

A SUMMARY OF  
PROCEEDINGS:  
28-30 JUNE 2011



Smith School  
of Enterprise and  
the Environment



# WORLD FORUM

2011

ON ENTERPRISE &  
THE ENVIRONMENT

VALUING ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

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## Introduction

**Professor Sir David King**, *Founding Director, Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment*  
**Professor Laurent Mermet**, *AgroParisTech and Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment*

The impact of humanity on the planet is in danger of sacrificing the very ecosystems that provide the air we breathe, the food we eat and the biological diversity that sustains life as we know it. Failure to address these challenges will result in a planet that can no longer sustain our civilisation.

While progress has been made in raising awareness and mobilising action – including new goals, valuation tools and action strategies on a global scale – we have yet to solve the systemic causes that continue to thwart meaningful, measurable change.

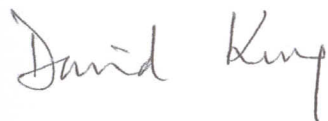
The Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment at the University of Oxford is working closely with business, governments and academia to find solutions to these challenges. In June 2011, we held our third World Forum in Oxford, the theme of which was Valuing Ecosystem Services: From New Commitments to Strategic Action.

Bringing together global leaders from all sectors, the World Forum took as its starting point the Nagoya biodiversity commitments of 2010. Over two days of in-depth dialogue between participants, breakout groups and panel discussions, we coordinated a candid and critical exploration of current progress, potential future scenarios and key systematic opportunities and avenues for action.

The idea was to avoid revisiting old ground, and to resist discussing biodiversity in the abstract without any connection to concrete action. As we come to the end of ten years of work assessing the scale of the problem and the tools, commitments and indicators available (a process concluded by the Nagoya summit), we wanted to use the Forum to kick-start a new discussion about how to find a way forward.

This report captures the key outputs from the World Forum and summarises the debates and discussions that took place. It is intended to serve as a record of the ideas that were exchanged, and as a source of inspiration for future action. We would value any feedback in response to this publication, plus any thoughts it might provoke on the preservation of ecosystem services and, crucially, how to break down barriers to change.

We hope you enjoy the report.



*Professor Sir David King, Founding Director,  
Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment*



*Professor Laurent Mermet, AgroParisTech  
and Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment*



## Session 1: Valuing Ecosystem Services

Speaker 1: Professor Patrick Blandin, *Professor Emeritus, Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris*

### How to value Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: A Long-Standing Argument



The history of environmental protection is the history of competition between aesthetic and utilitarian values. Over the last 100 years, the proponents of these opposing values have lobbied governments and international bodies

in an attempt to achieve their respective goals.

In the late nineteenth century, individuals on either side of the Atlantic expressed concerns about industrial development and the future of life on earth. At first, figures like French landscape painter Rousseau and American naturalist John Muir argued for the preservation of nature on purely moral and aesthetic grounds. But by the early twentieth century, more utilitarian views were being articulated. In 1909, for example, the Chief of the United States Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot, called for the conservation of natural resources "for the service of man". And in 1923, at the First International Congress for the Protection of Nature, in Paris, Louis Mangin made strong links between "natural protection and economic transformation".

Throughout the twentieth century, the two arguments developed in parallel: on the one hand, the preservation of nature; and on the other, the conservation – and "prudent exploitation" – of natural resources.

#### Focus points

- Before the Second World War, the focus in Europe was mainly on the protection of nature. But in 1948 UNESCO and other bodies came together in Fontainebleau, France, to create the International Union for the Protection of Nature (IUPN). IUPN founding documents and spokespeople urged for the conservation of natural resources and the creation of "official ecological services". At this time, Julian Huxley, UNESCO Director General, linked the protection of nature with social and economic issues, thus defining the three pillars of sustainable development that have endured to this day.

“Policies regarding biological diversity first need to demonstrate in economic terms the contribution biological resources make to the country’s social and economic development.”

*Conserving the World’s Biological Diversity, 1990 quote*

“Conservation is not conservatism. It is management of the resources of the environment – air, water, soil, minerals, and living species, including man – so as to achieve the highest sustainable quality of life.”

Gerardo Budowski, Director General, IUCN.

Address to the United Nation Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm 1972

However, before long the interests of the IUPN were broadened; a move that was reflected in its name change in 1956 to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

- In 1968, the Biosphere Conference in Paris laid further foundations for sustainable development, although the first direct use of the phrase did not come until 1980, in IUCN's *World Conservation Strategy*:

“Humanity's relationship with the biosphere will continue to deteriorate until a new international economic order is achieved, a new environmental ethic adopted,

human populations stabilise, and sustainable modes of development becomes the rule, rather than the exception.”

- The term ‘biodiversity’ was coined in 1985; it was an invasive word that pushed aside the previously discussed concepts of ‘nature’ and ‘natural resources’. And in 1992, the UN Conference on the Environment and Development (the Rio Convention) acknowledged the ‘intrinsic value’ of biodiversity. However, two years earlier, the publication *Conserving the World's Biological Diversity* acknowledged that ethical principles alone could not be expected to drive change in human behaviour.

#### Fact and action

In 2011, the loss of biodiversity continues. We must realise that we are responsible for the adaptive capacity of living systems, and for the future of the planet. Sustainable adaptability must be our target.

#### Question

Can the moral and utilitarian views of man's relationship with the natural world ever be fully reconciled?