



South Africa's perspective of the International Year of Biodiversity

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DDG: Biodiversity and Conservation

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The Department's mandate is

- To create a balance between conservation and socio-imperatives
- Informed by the unique historical context of South Africa:
 - Conserve biodiversity, its components, processes and functions and mitigate threats
 - Ensure fair, equitable and sustainable use of natural resources
 - Build a sound scientific base for the effective management of natural resources
 - Ensure compliance and enforcement of biodiversity laws
 - Contribute to global sustainable development agenda



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Importance of biodiversity to South Africa

- South Africa occupies 2% of the world's surface area, yet contains a large number of valuable biodiversity which contribute to our human well-being and the economy
- Biodiversity includes diversity at genetic, species, ecosystem and landscape levels



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The role of biodiversity

- Continued loss of biodiversity is not an issue separate from the core concerns of society:
 - tackle poverty and enhance livelihoods
 - improve the health, prosperity and security of our populations, and
 - deal with climate change



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Our biodiversity is under threat

- Land transformation and loss of habitat (agriculture, afforestation, urban and industrial development, mining, dams)
- Invasive species
- Climate change (variability, adaptation and mitigation)
- Pollution (water, mining and hazardous wastes)
- Desertification (land degradation, overutilisation)
- Wildlife crime

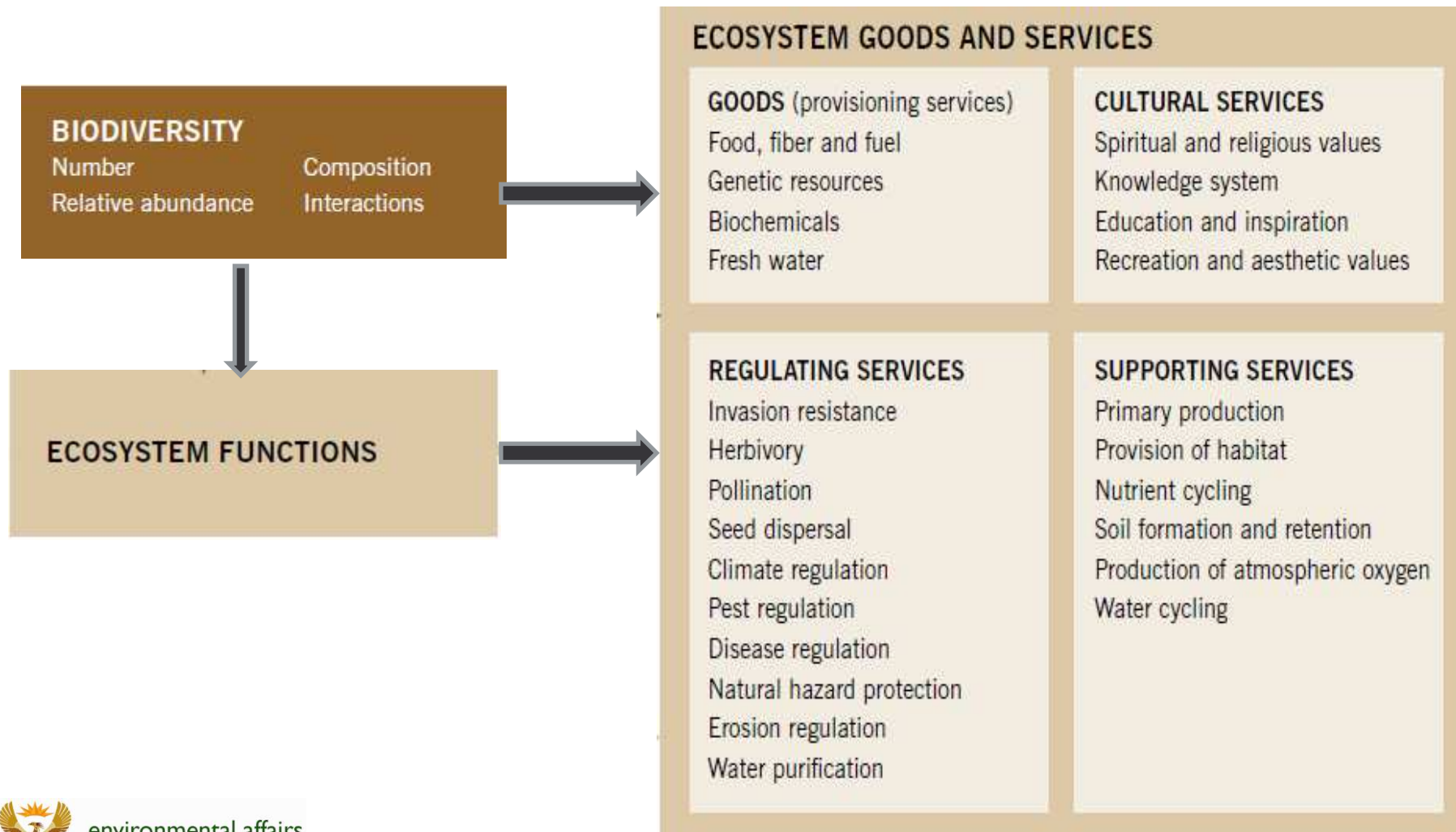


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The Concept of Ecosystem Goods and Services



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The legislative framework

- National Environmental Management Act
- National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act
- National Environmental Management : Biodiversity Act
- World Heritage Act
- Marine Living Resources Act
- Integrated Coastal Management Act



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Enabling Biodiversity Tools

- National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
- National Biodiversity Framework
- Protected Areas Register
- National Protected Areas Expansion Strategy
- National Action Programme to Combat Desertification
- Regulations on Threatened or Protected Species
- Guidelines for Bioregional Plans
- Criteria for Ecosystem listing
- Norms and Standards for Elephants
- Norms and Standards for Species Management Plans
- Framework for Assessing Risk of GMOs
- Regulations on Bioprospecting, Access and Benefit Sharing
- Fiscal incentives for biodiversity management
- Regulations for proper administration of special nature reserves, national parks and World Heritage Sites



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Going forward the emphasis will be on

- Responding to the impacts of Climate change on biodiversity
