

# Global Environment Outlook 3 ? missing the 2010 biodiversity target

World leaders have failed to deliver commitments made in 2002 to reduce the global rate of biodiversity loss by 2010, and have instead overseen alarming biodiversity declines. These findings are the result of a study by BirdLife International and others such as UNEP-WCMC which has fed into the *Global Environment Outlook 3*. The flagship publication of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has been launched at UNEP Nairobi during the opening ceremony of the 14<sup>th</sup> Subsidiary body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 14) meeting. Government representatives and other stakeholders from around the world are meeting in Nairobi to discuss, among other issues, the 2010 target and how to address the biodiversity crisis. The findings represent the first assessment of how the target has not been met. Compiling over 30 indicators ? measures of different aspects of biodiversity, including changes in species? populations and risk of extinction, habitat extent and community composition ? the study found no evidence of a significant reduction in the rate of decline of biodiversity, and that the pressures facing biodiversity continue to increase. The synthesis provides overwhelming evidence that the 2010 target has not been achieved. "Our analysis shows that governments have failed to deliver on the commitments they made in 2002: biodiversity is still being lost as fast as ever, and we have made little headway in reducing the pressures on species, habitats and ecosystems", said BirdLife's Dr Stuart Butchart recently - the study's lead author. "Our data show that 2010 will not be the year that biodiversity loss was halted, but it needs to be the year in which we start taking the issue seriously and substantially increase our efforts to take care of what is left of our planet", Dr Butchart continued. The indicators included in the study were developed and synthesised through the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership ? a collaboration of over 40 international organisations and agencies developing global biodiversity indicators and the leading source of information on trends in global biodiversity. According to the United Nations Environment Programme's Chief Scientist Prof Joseph, since 1970, animal populations have been reduced by 30%, the area of mangroves and sea grasses by 20% and the coverage of living corals by 40%. These losses are clearly unsustainable, since biodiversity makes a key contribution to human well-being and sustainable development, as recognised by the UN Millennium Development Goals. "Although nations have put in place some significant policies to slow biodiversity declines, these have been woefully inadequate, and the gap between the pressures on biodiversity and the responses is getting ever wider", said Dr Butchart. The study recognised that there have been some important local or national successes in tackling biodiversity loss, including the designation of many protected areas (e.g. the 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> Juruena National Park in Brazil), the recovery of particular species (e.g. European Bison) and

the prevention of some extinction (e.g. Black Stilt of New Zealand). But despite these encouraging achievements, efforts to address the loss of biodiversity need to be substantially strengthened, and sustained investment in coherent global biodiversity monitoring and indicators is essential to track and improve the effectiveness of these responses.

"Governments must agree and commit to deliver new well defined, ambitious but achievable post 2010 targets in order to stem the current tide of biodiversity loss. Biodiversity and the ecosystem services it provides are essential for the survival of humanity and mother earth, and hence we should not fail again. . The BirdLife Partnership is committed to work with Governments and other stakeholders to reduce biodiversity loss by saving species and ecosystems and working with communities in ensuring sustainable use, through national and regional processes", said Dr Julius Arinaitwe, Regional Director for Africa, BirdLife International Partnership.