

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**  
**22 May 2013**

As the international community strives to accelerate its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and define a post-2015 agenda, including a set of goals for sustainable development, water and biodiversity are important streams in the discussion.

Although seemingly abundant, only a tiny amount of the water on our planet is easily available as freshwater. We live in an increasingly water insecure world where demand often outstrips supply and where water quality often fails to meet minimum standards. Under current trends, future demands for water will not be met.

Biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides are central to achieving the vision of a water secure world. Ecosystems influence the local, regional and global availability and quality of water. Forests help regulate soil erosion and protect water quality and supply. Wetlands can reduce flood risks. Soil biodiversity helps maintain water for crops. Integrating nature-based solutions into urban planning can also help us build better water futures for cities, where water stresses may be especially acute given the rapid pace of urbanization.

Recognizing the importance of biodiversity, the United Nations General Assembly has encouraged the use of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Targets in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. Last year's Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development also recognized the role of ecosystems in maintaining water quantity and quality. Where once the focus was on trade-offs between water use and biodiversity, today we are coming to understand how biodiversity and water security are mutually reinforcing.

This shift from conflict to synergy is particularly welcome in this, the International Year of Water Cooperation.

On the International Day for Biological Diversity, I also call on all Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity who have not already done so, to ratify the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, and therefore help us all to work toward the future we want.