



Biodiversity Monthly Newsletter

Ethiopian Institute of
Biodiversity



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Integrating Ecosystems into Urban Planning Can Deliver Major Economic Benefits and Reduce Environmental Damage

October 15th, 2012 Hyderabad (India), 16 October 2012 – Global urbanization will have significant implications for biodiversity and ecosystems if current trends continue, with knock-on effects for human health and development, according to a new assessment by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The assessment, which draws on contributions from more than 123 scientists worldwide, states that over 60 percent of the land projected to become urban by 2030 has yet to be built. This presents a major opportunity to greatly improve global sustainability by promoting low-carbon, resource-efficient urban development that can reduce adverse effects on biodiversity and improve quality of life, it says.

The Cities and Biodiversity Outlook is the world's first global analysis of how projected patterns of urban land expansion will impact biodiversity and crucial ecosystems. The world's total urban area is expected to triple between 2000 and 2030, with urban populations set to double to around 4.9 billion in the same period. This urban expansion will draw heavily on water and other natural resources and will consume prime agricultural land.

“The way our cities are designed, the way people live in them and the policy decisions of local authorities will define, to a large extent, future global sustainability,” said Braulio Dias, Executive Secretary of the CBD.

“The innovation lies not so much in developing new infrastructural technologies and approaches but to work with what we already have. The results often require fewer economic resources and are more sustainable,” he added.

The report states that urban expansion is occurring fast in areas close to biodiversity ‘hotspots’ and coastal zones. In rapidly urbanizing regions, such as large and mid-size settlements in sub-Saharan Africa, India and China, resources to implement sustainable urban planning are often lacking. **CBD Press release**

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Gemedo Dalle Elected to be the next SBSTTA Chair

October 17th, 2012. 12 October 2012 - Delegates of the 11th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP11) Hyderabad, India elected Dr. Gemedo Dalle from Ethiopia (Director General, Institute of Biodiversity Conservation) in their plenary session to be the next SBSTTA Chair. Plenary took note of the report on credentials and the list of observer organizations in the meeting.

Article 25 of the Convention on Biological Diversity establishes an open-ended intergovernmental scientific advisory body known as the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to provide the Conference of the Parties (COP) and, as appropriate, its other subsidiary bodies, with timely advice relating to the implementation of the Convention. As a subsidiary body of the COP, SBSTTA is to report regularly to the COP on all aspects of its work.

Multidisciplinary and open to participation by all Parties, SBSTTA comprises government representatives competent in the relevant field of expertise. Its functions include: providing assessments of the status of biological diversity; providing assessments of the types of measures taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention; and responding to questions that the COP may put to the body.

It is to be remembered that Dr. Gemedo Dalle was elected as member of the SBSTTA Bureau to represent Africa during the sixteenth session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Plant Genetic Resources, foundation for agricultural sustainability

October 15th, 2012 Plant genetic resources are deeply rooted in our culture and economy. Their wide diversity, still present in the country, needs to be preserved and wisely utilized. In fact, it represents an immense treasure for the development of our society, in particular sustainable agricultural development.

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The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT-PGRFA) is a legally binding instrument with an objective of conservation and sustainable use of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use, in harmony with the Convention on Biological Diversity, for sustainable agriculture and food security.

As signatory to this Treaty, Ethiopia previously produced two country reports on the State of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA).

The review of the first draft of the third country report on the state of PGRFA has taken place at Inter Continental Addis Hotel Friday, October 5/2012.

In his opening speech, His Excellency Mr. Sileshi Getahun, State Minister of Ministry of Agriculture said “the diverse cultural practice and life style of local community are important factors for development and maintenance of genetic resources.”

Ethiopian farmers play significant role in conservation, sustainable utilization and diversification of crops. The Institute of biodiversity conservation, as focal point to the IT-PGRFA is responsible for following up implementation of the Treaty as well as undertaking conservation, sustainable use and sharing benefits arising from utilization of plant genetic resources according to the Treaty.

Mr. Abiyot Berhanu, on behalf of the Director General said, “Ethiopia has enormous diversity of plant genetic resources, though it faces climate change and other threats. On this regard, collecting germplasm and conducting basic and advanced research to prevent genetic erosion has to be the priority.”

The in-situ conservation of cultivated and wild species from the forest ecosystems, including wild crops and fruits play an important role for rural people in terms of food security, both quantitatively and nutritionally. Hence, conservation and promoting sustainable utilization of genetic resources and associated indigenous knowledge is underway by IBC and stakeholders.

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It is necessary to assist the on-farm management of traditional landraces, which bear adaptive characters essential for crop improvement programs, and complement it with an adequate ex-situ conservation strategy of these resources. Since the inception of the institute, IBC has conserved more than 72,000 accessions of various crop species comprising of more than 400 species in cold storage facilities and field gene banks.

The third country report evaluates the outcomes, challenges and possible scenarios of those activities undertaken by IBC and different institutions based on selected indicators. **IBC**

IUCN Reports on Freshwater Species Extinction in Northern Africa

October 2nd, 2012 10 September 2012: A report from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) finds that 28% of aquatic species in northern Africa face extinction, higher than elsewhere in Africa. This includes fishes, molluscs, crabs, dragon and damselflies, as well as aquatic plants. Coordinated by the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN Med), the report also demonstrates the socio-economic benefits provided by the species, and notes the especially rapid loss of wetland ecosystem species.

The report, titled “Assessment of the Socio-Economic Value of Freshwater Species for the Northern African Region,” includes an introduction to freshwater ecosystems and the situation in northern Africa, outlines the study methodology, and examines the socio-economic value of freshwater fish and aquatic plants. It concludes with recommendations for reducing freshwater species decline, including: involving local communities; encouraging sustainable exploitation; and integrating ecosystem value into planning processes.