

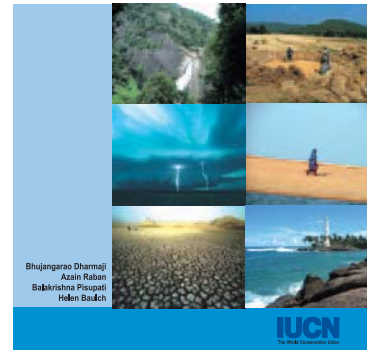
# Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia

## 2004 Annual Report



### Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia

#### A GUIDING FRAME FOR MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT INTO NATIONAL ADAPTATION PROGRAMMES OF ACTION (NAPAs)



Bhujangarao Dharmaji  
Azalin Raban  
Balakrishna Pisupati  
Helen Soudich

IUCN  
The World Conservation Union

#### Report of the Southeast Asia Regional Session of the Global Biodiversity Forum



Bhujangarao Dharmaji  
Balakrishna Pisupati

Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia

IUCN  
The World Conservation Union



# Annual Report 2004

## Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia



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Staff of IUCN Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia



## Message from the Programme Head

IUCN Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia (RBP) is pleased to report on our activities and programmes in year 2004. It has been a tradition to release our annual report on May 22nd to commemorate International Biodiversity Day. We do so this year too.

Being the last year of our second 4-year phase, 2004 was a year of hectic activity. World Conservation Congress (WCC) was held in November, and it adopted a quadrennial work plan (2005-2008) for IUCN. With this as a guide and reflecting on our past and current activities, the RBP quadrennial plan for 2005-2008 focuses on making conservation people and development centred, including conservation principles in adaptive management.

The Programme was established in 1996 with support from the German Federal Agency for Development and Cooperation (BMZ) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Looking back at the progress since, it is with a sense of satisfaction that we began planning for the next quadrennium. From being a set of scattered activities at country level, RBP consolidated and matured into a visible and influential regional programme in Asia, receiving constant encouragement from members, country focal points, partners and donors.

The endeavour to innovate and willingness to mainstream conservation and development actions is central to the strength of RBP and its success. Chairing the selection of the Asia-Pacific Group finalists, for Equator Initiative's 2004 awards, provided a golden opportunity. RBP was privileged to work with 17 community initiatives around the world in distilling the lessons learnt on making conservation and development work together. The ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (AWGNCB) the highest, official, decision making body reporting to the Ministers of Environment in ASEAN was appreciative of RBP's support in 2004 and requested continued support for its actions on conservation in the Southeast Asia region.

RBP works closely with the members of the Like-Minded Group of Megabiodiverse Countries (LMMC) and its Secretariat, and responded positively to their invitation to support a technical expert consultation on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) and the International Regime in January 2005. This consultation preceded the meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on ABS of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). RBP also assisted UNEP and regional bodies in Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America in finalising projects related to ABS during 2004. These contributions make the Programme a stronger and more visible technical and implementing partner on ABS related issues, in Asia and other regions.

Pursuing our commitment to building capacities and creating an enabling environment in the region, RBP produced several reports and publications, including two resource kits addressing Poverty and Environment, and Bioprospecting and ABS, during 2004. With support from the U S State Department, through the South Asia Environmental Hub, RBP began implementing a capacity building project on ABS. This involved specific actions on ABS issues, at both at regional and national levels, some of which were presented at the CBD AWG meeting held in February 2005. Continuing our work on climate change and biodiversity, RBP produced a guidance document on mainstreaming biodiversity and development into National Adaptation Programme of Actions (NAPAs), in consultation with the Secretariat to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This guiding frame is being extensively used in Asia and Africa by countries developing NAPAs.

Besides these, RBP continued to innovate in areas of development policy, linking conservation and economic strategies, achieving synergies between multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and biosafety capacity building in the region. In collaboration with International Development Research Centre (IDRC), RBP organised a regional consultation on setting a research agenda for biosafety in Asia. A report of this consultation is to be released at the Second Conference of Parties serving as Meeting of Parties (COP-MOP) to the Biosafety Protocol in Montreal, was in May 2005. In recognition of RBP's key role in CBD implementation in the region, RBP invited to sit on the CBD Expert Panel on Capacity Building for Biosafety as well as the Expert panel on Technology Transfer and Cooperation. With evolving restructuring of IUCN in Asia under the theme Ecosystems and Livelihoods, RBP is a part of the Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group (ELG) established in 2003. Working in partnership with interdisciplinary team of experts in IUCN, RBP is able to provide a platform for better focus on IUCN's work on ecosystems and livelihoods in Asia.

During the year under review we were able to consolidate, focus and concentrate on the core areas of our work with support from partners and colleagues within the IUCN family. While the achievements are most satisfying there is more to be done. We look forward to continued support to further develop a regional programme that is technically sound and visibly robust.

**Balakrishna Pisupati Ph.D**

## Programme mission and priority themes

Our mission is to assist countries in the Asian region implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In this endeavour, RBP seeks to encourage, advise and influence these countries, to address issues of conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use and equitable benefit sharing, through our commitment to

- Working in partnership
- Building capacities
- A long-term presence

RBP's activities in the region has always been in response to specific requests and needs of the Secretariat, members and partners. Working in close cooperation with country offices and other regional programmes, RBP is taking forward its mandate in the region.

RBP firmly believes in building partnerships to achieve its mission of implementing the CBD in the Asia region. This principle guides RBP in its work at national, regional and global levels. Within this framework, priority themes were identified to meet regional and national needs. These include: National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs); Species Monitoring and Conservation; Legal and Regulatory Issues; Environmental Governance and Synergies between MEAs.

However, with emerging relevance to mainstream biodiversity into economic as well development planning and into other sectors, RBP diversified its mandate to work on other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) as well as with development processes such as working towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



## In retrospect

RBP Phase 1 (1996-2000), supported by BMZ and SDC, was essentially an initial testing phase to assess possible strengths, appropriate approaches and identify the niche for such a regional programme. Impressive achievements, products and services generated in this phase helped the Programme reach out to more partners and donors. RBP being identified as the regional collaborating partner for UNDP UNEP-GEF Biodiversity Planning Support Programme (BPSP), the support extended by The World Bank, International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the continuing support from BMZ helped RBP focus on a set of priority themes during its second phase (2001 - 2004).

