Short Essays

on

Preventing Pandemics: Why Biodiversity Matters?
This e-book is a compilation of entries of Essay writing competition organized on International Day of Biological Diversity 2021 by Pushpa Gujral Science City in collaboration with Punjab Biodiversity Board.

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Preface

The United Nations has proclaimed May 22 as 'The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB)' to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. The Day falls within the scope of the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals. That Biodiversity plays a critical role to achieve sustainable development was first recognized at Rio+20 document titled “The World We Want: A Future for All”. It has been recognized that though biodiversity issues are primarily address in SDG 14 (Life below water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land), however, they are linked with and have a profound impact on several other Goals including SDG1 (No poverty), 2 (No hunger), 3 (Good health and well-being), 6 (Clean water and sanitation), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (Reduced inequalities), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), 12 (Responsible consumption and production) and 13 (Climate action).

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has also released a report which establishes the links between biodiversity loss and the increase in pandemic risk factors. This report highlights that the current COVID-19 crisis and the previous global health pandemics have their origin in microbes carried by animals and their emergence is generally driven by human activities. Hence, the need to understand and appreciate these links and promote action for conservation of biodiversity.

Accordingly, the theme for IDB 2021 was: ‘We're part of the solution’.

PushpaGujral Science City celebrated International Day for Biological Diversity 2021 from 20th-22nd May, 2021. The program was financially supported by Punjab Biodiversity Board. The objective of the event was to raise awareness among participants about conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity resources. A webinar series accompanied with online Essay writing competition was organized due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The competition was organized for students from Class 7-10 on the theme “Preventing Pandemics: Why Biodiversity matters”.

The Essay writing competition got an overwhelming response. 188 students participated across India, with about 80% participation from Punjab and neighbouring States. This e-book is a compilation of Best entries received under the Essay writing competition.

We present to you the best compiled and edited essays as adjudged by our honorable judges and hope you enjoy reading the same.

Editors
20.05.2021 Talk on “Diversity in Butterflies & Moths and their role in Ecosystem”

Speaker: Dr. H.S. Rose, Former Professor, Punjabi University, Patiala and Former Pro Chancellor, Guru Kashi University, Talwandi Sabo, Punjab

21.05.2021 Talk on “Saving the Asian Vulture”

Speaker: Dr. Munir Virani, Executive Vice President and Global Director for Conservation Strategy at The Peregrine Fund – World Centre for Birds of Prey, Idaho, USA

22.05.2021 Talk on “Medicinal Plant Diversity and natural remedies for COVID”

Speaker: Dr. Sudhir Kumar Mahotra, Conservationist and Physician Consultant, Retd. District Ayurveda Office and Hon. Wildlife Warden, Pathankot, Punjab

22.05.2021 Webinar with CI on Industry and ‘Access & Benefit Sharing’ provisions under the Biological Diversity Act

Chief Guest:
- Dr. V. B. Mathur, Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority on “National & International Perspective on the need and importance of ABS”

Speakers:
- Sh. Bhavdeep Sardana, Chairman, CI- Punjab on “Industry & ABS: breaking the myths”
- Dr. Neelima Jerath, Director General, PGSC “A brief Introduction to Biodiversity and ABS mechanism”
- Sh. J. Justin Mohan, IFS, Secretary, National Biodiversity Authority on “ABS Guidelines, Procedures and Case Studies”
- Dr. Geetha Nayak, GIZ on “Economics and Biodiversity: ABS and Business”
- Sh. Sanjay Kumar, Country Manager, Valagro Biosciences Limited, Hyderabad (Recipient of India Biodiversity Award 2021) on “The ABS Experience: Perspective of an Industry”
- Dr. J.K. Arora, Executive Director, PSCSTon “Role of Punjab Biodiversity Board in implementing the Biodiversity Act, 2002”
Winners of the Competition

1st prize: Aarushi, Cambridge International School For Girls, Urban Estate Phase II, Jalandhar
2nd Prize: Manmeet Kaur, DRV DAV Centenary Public School, Phillaur, Jalandhar
3rd Prize: Anik Panda, Kendriya Vidayalaya, No.2, Nausenabagh, Vishakhapatnam

