when biodiversity is conserved, used in a sustainable manner and the benefits from the use of genetic resources shared fairly and equitably.

"The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the foremost instrument for the global preservation of biodiversity and the life-sustaining ecosystems it underpins," said Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

"The theme of this year's International Day for Biological Diversity, *Biodiversity and poverty alleviation - challenges for sustainable development*, highlights the pivotal role of biological diversity in eradicating poverty through sustainable development and benefit sharing," he said.

International Biological Diversity Day is an opportunity for all the stakeholders to build public awareness of the value of biodiversity and its essential role in poverty alleviation and achievement of sustainable development. The CBD salutes the creative participation of the Parties around the world in this celebration of the world's efforts to conserve biodiversity – The Web of Life.

In conjunction with the International Day for Biological Diversity, some 150 experts in the work of the Convention are meeting in London, UK. **2010** – **The Global Biodiversity Challenge**, convened by the CBD Secretariat, is specifically focused on articulating a framework for action to address the internationally agreed target of significantly reducing the current rates of biodiversity loss by the year 2010.

One of the key issues on the agenda that is of relevance to the theme for this year's International Day for Biological Diversity is the need to reduce the loss of biodiversity and thus bring about a positive impact on people's lives, especially the lives of the poor.

Note to journalists:

Biodiversity, the variety of life on Earth and the natural patterns it forms, encompasses all plants, animals and microorganisms, genetic differences within each species and the variety of ecosystems in which living creatures, including humans, form a community, interacting with one another and with the air, water, and soil around them.

At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, world leaders agreed on a comprehensive strategy for "sustainable development" – meeting our needs while ensuring that we leave a healthy and viable world for future generations. One of the key agreements adopted at Rio was the **Convention on Biological Diversity**. This pact among the vast majority of the world's governments sets out commitments for maintaining the world's ecological underpinnings as we go about the business of economic development. The Convention establishes three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.

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