Over 2001 and 2002 RBP expanded its programme to India, China, and Malaysia and sought inter-regional cooperation with regional offices for Eastern Africa, Meso America and Europe and worked closely with CBD focal points, IUCN national and thematic programmes, commission chairs and members in Asia. In addition to diligently pursuing its mandate to help countries implement the provisions of the CBD, RBP expanded into supporting national and regional initiatives dealing with mainstreaming biodiversity into sectoral issues.

In the absence of other strong regional institutions RBP provided leadership on conservation and development issues. Its communication base was strengthened by launching a website ([www.biodiversityasia.org](http://www.biodiversityasia.org)) and a list server BIOPLAN, which enhanced dissemination of outcomes of RBP's actions.

Year 2003 saw the Programme expand into new areas of focus and work. RBP received continued support from BMZ, its principal donor, and additional support from agencies like IDRC, UNDP, SDC and others.

Collaborative actions were initiated with ASEAN Secretariat, Research Information Systems for the Non-Aligned and Developing Countries (RIS), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), United Nations University (UNU), International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). RBP was nominated as the interim coordinating agency for the South Asian Network for Taxonomy Capacity Building (SACNET).

RBP began focusing on issues of links between trade, biodiversity and development; the role of biodiversity in reducing poverty and realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); impacts of WTO on issues of access to genetic resources and benefit sharing as well as biosafety; local actions on achieving synergies between CBD and the UNFCCC and provision of policy guidance for national actions on strengthening rural livelihood securities during 2003 -2004.

RBP's 'Biosafety Capacity Building Initiative for Asia' was highly recognized and much appreciated as a significant effort supporting the CBD biosafety programme. RBP supported a host of different countries with their work on National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans, National Biosafety Frameworks, East Asia Seas Sustainable Development Action Plan, access and benefit sharing issues, impact of climate change on biodiversity, mainstreaming biodiversity and development into National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) in addition to supporting the development of country level biodiversity programmes of IUCN.



*Credits Sandra McKenzie IUCN - RBP*



*Credits Sandra McKenzie IUCN - RBP*



## Year 2004 -2005 an overview

The year 2004 saw new growth in RBP's technical and programmatic areas. In line with IUCN policy on reducing carbon emissions, RBP adopted a Carbon Neutral Policy to offset carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emitted due to its activities such as air travel, energy use and waste management. Use of energy efficient lighting, carbon levy on air travel, adoption of the 'reduce, recycle and reuse' principles form the core of this strategy. The release of our first report on these actions (Carbon Audit) is planned for June 5th, 2005 The World Environment Day.

RBP and the Social Policy Group at IUCN Head Quarters initiated a new programme with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to address issues of poverty, health and environment for human development. This collaboration that began at the WCC, will share experiences and knowledge, building on discussions and lessons learned from a series of case studies in Asia, on addressing poverty, environment and health issues in an integrated fashion. The case studies will showcase the impacts of local actions on policy making. The project is expected to facilitate priority setting on poverty and environment at IUCN and ADB. To develop the above theme, RBP produced a film on issues of mainstreaming poverty and development titled "Voicing Silence". This video film was screened during the WCC at Bangkok. A RBP resource kit on Poverty and Environment was also distributed at the congress.

During 2004, RBP helped the Government of Bangladesh to finalise its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). This action plan is progressive, cross-cutting and development-centred. A programme on National Capacity Self Assessments (NCSA) was also developed with funding from the UNDP Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GEF), and is being implemented currently.

Working in partnership with UNDP-GEF and UNEP-GEF, RBP contributed to the technical training workshop on NCSA for the Asia region held in Kuala Lumpur in November 2004. Recognizing, RBP's initiative on mainstreaming Rio Conventions into development agendas such as MDGs and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the GEF implementing agencies are considering RBP as a strategic partner in implementing the Global Support Programme (GSP) for effective implementation of NCSAs globally.



Source IUCN - RBP



Source UNDP



RBP provided technical backstopping to the Government of Maldives in developing the National Biosafety Framework. Advice and support was also provided to Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Cambodia on development of National Biosafety Frameworks (NBFs) during the year.

In partnership with Government of Philippines and a consortium of donors and partners, RBP organized the 4th Regional Session of Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF) for Southeast Asia. This session brought together 66 participants from 13 countries and had representation from governments, NGOs, community leaders, academia and civil society. The issues addressed included linking conservation and development plans, use of the precautionary principle in natural resource management and developing work programmes for synergies among Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). In light of the growing relevance and importance of GBF as a key mechanism to foster free dialogue on a range of conservation and development issues, IUCN Headquarters requested RBP to coordinate the Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF) and further develop the initiative into its next phase.

Consolidating its activities on climate change and biodiversity, RBP initiated work in the Lower Mekong countries on field assessments related to impact of climate change on biodiversity and livelihoods. A guidance document on mainstreaming biodiversity and development into National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) was produced in association with United National Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat. This document is being used by many least developed countries in Asia and Africa while implementing their NAPA.



*Credits Erin M Smith IUCN - RBP*

## Key theme-related activities in detail

RBP firmly believes in building partnerships to achieve its mission of implementing the CBD in Asia region. With this principle as its bottom line, RBP works with its partners at national, regional and global levels. Within this framework, priority themes have been identified on the basis of regional needs as a follow up to Phase I of the programme. The key priority themes include: National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs); Species Monitoring and Conservation; Legal and Regulatory Issues; Environmental Governance and Synergies between Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Under these themes RBP undertook activities dealing with following themes during 2004:

- Supporting National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans.
- Monitoring 2010 Conservation Targets of CBD.
- Creating an Enabling Environment: Communicating Challenges and Building Capacities
- Access and benefit sharing
- Regional capacity building initiative on biosafety
- Raising the 'Voice of Asia'
- Inter-linkages among multilateral environmental agreements
- Other emerging and priority areas such as poverty, environment and development linkages.

