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Biological diversity requires environmental protection

New UBA special issue points out ways to conservation of species

The Federal Environment Agency (UBA) is calling for greater environmental protection efforts to be made to conserve biodiversity, both internationally and at home. On this year's International Day for Biodiversity, proclaimed by the United Nations every year on 22 May, UBA President Jochen Flasbarth said, "The greatest dangers posed to the protection of biological diversity are global warming and the accumulation of nutrients in air, water, and soils." Should mean global temperature rise by 2 degrees in this century, 20 to 30 percent of all animal and plant species could die out. Species in Germany would also die out, especially in high mountain ranges.

Another problem here at home is the high inputs of nutrients, especially from agricultural activity. "Overfertilisation is a huge problem for a large number of ecosystems in Germany. The 2010 target set by the federal government for a dinitrogen surplus of a maximum 80 kilogrammes per hectare and year is far from being achieved. The current level is 104 kilogrammes," said Flasbarth. Agriculture must further reduce nutrient inputs.

On an international scale the destruction of rain forests and jungles are the main causes of loss of animal and plant species. "We must sustain the world's forests, as they are the strongholds of biodiversity and act as carbon sinks. Since one fifth of greenhouse gas emissions are caused by forest clearance activities, it is necessary to tackle the problem at source and promote climate protection and nature conservation in equal measure," urged Flasbarth. The financial support granted by the federal government at the 2008 UN Convention on Biological Diversity held in Bonn will prove crucial in these efforts.

UBA President Jochen Flasbarth, who currently holds the presidency over the UN Convention on Biodiversity, clarified, "Efforts to protect biodiversity will only succeed if the instruments of conventional nature conservation are amplified by those of integrated environmental protection." A special issue by UBA illustrates which measures are now necessary to maintain the biodiversity of pastures and forests as well as soils and bodies of water.

Background: at the 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was opened for signature. The agreement proscribes the protection of biodiversity, regulates its sustainable use, access to genetic resources, and the just and fair

adjustment of profit from their use. In the meantime 193 states, including Germany and the European Union, have signed the treaty. Germany currently holds the presidency of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

The *Durch Umweltschutz die biologische Vielfalt erhalten* special issue available online (in German).

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