



**Topic Synopsis**  
UNEP, Loss of Biodiversity

**I. Background of Topic**

Biodiversity is defined as “the degree of variation of life forms within a given ecosystem, biome, or an entire planet,” and the measure of health in those ecosystems. It has been caused by five main factors: habitat loss and degradation, climate change, excessive nutrient load and other forms of pollution, over-exploitation and unsustainable use, and invasive alien species. It has been calculated by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment that 10-30% of mammal, bird and amphibian species are being threatened with extinction because of human enterprise. The amount of human intervention has been becoming too great for the planet to maintain its regeneration of vital resources. According to an article by Anup Shah on “Global Issues,” the life at the threat of extinctions are 1 of 8 birds, 1 of 4 mammals, 1 of 4 conifers, 1 of 3 amphibians, and 6 of 7 marine turtles. Also according to the article, 75% of genetic diversity in agriculture has been lost, 75% of fisheries are exploited, 70% of the world’s species will face extinction if the global temperature rises more than 3.5°C, one third of global coral reefs are threatened with extinction, and over 350 million people have a scarcity of water. The loss of biodiversity is a global issue that must find a solution as soon as possible. The global populations are at stake.

**II. UN Involvement**

The United Nations Environmental Programme has been actively participating in this issue and how to solve it. They have created various organizations such as Global Environmental Outlook, Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine



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Environment from Land Based Activities (GPA), Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP), Wings Over Wetlands (WOW), and World Conservation Monitoring Center (WCMC). Conventions and agreements they have created include the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), EUROBATS, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. UNEP’s international non-governmental organizations consist of Genetic Resources and Benefit-Sharing, International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN), the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (GRID-ICIMOD), and Earthwatch. Most recently the Conference of the Parties in April 2002, the UNEP pledged to “to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national levels as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth.”

### **III. Possible Solutions**

Possible solutions to stop the loss of biodiversity may be solved by the creation of areas that do not allow humans to populate because this is one of the main causes. These areas would allow threatened species an area of sanctuary. The climate change issue that is also harming the planet’s global populations can be solved by allowing only a certain amount of greenhouse emissions and unavoidable pollution by each country based on the amount of industry they contain. This regulation would be set up kind of like taxes. An obvious solution would be to stop or slow deforestation and re-build the habitats of endangered species so that they may survive by their own means. Invasive species in ecosystems should also be



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monitored to ensure that they do not continue to harm other species in the habitat. Lastly, research should be done in an effort to explain why biodiversity continues to be lost and how our efforts can be more effective based on the species that needs help the most.

#### **IV. Bloc Positions**

Biodiversity is an issue that is recognized globally as something that needs to be solved. However, the various countries may have different areas to focus on such as a greater amount of pollution and greenhouse emissions, rather than a loss of habitat or a lack of protected areas.

#### **V. Guiding Questions**

1. What does your country need help with the most (i.e. habitat, pollution, etc)?
2. Is there an organization that your country may be able to create to help with issue?
3. What about your country’s geographical location affects its possible loss of biodiversity?
4. How has your country handled the loss of biodiversity so far?
5. Can greenhouse gases be adequately monitored in a sustainable way?
6. Does your country have the resources to create an environment that allows for the betterment of biodiversity?

#### **VI. Sources**

<http://www.unep.org/Themes/Biodiversity/About/index.asp>  
<http://ecological-problems.blogspot.com/2011/03/possible-solutions-to-halt-biodiversity.html>  
<http://www.globalissues.org/article/171/loss-of-biodiversity-and-extinctions>