*"The fourteenth meeting of the ASEAN working group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity (AWGNCB) noted and expressed their appreciation to IUCN - Regional Biodiversity Programme in Asia .....and the activities that have been carried out jointly with the ASEAN Secretariat and member countries.....agree to further strengthen collaboration and explore potential partnership with IUCN Regional Biodiversity Programme in Asia."*

- ASEAN Secretariat



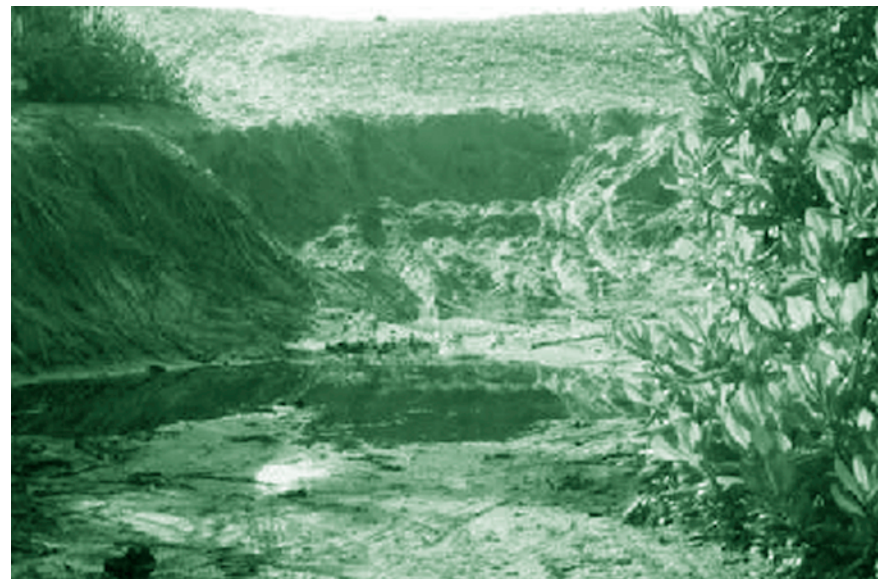
Credits Sandra McKenzie IUCN - RBP



## National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs)

National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) provide countries with a guiding framework to plan and prioritise their national actions on biodiversity conservation, and to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Several countries have formulated NBSAPs and implementation is in progress. The need for 'second generation' NBSAPs is now being increasingly felt. A compelling reason is the fact that conservation of biodiversity is no longer the preserve of biologists or conservation scientists. Realising this, many countries are keen to revise their NBSAPs and develop local or sub-national biodiversity action plans which, will also provide opportunities for decentralized decision-making and implementation.

The NBSAP of Bangladesh was finalized this year. These strategies and action plans were developed with RBP's technical assistance and guidance is responsive to the national development goals without compromising on conservation and sustainable use principles. Thus, the NBSAP of Bangladesh is a progressive document which considers the relationship between conservation and development while being responsive and relevant to local needs.



*Source IUCN - RBP*



*Source IUCN - RBP*

RBP also supported the development of an independent financial and communication plan for the NBSAP to facilitate its effective implementation.

RBP helped Oman and Qatar to review their NBSAPs during 2004, and also provided inputs for the review of Sri Lanka's Addendum to the National Action Plan.

RBP continued to support countries in the implementation of NBSAPs, including the development of guidelines on 'Realising National Poverty Reduction Strategies: Options from Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Use'; development of monitoring and evaluation packages for effective implementation of NBSAPs; supporting the revision of NBSAPs and development of sub national BAPs with a focus on sustainable development for China.



## Monitoring 2010 conservation targets of the CBD

Countries that are Party to CBD made a strong call for urgent action to ‘reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity significantly by 2010’ during CBD CoP6. The CoP placed a special emphasis on developing indicators to measure progress towards this goal.

IUCN is globally recognized for its efforts to assess status of biodiversity through Red Lists. RBP is well poised to assist countries on using the Lists to monitor and evaluate conservation efforts. RBP utilizes the competence of experts from the Species Survival Commission (SSC) to support the ongoing programme on species conservation and monitoring.

During the year, RBP supported the development of a Red List for Mammals of Pakistan with assistance from Zoo Outreach Organization (ZOO), India. This compilation is the first of its kind in Pakistan and provides the guiding framework for conservation efforts in Pakistan.

To facilitate technical training on the identification of species, RBP, as the interim coordinating agency for SACNET, worked with IUCN Sri Lanka Country Office to digitize the ‘Guide to Orchids of Sri Lanka’ and developed a user-friendly, searchable CD-ROM of the Guide. RBP is currently working with experts on lichens to develop an identification guide on lichens for the region.

RBP is currently partnering with UNDP and FAO in Lao PDR to develop a programme on agro-biodiversity conservation. Discussions are underway to develop an adaptive agrobiodiversity conservation project in Lao PDR.

With regard to mainstreaming MEAs, RBP is studying the interactions between Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES) and CBD work programmes. This study is expected to help design actions on implementing CITES, CBD and WTO as complementary agreements.



*Credits IUCN, Sri Lanka*



*Credits Emilie Warner IUCN - RBP*

## Creating an enabling environment : Communicating challenges and building capacities

One of the prerequisites for creating an enabling environment to deal with conservation is to build capacities of stakeholders by providing information that is better packaged and appropriately delivered. RBP therefore continues to focus on development, packaging and dissemination of information relating to CBD and other MEAs in the region.

During the year, RBP provided technical backstopping to the Science, Technology and Environment Agency (STEA) of the Government of Lao PDR to effectively implement the Climate Change Convention in Lao PDR. This was accomplished through IUCN Lao Country Office and in partnership with CIDA. The overarching objective of this exercise is to build technical capacities of Government, Civil Society and NGO stakeholders on some key technical areas of UNFCCC, including Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), Kyoto Protocol (KP) and Land Use Land Use Change Forestry (LULUCF)

Several training programmes, consultations and workshops were organised to enhance the capacities of key stakeholders. Some important ones are listed below.

