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For immediate release

NATURE AND NURTURE

A new online guide to the science and politics of biodiversity

As the UN Convention on Biological Diversity opens in Malaysia this week, the Science and Development Network (SciDev.Net) explores how concerns over biodiversity can be reconciled with the needs of the developing world.

A new dossier on the SciDev.Net website (www.scidev.net/biodiversity) provides an authoritative guide to this debate, packed with news, features, links, definitions and details of future events.

It also contains four specially commissioned policy briefings summarising key aspects of the issue in an informative and accessible style:

- **The UN Convention on Biological Diversity**

Policy analyst, *Stas Burgiel*, charts the progress of the biodiversity convention, and discusses the relative successes and many difficulties it has had to weather.

- **Modern agriculture and biodiversity**

In recent times, agriculture and biodiversity have coexisted uneasily. *Barbara Gemmill* and *Ana Milena Varela* describe how the future of each is intimately bound up in the other.

- **How biodiversity loss affects ecosystems**

Some environmental researchers take the view that species-rich ecosystems function better than those that are species-poor. Others disagree. *Shahid Naeem* assesses the arguments.

- **Biodiversity and climate change**

Hannah Reid, *Balakrishna Pisupati* and *Helen Baulch* explore the inextricable links between biodiversity and climate, and explain why an integrated policy approach is required.

In addition, Mark Malloch Brown (director of the United Nations Development Programme) and Reginald Victor (Sultan Qaboos University, Oman), provide sharply conflicting views on whether sustainable development policies can meet conservation goals. Victor claims that the two are incompatible. Malloch Brown, in contrast, argues that: "Far from being optional or a luxury,

biodiversity is a key development issue. Indeed it frequently provides the 'welfare system of last resort' for poor people and communities."

SciDev.Net dossiers sit at the meeting point between science and policy. Written by both acknowledged experts and experienced science journalists, and reviewed by panel of leading authorities in the field, they offer authoritative, accessible information on key science-related issues and their effect in the developing world. www.scidev.net/dossiers

For further information or to get in touch with our contributors, please contact Kirsty Cockburn at SciDev.Net on +44 (0)20 7291 3692, email: kirsty.cockburn@scidev.net

Notes to Editors

1. The Science and Development Network (SciDev.Net) aims to build capacity through the provision of free reliable information on science-based issues for the developing world. The website is backed by the world's two leading scientific journals, *Nature* and *Science*, and the Third World Academy of Sciences. Financial support has been provided by the UK Department for International Development, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the International Development Research Centre in Canada, and the Rockefeller Foundation. SciDev.Net is an independent not-for-profit company, registered under UK law as a 'company limited by guarantee'. Registered charity number 1089590.
2. Available free-of-charge, other dossiers on the website include brain drain, climate change, GM crops, indigenous knowledge, intellectual property rights and the ethics of clinical research.
3. Free newsfeeds, providing daily science news can be placed directly on your site. The newsfeed is supplied and automatically updated by SciDev.Net – you tailor the design to suit your website. For information on this and to find out more about SciDev.Net, or to register to receive regular email alerts that will inform you of new material added to the site each week, please visit: www.scidev.net.