

International Year of Biodiversity 2010

Every year when the 'Red List' of the IUCN gets updated we observe a different set of species being added to the category of threatened species. The statistics appear horrifying to those who consider it more than a mere list of species. We are at the brink of losing some of the precious plant and animal genomes that may not return in future. We are aware that biodiversity has been changing, but are we aware of the measures to minimize its loss caused due to anthropogenic activities? To safeguard the biodiversity and to bring awareness about the significance of biodiversity, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). The official launch of the event will take place on 11 January 2010 in Berlin, Germany.



The IYB logo and slogan (courtesy: IYB website)

With the slogan 'Biodiversity is life. Biodiversity is our life', the IYB will be celebrated throughout the world with various activities. UNESCO Biodiversity Exhibition will be launched in Paris, France during 21–22 January 2010. In India, the 'Sustainable Development Summit' will be held from 12 to 28 February 2010 at New Delhi. Some of the

other activities include: 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild flora and fauna) from 13 to 15 March 2010 in Doha, Qatar; the Ecological Conference: Climate change and natural resource use in Eastern Africa – impacts, adaptation and mitigation in Nairobi, Kenya from 19 to 21 May 2010; and UNESCO International Congress on Biological and Cultural Diversity in June/July 2010 at Montreal, Canada (for further details see IYB website: <http://www.cbd.int/2010>).

According to the IYB website, objectives of IYB 2010 are the following:

(a) Enhance public awareness of the importance of safeguarding biodiversity and of the underlying threats to biodiversity.

(b) Raise awareness of the accomplishments to save biodiversity that have already been realized by communities and governments.

(c) Encourage individuals, organizations and governments to take the immediate steps needed to halt the loss of biodiversity.

(d) Promote innovative solutions to reduce the threats to biodiversity.

(e) Start dialogue between stakeholders for the steps to be taken in the post-2010 period.

The idea of celebrating the IYB was originally conceived by the governments

who are parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, an environmental agreement signed in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The governments asked the UN General Assembly in 2006 to consider declaring the year. The declaration was then made by the General Assembly on 20 December 2006 to recognize the need to raise awareness about the significance of biodiversity.

The year-long celebrations will conclude with a convening of a one-day high-level segment on biodiversity during the 65th session of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2010. The heads of the state and government will meet and interactive sessions will be held on three themes of biodiversity: (i) biodiversity and its role in mitigating and adapting to climate change; (ii) the role of biodiversity for development and poverty alleviation, and achievement of the Millennium Developmental Goals, and (iii) the strategies and plans for the next decade for the Convention on Biological Diversity. Their discussions will then be presented to Nagoya Biodiversity Summit where the governments shall commit to a new round of targets for protecting life on earth in October 2010.