



International Day for Biological Diversity - 'Biodiversity for Sustainable Development'

Biological diversity or biodiversity refers to the variety of living things present on earth. Whether it is bacteria, fungi, birds, insects, plants, trees, spiders, moss, or algae, all are considered biodiversity.



22 MAY 2015
INTERNATIONAL DAY
FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
BIODIVERSITY FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is the concept of providing for the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It places emphasis on ensuring environmental conservation and preservation while striving for social and economic growth.

Biodiversity is essential for sustainable development and human well-being in various ways including food production, health, provision of clean air and water, contribution to livelihoods, and mitigating climate change. For this reason, the theme for International Day for Biological Diversity Day (IDB) this year is '*Biodiversity and Sustainable Development*'.

- **Food production** - the thousands of crops and animal breeds used in agriculture all come from the rich genetic pool of species. Biodiversity is also the basis for soil fertility, pollination, pest control and all aspects important for producing the world's food.
- **Livelihoods** - biodiversity directly supports major economic activity and jobs in such diverse sectors as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, pharmaceuticals, pulp and paper, cosmetics, horticulture, construction and biotechnology.



- **Health** - a large number of prescription drugs are derived from plant extracts, while pests and vector-based diseases are regulated by other biological species. In Guyana, we are very familiar with the use of 'bush' medicine for various ailments.

- **Ecosystem services** - biodiversity and ecosystem functioning provide goods and services essential for human health – including nutrients, clean air and water. For example, forests protect water supplies, wetlands regulate floods, and healthy soils increase water and nutrient availability for crops.



- **Climate change** - forests and their plant inhabitants help to fight climate change by storing carbon. Additionally, ecosystems such as forests, wetlands and mangroves play a critical role in reducing the impacts of extreme events such as droughts, floods and tsunamis.

Since biodiversity is so important to economic and social development it is crucial that we consciously increase our efforts to protect our environment. You can do your part by doing the following:

- Learn as much as you can about biodiversity and why it is important.
- Dispose of litter in bins and encourage others to do the same.
- Pledge to help preserve nature's beauty.
- Do not support persons selling parts and products of wild animals or plants that have been illegally captured or harvested.
- Participate in and contribute to community-based actions to protect the environment, e.g., tree planting, clean-ups etc.
- Report any form of wildlife cruelty to the relevant authorities.

International Action

It is important to note that the need to address biodiversity issues, as a key element of sustainable development, beyond 2015, has been widely recognised in a variety of ways. Governments have already made a number of commitments to protect biodiversity. A key achievement was the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. This year's theme also reflects the importance of efforts that are being made at all levels to establish a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as part of the United Nations Post-2015 Development Agenda for the period of 2015-2030 and the relevance of biodiversity for the achievement of sustainable development.

To learn more of International Day for Biological Diversity and how you can contribute to it log onto: <https://www.cbd.int/idb/2015/> or tweet using the hashtag #BiodiversitySustainsDevelopment.

Source: <https://www.cbd.int/development/doc/sdg-feb2014-info-en.pdf>

Share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: "Our Earth, Our Environment", C/O EIT Division, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: eit.epaguyana@gmail.com