

Biodiversity for Development ? Policy Briefing

Title This is an extract from the BirdLife Policy Brief for CBD COP-10, Nagoya - Biodiversity for Development Biodiversity provides the critical 'ecosystem services' on which development depends, including air and water purification, soil conservation, disease control and reduced vulnerability to natural disasters such as floods, droughts, storms and landslides. Biodiversity and healthy ecosystem services increase resilience to economic shocks and environmental change, including impacts of climate change. Poor people, especially in rural areas, depend on biodiversity for food, fuel, shelter, medicines and many other elements of their livelihoods. Therefore, addressing many of the pressures that threaten biodiversity can have positive benefits on livelihoods of local communities. Unsustainable use of natural resources can deepen poverty as essential resources are exhausted and services and functions of natural ecosystems are destroyed or diminished. But, while conservation often contributes to people's livelihoods, there is also a danger that if not done properly conservation can contribute to poverty at the local level, particularly by restricting and denying access to resources, by changing power relations or by failing to compensate displaced or disadvantaged people appropriately and adequately. Conservation that excludes people can lead to increased poverty, resentment and conflict, whilst working with people can build social capital, improve democracy and reduce poverty. Local people are often the most appropriate long term guardians of biodiversity and habitats and they often have statutory or customary rights over local land and resources; their knowledge can support sustainable management; they stand to lose most if local resources are depleted and so are motivated.