- Workshop on 'Responding to Global Challenges Celebrating the International Biodiversity Day'. Dhaka, Bangladesh, May 2004
- Southeast Asia Regional Session of Global Biodiversity Forum (GBF), Manila, Philippines, June 2004.
- Regional Consultation on 'Developing a Research Agenda on Agricultural Biotechnology and Biosafety in Asia', Colombo, Sri Lanka, October 2004
- Conservation Platform on 'Poverty, Environment and Health', World Conservation Congress (WCC), Bangkok, Thailand, November 2004
- Roundtable discussion on 'Taking Forward the Poverty environment linkages', WCC, Bangkok, Thailand, November 2004.
- National preparatory workshop on UNFCCC COP 10, Vientiane, Lao PDR, November 2004
- South Asia Regional Training Workshop on 'Bioprospecting, Access and Benefit Sharing', Lucknow, January 2005.
- Expert Meeting of Like-Minded Group of Megabiodiverse Countries (LMMC) on ABS and International Regime, New Delhi, India, January 2005.



*Credits Sandra McKenzie IUCN - RBP*



- Southeast Asia Regional Training Workshop on ‘Bioprospecting, Access and Benefit Sharing’, Bangkok, Thailand, February 2005
- Launch of RBP publication “A Guiding Framework for Mainstreaming Biodiversity and Development into National Adaptation Programmes of Actions (NAPAs), CBD-SBSTTA 10, Bangkok, Thailand, February 2005.
- Side-Event on ‘Bioprospecting, Access and Benefit Sharing’, 3rd Ad Hoc Working Group Meeting on ABS in Bangkok, Thailand, February 2005.

Besides the above, RBP also participated in several national, regional and global meetings, training programmes and consultations held during 2004-2005

### Resource Kits

RBP produces a series of resource kits, on key thematic issues. The resource kit provides a comprehensive ‘one-stop’ searchable information base to help non-experts understand the issues. During 2004 the ‘Biosafety Resource Kit’ and the ‘Climate Change Resource Kit’ were updated and distributed during Conference of Parties/Meeting of Parties (COP/MOP) and UNFCCC CoP 10, respectively.

In addition, two new resource kits were developed, titled “Poverty and Environment Resource Kit” “Bioprospecting, Access and Benefit Sharing Resource Kit”. These were distributed during the WCC and at various other workshops and training programmes organised by RBP.

### Biolog

During 2004, the thematic issue of RBP’s newsletter Biolog focused on health and biodiversity. This issue was launched on-line during June 2004. The current edition to be launched on the World Biodiversity Day (May 22, 2005) is addressing issues of National Capacity Self Assessments (NCSA)

### Bioplan (List Serve)

‘BIOPLAN’ is an informative electronic mailing list dealing with contemporary issues such as biodiversity, biosafety, climate change and others. The subscription to BIOPLAN is growing with more than 400 members on the list server now. The feedback from the users such as policy makers, scientists and NGOs has been very



Source IUCN - RBP

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positive and encouraging. Information is being provided on a weekly basis covering critical issues of conservation and development through this service.

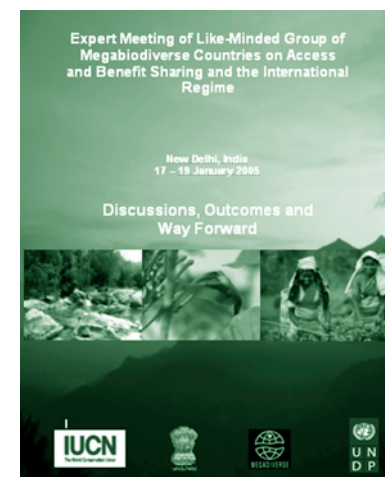
A specific list serve to facilitate exchange of information on Taxonomy related issues (SACNET-L) and one for CBD Focal Points (CBDFP-L) were established during 2005.

### Website

RBP's website ([www.biodiversityasia.org](http://www.biodiversityasia.org)) is used as an important medium for communicating with the external audience. Weekly updates on programme issues, provision of all publications of the Programme on the site, continued maintenance of the interim Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) for Biosafety in the region, strengthening the on-line biodiversity expert database formed the core areas of action during the year.

### Key Publications

- Balakrishna Pisupati, Maria Fernanda Espinosa and Sebastian Winkler. 2005. Report of the meeting on Like Minded group of Megabiodiverse Countries (LMMC).
- Balakrishna Pisupati, Maria Fernanda Espinosa and Sebastian Winkler. 2005. Synthesis Report of Regional Consultations on ABS and International Regime held in Nepal, Tanzania and Peru.
- Patricia Moore. 2004. Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing: Key Questions for Decision Makers.
- Bhujangarao Dharmaji, Azain Raban, Balakrishna Pisupati and Helen Baulch. 2004. A guiding frame for mainstreaming biodiversity and development into National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs)
- Bhujangarao Dharmaji. 2004. Impacts of climate change on Biodiversity in Attapeu Province, Lao PDR: A Rapid Field Assessment.
- Balakrishna Pisupati. 2004. Agenda Briefs for CBD SBSTTA 10 and 3rd Ad Hoc Working Group on ABS.
- "Voicing Silence" A short film on linking poverty, development and environment.
- Bhujangarao Dharmaji and Balakrishna Pisupati (2005). Report of the Southeast Asia regional session of the Global Biodiversity Forum



## Access and Benefit Sharing

RBP continues to carry forward the discussions and debates in the region on access and benefit sharing issues. This year the focus shifted from building capacities of stakeholders on ABS issues to raising awareness and understanding of relationships between values of biodiversity and ABS.

A regional project on ‘Bioprospecting, Access and Benefit Sharing’ was initiated with support from US State Department through the South Asia Regional Environmental Hub. The project works with diverse stakeholders in the region, on linking biological prospecting with ABS debates, at national and regional levels. The project is designed to build the capacity and awareness of policy makers and stakeholders on ABS issues.

