



# Environment Minister's message on the occasion of the International Day for Biodiversity Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism is the theme

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International Day for Biodiversity celebrated every year on May 22 and International Day for Biodiversity 2017 is being celebrated in Goa today. In his message on the occasion, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said:

"Biodiversity, the variety of all life on earth, is vital to social and economic development, and is indeed fundamental to our survival. Protecting biodiversity and halting its loss is therefore an essential investment for our collective well-being.

Biodiversity plays an important role in various economic sectors, including tourism. There are intrinsic linkages between tourism and biodiversity. While on one hand, tourism has the potential to contribute positively to biodiversity, on the other, the stress imposed by tourism activities may accelerate and aggravate its depletion. It is therefore in the interest of all stakeholders to ensure that tourism activities are ecologically sustainable.

As a mega diverse country, receiving an increasing share of international tourism, biodiversity may well be one of our most competitive advantages for tourism considered to be one of the fastest growing industry.

Today, on the occasion of the International Day for Biological Diversity, the theme for which is 'Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism', let us all pledge to be mindful and conscious in reducing our biodiversity footprint, including when we travel as a tourist.

The national level event is being celebrated today in Goa, the ultimate tourist destination, which unfortunately I am not able to attend. The Ministry has undertaken several activities towards spreading the message of sustainable tourism, including an exhibition organised in the Ministry through National Museum of Natural History (NMNH)."

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