



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Organisation
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Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

2010 : International Year of Biodiversity

Biodiversity: Science, Policy and why it Matters

The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity is a unique opportunity to highlight the value of biodiversity for our lives, reflect on our achievements to safeguard biodiversity and focus on the urgency of the biodiversity challenge for the future.

Global Biodiversity Challenge

Biodiversity, the variety of life on Earth, provide us all with the critical services our lives depend on. Provision of food, fuel and medicines, purification of air and water, moderation of floods and droughts, stabilization of climate; these are just some of the vital services provided by biodiversity. Biodiversity contribution to human life and well-being is not just practical, physical and utilitarian, it is also cultural. The diversity of the natural world has been a constant source of inspiration throughout human history, influencing traditions, the way our society has evolved and supplying the basic goods and services upon which trade and the economy are built.

Yet, over the past decades, biodiversity has been lost at an unprecedented rate, mostly due to unsustainable human activities. Given the importance of biodiversity to human development and well-being, the reversal of biodiversity loss has become one of the major challenges that society faces today.

2010 Biodiversity Target

In 2002, the Parties to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) committed themselves to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth.

Although some biodiversity indicators show positive trends, the general information available up to date is rather negative; overall, "the world had failed to fulfill the 2010 Biodiversity Target", states Mr Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Executive Secretary of the CBD.

2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB)

While expressing its deep concern for the social, economic, environmental and cultural implications of the biodiversity loss, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). Led by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the IYB aims primarily to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity to human development



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and well-being and the urgent need to halt the current trends in its loss. The IYB thus also represents an opportunity for the international community to revisit the existing targets and ways and means to achieve them for the benefit of human society.

As a central partner for the implementation of the IYB, UNESCO has developed an extensive IYB strategy aiming at strengthening the integration of biodiversity considerations into a range of cross-cutting issues, with particular focus on education, culture, science and communication.

UNESCO's Contributions to IYB

- High-level Inaugural Event: 21 - 22 January, Paris
- UNESCO IYB Biodiversity Science Policy Conference: 25 - 29 January 2010, Paris
- IYB traveling exhibition: Launch 21 January 2010, Paris
- Biodiversity Learning Kit: Launch October 2010, Nagoya
- International Conference on Biological and Cultural Diversity: 9-11 June 2010, Montreal
- Special Side Event on Gender and Biodiversity: 27 January 2010, Paris

Beyond 2010

The post 2010 biodiversity agenda and the next milestone biodiversity targets will be discussed at the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD (COP 10) in October 2010 in Nagoya, Japan.

The critical challenge for biodiversity agenda beyond 2010 will be to reinforce its relevance to other sustainability related agendas, including socio-economic, development, climate change and poverty alleviation. This will require, inter alia, better communication between science and policy.

The complexity of biodiversity science coupled with fragmentation of biodiversity research and uncertainty related to biodiversity data, made it difficult for scientists to efficiently interact with policy-makers and vice-versa. The current science-policy interface for biodiversity issues comprises a number of national and international programmes, mechanisms and processes. Their contribution to policy making at the appropriate levels could be strengthened further through an IPCC¹-like mechanism that could provide a scientifically sound, uniform

and consistent framework for addressing biodiversity issues. The current discussions on the establishment of such mechanism, i.e. the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, represent a very positive step in this direction.

Further strengthening the integration of biodiversity concerns into decision-making processes, will also depend on the value placed by people on biodiversity. The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity (TEEB) Initiative, has highlighted a large amount of evidence of the market and non-market values of various benefits from biodiversity, and thus on the costs of their loss. It is hoped that this, and other similar studies, will facilitate the development of cost-effective policy responses.

As declared by Mrs Bokova on the occasion of the UNESCO launch of the IYB "We must change current trends. The future we choose for our planet is in our hands."



¹ IPCC-Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

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Links:

<http://www.unesco.org/en/biodiversity>