

## UN biodiversity conference outcome a huge achievement: COP 2012 Hyderabad India

NEW DELHI: India on Monday claimed a "huge" achievement with nations agreeing to increase funding for halting rate of biodiversity loss, despite economic downturn, at a UN conference it hosted and said it would have bearing on climate change and other international negotiations.

Government said developed countries have agreed to double funding to support efforts in developing states towards meeting the internationally-agreed Biodiversity Targets, and the main goals of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

"Outcome has shown that this Ministry and our negotiators ... have come out with tremendous vision, initiative and success as the President of the CoP and achieved a difficult target that we had set for ourself which is the pledge of doubling biodiversity funds from developed-developing coun-



**XI Conference of Parties**  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
**HYDERABAD INDIA 2012**

tries especially in the backdrop of the economic downturn," environment minister Jayanthi Natarajan said.

"I think, it is a huge achievement. Because, it doesn't bear on biodiversity alone. It will have bearing on climate change, it will have bearing on other international negotiations," she told reporters here after conclusion of the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity at Hyderabad.

The Environment

Ministry said in a release that all parties agreed to substantially increase domestic expenditures for biodiversity protection over the same period. These targets, and progress towards them, will be reviewed in 2014, it said.

For the first time, developing countries at COP 11, including India and several African states, pledged additional funds above and beyond their core funding towards the work of the CBD.

The conference also saw the launch of the Hyderabad Call for Biodiversity Champions. The programme will accept pledges from governments and organisations in support of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. The government of India this week committed over USD 50 million as part of the programme.

*(Source : The Economic Times)*

### From the Chairman's Desk



TERRE Policy Centre is a non-profit, non-partisan and independent organization dedicated to the sustainable solutions to our developmental imperatives.

TERRE aims at providing a forum for objective research and analysis for developing pragmatic policies and solutions. For this purpose it is imperative that we reach out to people and initiate dialogues to engage them to seek the way ahead.

With this in mind, we at TERRE have launched 'NewsleTERRE', a fortnightly e-bulletin, to bring forward critical issues related to environment, energy, food security and sustainability.

In our inaugural issue, we have taken up the theme of Biodiversity, at the backdrop of the recent Conference of Parties of Convention on Biological Diversity held in Hyderabad. Biodiversity encompasses all forms of life on earth. As anthropological activities continue to endanger biodiversity across the globe, it is the need of the hour to induce sense of urgency and enhance awareness for the need of action. As per UNEP's report 60 percent of the ecosystem is irreversibly degraded. Hence, conserving and restoring the biodiversity is the key for a sustainable future. This issue of NewsleTERRE is a small step towards achieving that goal.

**Rajendra Shende**  
Chairman, TERRE

### TERRE @ CBD Hyderabad 2012

TERRE was an active participant at the Convention on Biological Diversity 2012 held in Hyderabad, India.

- Dr. Rajendra Shende was invited as a speaker for the event - Social Benefits of Ecosystem services enhanced by restoration/rehabilitation of Degraded landscapes - sharing experiences of technological and social approaches
- TERRE organized the event - Biorights of commons for conservation of biodiversity, in association with SAFE
- The event 'World Natural Heritage and Sustainable Development: Case of Western Ghats in India' was organized by TERRE in association with UNESCO and WII

## What is Biodiversity?



SMALL MINIVET—MALE

(Source:  
[www.westernghatworldheritage.org](http://www.westernghatworldheritage.org))

“45,500 PLANT SPECIES REPRESENTING 7% OF THE WORLD FLORA AND 91,000 ANIMAL SPECIES REPRESENTING 6.5% OF THE WORLD’S FAUNA, ARE FOUND IN INDIA.”  
(MoEF, 2009)

Oh, the beauty of a forest! The pleasure of walking through it, enjoying the smells of the flowers and the wild; watching the insects flitting about and listening to the birds chirp - how we all love it and wish to return to it again and again. It is this biodiversity that we have to protect and take care of in order to enjoy the joy of it all. But what is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is the variety and differences among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part. This includes genetic diversity within and between species and of ecosystems. Thus, in essence, biodiversity represents all life. India is one of

the mega biodiversity centres in the world and has two of the world's 18 'biodiversity hotspots' located in the Western Ghats and in the Eastern Himalayas (Myers 1999). The forest cover in these areas is very dense and diverse and of pristine beauty, and incredible biodiversity.

