

Abstract

The findings of the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and Poverty Reduction

Humans depend on nature and ecosystem services to provide the conditions for a decent, healthy, and secure life. When ecosystems are declining the poor people are likely to suffer most. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) conducted between 2001 and 2005 found that for the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history. Around 60% of the ecosystem services evaluated in the MA are being degraded or used unsustainably. We have the means to reverse the trend, but the changes in policy and practice required are substantial and not currently underway. The MA has only received limited political attention, but hopefully two international initiatives, the establishment of an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the global study "The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity" initiated by G 8 + 5 will attract more political attention to ecosystems and biodiversity