Title

Some of the world?s leading non-governmental organizations ? including BirdLife - alerted world governments in a preparatory meeting for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) yesterday in Nairobi to the alarming rate of degradation of the environment and urged them to be more ambitious in their efforts to address this problem. Biodiversity is being lost at a pace never seen before, undermining the capacity of ecosystems to provide essential services and goods that underpin the livelihoods of millions of people and the global economy, said the NGOs in a statement. The underlying causes of this problem have not been addressed adequately, they said, because current economic and governance systems and policies are promoting the over consumption of natural resources to an unsustainable level. Speaking on behalf of the coalition, BirdLife?s Muhtari Aminu-Kano noted the continuing alarming rate of biodiversity loss as a consequence of a failure to address the underlying causes. ?The capacity of the planet to support an increasing human population at high levels of production and consumption is finite. The sustainability of life on earth is being severely undermined,? noted Aminu-Kano. ?We are at a crossroads. As the Global Biodiversity Outlook warned, without ?swift, radical and creative action? we will fast-track destruction of life on earth. The good news is: we can still do it. We can learn from existing successes and develop intelligent and equitable approaches for the future.? The statement was read during an intervention in a working session of delegates from 193 countries gathered in the United Nations Environment Programme?s building in Nairobi for a two-week meeting known as SBSTTA (Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice). The SBSTTA provides scientific advice to the decision-making body of the CBD. Its recommendations will be incorporated into a Strategic Plan that should be agreed by world leaders when they meet in Japan later this year to commit to targets to reduce the loss of biodiversity over the next ten years. The targets include eliminating subsidies harmful to the environment, addressing overfishing and establishing norms for the equitable sharing of benefits arising from biodiversity. The NGOs proposed the reformulation of the targets to ensure that governments recognize the value and benefits of biodiversity for relevant sectors of the economy, as well as the cost they will bear from its loss. Mobilization of resources and action was urged at national and international level to address the biodiversity crisis. ?We are seeing the degradation of nature right before our eyes, and the responses have been inadequate so far,? said Lina Barrera, Senior Manager at the Center for Conservation and Government at Conservation International. ?One of the main things we need to do is to bring under protection more of the important areas for environment conservation, from species to the whole systems they form, if we want to have abundant drinking water and fresh air for generations to come. The intervention made by the NGOs was supported by Malawi, which means that it will be considered further by the delegates this week, and could be incorporated in the final version of the plan. The coalition?s statement (PDF, 100 KB).