

BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY: THE KEYS TO OUR FUTURE

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Based on concrete examples from different countries around the world, the driving forces behind the loss of biodiversity and the consequences especially for the poor will be discussed. It becomes directly visible in communities living in subsistence economies that it is the diversity of products that guarantees food security and survival, not the mass production in monocultures. In other words, the monocultures of oil palms, shrimps, soy beans and other products increase poverty and cannot solve the problem of hunger in the world. Furthermore, it cannot be forgotten that genetic and species diversity form the basis for all biological evolution on earth. Ecosystems provide invaluable environmental services and are – as can be seen in a few cases – of direct and highest economic importance. The common concept of “sustainability,” represented by a roof sustained by three columns (ecologic, economic, social) or a triangle with the corners, is sending out an incorrect message and therefore has to be revised. Although not always visible at first glance, the conservation of biological diversity and a sound understanding and respective implementation of “sustainability” are indispensable also in highly industrialized countries. It seems that the relevance and importance of biodiversity for all human cultures and economies has not been sufficiently recognized by politicians, the business sector and most civil societies and therefore “target 2010” is far from being achieved.