

Press release – for immediate release

New UN Report reveals biodiversity crisis

World Future Council calls for new economic vision

Nairobi/Bonn/Hamburg, May 10, 2010. Commenting on the alarming Global Biodiversity Report launched by the United Nations in Nairobi today, Dr. Vandana Shiva, Founding Councillor of the World Future Council (WFC) and Director of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, said: „Biodiversity is the real capital of the poor in the South. Destruction of biodiversity is at the root of hunger and poverty.“

The United Nations report warns that we „continue to lose biodiversity at a rate never seen before in history.“ According to the UN, the provision of fresh water, food, fibre and medicine as well as the filtration of pollutants and the pollination of crops are among those ecosystem services potentially threatened by decline and changes in biodiversity.

Ashok Khosla, WFC Founding Councillor and President of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) commented: „Despite the formal commitment of governments to conserve biodiversity, very little in their policies, budgets or even indicators of economic, social and human well-being reflects this fundamental importance. Much of the actual action on the ground to preserve biodiversity must be taken by farmers, industrialists and ordinary citizens but without governments giving the highest priority to saving this critical resource, it will inexorably be lost – and with it the hope for a better future for all.“

WFC Founder Jakob von Uexkull added: „Our economic activities cause irreversible damage to the life support systems of our planet. Business as usual is no longer possible. We need a new economic system which values the ecosystem services provided by biodiversity to humanity and respects them as foundation of our life.“

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Notes to Editors

On May 10, the "Global Biodiversity Report 3" was launched in Nairobi at the start of an expert meeting of the UN Convention of Biological Diversity, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice.

The report states, amongst others, that

- Species which have been assessed for extinction are on average moving closer to extinction.
- Nearly a quarter of plant species are estimated to be threatened with extinction.

- Freshwater wetlands, sea ice habitats, salt marshes, coral reefs, and shellfish reefs are all showing serious decline.
- Crop and livestock genetic diversity continues to decline in agricultural systems.
- Extensive fragmentation and degradation of forests, rivers and other ecosystems have also led to loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Habitat change, overexploitation, pollution, invasive alien species and climate change are either constant or increasing in intensity.

The report is available here <http://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo3/doc/GBO3-final-en.pdf> and a summary version can be downloaded here <http://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo3/doc/GBO3-Summary-final-en.pdf>

World Future Council

The World Future Council brings the interests of future generations to the centre of policy making. Its up to 50 eminent members from around the globe have already successfully promoted change. The Council addresses challenges to our common future and provides decision-makers with effective policy solutions. In-depth research underpins advocacy work for international agreements, regional policy frameworks and national lawmaking and thus produces practical and tangible results. The World Future Council is registered as a charitable foundation in Hamburg, Germany.

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