

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
22 May 2016

Biodiversity and the ecosystem services it supports are the foundations for life on Earth and the livelihoods and well-being of people everywhere. Protecting biodiversity and preventing further losses is an essential investment in our collective future.

Biodiversity is an important cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Goal 15 explicitly recognizes the importance of halting biodiversity loss, and other Goals recognize the importance of biological diversity for eradicating poverty, providing food and fresh-water, and improving life in cities. It is critical that we make progress in mainstreaming biodiversity and transforming how societies value and manage it.

Despite numerous commitments, biodiversity loss continues to accelerate in all regions. Only 15 per cent of countries are on track to achieve the Aichi Targets on biodiversity by the target date of 2020. In addition, the anticipated expansion of sectors that both depend on and affect biodiversity – including agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture – will pose a significant challenge to halting biodiversity loss in the coming decades.

Reversing these trends will require action by all sectors and stakeholders, from United Nations Member States and agencies to civil society, academia and business. We need better research, and we need to act on the evidence that biodiversity is integral to achieving social and economic goals.

The responsible use of natural resources is essential to sustainable development. Mainstreaming biodiversity will ensure that addressing development needs and protecting the environment are mutually supportive.

On this International Day for Biodiversity, I urge all Governments and stakeholders to preserve and sustainably manage the variety of life on Earth for the benefit of current and future generations. Preserving biological diversity is a vital part of our compact with each other and the planet that nurtures us.