

**Forum:** United Nations Environment Assembly

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## TOPIC 3: The internationalization of biodiversity hotspots

### I. Introduction to the Topic

Climate change and habitat loss are not to blame to one country; they are results of human activities in different countries. More countries have lost more habitat than the others, and more countries have contributed more to habitat loss than others. Management of habitat loss and taking responsibility are therefore what all nations should prioritize. However, because of the difficulty of measuring the contribution to climate change and the difficulty of management, it might impose questions regarding fairness.

### II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts

#### Definition of Key Terms

**Internationalization:** The action or process of bringing a place under the protection or control of two or more nations. The internationalization of biodiversity hotspots mean that the management and protection of natural habitat will be done by the nations of the United Nations.

**Biodiversity:** Biodiversity is the variety of lives on Earth. These include plants, animals, bacteria and fungi. The understanding of this terminology would increase the understanding of the whole topic.

**Biodiversity Hotspots:** It is a region with high biodiversity that experiences habitat loss caused by human activities. In order to be a biodiversity hotspot, the region must contain “at least 1,500 species of vascular plants (less than 0.5% of the world’s total) as endemic, and it has to have lost at least 70% of its original habitat.”

**Endemic:** “Native and restricted to a certain place”. If any living creatures are “endemic” to a country, it means that they are almost only found in that particular area. This will help in understanding one of the criteria of biodiversity hotspots.

### III. Key Stakeholders

**Brazil:** Brazil is the country with the most biodiversity, and the Atlantic Forest in Brazil is one of the 36 biodiversity hotspots. Because of its biodiversity and the awareness of protection, the rural farmers

contribute heavily to their ecosystem. Brazil will be one of the nations who are willing and able to protect the hotspots and biodiversity.

**Madagascar:** Madagascar is geographically isolated from the coast of Africa, which allows for unique conditions and various species to thrive. The habitats of Madagascar are decreasing because of the decreasing rainfall, which is a great threat to the endemic plants. Since the cause of habitat loss is created by multiple countries, it is likely that this country will encourage other nations to protect the biodiversity hotspots or climate action.

**Red Data List:** Also known as the IUCN Red List, the Red Data List was found in 1964. Their goal is to conserve the world's biological species in order to reduce extinction. They evaluate species and their risk of extinction around the world with an objective lens. Currently, around 77,400 species have been assessed by this organization. The biodiversity hotspots are determined by the Red Data List.

#### **IV. Key Issues including Background Information**

**Increase of habitat loss:** There are 36 places around the world that are qualified as biodiversity hotspots. In the present, 86% of the Earth's land surface has experienced tremendous habitat loss. The hotspots cover about 2.5% of the Earth's land surface today. The number might sound small, but the lives in the hotspot - 50% of the world's vascular plants and 42% of land vertebrates - are endemic. A small percentage of increase leads to a large impact because of the damage that happens in the biodiversity hotspots. Furthermore, the hotspots are losing more of its own habitat. For example, the Irano-Antolian region has 2,500 endemic plants. The original surface of vegetation was 900,000 square kilometers, but it encountered an 85% decrease, resulting in only 135,000 square kilometers of its original vegetation. The issue that holds from maintaining biodiversity is that the locations of hotspots are places that are essential to humans. The spots are home to different vulnerable populations who are dependent on natural resources to survive.

**Biodiversity decreases through the release of pollutants:** The biggest cause of habitat loss is due to human activities such as agriculture, urbanization, and releasing pollutants. While agriculture and urbanization can be internal in a particular country, the loss of biodiversity through climate change or releasing pollutants is global. When the cause of decreasing biodiversity is due to the decrease of rainfall and the release of toxic chemicals, the country will call on other countries to take action. Especially for

nations neighboring to countries with biodiversity hotspots, whether they support internationalization or not, they would have to find a way to decrease emissions.

**Issue with internationalisation:** There are different factors to consider when the hotspots are internationalized. They need a group of qualified workers, make a consensus on the cost, how to monitor the management, and how to manage the biodiversity. Countries would need to hire professional workers meaning that they will need to spend some money just for employment. For fairness, countries have to make a consensus on the cost of managing or supporting the management of the hotspots. The monitoring and ensuring the quality of management are also important; they are not only time-consuming but costly and strict. These factors will most likely affect the opinion of the country.