Appreciations

- Suchreet Kaur, Delhi Public School, Patiala
- Namya Joshi, Sat Paul Mittal School, Ludhiana
- Kashish Singla, Delhi Public School, Patiala, Punjab
- Yashkaran Rattu, D.S.S.D School, Sodal Road, Jalandhar
- Venus Thapa, Army Public School, Clement Town, Dehradun
- Rakhi Dhapola, Army Public School, Clement Town, Dehradun
- Aayush Kumar Jha, Sri Krishna Public School, Jamshedpur
The outbreak of epidemics and pandemics is a signal that Mother Nature is repeatedly giving us to make us realize “sins of will”, that Man today is not just guilty of committing but is also falling a victim to. To apply the words of Lord Tennyson, a Victorian poet, “sins of will” are those reckless human activities like, Deforestation, encroachment on wildlife habitat, and accelerated rate of climate change that have caused severe loss to wildlife. This irresponsible human behavior has created an imbalance in the ecosystem on which depends human health too. We need to understand that we don’t OWN the Planet rather SHARE it with biologically diverse species. Hence, the need to follow the creed of coexistence.

Time has come to admit the truth that Man’s own interference with dangerous wildlife by depriving species of their natural habitat has put humanity at a great risk. Shameless poaching of exotic wild animals for recreational and other commercial purposes like trade in animal feed has brought many viruses to cities. The repulsive sight of wet markets in North East India and China is a rallying cry against what we are returning to Nature for its priceless benediction. The outbreak of Spanish flu, HIV, Dengue, swine flu, SARS, etc. was due to viruses transmitted through infected animals to man. What poses a bigger challenge to us is not the animals themselves (living or dead) but what they carry : Viruses like Ebola, Zika, Nipah, Corona, etc. Such invisible but ‘fit’ viruses have the potential to destroy our well being, our economy, our livelihood and our lives reminding us of Darwinian Theory of ‘Survival of the Fittest’. To defeat this enemy and prevent future pandemics, we need to strengthen our defence mechanism against its onslaught. Let us begin by owning the responsibility first and then, resolve to put a halt to our self-destructive activities that do not sustain our future generations.
To accomplish this, we need to evolve our system for producing food and fiber, our economic planning, land management and marine life, and all those commercial activities that can safeguard biodiversity. There is a dire need to sustain biodiversity as researchers are increasingly “reverting to nature” for its medicinal properties to find cure for variety of diseases. We must also strengthen our relationship with indigenous communities globally who conserve the world’s remaining wildlife habitats.

The valuable lesson we need to learn from this pandemic is that we are a part of the ecosystem where our health is linked to the health of wildlife and the health of their environment. Let us not double the risk by creating conditions that favour pandemics and by minimizing the chances of finding a cure against ‘invisible’ enemy due to biodiversity loss. So it is a time now to join hands and respond to this wake-up call collectively, adapt to the ways of Sustainable Development and adopt biodiversity as our defensive weapon against any future pandemic that can devastate not only Man but also humanity.
Since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, Bats, Civets and Snakes have all been rounded up as potential suspects for the breakout of the virus. But when the smoking gun has been finally found, it is likely to have the fingerprints of 'us' - humans - on it. COVID-19 is a zoonosis, i.e., a disease that is transmitted from animal to human but the reason of major outbreak of such zoonotic diseases is associated with the increasing loss of natural habitat. Outbreaks like Ebola and HIV also emerged from areas where bio diverse habitats of our planet were disappearing.

Many of us think that Biodiversity is something very different from our human environment or as something that we may want to protect, while it won’t matter even if we don’t. But we all need to know that as Homo Sapiens, our survival is very much dependent on nature. There are so many components of medicine that have been provided by nature but we take it for granted. The ‘Nature’s Pharmacy’ has so many potential cures even for the diseases yet to be discovered.

While the nature and its guardians around the world are suffering from the effects of COVID-19, with many local rangers and communities already being the last stand against mounting threats, the world’s biodiversity is facing new challenges too. There has been much discussion on what is ‘green’. Many people have almost forgotten that the greenest investment is in the nature surrounding us, the trees that absorb carbon, hold water and create fresh oxygen, the corals that protect us from flooding and the wildlife that is the cornerstone of the rural economy in most developing countries.

It is important for the world to recognize the importance of biodiversity protection. Meanwhile, researchers all over the globe are doubling the efforts to understand the links between biodiversity and emerging diseases – and use that information to predict and stop future outbreaks. Globalization and lack of environmental sustainability is the cause of the increased spread of Zoonosis.
As the human population grows, we are encroaching more and more on territories once reserved for wildlife. This habitat loss is a threat to biodiversity and has triggered a wave of mass extinction. While the logical solution is to ensure that wildlife is diffused across a wide area and kept far from human settlements. By destroying wildlife habitat we are creating a situation where animals are cramped into much smaller areas which creates a perfect blunder.

