Projected global loss of biodiversity could be halved due to structural changes

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A combination of measures in different sectors could result in halving the projected global loss of biodiversity, up to 2050. This was calculated by the PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency in close cooperation with LEI, part of Wageningen UR, and the University of British Columbia. The study will be presented at the upcoming COP10 meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),

The study was performed on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). According to the study further expansion of the global network of protected areas will be necessary, but it will not be sufficient to attain a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss worldwide.

Structural changes in consumption and in the efficiency of production are indispensable. Changes in agriculture, forestry, fishery and energy supply are required to slow down biodiversity loss, through reduced expansion of agricultural land, stopping overexploitation of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and limiting climate change.

Combining measures across sectors delivers the largest benefits. Biodiversity is affected by a range of different pressures from economic activities: habit loss and degradation, pollution, overexploitation, eutrophication, fragmentation, and more. A strategy for global biodiversity should therefore include actions that limit these pressures. Changes in individual sectors, such as in energy or forestry, only lead to improvements on a limited scale. Implementing measures collectively would yield far greater benefits. An ambitious combination of measures in different sectors would result in halving the projected global loss of biodiversity, up to 2050. The measures could contribute to other policy issues as well, such as climate change mitigation, food security, and water quality.

Quantifying global changes in production, consumption, and biodiversity effects The report is unique in its quantitative analysis of the effects of changes in production and consumption on global biodiversity. These effects range from improved agricultural efficiency and reduced post-harvest losses, to improved timber production and climate change mitigation.

More information: PBL will present the report 'Rethinking global biodiversity strategies. Exploring structural changes in production and consumption to reduce biodiversity loss' during the COP10 in Nagoya. This convention will take place in Japan from 18 to 29 October 2010.

Provided by Wageningen University