



A THREAT TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

The last remnants of the world's natural areas are quickly disappearing. Unless an effective global conservation strategy stops the loss, all nations, including the U.S., will be poorer, less healthy and less secure.

The global conservation crisis confronts us with three critical challenges:

- **NATURAL RESOURCE DESTRUCTION** The loss of forests, fish stocks, fresh water sources, healthy soils, coral reefs, and wildlife impoverishes developing countries. These natural resources provide hundreds of billions of dollars of value to the world economy every year and are the foundation on which many developing economies around the world will grow. And because competition for natural resources—water, arable land and food—can lead to instability, conflict and mass migration, the National Intelligence Council anticipates that resource scarcities will increasingly define security challenges this century.

- **DISAPPEARING SPECIES** One-quarter of the world's mammals and one-third of primates and amphibians are already severely endangered. Unless conservation activities increase dramatically, as many as two-thirds of all species could be near extinction by the end of this century. Three-quarters of the world's terrestrial plant and animal species are in developing nations. The amount of natural habitat conserved in those regions during the next few decades will determine how many species survive.



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“For if one link in nature's chain might be lost, another and another might be lost, till the whole of things will vanish by piecemeal”

—Thomas Jefferson

■ **ACCELERATING CLIMATE CHANGE**

The burning and clearing of forests, mostly in developing countries, release 20 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions—more than the emissions from every car, truck and airplane on the planet. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and numerous other scientific authorities have said that it will be impossible to control climate change unless this critical source of emissions is addressed.

The conservation crisis threatens more than the world's environment. It threatens America's goals for a prosperous and stable world.



HOW HUMAN HEALTH AND PROSPERITY DEPEND ON NATURAL RESOURCES

WATER One-third of the developing world's 66 largest cities (500 million people) obtain a significant proportion of their drinking water directly from conserved natural watersheds.

AGRICULTURE Wild species such as birds and insects provide \$100 billion worth of pest control services to world agriculture every year. Wild animals pollinate two-thirds of the agricultural crop species that feed the world, contributing \$200 billion a year to world agriculture.

FOOD SECURITY Plant breeding programs involving genetic enhancements from the wild relatives of agricultural crops have helped feed billions of people around the world and are valued at an estimated \$115 billion per year. More than three-quarters of fish stocks that are a significant source of protein for two billion people are fully or over exploited.

PUBLIC HEALTH Natural ecosystems serve as a buffer between wildlife and human populations, minimizing the transmission of animal-borne infectious diseases—such as AIDS. Avian flu, originating in the wild, has cost the world economy more than \$10 billion and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) more than \$30 billion.

DISASTER PREVENTION Small investments in conservation can mean less disaster assistance. Forests absorb and hold water, preventing both catastrophic flooding and severe droughts. Healthy coral reefs reduce the impact of large storms on coastal populations, a protective function valued at \$9 billion a year.

POVERTY The income, credit, savings and social security for more than a billion of the world's poorest people are not in any bank or government treasury but in the fields, trees, streams and wildlife around them.

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SOLUTION

A U.S. PLAN FOR GLOBAL CONSERVATION

Without a clear strategy, the U.S. cannot exercise the international leadership needed to halt the conservation crisis.

U.S. leadership is vital to marshal resources from all donor nations. The world's developing nations are on the front lines of the global conservation crisis. They have the highest rates of deforestation, species loss and depletion of the very natural resources that underpin their economic progress. Under tremendous economic and population pressures, they have asked for help from the U.S. and other developed countries to manage their resources sustainably.

The response from donor nations has been insufficient and uncoordinated:

- Current funding from the U.S. and other developed nations is at too small a scale to address the problem.
- Benchmarks of progress are unclear.
- Ultimate success is not well defined.

In the U.S., more than six agencies are involved in international conservation, various efforts are often not coordinated, and the government has no overarching global conservation vision or strategy.



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RESULTS

The global conservation strategy outlined here would:

- Safeguard the freshwater supply of hundreds of millions of people.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by billions of tons, the equivalent to taking millions of automobiles off the roads or eliminating hundreds of coal-fired power plants.
- Provide more than \$1.1 trillion of value per year in economic services including disaster mitigation, health protection, fresh water, food production and climate regulation.
- Conserve or ensure sustainable development on millions of square miles of land and sea.
- Prevent the extinction of millions of species.





