



Press Brief

Global Biodiversity Outlook 4

Why is this important?

Published almost at the halfway point of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, the fourth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, to be launched on 6 October 2014 at COP 12, provides a timely report on progress towards meeting the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets and potential actions to accelerate that progress; on prospects for achieving the 2050 vision on 'Living in Harmony with Nature'; and on the importance of biodiversity in meeting broader goals for sustainable human development this century.

The report brings together multiple lines of evidence derived from a wide range of sources. It draws upon targets, commitments and activities of countries as reported in national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) and national reports as well as Parties' own assessments of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. It takes into account information on the status of trends of biodiversity reported by Parties and in the scientific literature, and makes use of indicator-based statistical extrapolations to 2020 as well as longer term model based scenarios.

Results

According to the GBO-4, there has been some significant progress towards meeting some components of the majority of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. However, in most cases, this progress will not be sufficient to achieve the target set for 2020, and additional action is required to keep the Strategic Plan for biodiversity on course.

Based on current trends, pressures on biodiversity will continue to increase at least until 2020, and that the status of biodiversity will continue to decline. This is despite the fact that society's responses to the loss of biodiversity are increasing dramatically. This may be partly due to time lags between taking positive actions and discernible positive outcomes. It could also be because responses may be insufficient relative to pressures, such that they may not overcome the growing impacts of the drivers of biodiversity loss.



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Meeting the Aichi Biodiversity Targets would contribute significantly to broader global priorities addressed by the post 2015 Development Agenda, namely reducing hunger and poverty; improving human health and ensuring a sustainable supply of energy, food and clean water.

Plausible pathways exist for achieving the 2050 vision for an end to biodiversity loss, in conjunction with key human development goals, limiting climate change to two degrees Celsius warming and combatting desertification and land degradation. However, reaching these joint objectives requires changes in society, including much more efficient use of land, water, energy and materials, rethinking our consumption habits and in particular major transformations of food systems.

Analysis of the major primary sectors indicates that drivers linked to agriculture account for 70 per cent of the projected loss of terrestrial biodiversity. Addressing trends in food systems is therefore crucial in determining whether the Strategic Plan will succeed.

The way forward

This mid-term report on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 suggests that the majority of its targets are still achievable, if challenging to meet.

Achieving these targets requires innovative and bold action in many areas, and a sustained focus on biodiversity in a wide range of policy areas for the second half of this decade. Success stories have demonstrated that effective action comes from simultaneously addressing multiple causes of biodiversity loss through monitoring and data analysis, changing economic incentives, applying market pressures, enforcing rules and regulations, involving indigenous and local communities and stakeholders and targeting conservation of threatened species and ecosystems – among many other routes to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Many of the measures required to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets will also support the goals of greater food security, healthier populations and improved access to clean water and sustainable energy for all. The Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 is thus part of the agenda for sustainable development. There is a need to accelerate our own actions to seize the opportunity to live in harmony with nature.

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