

## Biodiversity and Sustainable Development

Biodiversity is integral to key development sectors such as agriculture and livestock, forestry, and fishing or tourism. More than 1.3 billion people depend on biodiversity and on basic ecosystems goods and services for their livelihoods (availability of usable land, water, plant and animal species). For millennia, mankind's use of biodiversity and ecosystem services has contributed to human well being and economic development.

Biodiversity is crucial to the reduction of poverty, due to the basic goods and ecosystem services it provides. They include the provision of food, fiber and medicine, soil formation, air quality and climate regulation, the regulation of water supply and quality and the cultural and aesthetic value of certain plants and species.

The aims of development do not stop at poverty reduction; environmental sustainability is also a fundamental development objective. Biodiversity and development are closely linked: biodiversity sustains development, and development has an impact on biodiversity, either positive or negative. Although biodiversity does not contribute directly to all sectors of development, sustainable development cannot be achieved if biodiversity is compromised by development efforts.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) fully integrate the 2010 Biodiversity Target set in 2002 by the Convention on Biological Diversity to achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss. Even if goal 7 is most specifically focused on biodiversity related issues, biodiversity is important to the achievement of all eight MDG goals, and is essential to the fulfillment of this international commitment by the year 2015.

Since the poor are particularly dependent on the goods and services supplied by biodiversity, development strategies that ignore their protection undermine poverty alleviation and are therefore counterproductive. For this reason, it is crucial for development and poverty alleviation strategies and programs to prioritize biodiversity.

The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** was inspired by the world community's growing commitment to sustainable development. It represents a dramatic step forward in the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. The Convention on Biological Diversity entered into force on 29 December 1993. It has three main objectives:

1. The conservation of biological diversity

2. The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity
3. The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources

The **Conference of the Parties (COP)** is the Convention's governing body that meets every two years, or as needed, to review progress in the implementation of the Convention, to adopt programmes of work, to achieve its objectives, and provide policy guidance.

The COP is assisted by the **Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA)**, which is made up of government representatives with expertise in relevant fields, as well as observers from non-Party governments, the scientific community, and other relevant organizations. SBSTTA is responsible for providing recommendations to the COP on the technical aspects of the implementation of the Convention. Other subsidiary bodies have been established by the COP to deal with specific issues as they arise. These are called "ad hoc open-ended Working Groups" because they are established for a limited mandate and period of time, and because they are open to all Parties as well as the participation of observers.

The **Eleventh Conference of Parties to (CoP-11) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** and the sixth Meeting of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was held at **Hyderabad** from 1-19 October 2012. The **Government of India** also hosted the high-level segment to CoP-11 at the same venue from 17-19 October 2012.

Organized in collaboration with the **State Government of Andhra Pradesh, India** had proposed five key issues for discussion at the high-level segment of CBD CoP-11.

- Biodiversity and Livelihoods
- Integration of value of Biodiversity in National Planning and Accounting Process
- Strategy for Resource Mobilization
- Coastal and Marine Biodiversity
- Operationalization of Nagoya Protocol

CoP-11 was a historical opportunity for India to influence the policy and conservation logic that will set agenda for CBD in the years to come. It was also an occasion for taking stock of the effectiveness of various global, national and sub-national initiatives on biodiversity conservation, apart from spreading awareness and building capacities for improved ecosystem management.

The United Nations proclaimed May 22 The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.