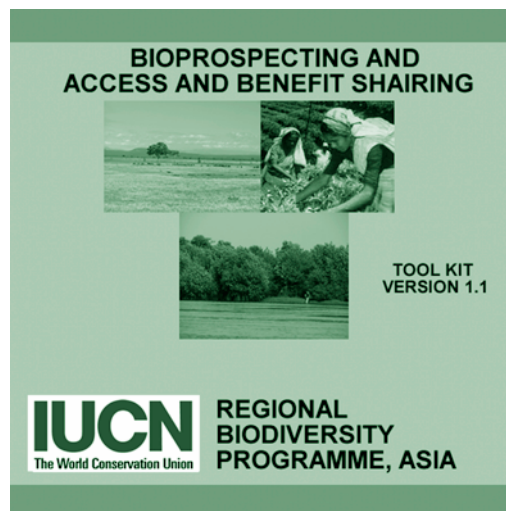
As a part of this project, a resource kit on bioprospecting and ABS was developed. In addition two regional training workshops were organised - for South Asia and Southeast Asia. A regional assessment and a country-wise priority setting on ABS issues was also carried out.

An information brochure on ABS initiatives in the region was developed during 2004. In partnership with the component programmes in Africa and Latin America and the headquarters’ policy unit, RBP supported three regional consultations on ABS and the International Regime (as called for by the WSSD). These workshops held in Kathmandu for Asia, Tanzania for Africa and Lima for Latin America brought together more than 27 countries and 156 participants to discuss the scope, structure and elements of the International Regime. A synthesis report of these consultations was distributed at the 3rd Ad Hoc Expert Group (AWG) Meeting on ABS in February 2005.

RBP was invited by the Like-Minded Group of Megabiodiverse Countries (LMMC) to help organise an expert consultation on ABS and the International Regime, in advance of the 3rd AWG meeting. Partnered by UNDP and the IUCN Component Programmes, and supported by BMZ, RBP organised this consultation in January

*“I would like to extend my appreciation to IUCN and UNDP for their support in providing this platform to work together for evolving a common position of the Group of Like Minded Megadiverse Countries (LMMC) ..... The IUCN meeting provided a good opportunity for the Like Minded Group to brainstorm various issues which came up for final decision making during the Ministerial meeting”*

Thiru A Raja  
Honorable Minister for Environment & Forests  
Government of India



Credits Sandra McKenzie IUCN - RBP

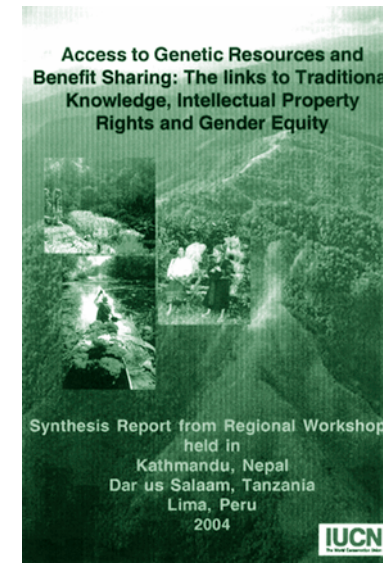
2005, in India. Based on the outputs of the consultation and the decisions at the LMMC Ministerial Meeting that followed soon after, the LMMC provided key inputs during the 3rd AWG meeting. A brief report of the expert consultation was circulated during the 3rd AWG meeting in Bangkok.

RBP was invited by UNEP for an expert consultation to develop three regional GEF projects on ABS. RBP was identified as an institutional partner for the Southeast Asia Project. Continuing the collaboration with World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), RBP is planning a training programme on registering traditional knowledge and using the WIPO tool-kits at local level. A regional workshop on implementing the farmers' rights provisions under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, is planned for 2005.

RBP continued its support to South Asian countries on ABS issues during the CBD debates. CBD Focal Points have identified RBP to develop an interim CHM on ABS for the region. The CHM is currently being designed. In addition, CBD focal points have recommended to the Secretariat of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to involve RBP as a key partner in the region on CBD related issues. RBP also launched its publication on ABS titled "Access and Benefit Sharing: Key Questions for Decision Makers" in partnership with the Regional Environmental Law Programme. Continued support is being provided to IUCN activities in Vietnam, Bangladesh and Nepal on issues of ABS and Traditional Knowledge issues.



Source UNDP





## Regional capacity building initiative on Biosafety

The adoption of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was prompted by the strong links which exist between the regulatory and legal regimes for safe use of biotechnology. RBP has implemented a capacity building initiative for Asia on biosafety since 2001, and continues to assist in promoting a better understanding of biosafety issues and the Protocol within Asia as well as other regions.

The main objectives of our initiative is to help countries in Asia develop and implement national frameworks on biosafety, build capacities to make informed decisions, and support awareness raising at regional level. Currently, RBP is helping Maldives, Sri Lanka and Vietnam to finalize their National Biosafety Frameworks (NBFs), and in partnership with UNEP supports the implementation programmes for NBFs. During 2004, the 'Biosafety Resource Kit' was updated with latest information from COP MOP 1, as well as other reviews of biosafety and biotechnology issues. More than 1000 copies of the Kit have been distributed so far. In addition, RBP continues to host a dedicated site, for countries in the region, to host their information on biosafety and related activities. This site is mirrored through the CBD Biosafety Clearing House (BCH).



*Credits Emilie Warner IUCN - RBP*



Together with IDRC, RBP organised a consultation on 'Setting a Research Agenda for Agricultural Biotechnology and Biosafety in Asia' in October 2004. More than 40 participants from diverse backgrounds, including media, attended the consultation held in Sri Lanka. Three priority themes namely regional cooperation on biosafety; socio-economic impacts related to biotechnology; and participatory approaches to decision making were discussed. The outcomes of the consultation will be presented during the COP MOP 2 meeting to be held in Montreal in May 2005.