More than two-third of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic. The good news is that by understanding the importance of biodiversity and tackling these unprecedented environmental challenges, we can reduce the risk of pandemics outbreak as it is the same battle.

So, with no more delay, no more procrastination, let’s do what must be done.
Humans exist within a web of life. This web is a complex, interconnected system in which each part plays an important role. When one component is changed or removed the entire system is affected, and this can produce positive or negative consequences.

The variability of life on Earth is called ‘Biodiversity’. Biodiversity takes into account all the living organisms present on Earth. Healthy and Good Biodiversity indicate a healthy and good ecosystem. As we all know COVID – 19 Pandemic has spread all over the world with a lightning speed, killing hundreds of thousands of people and infecting millions. There is a misperception that Nature is ‘Getting a break’ from humans during this pandemic.

“Biodiversity is the way, So don’t Let Nature Go Astray...”

The emergence of Covid – 19 has underscored the fact that when we destroy biodiversity, we destroy the system that supports human life. Human actions, including deforestation, encroachment on wildlife habitats, intensified agriculture and acceleration of climate change, have upset the delicate balance of nature. We have changed the system that would naturally protect us, and have created conditions that allow particular pathogens including Coronaviruses – to spread. Human action has reduced biodiversity and modified wildlife population structure and at an unprecedented rate.

“Be responsible for better world, Work to sustain biodiversity.....”

As we all know that the second wave of coronavirus has shaken the whole world. ICU beds and lack of oxygen in hospitals is a matter of great concern. In double mutant Corona Variants, more respiratory problems have been seen. Nature prevents and responds to some of the most pressing challenges faced by humans today. It purifies the air we breathe, cleans the water we drink, and
produces variety of foods we need to stay healthy and resist diseases. Since humans makes the most use of biodiversity, we must preserve and protect biodiversity and to further protect ourselves from Covid – 19.

“Look closely at nature. Every species is a masterpiece, exquisitely adapted to the particular environment in which it has survived. Who are we to destroy or even diminish biodiversity?”

E.O. Wilson
Addressing biodiversity, like so many other things, seems to have been shunted aside by the coronavirus outbreak. Everyone had their own plan for this year. But nature, it seems, had some other plan. The coronavirus pandemic has put pretty much all of them on the back burner. As humans diminish biodiversity by cutting down forests and building more infrastructure, they are increasing the risk of more pandemics like COVID-19. This isn't actually new. Researchers have long known that infectious diseases typically arise at the junction between nature and agribusiness, mining and other human activities which exploits nature. The Ebola outbreak in West Africa was the result of deforestation, leading to closer contact between humans and wildlife. The avian flu was linked to intensive poultry farming and the Nipah virus resulted from the intensification of pig farming in Malaysia. The list goes on: Middle East respiratory syndrome, sudden acute respiratory syndrome, West Nile virus, Zika virus disease and now COVID-19.

As humans continue to alter landscapes and destroy animal habitat, the remaining fragments become islands of rapid diversification of disease-causing microbes and their wildlife hosts. Today, though, the increasing diversity of disease-causing microbes, combined with the wildlife trade, means a higher chance that any one of these microbes may spill over into human population. As we deplete our forests, pollute our water and air, and hunt or capture wildlife for markets, we are disrupting ecosystem and displacing viruses from their natural hosts. When this happens, they find a new host, that’s ‘Us’.

Dozens of studies have demonstrated the connection between environmental degradation, managing and mismanaging wildlife, and the spread of novel infectious diseases. Yet, management of natural resources across the globe rarely focuses explicitly on preventing infectious diseases. Threats to biodiversity
have five main causes: habitat loss, over-hunting, pollution, introduced species, and climate change. The science on how to best mitigate these threats has been siloed in the sub culture of academic conservation science. The COVID-19 pandemic is giving the world a lesson on the risks associated with a globalized economy that continues to gobble up natural resources and habitat, and thus, puts us all at increasing risk of exposure to novel pathogens. If the COVID-19 pandemic doesn’t prove the need for conserving biodiversity, nothing will. The science is clear: our risk of contact with new viruses has exploded over the last three decades, and the forces behind the drivers of that contact—environmental degradation, species loss, and wildlife trade—are too powerful for a world to constrain.
Our planet has been working for a long time creating the things that are common to us. It has been working at the creation of seas and oceans, lakes, rivers and man – the Homo sapiens and the ecological life that supports biodiversity. Biodiversity provides functioning ecosystem that supply oxygen, clean air and water, pollination of plants, pest control, waste water treatment and many ecosystem services. Recreation—many recreational pursuits rely on our unique biodiversity, such as birdwatching, hiking, camping and fishing.

