



XI Conference of Parties  
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY  
HYDERABAD INDIA 2012

## Press Brief

# Health and Biodiversity

## Why is this important?

Health is often considered as a basic human right. It is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not simply as being free from illness.

Biodiversity can be seen as the foundation for human health, as it underpins the functioning of the ecosystems upon which we depend for many aspects of our health. Agricultural biodiversity contributes to diverse diets, and there are many synergies between biodiversity, nutritional diets and human health. Ecosystem services can provide clean, fresh water crucial to healthy populations. There are many recreational benefits to biodiversity, which can contribute to aesthetic and spiritual enrichment, as well as overall well-being. Traditional medicine relies on a diversity of biological components, and many modern medical discoveries have been the result of studying genetic diversity. Biodiversity can also provide options for adaptation to climate change, and can help mitigate the effects of floods and disease.

The current rate of biodiversity loss may potentially have grave consequences and hamper efforts to meet a range of sustainable development goals, including those related to poverty, hunger and health, by increasing the vulnerability of the poor and reducing their options for sustainable development. The poor and the marginalized, in particular children, will suffer first and most severely as they rely directly on biodiversity and associated ecosystem services for their very survival.

All human health ultimately depends on ecosystem services that are made possible by biodiversity and the products derived from them. Our fundamental reliance on biodiversity and ecosystem services offers significant opportunities to more consistently recognize and manage biodiversity's services for human health and to contribute to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use at all scales. We can improve our understanding of the complex linkages between biodiversity, ecosystem services and human health, as well as promote co-benefits through joint policies and implementation activities, by strengthening collaboration with the health sector, and better integrating biodiversity into national health strategies and programmes and health into national biodiversity strategies and activities.



Convention on  
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## What news to expect in Hyderabad?

In May 2012, the sixteenth meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-16), recommended that COP 11 take action to further raise awareness of the inter-relations between health and biodiversity and collaborate with the health sector to improve mainstreaming of biodiversity into national health policies and plans. In particular, SBSTTA recommended to COP 11 that cooperation be further strengthened with the World Health Organization and that a joint work programme be established with the WHO, and with other appropriate organizations and initiatives, focused on human health and biodiversity. Finally, SBSTTA recommended the further development of indicators related to health and biodiversity and encourages that they be used.

At COP 11, several side events related to human health and biodiversity will be held. These will explore the potential for co-benefits and for increased collaboration between the health and biodiversity sectors. Updates regarding the recent 1st regional workshop on the inter-linkages between human health and biodiversity held in Manaus, Brazil and plans for future workshops will be discussed at the side events. In addition, the outline of a CBD  will also be discussed. This Technical Series will serve as a state of knowledge review for all topics related to the inter-linkages between human health and biodiversity, and is planned for launch in 2013.

A Good Practice Guide on Human Health and Biodiversity, along with a Good Practice Guide on Food Security, will be launched at COP 11 during a side event held in collaboration with the Biodiversity for Development programme. These Guides will aid in the cross-sector support for implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and in mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into the health sector, with a focus on development and poverty reduction.

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