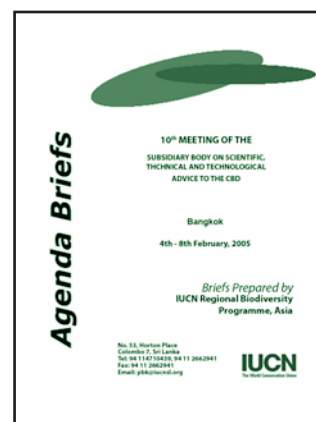
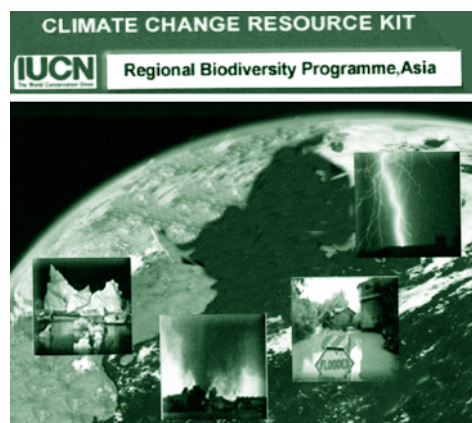
## Raising the 'Voice of Asia'

A core area of RBP's strength lies in its networking capacity. In the firm belief that environmental governance is about informed decision making, RBP puts emphasis on building capacity of stakeholders, including policy makers, on key environment and development debates through a range of actions. These include development of resource kits, agenda briefs and briefing papers on key global issues that come up for negotiation.

RBP supported, at national level, the preparation for global meetings such as Subsidiary Body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advise (SBSTTAs) and CoPs, since 1999. These consultations are now effectively institutionalised in the region, and countries are organising such sessions regularly. RBP continues to provide technical back-stopping for this activity, at country level and supported organizing pre-SBSTTA and pre-CoP sessions prior to CBD and UNFCCC events in the region. RBP partnered with the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) and provided technical inputs to a regional workshop addressing issues of mountain biodiversity and climate change for bridging gaps between research and policy. This workshop was organised during 2004 by IGES in collaboration with the Himalayan Climate Center (HCC) in Kathmandu, Nepal.

RBP participated in the first South Asia Regional Workshop on Ballast Water Control and Management held at the National Institute of Oceanography, Goa, India. Delegates from Bangladesh, Malaysia, Maldives, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand participated in the workshop organised by International Maritime Organisation (IMO), UNDP-GEF and the National Institute of Oceanography of India. The meeting concluded with a suggestion to develop a "Regional Strategic Action Plan" for Ballast Water Control and Management for South Asia. A South Asia Regional Task Force was also formed for purpose.

In its efforts to help local governments implement MEAs, RBP in partnership with CIDA, provided technical backstopping to the key stakeholders for effective implementation of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Lao PDR. This was done through the IUCN Lao Country Office and Science, Technology and Environment Agency (STE) of Government of Lao PDR. Appreciating the relevance of RBP's actions on environmental governance, RBP was invited to train UN Permanent Missions in New York by the United Nations University (UNU) and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) on issues of environment and governance. At the invitation of CBD Focal Points from the SAARC region, RBP is currently planning a regional consultation prior to CBD COP to be held in May 2006 in Brazil.



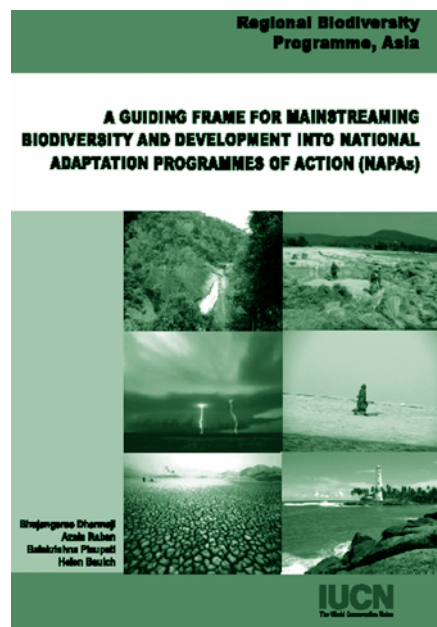
## Inter-linkages among Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

The establishment of inter-linkages among the three Rio conventions is generally hailed as a priority initiative for Asia. However, due to numerous barriers, it has proved a near insurmountable challenge, with not much progress beyond statements of goodwill. Concrete initiatives, even with modest initial targets are scarce. In this context, RBP focussed on using initiatives such as National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA), National Capacity Self Assessments (NCSA) and NBSAPs to foster synergy and linkages among MEAs.

To strengthen its ongoing efforts in 'synergies among MEAs' and to mainstream development and poverty issues into national planning processes, RBP published a document titled "A guiding frame for mainstreaming biodiversity and development into National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA)". This was done in consultation with the Secretariat to UNFCCC and the Expert Group of Least Developed Countries (LDC). This document is used in regional NAPA workshops in Asia and Africa, and countries are using the framework effectively in developing their NAPAs.

RBP worked with IUCN Regional Water and Wetlands Programme to prepare a technical report on impacts of climate change on biodiversity, poverty and livelihoods in Attapeu Province, in Lao PDR.

RBP continued to support countries in the region on issues related to synergies among MEAs, especially the National Capacity Self Assessments (NCSA) that are designed to focus on capacity building and issues cutting across the Rio conventions. RBP has helped Government of Bangladesh to prepare and submit their enabling activity proposal for implementing National Capacity Self Assessments (NCSA), through IUCN-Bangladesh Country Office and UNDP-Bangladesh. RBP has also pledged its support to work with the Government and UNDP in Bangladesh, and ensure effective implementation of NCSA process, when it starts in 2005.



In partnership with UNDP-GEF and UNEP-GEF, RBP has provided technical expertise to the regional training workshop on NCSA for the Asia region held in Kuala Lumpur, in November 2004. In addition, RBP partnered UNU to provide substantial technical backstopping on the development of a regional partnership for integrated capacity building for MEAs in South Asia, held in Kandalama, Sri Lanka in July 2004.