A STRATEGY FOR PROGRESS

The window for protecting the world's remaining natural areas is rapidly closing. Scientists have concluded we have only a decade to substantially scale up conservation efforts to address the problem or we face irreversible losses.

An eventual annual outlay of at least \$11 billion from *all* donor nations is the minimum investment required to implement a comprehensive strategy to begin to arrest the natural resource depletion, deforestation and extinction crises worldwide.

The strategy includes:

- Significantly advancing conservation in five of the world's most ecologically and economically important terrestrial wilderness areas and 20 large marine ecosystems.
- Fully protecting 25 of the world's most ecologically and economically important and species-rich areas on land and in the oceans.
- Conserving 10 percent of each of the developing world's major ecological types such as tropical forests, grasslands and freshwater systems.
- Ending illegal and unregulated fishing in 10 developing country regions where fish stocks are severely depleted and regional economies are threatened.
- Safeguarding natural areas providing fresh water to 20 major cities—and millions of people—in developing countries.
- Shutting down wildlife trafficking operations in 10 major global wildlife trading hubs and border areas—enterprises that enrich criminals, drug dealers and terrorists.

- Stabilizing or reversing natural resource scarcity trends in five vulnerable flashpoints for conflict, instability or mass migration.

As part of a global imperative to reach several billion dollars in annual funding in 10 years, the U.S. government should set a goal of generating at least \$1 billion in annual support for an international conservation strategy within five years.

COORDINATOR FOR GLOBAL CONSERVATION

In order to achieve more focused results from existing dollars, effectively program future commitments, and convince other nations to invest, the U.S. government must adopt a global conservation strategy and a plan for how all U.S. government agencies involved in conservation abroad can advance that strategy.

A Coordinator for Global Conservation should be identified within the Executive Branch to develop these critical plans, to coordinate agencies engaged in international conservation, and to lead the government's efforts to make the global conservation crisis an international priority.



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U.S. INTERESTS

WHY GLOBAL CONSERVATION MATTERS TO AMERICANS

It's about our health, our security,
our pocketbooks and the kind of world
we want to leave to our children.

U.S. COMPETITIVENESS

Responsible U.S. companies are being undercut by illegal logging, fishing and mining around the world, which flood the international market with low-cost products. If there were no illegal producers, the U.S. would be able to increase its exports of wood products by about \$460 million per year. The U.S. forest, paper, fishing and mining industries have called for greater efforts to advance conservation that can crack down on illegal resource extraction.

SECURITY

Many experts believe that the increasing competition for fresh water, food and arable land will lead to civil instabilities, mass migrations and conflict around the world. Additionally, many of the world's remaining natural areas are located in remote and poorly governed

regions. Without good management, some of these areas have become refuges for the drug trade and other illegal activities as well as strongholds for terrorist groups who transit easily through poorly controlled wilderness areas.



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“The conservation of natural resources is the fundamental problem. Unless we solve that problem, it will avail us little to solve all others.”

–Theodore Roosevelt

CLIMATE CHANGE

Rampant deforestation in developing countries is the second leading source of greenhouse gas emissions after electricity generation. It releases more emissions than all the world’s cars, trucks and airplanes combined. And because one-quarter of current deforestation can be abated for half the cost (per metric ton of carbon dioxide) of other forms of greenhouse gas reduction, stopping deforestation could actually help lower the cost of efforts in the U.S. to reduce emissions.

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

The U.S. is expected to produce an extraordinary 38 percent of all global pharmaceuticals by 2011, a major engine of growth for the U.S. economy. More than one-quarter of all medicinal drugs possess active ingredients from natural areas. Medicines derived from natural sources, including 10 of the world’s 25

top-selling drugs, have a market value of \$75 billion to \$150 billion per year. But the loss of habitat and species is estimated to eliminate one prescription drug from entering the market every two years between 1991 and 2050.

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Leading an international effort to protect the Earth’s last vestiges of nature is precisely the kind of visionary role the world expects and relies on America to fill. This effort will enable the U.S. to bring principled, international leadership to a critical global priority. The U.S. should look beyond its usual partnerships with donor countries in Europe and East Asia and ask emerging centers of wealth and power to play a meaningful role in addressing the conservation crisis. Such an approach could help move these global players to become responsible stakeholders in global sustainability.



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