



PRESS RELEASE

Scientific assessments by Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) confirm need for imperative actions to safeguard life on Earth

- *Reports shows that biodiversity continues to decline in every region of the world*
- *Loss of biodiversity undermines nature's ability to ensure quality of life everywhere*
- *Actions to safeguard biodiversity are being undertaken, but more needed*
- *IPBES regional assessment reports are a central part of the knowledge base for biodiversity policy at national and international levels.*

23 March 2018 - Landmark regional scientific reports were issued today in Colombia on the status of biodiversity in the following regions of the world: the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Africa as well as Europe and Central Asia. They show that pressures on biodiversity and resulting loss of biodiversity continue to increase in all of the regions. If unchecked, such loss will affect the ability of nature to support people and planet.

The regional assessments by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) show that the main pressures on biodiversity continue to be habitat change, climate change, invasive alien species, pollution and unsustainable use. However the relative importance of each of these pressures varies between the regions. These declines are of concern also because of the essential role biodiversity plays in providing for people, including, food, fuel and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

In all of the regions it is noted that actions have been taken to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity. However, it is also noted that these actions have, for the most part, been insufficient. It is further observed that while various plans and strategies have been developed for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity these have not generally been translated into actions.

These reports confirm the conclusions of work done under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and suggest directions for additional urgent actions to achieve global biodiversity targets.



The landmark science reports were approved by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), in Medellín, Colombia, at the 6th session of its Plenary on 22 March and released today. Written by more than 550 leading experts from over 100 countries, they are the result of three years of work, and include inputs from experts at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The four regional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services cover the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, as well as Europe and Central Asia.

Dr. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, CBD Executive Secretary, said: “These assessments are sobering. They show that the pressures on biodiversity and its associated ecosystem services from human activities, including climate change, are increasing. They show that the status of biodiversity is decreasing. They show that while the world is taking actions, more needs to be done to halt the loss of biodiversity.”

“These regional assessment reports help us understand variations across the regions of the world. However, if the current trends on biodiversity loss and ecosystems destruction are not reversed, the prospects for life on our planet become quite grim. At the current rate of destruction not only will it be difficult to safeguard life on Earth, but will jeopardize the prospects for human development and well-being. We need a paradigm shift in the way humans interact with nature; we need transformative change and a systemic approach to address the root causes of biological destruction.”

“The IPBES regional reports come at a critical time. The 196 countries of the world that are Parties to the UN Biodiversity Convention, are committed to the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity Conservation 2011-2020 and have signed-up for the implementation of 20 global biodiversity targets (the Aichi Biodiversity Targets). With only approximately 1000 days to meet their obligations, there is still time and opportunity for bold actions. We encourage all Parties to accelerate their efforts towards 2020. It is in the self-interest of all nations but also in the global interest to act to save biodiversity, the bedrock for our food, water, clean air and good health.”

The key messages from the regional and subregional assessments of biodiversity and ecosystem services for Africa, the Americas, and Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia are consistent with the information coming from the Convention on Biological Diversity. This includes the conclusion from the fourth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, recent deliberations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the updated assessment of progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

The regional summaries also highlight the need to better internalize global commitments, in particular, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, into national actions and to integrate biodiversity across sectors.

The reports show that there are several pathways for governments to achieve the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity while meeting other societal objectives relating to combatting climate change, and achieving food and water security. But to achieve these

different policy mixes, actions and measures need to be tailored to national circumstances and priorities.

The regional assessments and the upcoming global assessment on biodiversity, due for release in 2019, are a key element of the global scientific review of the progress made in the implementation of the global targets and the objectives of the current strategic plan for biodiversity 2011-2020. Its conclusions will directly feed into the preparation of *Global Biodiversity Outlook 5*, to be released in 2020.

NOTE TO EDITORS

Content of the Reports

For more information on the assessment reports, including access to data contained in the reports please go to: <https://goo.gl/oJ4DRq>

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 196 Parties so far, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 171 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified by 105 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int. For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int