- Improving the interaction between society and environment for sustainability
 - Approval of national co-manage framework for Protected Areas
 - Stewardship
- Create new economic opportunities based on the value of biodiversity
 - Valuation of biodiversity
 - Sustainable livelihoods



Going forward...

- South Africa has done relatively well compared with other countries
- 2010 targets were set at various fora (e.g. WSSD in 2002)
- Globally targets were not reached – but South Africa can report some successes
- The emphasis will be on implementation, monitoring and evaluating impact



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Another paradigm shift is required

- **Proactive engagement and advocacy** to ensure that sustainability and environmental resource protection are central strategies within the national development agenda
- **Coordinated action** that protects, enhances, and manages natural and heritage assets that underpin South Africa's economy and create social opportunities
- A commitment to fostering **informed and empowered stakeholders** (communities, public & public sector)
- A commitment to building resilience, independence and **sustainable livelihoods** within communities and individuals
- Acknowledgement/ ***Positioning*** of DEA's role in a ***developmental state***



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IYB is a key opportunity to

- Raise awareness of the importance of conserving biodiversity for human well-being
- Enhance scientific and indigenous knowledge of the threats to biodiversity and means to conserve it
- Create a public constituency for a green pathway - use stakeholder “gatekeepers” to advance mandate
- Encourage organizations (and through them individuals) to take direct or indirect biodiversity conservation activities



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Each month in 2010 has a biodiversity theme:

- January: BIODIVERSITY IS LIFE
- February: BIODIVERSITY IS PRECIOUS (World Wetlands Day)
- March: BIODIVERSITY IS FRESH WATER (Water week)
- April: BIODIVERSITY IS FOOD & ENERGY (Earth Day)
- May: BIODIVERSITY IS WEALTH (Biodiversity Day)



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MONTHLY THEMES

- June: BIODIVERSITY IS SECURITY
(World Desertification Day, World Environment Week)
- July: BIODIVERSITY IS CLEAN AIR
(World Population Day)
- August: BIODIVERSITY IS HEALTH
(National Women' Day)



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MONTHLY THEMES

- September: BIODIVERSITY IS HERITAGE (Heritage Day, National Arbor Week, National Parks Week)
- October: BIODIVERSITY IS BEAUTIFUL (World Habitat Day)
- November: BIODIVERSITY IS THREATENED (National Bird Week)
- December BIODIVERSITY IS OUR FUTURE (Day of Reconciliation and Christmas)



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What can you do to assist

- Check the DEA website monthly for details on activities and events www.deat.gov.za
- Increase awareness on the importance of biodiversity
- Spread the message -biodiversity is life
- Take action to address the threats

“Biodiversity is life...Biodiversity is our life”.



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