



**CONVENTION ON  
BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY**

**Media Advisory**

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***Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Biodiversity Synthesis report released  
for the International Day for Biological Diversity  
'Future generations at risk if current patterns of biodiversity loss continue to increase,'  
report warns***

Decision-makers and scientists are gathering at McGill University, in Montreal, Canada on 19 May 2005 to mark the International Day for Biological Diversity. The theme for the year, "Biodiversity: Life Insurance for our Changing World" reminds us that, in addition to providing the physical conditions for all life, biodiversity also plays an important role in protecting life and making it resilient to the pressures brought about by global environmental change.

As part of the celebrations, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity joins the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and McGill University in launching "Ecosystems and Human Well-being: The Biodiversity Synthesis report," the latest report by the MA, prepared in cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The report concludes that in the last 50 years, human actions have changed ecosystems more than at any other time in history. While this has lifted many people out of poverty, at the same time, unsustainable patterns of production and consumption have led to the loss of biodiversity. The consequences of this loss are already becoming apparent: the collapse of regional fisheries, climate change, pollution and rising invasive species. The harm done to ecosystems puts the well-being of future generations at risk and if current patterns continue, biodiversity loss will increase.

The report is the result of 5 years of collaborative work involving 1360 natural and social scientists from around the world. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment ([www.maweb.org](http://www.maweb.org)) is the largest study ever conducted on the changes to ecosystems and its impact on human well-being.

Conference headliners will discuss the report, the Convention and the quest for sustainable development at the local, national and global levels. Speakers include **Hamdallah Zedan**, Executive Secretary for the Convention on Biological Diversity, **Walter Reid** director of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, **Anantha Duraipah** of the International Institute for Sustainable Development and co-chair of the MA Biodiversity Synthesis Team, and a number of McGill University scholars including **Oliver Coomes**, **Catherine Potvin**, **Colin Chapman**, **Brian Leung** and **Andy Gonzalez**.

The conference is organized by the McGill Office of the Vice-Principal (Research), the Faculties of Arts, Science, Engineering, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, the McGill School for the Environment, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

**What:** Announcement, followed by all-day conference.

**Where:** Faculty Club, McGill University 3450 McTavish St. Montreal, Canada

**For further information, contact:**

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Advance copies of the report can be downloaded from [http://newsroom.wri.org/media\\_previews.cfm](http://newsroom.wri.org/media_previews.cfm)

**When:** 10:30 am to 4:30 pm, 19 May 2005

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