



Press Brief

Mountain Biodiversity

Why is this important?

Mountainous areas often host many more species than adjacent lowlands — including many that are found nowhere else on Earth. This diversity is important for many vulnerable human populations but it also faces special threats, especially from climate change.

Mountainous regions are particularly biodiverse because in a very small area they can include a range of different altitudes, habitats and climatic conditions, sheltering different groups of life-forms that thrive best in each of these. They also often provide islands of suitable habitat, isolated from unfavourable surrounding lowlands, competing species or environmental threats.

These ecosystems are found worldwide and cover some 27 per cent of the world's land surface, and directly support the 22 per cent of the world's people. The benefits of mountain environments also reach other people living in distant lowlands, and include: water, energy, timber, and opportunities for recreation and spiritual renewal.

Mountains are also home to a significant number of distinct ethnic groups, with distinct cultural traditions, environmental knowledge and habitat adaptations. As a result, mountains host some of the world's most complex agricultural diversity and traditional management practices.

Mountain species with narrow habitat tolerance, particularly those that live at high elevations or cannot disperse far are at high risk from climate change. Changes in land-use can also drive biodiversity loss. Flower-rich alpine meadows are an important cultural heritage that is increasingly threatened as traditional grazing practices decline.

Therefore the challenge is to sustainably manage mountain regions to avoid degradation and avoid subsequent increases in poverty and hunger.



Convention on
Biological Diversity

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What news to expect in Nagoya?

At COP10, Parties will be encouraged, among other things, to consider the new national and regional targets that address the direct drivers of biodiversity loss.

These targets will include moves to reduce pressures on — and to protect and restore — mountain biodiversity and related ecosystem services.

Parties will also be encouraged to consider the adoption of a long-term vision and ecosystem approaches to the conservation and sustainable use of mountain biodiversity. This would entail developing specific actions, timetables and capacity-building needs for the implementation of the CBD's programme of work on mountain biodiversity. Where appropriate, these would need to be integrated into revised national biodiversity strategies and action plans in line with the CBD's new Strategic Plan.

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