

Preface

It has been commonly accepted that biological diversity is important for a functioning ecosystem that provides services essential for humans' well-being. Under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), international efforts were made to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss. The 2010 Biodiversity Target was not achieved, however, and biodiversity continues to be lost. At COP 10, the CBD adopted the new Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Target to accelerate the support of worldwide biodiversity over the next decade.

The interface between science and policy are to be established as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Science is expected to play a leading role in the area of biodiversity, including characterizing the biodiversity of various areas, clarifying ecosystem services supplied to society, quantifying how rapidly biodiversity is being lost, and justifying needs and identifying possibilities for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The Biodiversity Observation Network under the Group of Earth Observation (GEO-BON) was launched in 2008 to collect and analyze data on the status and trends of the world's biodiversity. However, the methodology to quantify biodiversity loss at the global, regional, and national scales remains underdeveloped. The development of integrative and predictive science to address global biodiversity change is urgently needed. DEVERSITAS, an international program of biodiversity science, is leading the task of developing networks of integrative and predictive biodiversity science. It includes the GEO BON.

In December 2009, scientists in the Asia-Pacific region successfully organized the Asia-Pacific Biodiversity Observation Network (AP BON) to establish a cooperative framework for conducting research and monitoring the ecosystem and its biodiversity. Also, the East and Southeast Asia Biodiversity Information Initiative (ESABII) was established to enhance the availability of biological information and taxonomic capacities. Having entered the "Asian Millennium," many Asian countries are now rapidly growing their economies and social infrastructures. This development, on the negative side, is causing a rapid loss of Asian biodiversity, giving us

an urgent mandate to work toward achieving a harmonious balance between development and conservation in the region.

We are publishing this book to provide a platform on which we can take a quantum step forward in advancing science that optimizes the synergy between development and biodiversity conservation in Asia. We hope that it will be informative for all people interested in biodiversity issues.

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