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## Governments must act swiftly to salvage biodiversity, UN report finds



10 May 2010 – A new biodiversity report released today by two United Nations environmental bodies concluded that unless radical and creative action is taken quickly to conserve the variety of life on Earth, natural systems that support lives and livelihoods are at risk of collapsing.

“We need a new vision for biological diversity for a healthy planet and a sustainable future for humankind,” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon writes in the forward of the [report](#) produced by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)).

“To tackle the root causes of biodiversity loss, we must give it higher priority in all areas of decision-making and in all economic sectors.”

Based on scientific assessments, some 110 national reports and future scenarios for biodiversity, *Global Biodiversity Outlook* (GBO-3) shows that world leaders failed to deliver on their commitment to reduce the global rate of biodiversity loss by this year.

The five principal pressures directly driving biodiversity loss – habitat change, over-exploitation, pollution, invasive alien species and climate change – are either constant or increasing in intensity, according to the report.

“Business as usual is no longer an option if we are to avoid irreversible damage to the life-support systems of our planet,” [said](#) Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, calling the report “a wake-up call for humanity.”

The authors point out that for a fraction of the money summoned up instantly by the world's governments in 2008-09 to avoid economic meltdown, they can avoid a much more serious and fundamental breakdown in the Earth's life support systems.

For example, destruction of the Amazon forest caused by climate change, deforestation and fires has consequences for global climate, regional rainfall and widespread species extinction.

"Many economies remain blind to the huge value of the diversity of animals, plants and other life forms and their role in healthy and functioning ecosystems from forests and freshwaters to soils, oceans and even the atmosphere," said Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP.

The report will be part of the discussions at the General Assembly's high-level debate in September in New York.

Its conclusions will also likely be discussed 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.

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