

## INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

### A. INITIATED PROGRAMMES

1- Increasing focus on the implementation of [Multilateral Environmental Agreements \(MEAs\)](#) related to biodiversity such as: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), and the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands.

2- The [Regional Program on Trade and Environment in the Arab Region](#) seeks to strengthen the capacity of Arab countries to address trade and environment challenges related to trade-related MEAs, negotiations, market access and competitiveness.

3- The [Green Economy Initiative](#) will accelerate the transition to a more resource-efficient economy able to overcome multiple challenges and deliver multiple opportunities for protecting natural and living resources.

4- The [Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity \(TEEB\)](#) initiative is one of the focused programmes of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) aimed to promote the true value inherent in biodiversity as underpinning ecosystem services.

### B. OPPORTUNITIES

1- Promoting an increase in the number, size, and connectivity of [protected areas](#), both on land and at sea.

2- [Building capacity](#) and raising public awareness related to biodiversity with an aim to relate biodiversity to people and their livelihoods.

3- Identifying and creating [opportunities](#) for rural enterprises based on biodiversity such as eco-tourism, and bioprospecting to benefit local communities, the environment, species and their habitats.

4- Promoting [sustainable and efficient agriculture](#) by improving the efficiency of use of land, water and nutrients in agriculture, including aquaculture and plantations.

5- Providing important [economic and social benefits](#) that provide local communities with [incentives](#) for habitat protection.

### STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS ON BIODIVERSITY IN THE ESCWA REGION

- A total of 103 species of mammals were threatened with extinction in the ESCWA region in 2006, representing 17 per cent of the region's species of mammals, registering an increase of 49 per cent since 2002.
- A total of 145 species of birds were threatened with extinction in the ESCWA region in 2006, representing 14 per cent of such species, registering an increase of 56 per cent since 2002.
- A total of 44 species of reptiles were threatened with extinction in the ESCWA region in 2006, representing 6 per cent of such species, registering an increase of 91 per cent.
- A total of 130 species of fish were threatened with extinction in the ESCWA region in 2006.
- 5 per cent of the total land in the ESCWA region is categorized as protected areas, with the largest of such areas located in Egypt and Saudi Arabia at 10 per cent and 4 per cent respectively.

### Climate Change and biodiversity

20 - 30 per  
cent of plant  
and animal  
species  
will face  
extinction  
if global  
temperature  
increase  
exceeds  
1.5 - 2.5°C.

ESCWA. 2009. *Compendium for Environment Statistics in the ESCWA Region*. Chap.VI. New York (E/ESCWA/SD/2009/13).

## MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY

Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) identifies two general measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, namely:

- The development of national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, or what has been known by **National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)**;
- The **integration**, as far as possible and as appropriate, of the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.

### COMPLETION OF NBSAPs BY ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES\*



\* See [www.cbd.int/nbsap](http://www.cbd.int/nbsap). Status of development of NBSAPs as of 12 March 2010.

## PROMOTING BIODIVERSITY-INCLUSIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLS

In Article 14, the CBD identifies impact assessment as a key instrument for achieving the conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing objectives of the Convention. Furthermore, at its eighth meeting in 2006, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention endorsed the voluntary guidelines on biodiversity-inclusive **environmental impact assessment (EIA)** and **strategic environmental assessment (SEA)**, urging governments, regional and international agencies to apply them as appropriate (COP-8 Decision VIII/28).

The Sustainability Impact Assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EMFTA) found that agricultural trade liberalization in the Mediterranean region would result in production changes and new pressures on natural resources resulting in localized effects on biodiversity.



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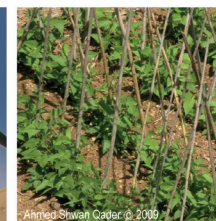
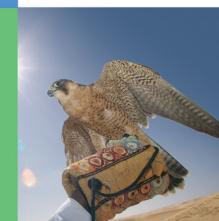
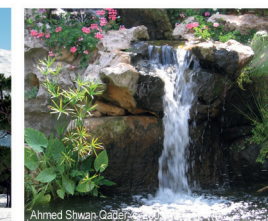
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# BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



UNEP-ROWA



ESCWA

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia



# BIODIVERSITY IS LIFE BIODIVERSITY IS OUR LIFE



Biodiversity, the variety of life on Earth, is essential to sustaining the living networks and systems that provide us all with health, wealth, food, fuel and the vital services our lives depend on. In view of the continuing loss of biodiversity, the United Nations is marking 2010 as **International Year of Biodiversity (IYB)**, by promoting the message, “*Biodiversity is life, Biodiversity is our life.*”

**MDG 7**  
Ensure Environmental Sustainability

**TARGET 2**  
Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss.

The year 2010 is a milestone for biodiversity and presents a unique opportunity to increase understanding of the vital role that biodiversity plays in sustaining life on Earth. The year coincides with the target adopted by governments in 2002 to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss, thus firmly placing biodiversity on the international agenda.