RBP's initiatives to mainstream Rio conventions into development agendas such as MDGs and PRSPs, has prompted GEF to consider RBP as a strategic partner in the Global Support Programme (GSP) for effective implementation of NCSA globally.

RBP functioned as a technical partner at a workshop organised by the UNCCD Secretariat, to develop an action plan for implementing United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in South Asia. The UNCCD Focal points from South Asian countries requested RBP for further help to develop the subregional action plan.

IUCN headquarters, along with UNEP, is currently developing 'global modules' on synergistic implementation of MEAs. RBP is the technical implementation partner for the module on biodiversity related conventions and climate change. RBP is presently developing the module working with IUCN Environmental Law Centre (ELC).

*"The South Asia Sub Regional Plan (SA-SRAP) member countries call upon the SACEP and IUCN in South Asia as important partners, among others, on the development and implementation of the SA-SRAP and they may be invited along with UNCCD Secretariat and other partners to assist member countries in formulating modalities for supporting SA-SRAP implementation and present proposals for the consideration by the SA-SRAP Steering Committee meeting."*

UNCCD Secretariat Report

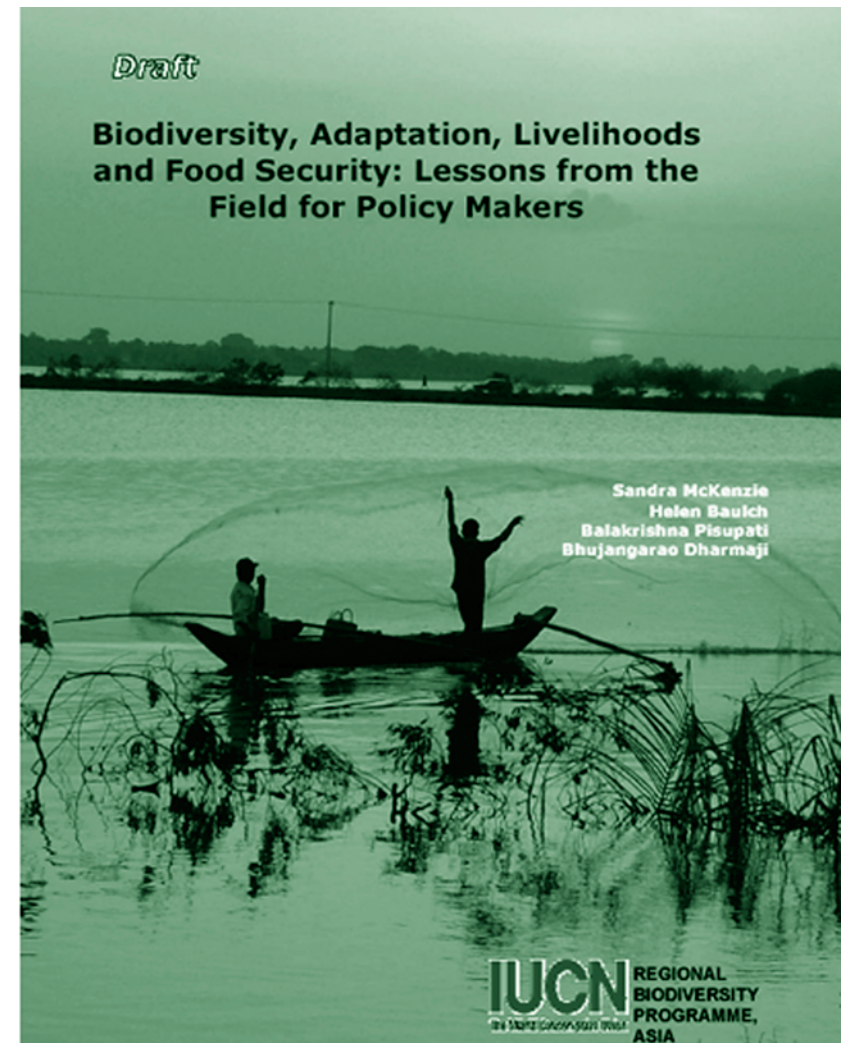
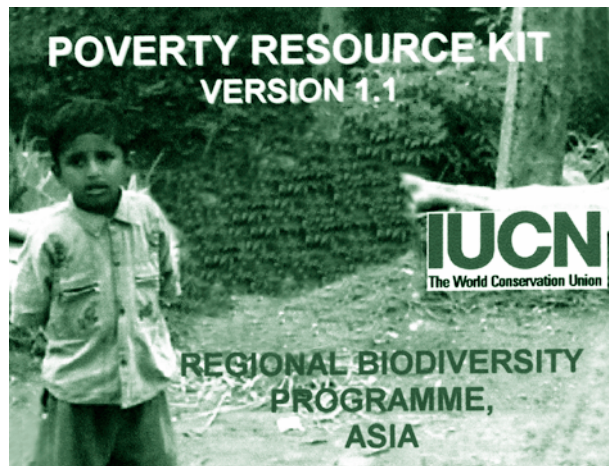


## Other priority areas

Since 2003, RBP has explored ways and means of achieving sustainable development through better implementation of MEAs. Several activities and products have emerged from this work, including the guiding document on mainstreaming biodiversity across all MDGs. Continuing this effort, during the year under review, RBP began compiling a global synthesis document on experiences and case studies that reflect best options for achieving environmentally and socially sustainable development. A set of 17 case studies from around the world were compiled, and their impact on poverty reduction and environmental management, and the lessons-learned were assessed and documented. The document is currently being extensively reviewed and we hope to launch it during the MDG + 5 Review Meeting, scheduled for September 2005.

A comparative study on how PRSP, National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD) and MDGs are linked at local level was also compiled during 2004. The paper assesses objectives, status and issues related to realising the elements of these national planning processes.

At the invitation of UNDP's Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI), RBP participated in a regional consultation on developing a PEI for Asia, on behalf of IUCN. Stemming from this consultation, IUCN was identified as a key partner in further development and implementation of PEI for Asia.



