

International Biodiversity Day 2020 – May 22, 2020

Theme: Our Solutions are in Nature

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Jamaica is living through a period of unprecedented threat to the country's public health system. Human health is interconnected with the health of our planet and how we manage our natural resources. We call upon the spirit of unity as the world celebrates International Day of Biological Diversity on May 22, under the theme, '**Our Solutions are in Nature**'.

Biodiversity provides food, secures water supplies and supports health. It contributes directly to local livelihoods and economic development. However, despite its fundamental importance for life, it continues to be lost.

Ecosystems are increasingly being recognized for offering intrinsic natural resilience in the face of increased risk exposures. In this regard, we at NEPA have endeavoured to integrate ecosystem-based approaches with a focus on building climate resilience into existing programmes and plans for ecosystem management and protection.

A wide range of environmentally and socially destructive practices, including, large-scale deforestation, habitat destruction, unregulated trading of species used as food and medicine, the hunting of wild animal and plant species are all significant drivers of biodiversity loss. Management of these valuable resources will help to sustain human activity and livelihoods.

Healthy and robust ecosystems can recover from a variety of disasters. But it takes a targeted approach that balances environmental sustainability with protection. Sixty per cent (60%) of the Natural Resources Conservation Authority's funding is spent on protected area management. Protected areas are important for biodiversity conservation and maintaining the health and diversity of ecosystems. They support many natural cycles and ecological processes that are essential for life on earth.

As a society, we are now being challenged by COVID-19. However, we must be mindful of the challenges facing biodiversity.

Let us use the opportunity to rediscover our relationship with nature.