



SPREP
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional
Environment Programme

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY [CBD]

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international treaty dedicated to sustaining the rich diversity of life on earth while recognizing the need for human and economic development. The CBD is an outcome of the Earth Summit discussions held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. By signing the agreement, 150 world leaders recognized, for the first time, that the conservation of biological diversity (biodiversity) is a common concern for human kind and an integral part of the development process¹.

The CBD entered into force on 29th December 1993 and now has 192 Parties.

The Convention has three main goals:

- The conservation of biodiversity;
- The sustainable use of the components of biodiversity; and
- The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.

What is the Earth Summit?

In 1992, the largest-ever meeting of world leaders took place at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. A historic set of agreements was signed at the "Earth Summit", including two binding agreements: the Convention on Climate Change, which targets industrial and other emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide; and the Convention on Biological Diversity, the first global agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The biodiversity treaty gained rapid and widespread acceptance. Over 150 governments signed the document at the Earth Summit, and 192 countries have since ratified the agreement.

What makes the CBD special?

The CBD is the first global comprehensive agreement to address all aspects of biodiversity; genetic resources, species and ecosystems. The CBD reminded decision-makers that natural resources are not infinite and set out a new philosophy for the 21st century, that of sustainable use. While past conservation efforts were aimed at protecting particular species and habitats, the CBD was the first global agreement to recognize that ecosystems, species and genes must be used for the benefit of humans. However, this should be done in a way and at a rate that does not lead to the long-term decline of biodiversity.

The Convention also offers decision-makers guidance based on the precautionary principle, which states that where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biodiversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat. The Convention acknowledges that substantial investments are required to conserve biodiversity. It argues, however, that conservation will bring us significant environmental, economic and social benefits in return.

One of the CBD's main purposes is to effectively halt the loss of biodiversity so as to secure the continuity of its beneficial use through the conservation and sustainable use of its components, (i.e. the flora and fauna found within an ecosystem), and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources².



Conference of Parties [COP]

Each government that joins the Convention must report on what it has done to implement the agreement and how effective they have been in meeting the objectives of the Convention. These reports are submitted to the Conference of the Parties (COP) – the governing body that brings together all countries that have ratified the Convention. The reports can be viewed by citizens of all nations. The Convention secretariat works with national governments to help strengthen reporting and to make the reports of various countries more consistent and comparable, so that the world community can get a clearer picture of the big trends. Part of that work involves developing indicators for measuring trends in biodiversity, particularly the effects of human actions and decisions on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The national reports, particularly when seen together, are one of the key tools for tracking progress in meeting the Convention's objectives³.

Currently 192 states, 14 of which are Pacific Island Countries, and the European Union are parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. This convergence of nations is regarded as a clear signal that countries acknowledge that biodiversity conservation is a global priority and thus requires working together as a global society.

Conservation of biodiversity: What can I do?

- Learn about biodiversity and environmental issues in your area and in your country.
- If you already have an organization, reach out to the people in your community and collaborate with other organizations.
- Enhance public awareness of the importance of conserving biodiversity and of the underlying threats to biodiversity
- Raise awareness of accomplishments by communities and governments to save biodiversity
- Promote innovative solutions to reduce the threats to biodiversity
- Encourage individuals, organizations and governments to take immediate steps to halt biodiversity loss⁴.

Decade of Biodiversity 2011–2020

The 16th COP of the CBD declared 2011–2020 the Decade of Biodiversity. The Decade will support the implementation of the 2011–2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets have been developed with the aim of enabling biodiversity values to be integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies, sustainable production and consumption.⁵

Aichi Biodiversity targets

There are five main Strategic Goals to the Aichi Target. These are;⁶

STRATEGIC GOAL A – Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society

STRATEGIC GOAL B – Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use

STRATEGIC GOAL C – To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity

STRATEGIC GOAL D – Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services

STRATEGIC GOAL E – Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building

1 UN Convention on Biological Diversity website, <http://www.un.org/millennium/law/xxvii-24.htm>

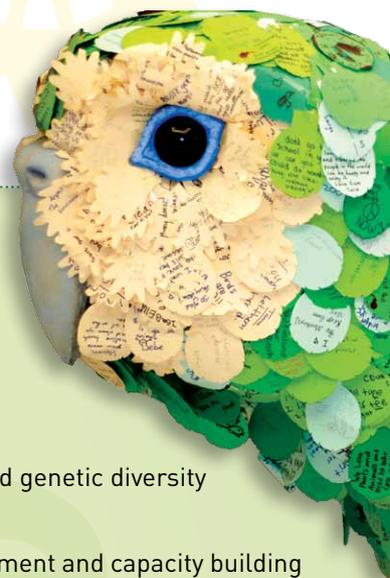
2 The Encyclopedia of Earth: Convention on Biological Diversity http://www.eoearth.org/article/Convention_on_Biological_Diversity#gen1

3 Convention on Biological Diversity: Sustaining Life on Earth, <http://www.cbd.int/convention/guide/?id=nataction>

4 2010 Biodiversity is our Life brochure

5 Aichi Biodiversity Target, Convention on Biological Diversity <http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>

6 Aichi Biodiversity Target, Convention on Biological Diversity <http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>



For more information: www.cbd.int | www.sprep.org



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