



With breaking stories and
newswire products from

UN NEWS CENTRE



Biodiversity loss brings ecological systems closer to a tipping point, Ban says



22 May 2010 – Despite repeated global commitments to protect the planet's species and habitats, the variety of life continues to decline at an unprecedented rate, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned today, urging action to curb the root causes of biodiversity decline.

“Biodiversity loss is moving ecological systems ever closer to a tipping point beyond which they will no longer be able to fulfil their vital functions,” he said in his message on the occasion of the International [Day](#) for Biological Diversity, observed on 22 May.

“Communities everywhere will reap the negative consequences, but the poorest people and the most vulnerable countries will suffer most,” he added, noting that this year's theme is “biodiversity for development and poverty alleviation.”

Some 70 per cent of the world's poor live in rural areas, and depend directly on biodiversity for their daily sustenance and income.

World leaders vowed in 2002 to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. The commitment was incorporated into the seventh of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the series of anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline.

The Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3) report released earlier this month by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) showed that world leaders had failed to deliver on their target.

"The deadline has arrived, yet the deterioration of our natural resources continues apace," the Secretary-General said in his message today.

He urged world leaders to create a new vision which promotes the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits from its use.

He also urged recognition of the close links between "our natural capital and our development objectives."

The General Assembly has declared 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity and will discuss the issue of biodiversity at its high-level debate in September in New York.

The topic will also take centre stage at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit in October, attended by the 193 parties to the CBD, which entered into force at the end of 1993 and addresses threats to biodiversity and ecosystems.

Meanwhile, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) [announced](#) that Italy has contributed 1.2 million euros to a scheme aimed at helping the world's poorest farmers conserve and propagate crop varieties.

The scheme is being managed by the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the Italian grant was unveiled to coincide with the International Day for Biological Diversity.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

Governments must act swiftly to salvage biodiversity, UN report finds