# [***Need to address biodiversity loss, economic value***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:688N-06M1-JDKC-R4K0-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Dar es Salaam, May 20 -- ENVIRONMENT stakeholders have every reason to come together and deliberate on the way forward in dealing with ***biodiversity*** ***loss*** and its economic ***loss***.

Experts in ***biodiversity*** conservation said at a breakfast debate in Dar es Salaam on Wednesday that conservation stakeholders and the government have a great role to push the nation forward in managing ***biodiversity*** ***loss***.

Dr Elikana Kalumanga, the Private Sector Engagement Manager with RTI &#8211; the USAID, the implementing partner, said to date there is no clear official data on the value of ***biodiversity*** in the country, as it involves numerous institutions and people.

He noted that there is a lot to be found in mountains, oceans, forests that are divided into different types, such as those found on Mount Kilimanjaro &#8211; the highest mountain in Africa and Mount Meru, among others.

Dr Kalumanga who was speaking at the breakfast debate at the Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET) and sponsored by &#8216;USAID Tuhifadhi Maliasili project, said ***biodiversity*** is a huge thing for the country, but unfortunately its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is yet to be established.

&#8220;There are different contributions to the GDP, it is a big business for the country dwellers depend on forests, also there are those who use trees for wood, house building and other activities, but we are yet to establish ***biodiversity*** contribution to the GDP.

&#8220;Why is the situation like this? It is because there is no official record regarding the ***biodiversity***. If you look at the Kilombero and Mbarali areas, the main crop produced is rice; this is due to rain that comes from Uluguru Mountains and conserved areas. Dar es Salaam people, for example, do not look at production costs. In many areas, when people cut trees and sell, they count on cutting the tree, transporting it and make sure they get profit but nobody looks at the cost of ***biodiversity***,&#8221; said Dr Kilumanga.

***Biodiversity*** is all the different kinds of life found in one area&#8212;the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up the natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life. ***Biodiversity*** supports everything in nature that we need to survive: food, clean water, medicine and shelter.

The expert said that in some countries, governments and private individuals have invested a lot in terms of wildlife, but there are some that enjoy good weather and have many attractive wild animals just naturally and get many tourists.

He stressed that the situation is due to ***biodiversity***, adding that there is a huge difference between those with animals in zoos and those in natural areas like national parks. He noted that reducing ***biodiversity*** also reduces prevalence.

He gave an example of exceptional species of birds that fly from Siberia, make a stop in Africa before proceeding with their journey, saying they choose areas of their interest, depending on the ***biodiversity*** at a particular area, adding that the bigger the ***biodiversity*** the bigger the income.

Expounding advantages of ***biodiversity***, Dr Kalumanga noted that there is great interdependence between it and people. He cited how electricity is produced from water that is a result of huge ***biodiversity*** caused by environmental conservation. As for development activities, he said they should be implemented by integrating it with the environment. He said there is need to calculate value of a tree from the time the seed is planted onwards.

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