



# Biodiversity Monthly Newsletter

Ethiopian Institute of  
Biodiversity



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Biodiversity

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## **Biodiversity Loss Becoming Major Threat for Farmed Plants and Livestock Breeds**

**May 27**– A decline in the diversity of farmed plants and livestock breeds is gathering pace, threatening future food supplies for the world’s growing population, the head of a new United Nations panel on biodiversity said on Monday.

Preserving neglected animal breeds and plants was necessary as they could have genes resistant to future diseases or to shifts in the climate to warmer temperatures, more droughts or downpours, Zakri Abdul Hamid said.

“The loss of biodiversity is happening faster and everywhere, even among farm animals,” Zakri told a conference of 450 experts in Trondheim, central Norway, in his first speech as founding chair of the U.N. biodiversity panel.

Many traditional breeds of cows, sheep or goats have fallen out of favour, often because they yield less meat or milk than new breeds. Globalisation also means that people’s food preferences narrow down to fewer plants.

Zakri said there were 30,000 edible plants but that just 30 crops accounted for 95 percent of the energy in human food that is dominated by rice, wheat, maize, millet and sorghum.

He said it was “more important than ever to have a large genetic pool to enable organisms to withstand and adapt to new conditions.” That would help to ensure food for a global population set to reach 9 billion by 2050 from 7 billion now.

Zakri noted that the U.N.’s Food and Agriculture Organization estimated last year that 22 percent of the world’s livestock breeds were at risk of extinction. That means there are fewer than 1,000 animals in each breed.

The extinctions of some domesticated animals and plants was happening in tandem with accelerating losses of wild species caused by factors such as deforestation, expansion of cities, pollution and climate change, he said.

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Irene Hoffmann, chief of the FAO's animal genetic resources branch, told Reuters that eight percent of livestock breeds had already become extinct. Many nations had started breeding programmes for rare livestock, from llamas to pigs. Some were freezing embryos or even stem cells that might be used in cloning, she said.

In 2010, governments set goals including halting extinction of known threatened species by 2020 and expanding the area set aside in parks or protected areas for wildlife to 17 percent of the Earth's land surface from about 13 percent now. **Reuters**

### **Biodiversity Day Colorfully Celebrated in Ethiopia**

**22 May 2013:** The International Day for Biological Diversity was colorfully celebrated in Arbaminch on May 22, 2013 with various events such as scientific conference, field visits and sports. The celebration was officially opened by the speech of Arbaminch university president Dr. Feleke Woldeyes.

This year's theme was "Water and Biodiversity". In his key note address Dr. Gemedo Dalle, Director General of the Institute of Biodiversity Conservation, said that this year's biodiversity day is celebrated for 12<sup>th</sup> time in the world. The theme **Water and Biodiversity** was chosen to coincide with the United Nations designation of 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation. Designation of IDB 2013 on the theme of water provides Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the public at large the opportunity to raise awareness about this vital issue, and to increase positive action. .

According to Dr. Gemedo, "If biodiversity is conserved properly, by becoming natural Engineers, water will be filtered and the natural evaporation and transpiration process/cycle continues normally. However, the loss of biodiversity is bringing big water crisis in the world."

Different research papers were presented by different researchers on the two days scientific conference. The day was celebrated by IBC staff, Arbaminch University lecturers staff, and invited guests from different university and institutions. Source:

**IBC**

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### **MoU signed to establish a relationship between Lanzhou University and IBC**

**20 May 2013**, LZU and IBC signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish a relationship whereby the Parties may exchange information and seek and implement programs and activities of mutual interest.

LZU and IBC agreed that it is in their mutual interest to collaborate in the exchange of information on a wide range of natural resources and environmental management related issues especially biodiversity conservation, ecosystem monitoring and management, sustainable utilization and activities which may be of mutual interest.

The activities include, but are not limited to, the following: collaborate on biodiversity conservation and sustainable utilization with focus on research, capacity development and public awareness raising; establishment of a remote sensing images processing center in Ethiopia; application of research findings and technology transfer; establishing/strengthening of the infrastructure for ecological related activities in the IBC; establish demonstration stations on ecosystem monitoring and plant resources in Ethiopia and collaborate on ecosystem restoration/rehabilitation in Ethiopia.

Lanzhou University, founded in 1909, is a major research university located in Lanzhou, Gansu Province, China. It is one of the key universities under Ministry of Education, China. It is also the best comprehensive university in northwest of China. Lanzhou University is active in developing international education exchange and cooperation through the international exchange of post-graduate students, visiting scholars and scientific research cooperation with universities and organizations in more than 30 foreign countries and regions

IBC was established in 1976 and has a long history of success in research and scientific programs aimed at the proper conservation, sustainable utilization and access and benefit sharing of Ethiopia's Biodiversity and associated indigenous knowledge. Source: **IBC**

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### **AMU and IBC agreed to establish relationships on areas of mutual interest**

**22 May 2013:** Arba Minch University (AMU) and Institute of Biodiversity Conservation (IBC) signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on activities of mutual interest. The purpose of the MOU is to establish a relationship by and between AU and IBC where by the parties may exchange information and seek and implement programs and activities of mutual interest.

