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# Saving Biodiversity

## Convention on Biological Diversity



### What is it?

Efforts to protect biodiversity is now a major international concern.

There is constant threat to biological diversity around the world, not least in the Pacific region. For example, coral reefs are the world's second richest ecosystem when considering the number and variety of species that inhabits these areas.

These irreplaceable assets are threatened with disappearing forever due to overexploitation and other human activities.

To successfully protect this natural wealth, on which many local communities rely for their food, shelter and many other uses, the **Convention on Biological Diversity** is the most recent appropriate tool.

### When will it come into force?

It was opened for signature by states in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992 at the Earth Summit. It will come into effect three months after the thirtieth country has ratified it,

i.e. 29 December 1993.

### Objectives of the Convention

The Convention's objectives are to:

- ♦ conserve biological diversity,
- ♦ ensure sustainable use of its components,
- ♦ ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

### Responsibilities of the Parties

The convention can be ratified by any country eligible to do so. Each *Party to the Convention* is responsible for the conservation and sustainable use of its own biological diversity. But Parties are also responsible for any activities they undertake that have consequences on biological diversity, *regardless of whether these activities are in their countries or not.*

Parties are encouraged to actively cooperate, either directly, together or through regional or international organisations.

### What areas are covered?

On-site and external influences are all considered part of biological conservation.

- ♦ *In-situ conservation* means conserving fauna and flora species in their habitats and natural surroundings.
- ♦ *Ex-situ conservation* means conserving species outside of their natural habitats, such as in botanical or zoological gardens, and seed banks.

### What are the commitments?

Member countries are involved in a variety of coherent actions, including specific commitments and providing access to appropriate means of conserving biodiversity.

These *specific commitments* include:

- ⇨ co-operation with other Parties,
- ⇨ exchanging information,
- ⇨ national measures that integrate conservation and sustainable use,
- ⇨ identifying and monitoring endangered species,
- ⇨ *in-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation,
- ⇨ public education and awareness, and
- ⇨ allowing access to genetic resources.

*Appropriate means* includes:

- ⇨ establishing a secretariat,
- ⇨ periodical meetings,
- ⇨ access to and transfer of technology,
- ⇨ technical and scientific cooperation, and
- ⇨ access to financial resources through relevant financial mechanisms.



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