

UN study backs economic changes to save natural world: report

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A key UN report on biodiversity will recommend massive economic changes like company fines to help save species and protect the natural world, The Guardian reported here on Saturday.

The study, which is due for publication in the summer, will argue that global action on the topic is more powerful than the argument for tackling climate change, according to the newspaper.

The report, entitled 'The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity' (TEEB), was launched by Brussels in 2007 with the support of the UN Environment Programme, after G8 and major emerging economies called for a global study.

If nature is not factored into the global economic system then the environment will become more fragile and exposed to external shocks, placing human lives and the [world economy](#) in jeopardy, it will argue.

The TEEB report will also recommend that companies are fined and taxed for over-exploitation of the natural world, with strict limits imposed on what they can take from the environment, according to the paper.

Alongside financial results, businesses and governments should also be asked to provide accounts for their use of natural and human resources.

And communities should be paid to preserve [natural environments](#) rather

than deplete them.

The Guardian's report, published on the UN's International Day for [Biological Diversity](#), added that the UN will also recommend reforming state subsidies for certain industries, like energy, farming, fishing and transport.

The TEEB study will also warn that one-third of the world's natural habitats have been damaged by humans.

The total value of "natural goods and services" like pollination, medicines, fertile soil, clean air and water, will be around 10 and 100 times the cost of saving the species and natural habitats which provide them.

"We need a sea-change in human thinking and attitudes towards nature," said Indian economist and report author Pavan Sukhdev, cited by The Guardian.

Sukhdev, head of the UN Environment Program's green economy initiative, also appealed for nature to be regarded "not as something to be vanquished, conquered, but rather something to be cherished and lived within".

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