



**JOINT MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND
UNDP IN LEBANON FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
22 May 2002**

Management of Forest Biodiversity

Forest ecosystems cover approximately 30% of the ice-free land area of the Earth and harbour most of the terrestrial biological diversity. Forests also generate a broad array of marketed and non-marketed goods and services and benefit a wide range of human communities. Many ecosystem services provided by forests, like regulation of hydrological regimes and local climates, or protection against soil erosion, are also of crucial importance to the functioning of ecosystems even outside the forested areas. Sustainable use of forest ecosystems can play an important role in poverty alleviation. For these reasons, 'Management of Forest Diversity' was adopted this year as the theme for the International Day For Biological Diversity.

Lebanon signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1992 and ratified it in 1994 (Law No. 360/94). Under Article six of this convention, Lebanon developed a national strategy and an action plan for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, with an aim to integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programs and policies at the national level. Furthermore, under Article 26, Lebanon presents to the Conference of Parties regular reports on measures taken to implement the provisions of the convention.

Lebanon prepared the 9-volume country study on "Biological Diversity in Lebanon". The report identified 9,119 species in Lebanon, roughly equally distributed between fauna and flora species. This number, however, is believed to represent only 20 percent of the actual number of species in Lebanon.

With the collaboration of the UNDP and GEF, the Ministry of Environment worked on the establishment of protected areas, the majority of which comprise important forest ecosystems, in an effort to sustain in-situ conservation within ecologically rich and sensitive areas. Acknowledging the importance of forests in sustaining the quality of life, the Ministry initiated a reforestation programme at the national level.

**Let this day be a day where we
start to act and make a difference**



**The Convention on
Biological Diversity:
For Sustaining Life on
Earth**



The United Nations Development Programme has recently initiated a project to further assess national capacity building needs and priorities in biodiversity. The project will also analyse institutional and functional capabilities, provide open access to information and determine the institutional and legal frameworks necessary to protect national biodiversity.

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