

## Why conserve biodiversity? Martin Sharman

He was talking to us for himself, not as a European Commission representative. He spent his childhood in Kenya. For several decades Kenya had the highest population-growth rate in the world (11 years for doubling).

The answer lies here. Adaptive hominid whose characteristics allowed to develop something completely new. He started to use stone tool, leather tool, wooden tool, combined tools, fire. Domestication of dogs allowed a completely new type of hunting. For a very long time period people managed with a very simple tools. E.g. 2 millions years (first stone tool), 0.2 million years (composite tool form stone, leather and wood-chopper). In a modern history, things happened incomparably faster. In 1953 discovery of DNA structure, soon after first experiments...Dolly, DMO food, human genome.

An important fact associated with biodiversity is a human population size ("hockey stick" curve). In 1953: 2 billions, in 2007: 6.5 billions. This means 4.5 billions people in addition. Earn living for so many people have to cost a price. UN predicts 8.9 billions in 2050. In 2007 new estimation was published: 9.1 billions.

In 2007 for the first time more people live in the cities. This means reduced contact with nature and biodiversity and as a result lower understanding of biodiversity. (Where does the milk and meat come from? Are cows violet-coloured?) Living in cities means that damage we did is taken away outside of the city (e.g. Nairobi, Mexico, mainly not for EU or US).

But there are limits to growth. A model, with several elements in it (e.g. natural resources, population, food, industry) predicts a ceiling for human population estimated about 9 billions. (The book Beyond the Limits)

If human population grow, there will be more bodies, more space needed, more waste etc. (Nice dynamic graphics of figures filling up the space available for living.) Does not matter if the decoupling is used, even though it is often being used in politics.

Julian Simon: We have in our hands tools to feed people for the next 7 billions years. Unfortunately people tend to behave unreasonably (when they say utopic things, confront on ways, confront existing paradigms, contradict inconvenient truth). And governments that are making important decisions are composed of people too.

Most drivers are anthropogenic-related. We can say that a man is the single driver! And a man tends to act as he likes.

So why preserve biodiversity? The answer depends on what we mean by biodiversity. We can think about diversity of genes, species, habitats...and many, many more. In addition, these things are not independent. We live in a complex world. Biodiversity is about almost everything that humans do in some way.

Who is biodiversity good for? For humans. It allows us to be human. Biodiversity is necessary, but not sufficient. It is vital to human survival. It is closely connected with human well-being and our basic needs. Biodiversity does not need human. Humans need biodiversity. And harking back to the major question, the answer could be very simple: at least for our children.

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