



22 May 2014 – The term [biological diversity](#) covers the millions of different species of animals inhabiting our planet; within these different species it also covers genetic differences and the different ecosystems where the species live and interact. The biodiversity we see today is the fruit of billions of years of evolution, shaped by natural processes and, increasingly, by the influence of humans. It forms the web of life of which we are an integral part and upon which we so fully depend.

The level of diversity is very different throughout the planet and depends on the climate. Different aspects of biodiversity influence each other, and therefore, if one thing changes in an ecosystem it might change the whole balance and end up destroying it.

Biological diversity has been increasing through years but is now decreasing, so far the loss has been 40 % between 1970 and 2000. The decrease is largely caused by humans and represents a serious threat to human development.

Climate change is the biggest threat to biological diversity and the consequences of destroying ecosystems are immeasurable. Ecosystems regulate the availability of water, and its quality. Degradation of ecosystems increases water insecurity and ecosystem conservation and restoration therefore help us achieve water security. On the occasion of the International day for biological diversity, Ban Ki-moon stated: "Although seemingly abundant, only a tiny amount of the water on our planet is easily available as freshwater. We live in an increasingly water

insecure world where demand often outstrips supply and where water quality often fails to meet minimum standards. Under current trends, future demands for water will not be met."

Despite mounting efforts over the past 20 years, the loss of the world's biological diversity, mainly from [habitat destruction](#), over-harvesting, pollution and the inappropriate introduction of foreign plants and animals, has continued. Urgent and decisive action is needed to conserve and maintain genes, species and ecosystems, with a view to the sustainable management and use of biological resources.