



United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
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**on the occasion of the
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY
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A large number of people are presently living in poverty, with the majority of these being women and children. Protecting biodiversity and a healthy planet and productive ecosystems with the full and effective participation of the poor is essential to achieve poverty eradication and provide justice and dignity for all.

As the Rio+20 outcome document (*The Future We Want*) indicates, global biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation affect food security and nutrition, and the provision of, and access to, water and the health of the rural poor.

The biodiversity and poverty relationship is complex, multi-dimensional and multi-scale, and requires the involvement of a broad range of actors at the local, national, regional and international levels.

It is now widely recognised that the poor depend disproportionately on biodiversity, not only for their subsistence needs and income, but also as insurance against risks such as the impacts of climate change. For example, 98% of households in South Africa use wild herbs and 72% of households in South East Asia depend on forest products.

Therefore, safeguarding biological and cultural diversity is essential to build socio-economic and ecological resilience, eradicate poverty and meet sustainable development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals.

This safeguarding also needs to ensure the inclusion of traditional knowledge and practices of the poor, including practices of customary sustainable use of biodiversity, particularly of indigenous and local communities. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is finalizing a plan of action on customary sustainable use that recognises these issues, and seeks a just implementation of the relevant articles of the Convention.

The CBD also supports and promotes a broad range of initiatives to facilitate the integration of biodiversity into development planning and its mainstreaming approaches in different environmental and non-environmental strategies, including those on poverty eradication. Working collaboratively with a broad range of partners, the Convention's Biodiversity for Poverty Eradication and Development Initiative is developing tools to increase the capacity of governments to develop national accounting systems that take depreciation of natural capital into consideration.

Poverty eradication is also a cross-cutting issue of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its twenty internationally agreed time-bound Aichi Biodiversity Targets. Together, these were welcomed by

the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly as the overarching ten-year global framework to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, and its importance was reaffirmed in the Rio+20 outcomes. The Strategic Plan's mission statement for 2020 foresees that actions have been taken to halt biodiversity loss and to ensure that ecosystems are resilient and contribute to poverty eradication and human well-being.

As such, several Aichi Targets are relevant to poverty eradication, in particular:

- Target 2 seeks, by 2020, at least, to integrate biodiversity values into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes as well as into national accounting and reporting systems.
- Target 14 aims, by 2020, to restore and safeguard services provided by ecosystems including those related to water, health, livelihoods and well-being, taking into account the needs of women, as well as poor, vulnerable and indigenous and local communities.

In the context of the post-2015 development agenda, biodiversity is not simply another problem to be solved. It is an important opportunity to help achieve broader social and economic goals and to address many of the current challenges and concerns for the future in proactive, coherent and cost-effective ways, including issues such as food security, access to water, sustainable energy, health and human well-being.

As we do this, it is important to listen to the voices of the poor, who frequently are indigenous and local communities, that possess traditional knowledge related to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Their knowledge, practices and culture is the basis for protecting biodiversity, and therefore for eradicating poverty. Let us work together to bring justice and dignity to the poorest of the planet.