## Priorities for Year 2005 - 2006

Year 2005 marks the beginning of the new IUCN Quadrennial Programme based on the outcomes and the quadrennial plan for 2005-2008 adopted at the WCC. While RBP will respond to the changing needs of the region and take on issues of ecosystems and livelihoods, it will continue to lead actions in areas it has influenced positively, in the past.

Activities under the ABS and Biosafety portfolios will continue in 2005, focussing on country level actions. Training and building capacities on ABS and support for implementing NBFs will receive emphasis. With specific requests already received from SAARC region and China to develop their ABS related activities, RBP aims to assist interested countries to develop activities related to ABS.

Inputs into CBD processes such as CoP MoP 2, CoP - 8 and SBSTTA 11 will be continued besides supporting countries and stakeholders preparing for the 5th Ministerial Meeting of WTO (November 2005) and UNFCCC COP 11 (December 2005). Accepting the global responsibility to take forward the GBF, RBP will work with a range of partners to develop a proposal and seek financial support to continue the GBF sessions.

RBP will continue its programme on synergies among MEAs and focus specifically on supporting the NCSA process, especially in countries initiating the implementation phase. RBP will expedite the ongoing development of a MEA information systems (Environmental Conventions Information Exchange-ECIE) that will assist synergies among MEAs (CBD, CITES, CMS, WHC, RAMSAR, UNFCCC, UNCCD).

RBP is currently partnering the UNDP and Equator Initiative to bring out a compendium on 'Community Perspectives of MDGs', in time for the MDG + 5 Review meeting. Hopefully, this compilation will help to 'raise the voices' of communities to better achieve the MDGs and support sustainable development.

Supporting and further developing the activities under Ecosystems and Livelihoods umbrella, we hope that 2005 will present RBP with more opportunities and partnerships, not only to develop robust and innovative programmes in the region, but also spread their ownership to achieve growth based on equity and ethics. We relish the challenge and look forward to working with the multitude of partnerships we have built over the last several years.



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## Abbreviations

<b>ASEAN</b>	- Association of Southeast Asian Nations	<b>IUCN</b>	- International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
<b>AWGNCB</b>	- ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity	<b>KP</b>	- Kyoto Protocol
<b>ABS</b>	- Access and Benefit Sharing	<b>LDC</b>	- Least Developed Countries
<b>ADB</b>	- Asian Development Bank	<b>LMMC</b>	- Like-Minded Group of Megabiodiverse Countries
<b>AWG</b>	- Ad hoc Working Group	<b>LULUCF</b>	- Land Use Land Use Change Forestry
<b>BAP</b>	- Biodiversity Action Plan	<b>MEAs</b>	- Multilateral Environmental Agreements
<b>BCH</b>	- Biosafety Clearing House	<b>MDGs</b>	- Millennium Development Goals
<b>BMZ</b>	- German Federal Agency for Development and Cooperation	<b>NAPA</b>	- National Adaptation Programmes of Action
<b>BPSP</b>	- Biodiversity Planning Support Programme	<b>NCSA</b>	- National Capacity Self Assessment
<b>CII</b>	- Confederation of Indian Industry	<b>NBF</b>	- National Biosafety Framework
<b>CHM</b>	- Clearing House Mechanism	<b>NBSAP</b>	- National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plan
<b>CMS</b>	- Convention on Migratory Species	<b>PEI</b>	- Poverty Environment Initiative
<b>CoP</b>	- Conference of Parties	<b>RAMSAR</b>	- The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
<b>CoPMoP</b>	- Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity serving as the Meeting of Parties	<b>RIS</b>	- Research Information System for Developing Countries
<b>CIDA</b>	- Canadian International Development Agency	<b>RBP</b>	- Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia
<b>CITES</b>	- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna	<b>SAARC</b>	- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
<b>CBD</b>	- Convention on Biological Diversity	<b>SACNET</b>	- South Asian Network for Taxonomy Capacity Building
<b>ECIE</b>	- Environmental Convention Information Exchange	<b>SBSTTA</b>	- Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
<b>ELG</b>	- Ecosystems and Livelihoods Group	<b>SDC</b>	- Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
<b>ELC</b>	- Environmental Law Centre	<b>SSC</b>	- Species Survival Commission
<b>FAO</b>	- Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nations	<b>STEa</b>	- Science, Technology and Environment Agency
<b>GSP</b>	- Global Support Program	<b>UNDP</b>	- United Nations Development Programme
<b>GEF</b>	- Global Environment Facility	<b>UNCCD</b>	- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
<b>GBF</b>	- Global Biodiversity Forum	<b>UNFCCC</b>	- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>ICTSD</b>	- International Council for Trade and Sustainable Development	<b>UNU</b>	- United Nations University
<b>IMO</b>	- International Maritime Organisation	<b>UNEP</b>	- United Nations Environment Programme
<b>IDRC</b>	- International Development Research Centre	<b>UNITAR</b>	- United Nations Institute for Training and Research
<b>IISD</b>	- International Institute for Sustainable Development	<b>WHC</b>	- World Heritage Convention
<b>IIED</b>	- International Institute for Environment and Development	<b>WCC</b>	- World Conservation Congress
		<b>WIPO</b>	- World Intellectual Property Organization
		<b>WTO</b>	- World Trade Organization
		<b>ZOO</b>	- Zoo Outreach Organization



## IUCN - The World Conservation Union

The World Conservation Union is the world's largest and most important conservation network. The Union brings together 82 States, 111 government agencies, more than 800 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a unique worldwide partnership.

The Union's mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

The World Conservation Union is a multicultural, multilingual organization with 1000 staff located in 62 countries. Its headquarters are in Gland, Switzerland.

### Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia (RBP)

IUCN's Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia (RBP) was established in 1996 to assist countries in Asia implement the Convention on Biological Diversity. Working in 16 countries in Asia, RBP is creating an enabling environment in the region through partnership with governments, NGOs, community based organisations, donors and other stakeholders on technical as well as policy issues.



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