## V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

### Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of event
1989	The concept of biodiversity hotspots introduced to the world by Norman Myers. Norman Myers is a scientist well-known to be the person who first calculated the decrease in the area of tropical rainforest for agriculture.
10 October 2010	Outcome Document of 2010 MDG Summit, “Keeping the promise: United to achieve the Millennium Development Goals”. The document has the commitments of countries and their strategies to maintain and further prevent loss of biodiversity.
11 September 2012	Outcome Document of Rio+20, “The Future We Want”. This also includes plans to maintain biodiversity, but focuses more on international cooperations between member states and organizations.
October 2010	Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets: "Living in harmony with nature". This document has specific strategies and goals for the protection of the ecosystem. Their vision mostly focuses on 2020, so the countries would have to realize if they have met the vision mentioned in this document.
9 June 2021	EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives. It is a recent resolution of the European Union. It has specific goals to achieve by 2030, which is the most recent.

## VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

**Increase of habitat loss:** For countries that cannot support the internationalization of biodiversity hotspots, they should need to propose ways to reduce their own pollution and/or habitat loss. Their resolutions should include specific numbers about the amount they will reduce. Another solution could be calling brother nations to cooperate to decrease habitat loss and manage biodiversity hotspots.

**Biodiversity decreased through the release of pollutants:** There would be countries that release pollutants and countries that get negatively affected by these pollutants. Countries can compensate financially by paying carbon tax that goes to nations that are negatively impacted, but with specific proof of the cause of habitat loss. Another solution can be to support the country's transition into a green industry.

**Issue with internationalization:** Considering the consequences of internationalization, countries that seek internationalization of biodiversity hotspots would need a strong strategy in solving these issues. They might need support from other countries and propose a solid plan with specific statistics. For countries that do not support internationalization, they would still need to propose ways to decrease habitat loss without internationalization.

## VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

The chair recommends the delegates to research the biodiversity, contribution to climate change and habitat loss of their own nation. Based on this research, they would be able to conclude whether the internationalization will benefit their perseverance of biodiversity or it would be more beneficial to reduce their own emission and disagree with the internationalization. The chair also recommends researching the factors regarding possible challenges for internationalization. If internationalization is difficult for the country, whether it be due to financial constraints or fairness, the country is likely to support alternative solutions for habitat loss internally.