Zoonotic diseases are diseases which are shared between animals and people. It is very likely that COVID-19 came from animals. I have not really seen anything like this in lifetime nor have I heard from my mother which has affected nearly every country in the world. Although zoonotic diseases are diseases which are shared between animals and people, keeping nature and species diversity intact protects us from pandemics. In some cases high host species diversity reduces disease risk, this is called dillusion effect. But if we remove these hosts and only create monoculture of animals then they are likely to be the transmitters of disease. Outbreaks like Ebola and HIV also emerged from areas where forests, among the bio diverse habitats of our planet, were disappearing.

People have this misconception that biodiversity or nature as something separate from our human environment. We humans must not forget that our survival is dependent on nature. Our rich oceans and forests store carbon, the corals that protect us from flooding and the wildlife that is the cornerstone of the rural economy in most developing countries. Our balanced ecosystems prevent plagues by single species and our myriad of plant types serve as ‘nature’s pharmacy’, with so many potential cures for diseases yet to be discovered. Many components of medicines we now take for granted originate from nature,
including ingredients for aspirin, penicillin and quinine. There is a need to minimize human interface with wild animals and wild spaces; eliminating transmission points where the likelihood of viral spill over to humans is high, such as unhygienic commercial markets in wild animal meat and live animals; better monitoring of the legal trade in wildlife; diligently suppressing illegal and unsustainable trade in wildlife; and conserving natural habitats.

Much of the food we eat depends on honeybees. These are guardians of biodiversity. Changes in land use, intensive agricultural practices, monocultures and pesticides have all fragmented and degraded pollinators’ habitat. Furthermore, extreme weather associated with climate change is hindering pollination by desynchronizing the demand (flowers in bloom) with the supply of service providers (abundant and diverse populations of pollinators). The decline of pollinators could have disastrous effects for our future of food. The countries should rally together to create sustainable rehabilitation plan and should realise that it’s not just climate change but handling this will also become a catastrophe on a major scale and will haunt the global world in future if nothing is done.
“Biodiversity is the way, so don’t let nature go astray” Biodiversity underpins all life on Earth, and refers to biological variety in all its forms, from the genetic makeup of plants and animals to cultural diversity. People depend on biodiversity in their daily lives, in ways that are not always apparent or appreciated. Human health ultimately depends upon ecosystem products and services (such as availability of fresh water, food and fuel sources) which are requisite for good human health and productive livelihood. Biodiversity loss can have significant direct human health impacts if ecosystem services are no longer adequate to meet social needs, and this is what we are going through right now. The emergence of COVID-19 has underscored the fact that when we destroy biodiversity, we destroy the system that supports human life. The more bio diverse an ecosystem is, the more difficult it is for one pathogen to spread rapidly or dominate; whereas, biodiversity loss provides opportunity for pathogens to pass between animals and people. Human actions, including deforestation, encroachment on wildlife habitats, intensified agriculture, and acceleration of climate change, have upset the delicate balance of nature. We have changed the system that would naturally protect us, and have created conditions that allow particular pathogens—including coronaviruses—to spread. As humans diminish biodiversity by cutting down forests and building more infrastructure, they’re increasing the risk of diseases and pandemics such as COVID-19. Many ecologists have long suspected this, but a new study helps to reveal why: while some species are going extinct, those that tend to survive and thrive — rats and bats, for instance — are more likely to host potentially dangerous pathogens that can make the jump to humans. Today, it is estimated that, globally, about one billion cases of illness and millions of deaths occur every year from diseases caused by viruses like coronavirus; and about 75 per cent of all emerging infectious diseases in humans are zoonotic, meaning that they are transmitted to people by animals. Nature is sending us a message. COVID-19 provides us an opportunity to both revisit our relationship with nature and rebuild a more environmentally responsible world. Addressing zoonotic disease emergence requires addressing its
root cause—primarily, the impact of human activities. As the global population approaches 10 billion, we need to better understand the web of life in which we live and appreciate that it functions as a whole system. It is time to re-imagine our relationship with nature and put nature at the heart of our decision-making. Voices are being heard that the —world will not be same after Covid-19. So let's integrate into this —next world with a greater respect for biodiversity. It's our greatest immediate benefit!