Some of the activities of mutual interest, among others, include: pursuing joint research collaborations in all areas of natural resources and environmental sciences including but not limited to biodiversity conservation, molecular biology/biotechnology, medicinal plants, environmental protection, microbiology, indigenous knowledge, access and benefit sharing; collaboration in research, teaching and conducting training programs and workshops; exchange of information on biodiversity conservation, sustainable utilization and access and benefit sharing.

Arba Minch University is a governmental university which offers undergraduate and graduate programs. Before its inauguration as a University, it was known as Arba Minch Water Technology Institute (AWTI) offering a qualified course in water resources planning, design and development. AWTI was established in 1986 with the objective of creating a skilled and qualified manpower vital for the effective utilization and exploitation of water resources for various aspects of national development.

IBC was established in 1976 and has a long history of success in research and scientific programs aimed at the proper conservation, sustainable utilization and access and benefit sharing of Ethiopia's Biodiversity and associated indigenous knowledge. **IBC**

### **Inception workshop to support the ratification and entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol convened**

**11 May 2013, Addis Ababa:** An inception workshop to support the ratification and entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) was

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conducted here in Addis Ababa from 7-10 May 2013 with the objective of sharing experiences and good practices on the ratification and accession processes of the Nagoya Protocol.

H.E Ato Sileshi Getahun, State Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, warmly welcomed participants and delivered an opening remark. In his opening remark, H.E said that “...Ethiopia has taken a number of fundamental measures to conserve biological resources prior and after the ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The upgrading of the former Plant Genetic Resources Center to the Institute of Biodiversity Conservation (IBC) to accommodate forest, animal and microbial genetic resources and the associated indigenous knowledge was the first step. Following its reestablishment, a National Policy on the Conservation and Research of biological resources was issued. As per the provision in Article 6 of the CBD, the country developed and published the Ethiopian Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAP).”

He also stated that after ratifying the CBD and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT-PGRFA) as well as adopting international model laws and guidelines, Ethiopia issued a proclamation and regulation on Access to Genetic Resources and Community Knowledge, and Community Rights.

After six years of negotiations, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on 29 October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan. The Protocol significantly advances the Convention's third objective by providing a strong basis for greater legal certainty and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources.

Specific obligations to support compliance with domestic legislations or regulatory requirements of the Party providing genetic resources and contractual obligations reflected in mutually agreed terms are a significant innovation of the Protocol. These

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compliance provisions as well as provisions establishing more predictable conditions for access to genetic resources will contribute to ensuring the sharing of benefits when genetic resources leave a Party providing genetic resources.

Generally, the Protocol is a major turning point for proper implementation of the Access and Benefit Sharing agreements and follow-up in Ethiopia and elsewhere. Many of the articles of the protocol are more or less included in the existing ABS laws of Ethiopia and it is strongly believed that the Protocol will boost their implementation especially when negotiations and agreements are made between Ethiopia and foreign companies.

Cognizant to this fact, Ethiopia acceded the protocol a year ago being one of the 16 champion countries and parties particularly developing countries are eagerly waiting for the entry into force of the protocol. There remain still 34 countries to ratify the protocol for its entry into force.

Ethiopia and other countries which ratified/acceded the protocol shared their experiences. Dr. Gemedo Dalle, presenting Ethiopian Experience, pointed out that members of Ethiopian Parliament delivered their paramount help in promoting the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol. Awareness creation through media, workshops and face-to-face discussions with higher officials were held as part of the ratification process. He acknowledged Ethiopian Government for its responsible action in availing all necessary support and ratifying the Nagoya Protocol.

Dr. Gemedo said “The Government was seriously following up the process and we were challenged particularly by the Ethiopian Parliament members on its progress. And finally we were able to ratify the Protocol. Involving all responsible stakeholders and officials is crucial in such cases. Funds are also required to carry out different activities prior to ratification, however, it does not cost as much if we are really interested in ratifying the protocol. For example, we did the ratification using small government funds. We must not forget that Africa was at the forefront in developing the Protocol and we have to ratify it without taking time for Africa’s benefit.”

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Fifty delegates from more than 25 countries around the world and local participants such as members of Ethiopian Parliament, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the Institute of Biodiversity Conservation (IBC) attended the meeting. The meeting was organized by UNEP and IBC. Source: **IBC**

### **FAO Documents Wildlife Extinction Risks from Climate Change**

**May 2013:** Highlighting the risks posed by climate change to biodiversity, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) has released a study that documents climate-induced changes to ecosystems and measures to promote adaptation.

The report, titled 'Wildlife in a changing climate,' describes the roles of major climate-induced changes related to disturbances and extreme weather events, as well as long-term ecosystem and landscape changes in coasts, mountains, forests and grasslands. It underscores the need to prepare for ecosystem and landscape change, new species distributions and interactions, human-wildlife conflicts, wildfires, invasive species and changes in wildlife disease and health.

On adaptation measures, the study highlights approaches to maintain current ecosystems, adapt management, restore damaged ecosystems, and adopt integrated and landscape approaches. It underscores that globally all ecosystems will be affected by climate change and that human-use of these systems will be forced to evolve. Source: **FAO**