The 2010 Biodiversity Target was incorporated as a new target under Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The target for 2010 has not been met and therefore a new strategy is being developed with a vision for 2050 and targets for 2010 - 2020 based on scientifically measurable indicators. The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-10) will review progress made towards attainment of the 2010 Biodiversity Target and seek strengthened commitment to the new strategy and targets, and their means of implementation, post 2010.

**INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIODIVERSITY (22 MAY)**  
**BIODIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION**

- The United Nations proclaimed May 22 the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) in an effort to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. The theme for 2010 is *Biodiversity, Development and Poverty Alleviation*.
- This designation provides Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the development community the opportunity to raise awareness on the importance of biodiversity to sustainable development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Food, fuel, pharmaceuticals and rural livelihoods all depend on functioning ecosystems which require sustainable interactions between plants, animals, natural resources and mankind.

## Convention on Biological Diversity

The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** is an international legally-binding treaty comprising three main goals:

- Conservation of biodiversity;
- Sustainable use of biodiversity;
- Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

Its overall objective is to encourage actions which will lead to a sustainable future. The CBD addresses biodiversity and biotechnology through the **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety**. This supplementary agreement to the Convention adopted during 2000, seeks to protect biological diversity and human welfare from the potential risks posed by the transport, trade, handling and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology. Prior informed consent and risk assessment procedures are the main tools promoted in the protocol.

The CBD seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, non-governmental organizations and women.

All ESCWA member countries have ratified or acceded to the CBD

COUNTRY	CBD	COUNTRY	CBD
Bahrain	1996	Palestine	-
Egypt	1994	Qatar	1996
Iraq*	acs (2009)	Saudi Arabia	2001
Jordan	1993	Syrian Arab Republic	1996
Kuwait	2002	The Sudan	1995
Lebanon	1994	United Arab Emirates	2000
Oman	1995	Yemen	1996

\*Accession: Countries that do not sign a treaty during the time it is open for signature, can only accede to it. Accession and ratification of an international convention have the same legal effect.

**FAST FACTS**

- The Convention was opened for signature at the Earth Summit held in Rio De Janeiro in 1992.
- The Convention enjoys near universal membership, with 193 countries having ratified it.
- Substantial investments are required to conserve biodiversity, but it will bring significant environmental, economic and social benefits in return.
- The Ecosystem Approach, an integrated strategy for the management of resources, is the framework for action under the Convention.



# MANY SPECIES, ONE PLANET, ONE FUTURE

Biodiversity reflects the number, variety and variability of living organisms and how these change from one location to another and over time. Biodiversity includes diversity within species (genetic diversity), between species (species diversity), and between ecosystems (ecosystem diversity). There is a wide range of **direct causes** for biodiversity loss and **underlying drivers** which include the **growing demand for goods and services** causing ecosystem degradation.

**DIRECT CAUSES**

**Major threats to biodiversity loss include the following:**

- Habitat loss and destruction** which is directly linked to human induced pressures on land;
- Alterations in ecosystem composition** which are a critical factor contributing to species and habitat loss;
- Invasive alien species** that replace local and native species are cited as the second largest cause of biodiversity loss incorporated with huge annual economic damage;
- Over-exploitation**, over-hunting and over-fishing. Changing consumption patterns of humans is often cited as the key reason for this unsustainable exploitation of natural resources;
- Pollution and contamination** that cause irreversible damage to species;
- Global climate change** is causing permanent loss of species and populations if these are not provided with enough time to adapt to changing climatic conditions.

**ECOSYSTEM GOODS AND SERVICES**

- Provisioning:** (a) provision of food, fuel and fibre; (b) provision of shelter and building materials;
- Regulating:** (a) purification of air and water; (b) detoxification and decomposition of wastes; (c) stabilization and moderation of the Earth's climate; (d) moderation of floods, droughts, temperature extremes and the forces of wind;
- Supporting:** (a) generation and renewal of soil fertility, including nutrient cycling; (b) pollination of plants; (c) control of pests and diseases; (d) maintenance of genetic resources as key inputs to crop varieties and livestock breeds, medicines, etc;
- Cultural:** recreational and aesthetic benefits.

