

In 1992 state and government leaders agreed on a strategy for sustainable development at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as "**The Earth Summit**", in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Sustainable development is a way to meet the needs of people all over the world and ensuring that planet earth remains healthy and viable for future generations. One of the most important agreements reached during the "Earth Summit" was the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Convention on Biological Diversity came into force on December 29, 1993, and each anniversary of this date was designated the International Day for Biological Diversity. From 2001 onwards the date of this celebration was moved to May 22 due to the number of holidays that fell in late December. On this date in 1992, the text of the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted at a United Nations at a conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

Each year, the International Day for Biodiversity focuses on a particular theme. Recently, the themes have been: Biodiversity and Poverty Alleviation (2003); Biodiversity: Food, Water and Health for All (2004); Biodiversity: Life Insurance for our Changing World (2005); Protect Biodiversity in Dry-lands (2006); and Biodiversity and Climate Change (2007);

"Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism May 2017 "

This theme, has been chosen to coincide with the observance of 2017 as the "**International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development**" as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in its **Resolution 70/193** and for which the **United Nations World Tourism Organization** is providing leadership.

What is Biodiversity?

Biodiversity (Biological diversity) is the variety/totality of life on earth and it's composition, structure and function within its broader scale. It is the natural wealth of the earth that supplies all our food and other natural resources, **ie** water etc.

Why is Biodiversity Important!!!

- Provides recreational, educational and cultural spaces.
- Improves natural systems. **ie** rivers, streams, dams, wetlands, etc.
- Well managed areas assist with the damage prevention.**ie** flood control along river banks and regulate the atmosphere, climate, fresh water, soil formation, cycling of nutrients and disposal of wastes.
- Biodiversity allows us to live healthy and happy lives. It provides us with an array of foods and materials and it contributes to the economy. Without a diversity of pollinators, plants, and soils, our supermarkets would have a lot less produce.
- Most medical discoveries to cure diseases and lengthen life spans were made because of research into plant and animal biology and genetics. Every time a species goes extinct or genetic diversity is lost, we will never know whether research would have given us a new vaccine or drug.
- Biodiversity is an important part of ecological services that make life livable on earth. they include everything from cleaning water and absorbing carbon dioxide, which wetlands do, to providing oxygen for us to breathe—one of the many things that plants do for people.

The value of biodiversity

Biodiversity is the foundation for a healthy planet and healthy people, well managed natural areas offer recreational and educational as well as sustainable harvesting, well maintained areas are also known to enhance adjacent property values and boost tourism, which is one of the major components of job creation in sustaining livelihoods.

Threats to biodiversity!



Illegal dumping. has a negative effect on the environment and human beings, it travels through storm drains to bays, rivers and harm the fauna and flora (*plants and animals*), it's a threat to Public Health and causes bacteria, can be a fire hazard and also affects the value of homes, businesses and local economy, especially in tourist locations. It also attracts rodents (rats), snakes into households and business areas, **etc.**



Environmental pollution- causes harm to the well-being of human beings and other *species* living on land and water. (*Aquatic and terrestrial*), causes climate change, through green-house gas emissions.



Inappropriate fires- destroys *vegetation* and other animal *species*, especially those living on land, including human beings. be it adults or children.

Solutions/remedies

- Reduce environmental pollution
- Stop deforestation-chopping off wood
- Recycle, reuse and reduce. recycling decreases pollution
- Drive less, walk, ride or carpool more.
- Learn about low emission vehicle research and availability.

Way forward

The celebration of the “**Environment**” Month, is an annual event on the calendar of South Africa’s environment sector, and includes **World Environment Day on 5 June**. Other key events celebrated during National Environment Month include **World Oceans Day on 8 June** and World Day to Combat Desertification on 17 June.

Our **goals** are to educate our children, parents and all community clusters about the importance of protecting our planet, environment, waterways, watersheds and ocean waters, the natural habitat and encourage everyone to take action to preserve, conserve nurture and protect. Everyone in the world lives on a watershed. Oceans generate 80% of our oxygen (trees generate 20%). The future of our planet is in our hands. ***Together, we can make an immense difference, for our future and that of our generation.***