“The more variety, the better society”
कोरोना वायरस के प्रकोप के कारण वैश्विक सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य और आर्थिक तबाही नाटकीय रूप से एक नयी जूनीटिक महामारी की संभावना को कम करने के लिए तत्काल अनिवार्यता को पुष्ट करती है।

वायरल स्विलोवर की दुनिया को व्यापक बनाने की संभावना को कम करने के लिए हरम प्रकृति और जैव-विविधता के लिए एक मौलिक बदलाव की आवश्यकता है। इसमें जंगली जानवरों और जंगली स्थानों के साथ मानव इंटरफेस को कम करने की आवश्यकता है; जैसे संचरण बिंदुओं को समाप्त करना जहाँ मनुष्यों के लिए वायरल स्विलोवर की संभावना अधिक है, जंगली जानवरों के मांस और जीवित जानवरों का अस्वच्छ वाणिज्यिक बाजार; वन्यजीवों में क्रान्ती व्यापार की बेहतर निगरानी; वन्यजीवों में अवैध और निरंतर व्यापार को दबाने; और प्राकृतिक आवासों का संरक्षण। बदले में प्राकृतिक आवासों के संरक्षण के लिए मानव खाद्य उत्पादन में गहन बदलाव और शेष प्राकृतिक आवासों पर मानव अतिक्रमण की आवश्यकता होती है।

विविधता के बारे में निर्णय लेने को स्थायी आधार पर सरकारों के उच्चतम स्तर तक बढ़ाया जाना चाहिए। इस तरह के परिवर्तन आसान या सस्ते नहीं होंगे, लेकिन वे आवश्यक हैं। हालांकि, महामारी को रोकने के लिए आवश्यक उपाय वन्यजीवों के सभी व्यापार पर प्रतिबंध नहीं लगा सकते हैं। इस तरह की नीति गहन रूप से प्रतिकूल होगी क्योंकि यह महत्वपूर्ण प्राकृतिक पारिस्थितिक तंत्र के संरक्षण के लिए आर्थिक प्रोत्साहन को समाप्त कर देगी। न ही बुनियादी खाद्य सुरक्षा और निर्वाह के लिए शिकार पर निर्भर सेंड़ों कोड़ों लोग की आजीविका को खत्म करने के उपायों में शामिल होना चाहिए।

वास और वन्यजीवों को संरक्षित करने और उन्हें जंगली और मनुष्यों से दूर रखने के लिए, जीवनमय वायरल स्विलोवर को कम करने के लिए, कुछ वन्यजीव उत्पादों के वैश्विक मांग, न केवल जंगली मांस, बल्कि पारंपरिक चीनी चिकित्सा (टीसीएम) के पहलुओं को भी कम करने के आवश्यकता हैं। इस तरह के स्मार्ट अनुरूप और आवश्यक महामारी की रोकथाम के उपायों को अपनाना नीति प्रभावशीलता के लिए महत्वपूर्ण हैं।

गंभीर रूप से , प्राकृतिक आवास और जैव विविधता को बचाने के लिए हरम मौलिक वैश्विक प्रयासों में शामिल होने के आवश्यकता हैं। मुख्य रूप से रक्षात्मक प्रतिक्रियाओं पर आधारित नीतियाँ , जैसे व्यवस्थापन देखभाल प्रणाली को मजबूत करना या वैश्विक उत्पादन और तार्किक बिंदुओं को फिर से
तैयार करना, अपर्याप्त हैं और अभिभूत होंगी। फिर फिर वे अब तक दुनिया भर में नीतियों के थोक हैं।

कुछ अपवादों के साथ, कई विनाशकारी नीतियों पर जो जूनोटिक महामारी या महामारी के आगमन को तेज करती हैं, एक बुनियादी पुनर्गठन के आधार पर गहरी रोकथाम के आवश्यकता हैं।
Many of us think about biodiversity or nature as something separate from our human environment, something we may want to save, while it may not matter too much if we did'nt. But we all need to be aware that as humans our survival is still very much dependent on nature. Our rich oceans and forest store carbon, our balanced ecosystems prevent plagues by single species and the classifications of plant types serve as nature’s pharmacy with so many cures with several diseases. Many components of medicines from the past times, we now take it as granted are originated from nature including penicillin, aspirin and quinine.

On the other side, nature and its caretakers (we humans) are suffering from the effects of Covid-19. Incidents of poaching have risen while rangers are limited in their movement due to lockdown measures and governments have their hands full with emergency responses.

