



**Message by the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity
on the occasion of the International Day for Biological Diversity 2016 –
Mainstreaming Biodiversity; Sustaining People and their Livelihoods
22 May 2016**

Biodiversity and the ecosystem services it supports is the foundation for life. It underpins peoples' livelihoods and sustainable development in all areas of activity. By halting biodiversity loss, we are investing in people, their lives and their well-being.

This year on the International Day for Biological Diversity, we focus on mainstreaming biodiversity and supporting livelihoods. These issues will also be the focus of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, set to take place 4-17 December this year in Cancun, Mexico.

Addressing the indirect and direct drivers of biodiversity loss requires a focus on primary sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture. These sectors both impact biodiversity and are dependent on biodiversity. The demand for the goods and services produced by these sectors is projected to increase over the coming decades as a result of population growth, increasing average wealth, and other demographic changes.

For example, demand for food, wood, water and energy is projected to increase 1.5 – 2 fold by 2050 due to increasing population and average wealth, with a concomitant and negative effect on biodiversity.

Therefore, mainstreaming biodiversity considerations across these sectors is essential in ensuring not only the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity but also the continued vitality of these sectors.

The good news is that the value of biodiversity for achieving economic and social goals has been recognized at the highest levels. Biodiversity features prominently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, playing a crucial role in poverty eradication, provision of water and food, and in achieving sustainable, livable cities. Implementation of the SDGs therefore will also help countries achieve the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

Still, there remain challenges to the implementation of mainstreaming. The mid-term review of progress by COP 12, on the basis of the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, and the fifth national reports, concluded that while significant progress has been made towards meeting some components of most of the Aichi Targets, the status of biodiversity will continue to decline



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without urgent action to scale up implementation. Information that has become available since the preparation of the GBO-4 does not make the picture much better. On average, only 15 per cent of countries are on track to achieve the Aichi Targets or the corresponding national-level targets, established by countries in response to the Aichi Targets, which, in many cases, are less ambitious or leave out important aspects addressed in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

Consequently, we have to make more compelling arguments for the inclusion of biodiversity considerations in all aspects of decision-making. Reversing current trends requires action by all sectors and stakeholders. We need to develop targeted, evidence-based communications about the value of biodiversity for social and economic goals. Partnerships and multidisciplinary teams are needed to develop integrated solutions. We need to involve civil society organizations and academia. The business sector also has a key role to play in using better practices to reduce impacts on biodiversity.

As we begin to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, it will be critically important that this be done in an integrated manner, which includes the key roles of biodiversity.

Similarly, the biodiversity-related conventions that the world has agreed to over the last four decades can contribute significantly to the implementation of the SDGs and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The seven global biodiversity-related conventions work together to harness the benefits of collaboration, and to ensure more coherent, efficient and effective implementation, both bilaterally and through cooperative efforts.

Quite simply, mainstreaming biodiversity ensures that addressing development needs and protecting the environment is not an either-or situation, but rather that development is supported by the sustainable use of natural resources and provision of ecosystem services and support in its turn the conservation and restoration of biodiversity. Our social and economic well-being depends on biodiversity. By working together, we can achieve the future we want.

