



## UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre

Annual Report 2001



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welcome

The World Conservation Monitoring Centre has completed its first full year as a part of the United Nations Environment Programme and I am pleased to see the support the Centre has received, and the successes that staff and associates have accomplished in this short time.

In this Annual Report you will see that the arrangement with UNEP is achieving many successes, both programmatically and financially. The Centre is well placed to push its planning horizon forward and to make ever greater contributions to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

I recognise that almost all the Centre's work is done through agreements and understandings with other organisations, not only in the governmental and intergovernmental sectors but also with NGOs and in the private sector. Such a wide participation and partnership is essential in today's globalised world.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the many organisations that work alongside UNEP and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre in caring for the global environment.



**Klaus Töpfer**  
Executive Director, UNEP

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## foreword

Biodiversity is the defining characteristic of planet Earth. But our understanding of living things, their role in ecological processes and, most importantly, their significance to our own future, remains poor. What we do now know is that human beings dominate all other species. We divert more than one third of the sun's life-giving power to feed ourselves and our livestock, we have transformed around one third of land to agriculture, and we capture probably more than half the fish production of the oceans and seas every year. The Centre's role is to establish and communicate the impact this dominance has on other life forms, and to evaluate this in terms of its sustainability.

Turning complex data into policy-relevant information is one of the tasks that the Centre does best. The World Atlas of Coral Reefs and our input to the Biodiversity Convention's Global Biodiversity Outlook are good examples of successes in 2001. In the coming year we will, amongst other projects, develop further assessments on the world's mountains, seagrass beds and great apes.

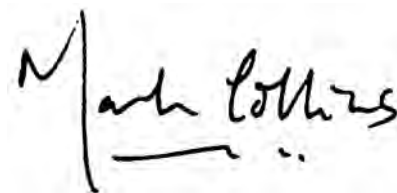
Less high-profile work, but equally important in establishing a baseline for planning and policy-making, has been our

Tackling biodiversity problems at the global level increasingly needs multi-stakeholder partnerships between governments, scientists, NGOs and the private sector. Initiatives such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the International Coral Reef Action Network and the Great Apes Survival Programme, in all of which the Centre plays a significant role, illustrate the advantages of such partnerships.

In planning for the future, and to enhance our contribution to sustainable development in coming years, the Centre will soon redevelop its information systems and take steps to strengthen its sources of data by networking more effectively with national and regional centres of excellence. I look forward to reporting on these and other initiatives in future years.



background work for international programmes and processes. For example, our analytical support to the UN Forum on Forests, to the FAO Forest Resources Assessment and to the Conservation of Arctic Fauna and Flora programme has been very rewarding.



**Mark Collins**  
Director, UNEP-WCMC

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## assessment and early warning

The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre informs policy-makers on the priorities and concerns for the future conservation and sustainable use of all living resources.

In 2001 the Centre continued its strong record of breaking new ground in providing assessments of biodiversity for a range of different ecosystems. Greater emphasis was placed on the human dimensions of assessment work - especially in our work on mountain regions, a theme that is set to be centre-stage in environmental discussions throughout 2002, which is designated as the International Year of Mountains.

### **Coral Reefs: Research and Action**

The World Atlas of Coral Reefs, launched in September, provides the most detailed and definitive account yet produced of the state of the planet's coral reefs. Coral reefs are not only one of the most diverse ecosystems, but are important to millions of people for food resources, physical shelter for islands and coastal regions and increasingly as a source of revenue from tourism. The Atlas is remarkable for the newly researched maps and satellite images of the reefs and for detailing the threats faced by reefs and received wide acclaim.

### **International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN)**

The Centre now hosts the Directorate/Coordinating Unit of [ICRAN](#), a partnership that brings together scientific, cultural, social and economic perspectives to promote improved management, assessment and monitoring as well as communicating knowledge about reefs.

### **Marine Ornamentals Trade**

A substantial increase in the data



available on the world trade in marine ornamental species was achieved through research and networking with partners during 2001.

The [Global Marine Aquarium Database](#) was launched at the aquarium trade's conference following its successful promotion through the Marine Aquarium Council's website and through a workshop with the association of Indonesian exporters. This initiative will provide a scientific basis for improved decision making on the sustainability of the trade.



## Further Information

- [Global Marine Assessment](#)
- [Mountains](#)
- [Millennium Ecosystem Assessment](#)
- [Indicators](#)
- [Forest Biodiversity](#)
- [Global Environment Outlook \(GEO\)](#)

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## conventions and policy support

Throughout 2001, the Centre continued to provide support for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). This has not only included regular support to the work of MEA secretariats, but also activities that have directly supported national governments in their implementation of international agreements and programmes.



### Convention on Biological Diversity

The Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO) was launched during the meeting of the Convention's technical body (SBSTTA) during November 2001, after significant further work by the Centre's staff on the tables and maps (the text having been drafted the previous year). The GBO has been very well received by the Contracting Parties to the Convention, and a new edition is foreseen for 2004. Following its work with national governments in Albania, the Czech Republic,

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