Biodiversity is extremely important to maintain the ecological system. Most noteworthy many species of plants and animals are dependent on each other. Biodiversity in flora and fauna is the need of the hour. Therefore, we should take various counter measures to stop the reduction of endangered species. Pollution from vehicles should decrease so that animal can get fresh air to breathe and there is no shortage of oxygen for people with respiratory diseases.

Biodiversity is closely related to human health which is why it is becoming a global issue. The health risk of climate change is relevant to the changes in biodiversity. Biodiversity has been the reason for forming the foundation of different ecosystem services that are responsible for contributing to human well-being. If we protect our environment, then only it will be able to protect us. If we want a better future, then we have to control this and stop the activities that lead to massive loss of human life due to pandemics.

“We should preserve every scrap of biodiversity as priceless while we learn to use it and come to understand what it means to humanity.”
‘Biodiversity’- this word describes different types of living creatures, humans and their importance in the ecosystem. Every creature is dependant on another creature to survive in the race of life. There should be a balance in ecosystem. No creature is unimportant. Each of them has a specific role. Now in the situation of pandemic, people are inside their homes due to lockdown. They are stressed and depressed. But they do not understand the mindset of the animals kept in cages. Many people are dying due to coronavirus and we are keeping an account of it but when the animals were dying in large numbers there were no records.

People believe that the coronavirus came from bats and other pathogens but they don’t consider it their mistake because animals are being forced to live in cities as their natural habitats are being destroyed by humans for their greed in the name of development. Now people want to go close to nature but there is no place left where we can’t see tall buildings, traffic, industries and factories. From the latest survey of 2020, around 70+ animals are critically endangered and 60+ plants are critically endangered. And 300+ species of animals and 140+ species of plants are endangered. Due to pollution in oceans and seas about 100,000 marine animals die every year. Because of the fault of humans many of the valuable species of plants are now extinct which were used as medicines. Now a days, the demand for oxygen is increasing and people are bound to take artificial oxygen as humans have cut down the forests and due to climatic changes many microorganisms and plants are not in a condition to keep them alive. Also countries are more interested in wars. They are very much eager to destroy this only Planet which supports life. They are spending their money in weapons and nuclear bombs which only leads to destruction. People are not understanding that development does not mean that we should forget our Mother earth and the gifts she provided us. We should take immediate action to protect it or else one day this earth will be no more in existence. We should always remember that
people are really much dependent on nature for their survival. It is never too late, we should take initiatives to protect our Biodiversity and prevent situation of pandemic like Coronavirus in future. Let's make this earth a better place for future generations to survive.

"Nature can live without people but people cannot live without nature"
From a single cell to a world of seven billion people, what we are and the world that we live in today is biodiversity and without it, the world wouldn't be as it is right now. Man has always been a part of biodiversity and transforming it since the very beginning. Biodiversity is not static; it is constantly bestowing blessings upon us and at the same time punishing us for our actions that violate its laws. Everything that goes around, comes around and if we don't change our ways, it will come right back to us. Even right now, the world has been facing many difficulties which is a consequence of our own actions. Biodiversity has given us everything that we have. Everything that surrounds us directly or indirectly has its history in biodiversity.

Biodiversity has never tried to harm us without a reason; all the calamities that have occurred in the past are just obvious consequences of human wrong doings. We overuse scarce natural resources, consume way more than how much we actually should, pollute the natural environment, cut down forests and kill animals. Due to our actions, the glaciers are melting, the sea level is rising, innocent animals and coral reefs that take thousands of years to form are dying and the earth is getting warmer everyday while most of us simply go on with our lives as if nothing has happened. We just sit and watch thinking that all this will not affect us or that even if it does, there will be someone else to step in and do something. However, the number of people who have actually stepped in are only handful compared to millions of people who are worsening the situation everyday.

It is time for us to step forward as we only have little time left to stop this. In the past few years we have suffered from many major global issues and even right now we are suffering from a global pandemic. All these events that have happened in the past and the events that are currently happening are all results of human exploitation of what biodiversity provides us with. These events
are a warning of what is yet to come if we do not stop what we are doing. Time is slipping from our hands and we need to make things right before it is too late. We have remained selfish for too long. If we remain selfish any longer, the clock will eventually stop ticking and nothing will be left with us. The human race has already caused enough imbalance in ecosystem. However, we still have hope and a little bit of time left in our hands. Instead of celebrating International Day for Biological Diversity and spreading awareness only once a year, with combined efforts, we can make everyday Biodiversity Day and make a huge difference.

“Remember the change starts with you”