International Day for Biological Diversity

Title

Since 1994, the world has celebrated the International Day for Biological Diversity on 22 May. In the year of International Year of Biodiversity this year?s theme is ?Biodiversity for Development and Poverty Alleviation?. Efforts to improve the situation of the poor have often focused on financial benefits at the expense of sustainable livelihoods, security, resilience and wellbeing underpinned by healthy, biodiverse ecosystems. For International Day for Biological Diversity we are showcasing a series of projects from the BirdLife Partnership?s work around the world which improve livelihoods while conserving biodiversity. With our unique local-to global structure, the BirdLife Partnership supports models of development which recognise the irreplaceable role of biodiversity**.** Our conservation and development projects happen at local level, at thousands of sites, using a combination of globally recognised science and best practice, and local knowledge. Since the late 1990s, BirdLife has been nurturing and networking grassroots groups at key sites for biodiversity conservation (Important Bird Areas - IBAs). These Local Conservation Groups (LCGs), build on local experience and enthusiasm. Membership is typically drawn from the communities surrounding the site, but may also include local authority representatives, business people and other stakeholders. Here are just a few examples of how BirdLife?s work around the world contributes to improvements in livelihoods and wellbeing while protecting birds and other biodiversity.

- **Strengthening conservation of Mount Siburan IBA, Mindoro, Philippines**
- **Helping local communities to influence decision makers in Northwestern Pichincha, Ecuador**
- **Conservation of Nyabarongo Wetlands for Sustainable Livelihoods, Rwanda**
- **Safeguarding priority forest sites with local community support, Fiji**
- **Improving natural resource use by local communities at Cape Mount, Liberia**
- **Biodiversity conservation in the indigenous Chimalapas region, Oaxaca, Mexico**

Development has brought benefits for many, through improved health, nutrition, comfort and quality of life. But progress has been distributed unequally, and has brought unprecedented environmental change. Poor and vulnerable communities, who consume least, are already feeling the effects of environmental degradation. Natural sources of food, fuel, fibre and clean water, and the medicinal herbs which provide primary health care for hundreds of millions of people, are disappearing as forests and wetlands are converted for the production of globally tradable commodities like soya and palm oil. ?***It is within the reach of this generation, not the last one, not the next one, to turn the tide of the massive and growing ecological crisis that is worsening poverty for millions of people and threatens all life on Earth***. " Dr Marco Lambertini, BirdLife International Chief Executive