According to an MoEF Report (1999), the country is estimated to have over 49,219 plant species and 81,251 animal species representing 12.5% of the world's flora and 6.6% of its fauna. The 2009 figures are 45,500 plant species representing 7% and about 91,000 animal species representing 6.5%.

The sacred groves of India are some of the areas in the country where the richness of biodiversity has been well preserved. The Thar desert and the Himalayas are two regions rich in biodiversity in India. There are 89 national parks and 504 wildlife sanctuaries in the country, the Chilika Lake being one of them. This lake is also an important wetland area. Learn more through map on biodiversity in India.

Over the last century, a great deal of damage has been done to the biodiversity existing on the earth. Increasing

human population, increasing consumption levels, and decreasing efficiency of use of our resources are some of the causes that have led to over-exploitation and manipulation of ecosystems. Trade in wildlife, such as rhino horn, has led to the extinction of species. Consequences of biodiversity loss can be great as any disturbance to one species gives rise to imbalance in others. In this the exotic species have a role to play.

To prevent such loss, the Government of India is setting up biosphere reserves in different parts of the country. These are multipurpose protected areas to preserve the genetic diversity in different ecosystems. Till 1999, ten biosphere reserves had been set up, namely Nilgiri, Nandadevi, Nakrek, Great Nicobar, Gulf of Mannar, Manas, Sunderbans, Similipal, and Dibru Saikhowa. A number of NGOs are being involved in the programme to create awareness. But legal protection is provided only to national parks and sanctuaries, which cover about 4.5% of India's land area.

(Source : TERI website)

Watch this space for the names of individuals sending in correct entries to Quick Question.

## Quick Question

The word "biodiversity" is a combination of which two words?

- Biology and diversity
- Biomass and diversity
- Biosphere and diversity

**If you know the answer, send in your entry to us at [terrepolicycentre@gmail.com](mailto:terrepolicycentre@gmail.com) before 12th November 2012**





## Reasons why India's biodiversity is at risk

Home to about a tenth of the world's known plant and animal species, India is a global biodiversity hot spot.

The country also has a bank of 50,000 varieties of rice, a grain that feeds about half of the world's population. Mangoes, tea, sorghum, millets and pulses grow freely on its lands.

But with 18% of the world's population crammed into just 2.4% of the global landmass, India's biodiversity is under pressure, something which the 12,000 delegates from 190 countries attending the **UN meeting on biodiversity** in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad will be aware about.

Here are some indicators of how India's biodiversity is under threat:

Four animals - the **cheetah**, Lesser Indian Rhinoceros, **Pink-headed duck**, and the **Himalayan Mountain Quail** - have become extinct in the last century.

A total of 929 animal species are threatened today, up from 648 in 2004, according to the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**. India's rank in the global "shame list" of nations struggling to protect its species diversity has slid to seven, next to China.

Just 1% of India's 8,000km- (4,970-mile)-long coastline is protected from badly planned and illegal development. Coral reefs and fish are threatened by development projects like ports and power plants.

### 'Wide gap'

To be sure, India has explored and mapped the flora and fauna of only around 70% of its area, documenting some 150,000 plants and animals. Even the government admits there is a "wide gap" in mapping all species.

So the jury is still out on the total number of new and dying species. But in a country which spends about \$2bn (£1.25bn) on biodiversity, there are some good tidings as well:

**Arunachal macaque** a new species of monkey, was discovered in the north-eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh in 2005.

The **Zoological Survey of India** reported there were 193 species of animals in India in 2011.

The number of tigers has risen to 1,706 from 1,411 in 2006.

