



# Cities & Biodiversity

## Threat or Opportunity for Biodiversity?

Biodiversity is being lost at an unprecedented rate, up to 1,000 times the normal rate of extinction. Cities occupy only 2.8 per cent of the Earth's surface, but urban dwellers control the use of 75 per cent of the planet's natural resources. Cities consume resources that may be thousands of miles away. This is both a threat and an opportunity for biodiversity - cities can make a difference

The fight for biodiversity will ultimately be won by working with cities. The growing urban world is one of the most dramatic changes experienced by humanity in recent history. More than half of today's world's population lives in cities, and urban population is expected to reach 70 per cent by 2030.

## Why it is important:

- Cities have critical mandates in some areas essential to biodiversity:
  - land use planning by creating urban protected area networks to achieving a balance of conservation and sustainable use
  - watersheds and water use (cities can avoid expansion into critical watersheds and can work with partners to conserve ecosystems where water is sourced)
  - licensing of businesses and guidelines to businesses (cities enforce norms for sustainable consumption of biodiversity resources)
  - promoting sustainable consumption (stopping the use of illegal timber and endangered species, promoting networks of gardens, supporting reforestation, reducing use of biodiversity resources)
- Cities are very efficient partners, maximizing resources, and fostering innovative public private sector partnerships
- Local authorities are recognized as critical stakeholders for the conservation of biodiversity
- Considered an essential partner for the CBD to achieve its objectives
- Incorporating biodiversity issues into urban planning and development can be an effective way of addressing the threats of biodiversity loss.

## What the CBD is doing:

Aware of the critical mandate of local authorities and particularly cities, the Secretariat of the CBD is working with networks of cities, international organizations and other UN Agencies to encourage Parties to support cities making a difference, and to provide governments at all levels with the tools and technology to allow cities to fully incorporate biodiversity issues into urban planning and development.

At the initiative of Mayor Richa of Curitiba, a meeting was held in Curitiba, Brazil, on 26-27 March 2007. Over 34 mayors or their representatives attended, and participants adopted the Curitiba Declaration on Cities and Biodiversity. The Declaration reaffirms the Mayor's commitment to contribute actively to the implementation of the three objectives of the CBD and to the achievement of the 2010 Biodiversity Target. A task force was established with the Secretariat of the CBD, ICLEI and its Local Action for Biodiversity Programme, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, IUCN's Countdown 2010, and UNESCO, as well as the mayors of Curitiba, Bonn, Nagoya, Montreal and Johannesburg.



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At COP 9 Brazil will propose a draft COP decision on Cities. This is included in document UNEP/CBD/COP/9/21/Rev1 ( [www.cbd.int/COP9/doc/](http://www.cbd.int/COP9/doc/) ), which will be examined in Working Group I on 20 May, under agenda item 4.13.

Three events on Cities will feed into the COP discussion on the issue:

- A side event on 26 May (Reger Salon) at 1:15 PM, on Cities and Biodiversity, featuring the Minister of National Development of Singapore, and the mayors of Curitiba, Nagoya, Montreal, Bonn and Durban, on progress in the initiative since the Curitiba Declaration.
- The Mayor's Conference on Local Action for Biodiversity will take place in the Westsaal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from 26-28 May, with the attendance of over 80 mayors and senior city officials. Information available at [www.iclei.org/biodiv-bonn2008](http://www.iclei.org/biodiv-bonn2008).
- During the high-level segment of the CBD COP, Mayors will address the session on 27 May in the morning.

Background is also provided through information document UNEP/CBD/COP/9/INF/10.

**For more information:**

Local authorities [www.cbd.int/authorities](http://www.cbd.int/authorities)

Documents [www.cbd.int/COP9/doc](http://www.cbd.int/COP9/doc)



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Convention on Biological Diversity

