

## Media Brief

### International Day for Biological Diversity May 22, 2025

The UN International Day for Biological Diversity (May 22) raises awareness about biodiversity threats, crucial for human survival. The 2025 theme, "Harmony with nature and sustainable development," emphasizes aligning the 2030 SDGs with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)—a universal pact for nature.

The KMGBF's 23 action targets (2030 goals, 2050 vision) provide a roadmap to halt biodiversity loss through habitat protection, species conservation, sustainable resource use, and fair benefit-sharing. These targets complement global commitments like the SDGs and the Convention on Biological Diversity, adapting to national contexts. Adopted in 2022, they aim to reverse biodiversity decline by 2030.

#### **Why biodiversity is essential for our socio-economic development**

Biodiversity forms the backbone of healthy ecosystems, directly supporting essential services such as clean air and water, crop pollination, climate regulation, protection from natural disasters, recreation, and cultural inspiration. These ecosystem services are vital for human health, livelihoods, and food security, as they ensure that we have access to medicines, food crops, and other natural resources. The interdependence between biodiversity and ecosystem services underscores its importance for sustaining human life.

The loss of biodiversity can have profound consequences, threatening to destabilize ecosystems and affect global climate patterns. This destabilization can disrupt the very services that biodiversity supports, leading to a cascade of negative impacts on human health and food security. Therefore, preserving biodiversity is not only crucial for maintaining ecosystem balance but also for ensuring global economic stability and resilience against environmental changes.

#### **How the KMGBF Targets Address Sustainable Development Goals**

**Protecting and restoring key habitats** (SDGs 14, 11,15) such as forests, wetlands, and coastal areas is fundamental to preserving biodiversity. These efforts are intrinsically linked to species conservation, as safeguarding habitats directly reduces the risk of species extinction, boosts species abundance, and ensures the protection of threatened species.

In tandem, **promoting sustainable resource use** (SDGs 1, 2,3, 8,12, 14,15) in sectors like fisheries, forestry, and agriculture is essential to minimize adverse impacts on biodiversity, ensuring that natural resources are used responsibly and efficiently. This sustainable approach naturally extends to equitable benefit sharing, where the framework stresses the importance of distributing the benefits of biodiversity fairly, particularly to Indigenous Peoples and local communities who are often stewards of these resources.

Addressing **pollution and climate change** (SDGs 3,6,7,13) is also central to the framework, as these are significant threats to biodiversity. By advocating for clean energy, reducing pollution, and implementing climate adaptation and mitigation strategies, the framework aims to create a healthier environment for all living organisms.

Lastly, achieving **gender equality** (SDGs 4,5,9) is crucial, as empowering women and recognizing their roles in biodiversity conservation can lead to more effective and inclusive conservation efforts. The Women4Biodiversity initiative for instance, explores how each target can address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women and girls in this vital field, ensuring that their contributions are recognized and valued.

Overall, the GBF provides a roadmap for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by recognizing the critical role of biodiversity in achieving the SDGs. It highlights how biodiversity is interconnected with various aspects of sustainable development, from food security and water resources to healthy oceans and ecosystems.

### **Is Ghana Truly Committed to Biodiversity Conservation?**

Ghana, represented by the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, made a pledge to fully commit to the protection and preservation of biodiversity for a healthier planet. However, we must ask ourselves: Is this commitment evident in our actions?

**Contradictory Policies:** Conflicting policy and legal frameworks are hindering the consistent actions necessary to safeguard forests and biodiversity in Ghana.

**Depletion of Biodiversity:** We are witnessing the unprecedented depletion of vital biodiversity hotspots and ecosystems, such as forests and wetlands, driven by the relentless pursuit of the nation's mineral resources.

**Revocation of LI 2462:** We continue to await action from the Parliament of Ghana to repeal LI 2462, a law that allows mining access to all forest reserves across the country.

**The condition of our water bodies**, which host both edible and endemic species, is rapidly declining. We are frequently documenting the loss of aquatic species due to irresponsible mining practices and inadequate management of our rivers. At this moment, **Galamsey** remains a thriving issue.

Our **Ramsar Sites are quickly deteriorating** due to illegal developments. For instance, the Sakumo Ramsar Site bears little resemblance to our original vision. If measures are not taken, it may soon be removed from the prestigious list of international Ramsar Sites.

### **Ghana must act now to live in harmony with Nature**

As we reflect on the theme for IDB, we take this opportunity to share some invaluable interventions that are crucial to securing what is left of our Biodiversity.

- For progressive management of biodiversity habitats and hotspots such as forests, Ghana must **Repeal LI 2462**. This would safeguard more than 60% of our forest reserves and pave the way for a brighter future for the country's biodiversity.

- **Make Atewa Forest a National Park.** We have, over the years, consistently asked that the Atewa Forest be designated as a National Park. The forest is a crown jewel of biodiversity and is home to more than 1,000 species of plants, 230 species of birds, 570 butterfly species, and at least 50 species of mammals. It is a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), meaning it is critical to the persistence of global biodiversity and the overall health of the planet.
- **Strengthen monitoring and enforcement of Protected Forest Reserves, Ramsar Sites,** and other protected areas to stop mining, illegal logging, illegal farming, poaching, and other damaging activities.
- **Protect and restore Ghana's mangrove ecosystems** and build communities' capacity for their sustainable use and management.
- **Protect green spaces and trees in urban areas** while adopting a culture of maintaining the urban trees, so we do not lose them, as in the case of the Atomic-Kwabanya Highway. We also need to take steps to secure and conserve the Achimota Forest at the heart of Accra for improved health for urban dwellers. It is about time we learn to blend with nature rather than insist on bending nature to suit human needs.

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