

# ALLIANCE FOR GLOBAL CONSERVATION

PROTECTING LIFE ON EARTH

[www.actforconservation.org](http://www.actforconservation.org)



## A THREAT TO ECONOMIC GROWTH, HEALTH AND SECURITY

Major global ecosystems and key natural resources are rapidly disappearing—impoverishing and destabilizing developing countries and undermining America’s health, competitiveness and security. An effective U.S. global conservation strategy can save lives and livelihoods.

### A CRITICAL CHALLENGE FOR ALL COUNTRIES

Forests, fisheries, fresh water, soils, coral reefs, wildlife and other natural resources provide hundreds of billions of dollars of value to the world economy—and the U.S. economy—every year.

- Water scarcity is expected to lead to more thirst and less food production.
- Ninety percent of the world’s large fish have been eliminated from the world’s oceans.
- More than half of all species could be severely endangered by the end of this century.



### WHY GLOBAL CONSERVATION MATTERS TO AMERICANS

#### U.S. EXPORTS AND JOBS

The U.S. economy increasingly depends on developing countries. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, developing countries buy 48 percent of all U.S. exports and, therefore, support a significant number of American jobs. But with 54 percent of the developing world’s workforce employed in agriculture, fisheries and forestry, developing country economies require a healthy natural resource base to continue to grow and buy our products.

And they are the key to survival for more than a billion of the world’s poorest people.

- But less than a fifth of the world’s original forest cover remains in unfragmented tracts.
- One-third of coral reefs are destroyed or damaged.



For more information, visit:  
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## U.S. COMPETITIVENESS

Responsible U.S. companies are being undercut by illegal logging, fishing and mining around the world that flood the market with low-cost products. Unfair competition from illegally harvested timber in developing countries costs U.S. businesses about \$1 billion annually.



## NATIONAL SECURITY

Many security experts are documenting how increasing competition for fresh water, forests, arable land, fish and other natural resources is leading to instability, mass migrations and conflict around the world. The National Intelligence Council has concluded that resource scarcities will increasingly define security challenges this century. The U.S. and

**“Serious environmental degradation has the potential to undermine [U.S.] security, economic, and political goals in many regions of the world.”**

**—General Anthony Zinni (Ret.),  
Former Commander-in-Chief,  
U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM)**

its allies have lost lives and spent billions trying to stabilize regions where environmental degradation undermines stability. In Afghanistan, desertification and deforestation affect 75 percent of the country’s land area and constrain economic growth and stability. In Somalia, overexploitation of fish stocks has driven desperate fishermen to embrace an economy based on piracy. Future environmentally driven flashpoints could include Mexico, Yemen, Pakistan, and several African countries.

## CHRONIC DISEASE AND THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY



One in three Americans has a chronic health condition that may be treated with pharmaceuticals derived from a compound found in nature—comprising more than thirty percent of all drugs and seventy percent of all cancer drugs. The U.S. produces one-third of all global pharmaceuticals, and medicines derived from natural sources have a

market value of nearly \$150 billion a year. The loss of natural areas is estimated to eliminate one prescription drug from entering the market every two years.

## INSPIRATION AND STEWARDSHIP

Millions of American tourists and sportsmen travel each year to be inspired by the world’s natural landscapes and iconic wildlife. Many other Americans who do not directly experience these places and species still value them and feel a moral or religious commitment to act as good stewards of the earth.



**“When watersheds no longer provide freshwater, forests no longer prevent droughts and floods, and oceans no longer support healthy fish stocks, governments will be called upon to provide these goods and services in much more expensive ways.”**

**—John S. Adams, Senior Vice President,  
Investments, UBS Financial Services**

## **A U.S. PLAN FOR GLOBAL CONSERVATION**

More than six federal agencies are involved in international conservation in some way. Various efforts are not fully coordinated, benchmarks of progress are unclear, and ultimate success is not well defined. Moreover, the U.S. cannot solve the global conservation crisis alone. The U.S. must encourage other developed countries, as well as emerging economic powers, to play a meaningful role in addressing the problem. But the U.S. cannot lead without a clear roadmap. In order to achieve better results and convince other countries to do more, the U.S. government should adopt a global conservation strategy with clear goals, measurable benchmarks, and a plan for how these can be achieved by the U.S. and its allies.



## **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.

### **FOOD SECURITY**

Wild plant species provide genetic enhancements used in plant breeding programs that have helped feed billions of people around the world. Wild animal species provide \$300 billion worth of pest control and pollination services to world agriculture every year. More than three-quarters of fish stocks providing protein for 2 billion people are fully or over-exploited.

### **PUBLIC HEALTH**

In addition to providing sources of medicines, natural ecosystems serve as a buffer between wildlife and human populations, minimizing the transmission of animal-borne infectious diseases—such as avian flu, SARS and malaria—which have caused millions of deaths and cost the world economy tens of billions of dollars annually. A recent study in the Amazon found that a four percent loss of tropical forests led to a 47 percent increase in malaria incidence.

### **LOCAL JOBS AND INCOME**

Sustainably managed wildlife and natural ecosystems generate tens of billions of dollars a year and maintain thousands of jobs from activities like regulated sport hunting and fishing, ecotourism, and the sustainable extraction of natural products.

### **WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Throughout the developing world, women and girls are usually the ones responsible for collecting fuelwood and water. But as forests and fresh water sources are destroyed, millions of women must travel many hours each day to gather these items. This limits their time to attend school, start a business, take care of children, or play a role in leading their communities.

### **DISASTER PREVENTION**

Forests hold water, preventing catastrophic flooding, mudslides and droughts. Healthy coral reefs reduce the impact of large storms on coastal populations, saving lives and preventing \$9 billion of losses every year.

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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**

**“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**



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to support global conservation.