# [***Need To Mitigate Biodiversity Loss***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6765-2F91-JCH9-G32Y-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Ranked 49th in the world, Nepal is highly known for its rich ***biodiversity***. This richness may be attributed to its diverse geographical features. The country boasts the presence of 22,000 species of plants and animals, which constitute 1.3 per cent of the global ***biodiversity***. There are 210 species of mammals, 871 species of birds, 228 species of fish, 12,957 species of insects, 137 species of reptiles and 53 species of amphibians. Likewise, Nepal is home to 6,653 species and sub-species of angiosperms, 28 species of gymnosperms, 1,001 species of algae, 2025 species of fungi, 771 species of lichens, 1,150 species of bryophytes and 534 species of pteridophytes (ferns).

The small Himalayan nation has 118 different ecosystems that include 112 forest ecosystems, four cultivation ecosystems, one water body ecosystem and one glacier/snow/rock ecosystem. These ecosystems consist of tall grass lands, tropical and subtropical broad-leaf forests along the Terai and Siwalik hills and tropical and subtropical broad-leaf and conifer forests in middle mountains.

Tourist attraction

Owing to diverse climatic and topographical conditions, diversity is evident within agricultural crops and animals as well. There are alpine meadows above the tree-line and mixed and conifer forests in high mountains. Also, the availability environmentally valuable wetlands cannot be forgotten. Wetlands are such geographic zones that accommodate threatened and endemic biota and act as resting places for migratory birds, some of which are threatened species. They are also considered important from a cultural and economic point of view. They have been a major attraction for tourists as well.

***Biodiversity*** is closely connected to and highly beneficial for the human life. A country's economy is dependent on natural resources and it becomes sustainable when ***biodiversity*** is conserved. In addition, ***biodiversity*** can be a means for promoting tourism. It acts a springboard for offering natural places and scenes to such tourists.

***Biodiversity*** plays a catalytic role in maintaining ecological balance. Besides preventing natural hazards, it helps conserve soil and water. It also prevents land degradation, enhances the fertility of soils and mitigates possible threats of extinction that some plants and animals face. Despite the multi-functional nature and the richness, ***biodiversity*** remains to be under threat in Nepal. Reasons include: ***loss*** and degradation of natural habitats such as forests, grasslands and wetlands; unsustainable agricultural practices and infrastructure development; human-wildlife conflict; over-exploitation of natural resources; ecological pollution; poaching and illegal trade in wildlife; deforestation and burgeoning urbanisation; over-grazing of cattle; fires, floods and landslides; global warming and climate change; and invasion of endemic species by alien species.

It would be germane to mention the UN ***Biodiversity*** Conference (COP 15) held in Montreal from December 7 to 19. The conference has made a historic deal on the conservation of ***biodiversity***. As per the deal, 30 per cent of land and water will be protected by 2030. Now, 17 per cent of land and 10 per cent of water (oceans) have been protected. On the financial front, USD 200 billion will be mobilised by 2030 from various sources for the conservation of ***biodiversity***. The financial assistance provided to poor countries which include least developed countries, small island nations and countries in economic transition - will be increased to an annual amount of USD 20 billion by 2025. And by 2030, the assistance will be increased to USD 30 billion. Subsidies provided to agriculture, pisciculture and other environmentally harming sectors will be reduced, phased out or reformed. Doing so can release another USD 500 billion.

At the conference, it was also agreed to halve food waste and reduce excessive consumption. It was also resolved that works will be done to halt ***biodiversity*** ***loss***, restore ***biodiversity***, reduce the use of pesticides and reduce the ***loss*** of species of fauna and flora. Under the ***Biodiversity*** Framework endorsed by 190 participating countries at the conference, four global targets and 23 other targets have been fixed so as to prevent ***biodiversity*** ***loss*** by 2030. The conference also dwelt on various aspects of ***biodiversity*** such as climate change, habitat ***loss***, pollution and development affecting ***biodiversity***. The conference has been termed as a peace deal with nature by the Secretary General for the UN, Antonio Guterres.

***Biodiversity*** ***loss*** has great impacts on the ecosystem. Damage to the ecosystem would worsen climate change, undermine food security and affect people and communities. As many as 3.2 billion people (40 per cent of the global population) are adversely affected by land degradation and USD 5.77 billion worth of annual global crop production is at risk from pollinator ***loss***. Owing to coastal habitat ***loss***, 100 to 300 million people are at risk of floods and hurricanes. Twenty-five per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions are produced by land clearing, crop production and fertilisation.

Concern

***Biodiversity*** ***loss*** is a matter of concern. It may undermine progress towards 35 out of 44 of the SDG (sustainable development goals) targets related to poverty, hunger, health, water, cities, climate, oceans and land. Conserving ***biodiversity*** on a global scale requires synergetic action at local, national, regional and global levels.

Nepal is a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992 and has submitted five reports to the CBD. There are several policies and mechanisms for the conservation of ***biodiversity*** in the country. These policies and mechanisms such as afforestation programmes, captive breeding techniques and seed banks are to be strictly implemented for the conservation of ***biodiversity***. Having mentioned all of this, public participation in the local level is one such essential condition that cannot be forgotten when it comes to ***biodiversity*** conservation.

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