Some of the species are no longer endangered - this week, the IUCN, removed the **Lion-tailed macaque** from



**LION TAILED MACAQUE (MACACA SILENUS) FOUND IN THE WESTERN GHATS**

(Source: [www.fritzrevilla.com](http://www.fritzrevilla.com))

its list of 25 most endangered primates as its numbers have improved.

India's Environment Minister Jayanthi Natarajan says, "India speaks from a position of strength as we need to balance economic development, poverty alleviation and protection of biodiversity".

But India needs to do a lot more. Forest cover is shrinking - authorities are talking about raising it to 33% from the existing 23%. India continues to struggle to protect the tiger, lion, elephant and rhino. And yes, it needs to complete the mapping of its biodiversity.

*Pallava Bagla is correspondent for Science magazine; Science Editor of NDTV and author of Trees of India.*

"INDIA SPEAKS FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH AS WE NEED TO BALANCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND PROTECTION OF BIODIVERSITY".

(JAYANTHI NATARAJAN, ENVIRONMENT MINISTER)

## What can we do?

**Plant native species of trees.** It will enhance biodiversity in terms of flora as well as fauna in the form of birds, insects and other small organisms which depend on trees.

**Be a responsible consumer.** As far as possible, prefer local products and buy products which involve minimal packaging.

*Let's Talk Numbers*

**27,000**

is the estimated number of species going extinct per year globally due to habitat loss.

*(Source: [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org))*

**Reader's Speak**

If you have any comments, suggestions or contributions, we would love to hear from you at [terrepolicycentre@gmail.com](mailto:terrepolicycentre@gmail.com)

## Study links biodiversity and language loss

By *Mark Kinver*  
*Environment reporter, BBC News*

The decline of linguistic and cultural diversity is linked to the loss of biodiversity, a study has suggested.

The authors said that 70% of the world's languages were found within the planet's biodiversity hotspots.

Data showed that as these important environmental areas were degraded over time, cultures and languages in the area were also being lost.

The results of the study have been published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

"Biologists estimate annual loss of species at 1,000 times or more greater than historic rates, and linguists predict that 50-90% of the world's languages will disappear by the end of the century," the researchers wrote.

Lead author Larry Gorenflo from Penn State University, in the US, said previous studies had identified a geographical connection between the two, but did not offer the level of detail required.

Dr Gorenflo told BBC News that the limitation to the data was that either the languages were listed by country or there was a dot on the map to indicate the location.

"But what you did not know was if the area extended two kilometres or 200 kilometres, so you really did not get a sense of the extent of the language," he explained.

"We used improved language data to really get a more solid sense of how languages and biodiversity co-occurred and an understanding of how geographically extensive the language was."

He said the study achieved this by also looking at smaller areas with high biodiversity, such as national parks or other protected habitats.

"When we did that, not only did we get a sense of co-occurrence at a regional scale, but we also got a sense that co-occurrence was found at a much finer scale," he said.

"We are not quite sure yet why this happens, but in a lot of cases it may well be that biodiversity evolved as part-and-parcel of cultural diver-

sity, and vice versa."

In their paper, the researchers pointed out that, out of the 6,900 or more languages spoken on Earth, more than 4,800 occurred in regions containing high biodiversity.

Dr Gorenflo described these locations as "very important landscapes" which were "getting fewer and fewer" but added that the study's data could help provide long-term security.

"It provides a wonderful opportunity to integrate conservation efforts - you can have people who can get funding for biological conservation, and they can collaborate with people who can get funding for linguistic or cultural conservation," he suggested.

"In the past, it was hard to get biologists to look at people.

"That has really changed dramatically in the past few years. One thing that a lot of biologists and ecologists are now seeing is that people are part of these ecosystems."

*(Source : BBC News)*

"I once had a sparrow alight upon my shoulder for a moment, while I was hoeing in a village garden, and I felt that I was more distinguished by that circumstance that I should have been by any epaulet I could have worn."

- Henry David Thoreau

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