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UN launches Decade on Biodiversity to stem loss of species and ecosystems



The United Nations marks its Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020

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The United Nations today launched the Decade on Biodiversity with [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon urging humanity to live in harmony with nature and to preserve and properly manage its riches for the prosperity of current and future generations.

“Ensuring truly sustainable development for our growing human family depends on biological diversity and the vital goods and services it offers,” Ban said in his message to the launch event

delivered on his behalf by Kiyoko Akasaka, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, in the Japanese city of Kanazawa.

“While the poor suffer first and worst from biodiversity loss, all of society stands to lose from this mass extinction. There are also the opportunity costs what cures for disease, and what other useful discoveries, might we never know of because a habitat is destroyed forever, or land is polluted beyond all use?”

The General Assembly previously declared the period 2011-2020 as United Nations Decade on Biodiversity to promote the implementation of a strategic plan on biodiversity and its overall vision of living in harmony with nature.

The main goal is to mainstream biodiversity at different levels. Throughout the Decade, governments are encouraged to develop, implement and communicate the results of national strategies for implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity.

In his own statement at the launch of the Decade, Mr. Akasaka stressed that stable ecosystems have the capacity to create jobs.

“Sustaining them sustains job growth,” he said. “With the world undergoing a youth bulge, sustainable use of biodiversity is not an isolated 'ecological' green approach, but an indispensable pillar of sustainable development for future generations,” said Mr. Akasaka.

Human activities have caused the extinction of plants and animals at some hundreds or thousands of times faster than what the natural rate would have been, Mr. Akasaka pointed out.

“We cannot reverse extinction. We can, however, prevent future extinction of other species right now. For the next 10 years our commitment to protecting more than eight million species, and our wisdom in contributing to a balance of life, will be put to a test,” he said.

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