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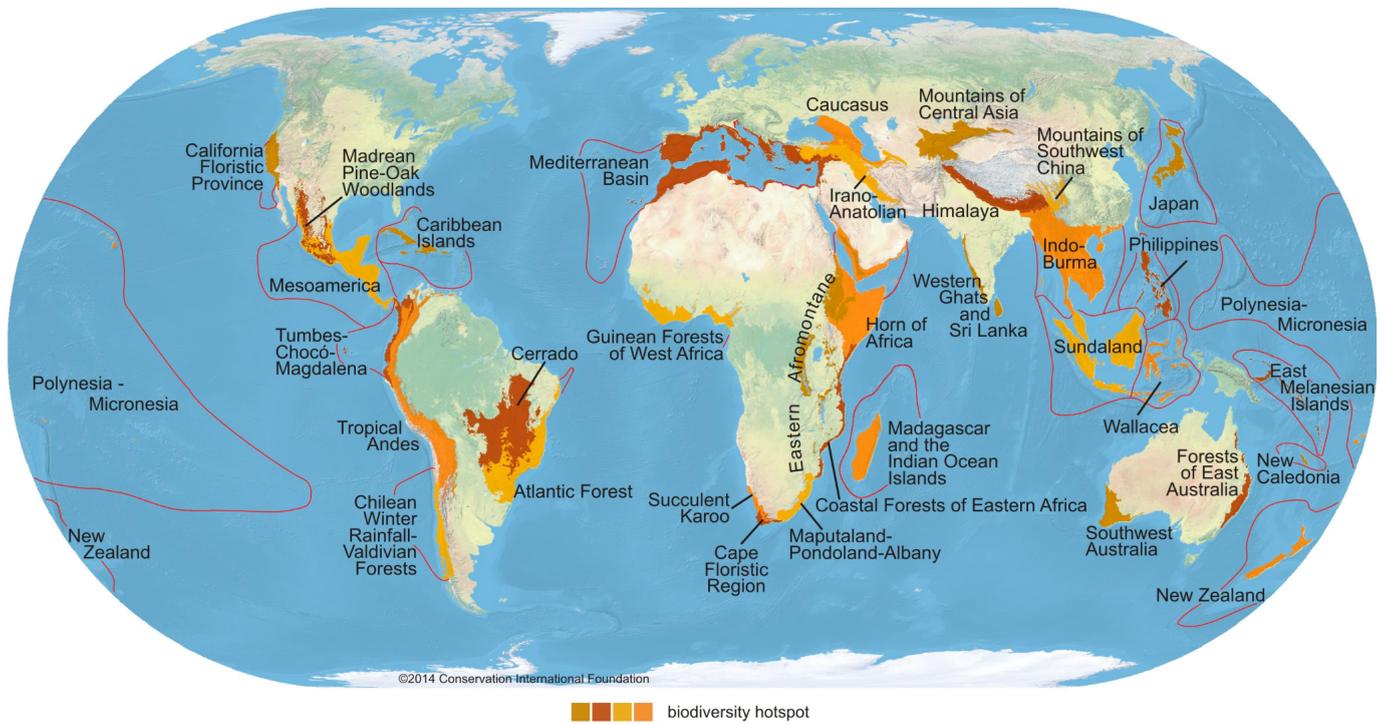
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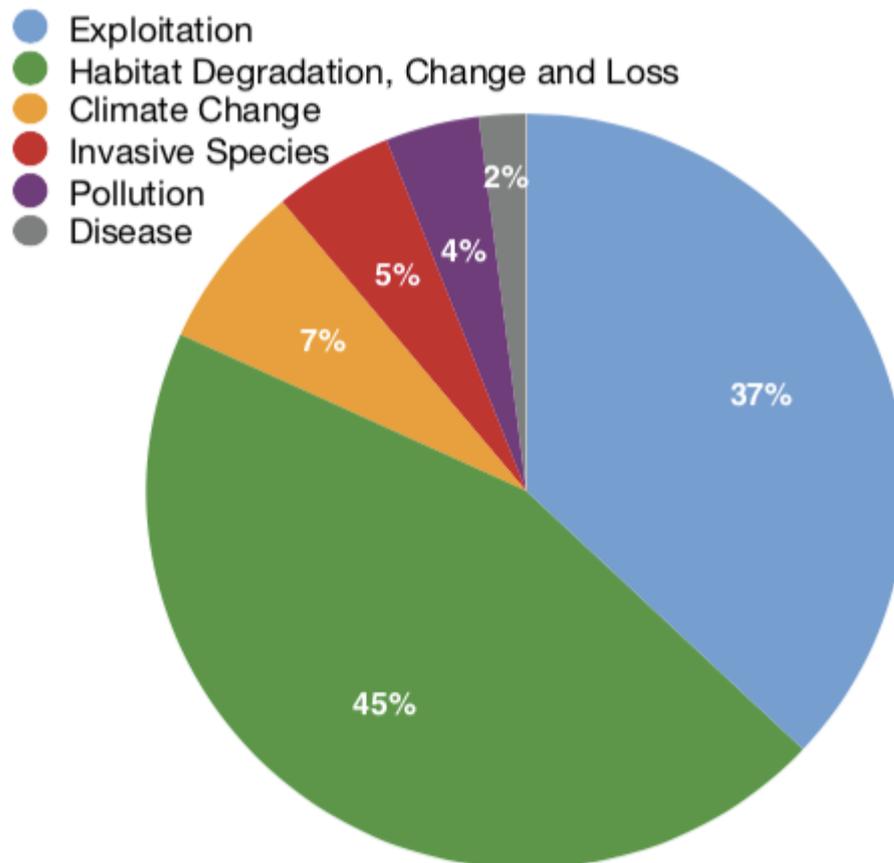
## **IX: Additional Resources**

Figure 1: Biodiversity Hotspots Internationally



Conservation International (conservation.org) defines 35 biodiversity hotspots — extraordinary places that harbor vast numbers of plant and animal species found nowhere else. All are heavily threatened by habitat loss and degradation, making their conservation crucial to protecting nature for the benefit of all life on Earth.

Figure 2: The Main Threats Facing Biodiversity



**Fig. 1: The Main Threats Facing Biodiversity:** This diagram shows the proportion of species losses attributable to a range of factors. *Exploitation is the leading cause of population decline. Habitat change and degradation are also dominant threats. Adapted from data in the WWF Living Planet Report (2014). Figures for habitat degradation and change and habitat loss have been combined for the purpose of this paper, and decimals have been rounded.*