

Biodiversity loss weakens global development

September 30 2009



Yellow banded dart frog. Amphibians are facing some of the worst threats to their biodiversity. A report in the journal *Science* highlights how biodiversity loss is weakening efforts to tackle global poverty.

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Biodiversity loss is undermining global development, leading scientists warn in a paper published in the journal *Science* this month.

Goals set to alleviate extreme [poverty](#) will not be met unless we address the accelerating rate of biodiversity loss, they say, and new achievable targets are needed urgently.

Led by Professor Jeffrey Sachs of ZSL (Zoological Society of London), the paper brings together a broad group of scientists and policy makers, including Natural History Museum plant expert Dr Sandra Knapp.

Poverty and environmental degradation have many of the same fundamental causes, such as the pressures of unsustainable human population growth.

More research is needed into the links between biodiversity and poverty, the team says, so that better decisions can be made about how the environment is used in future. The outcomes should benefit both poverty alleviation and conservation.

‘Degradation of the natural diversity of our planet will inevitably bring problems for our own species,’ says Dr Knapp.

Dr Knapp explains, ‘The integration of conservation and development goals will be difficult, and will require new interactions between scientific communities and with the public at large’.

‘We hope the newly opened Darwin Centre at the Natural History Museum can be a focal point for discussion of issues that confront all of us as we integrate the Millennium Development Goals with our concern for the natural world.’

The 8 Millennium Development Goals were agreed by all the world’s countries and one of the goals is to halve extreme poverty by 2015. The Convention on [Biological Diversity](#), signed by 150 governments at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, is dedicated to promoting sustainable development. However, the goals of both of these will not be met unless humans begin living in a more sustainable way.

Dr Kate Jones, Senior Research Fellow at ZSL concludes: ‘The global

issues are now so intense we will only succeed if we have an integrated environment and development agenda - our children's environment is an essential part of their welfare.'

Provided by American Museum of Natural History ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Biodiversity loss weakens global development (2009, September 30) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-09-biodiversity-loss-weakens-global.html>

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