

Rio+20 is greatest threat to biodiversity

99% of species and humans are ill served by the 0.1% UN and environmentalist elites

Paul Driessen and David Rothbard

The UN Conference on Sustainable Development is underway in Rio de Janeiro. This time, 20 years after the original 1992 Rio “Earth Summit,” thousands of politicians, bureaucrats and environmental activists are toning down references to “dangerous man-made climate change,” to avoid repeating the acrimony and failures that characterized its recent climate conferences in Copenhagen, Cancun and Durban.

Instead, “Rio+20” is trying to shift attention to “biodiversity” and alleged threats to plant and animal species, as the new “greatest threat” facing Planet Earth. This rebranding is “by design,” according to conference organizers, who say sustainable development and biodiversity is an “easier sell” these days than climate change: a simpler path to advance the same radical goals.

Those goals include expanded powers and budgets for the United Nations, UN Environment Programme, US Environmental Protection Agency and other government agencies, and their allied Green pressure groups; new taxes on international financial transactions (to ensure perpetual independent funding for the UN and UNEP); and more mandates and money for “clean, green, renewable” energy.

Their wish list also includes myriad opportunities to delay, prevent and control energy and economic development, hydrocarbon use, logging, farming, family size, and the right of individual countries, states, communities and families to make and regulate their own development and economic decisions.

Aside from not giving increased power to unelected and unaccountable bureaucrats and activists, there are two major reasons for stopping this attempted biodiversity-based power grab.

1) There is no scientific basis for claims that hundreds or thousands of species are at risk

Up to half of all species could go extinct by 2100, asserts astronomer and global warming alarmist James Hansen, because of climate change, “unsustainable” hydrocarbon use, human population growth and economic development. At Rio+20 activists are trumpeting these hysterical claims in reports, speeches and press releases. Fortunately, there is no factual basis for them.

Of 191 bird and mammal species recorded as having gone extinct since 1500, 95% were on islands, where humans and human-introduced predators and diseases wrought the destruction, notes ecology researcher Dr. Craig Loehle. On continents, only six birds and three mammals were driven to extinction, and no bird or mammal species in recorded history is known to have gone extinct due to climate change.

The massive species losses claimed by Hansen, Greenpeace, WWF and others are based on extrapolations from the island extinction rates. Some are just wild guesses or rank fear-mongering, with nothing remotely approximating scientific analysis. Other extrapolations are based on unfounded presumptions about species susceptibility to long or short term climate shifts – fed into clumsy, simplistic, non-validated virtual reality computer models that assume rising carbon dioxide levels will raise planetary temperatures so high that plants, habitats, and thus birds, reptiles and animals will somehow be exterminated. There is no evidence to support any of these extinction scenarios.

Indeed, there is no empirical evidence to support claims that average global temperatures have risen since 1998, or that we face any of the manmade global warming or climate change cataclysms proclaimed by Hansen, Gore and others.

2) The greatest threats to species are the very policies and programs being advocated in Rio.

Those policies would ban fossil fuels, greatly increase renewable energy use, reduce jobs and living standards in rich nations, and perpetuate poverty, disease, death and desperation in poor countries.

Today, over 1.5 billion people still do not have electricity, or have it only a few hours each day or week. Almost 2.5 billion people live on less than \$2 a day. Millions die every year from diseases that would be largely eradicated by access to reliable, affordable electricity for cooking and refrigeration, clinics and hospitals, clean water, sanitation, and businesses and industries that generate jobs, prosperity and health.

Opposition to large-scale electricity generation forces people to rely on open fires for cooking and heating – perpetuating lung diseases and premature death, from breathing smoke and pollutants. It also destroys gorilla and other wildlife habitats, as people cut trees and brush for firewood and charcoal.

Wind turbines slice up birds and collapse bat lungs, exacting an unsustainable toll on eagles, hawks, falcons, and other rare, threatened and endangered flying creatures.

Turbine and solar arrays cover and disrupt millions of acres of farmland and wildlife habitat, to provide expensive, intermittent power for urban areas. They require backup generators and long transmission lines, and consume millions of tons of concrete, steel, copper, fiberglass, polymers and rare earth minerals – extracted from the Earth, often in countries whose pollution control regulations and technologies are substantially below US, Canadian, European and Australian standards.

Corn-based ethanol requires tens of millions of acres, billions of gallons of water, millions of tons of fertilizer and insecticides, and enormous quantities of hydrocarbon fuels.

And yet, President Obama told Ghanaians in 2010 that poor, electricity-deprived, malnourished Africans should rely on biofuel, wind and solar power – and not build even gas-fired power plants.

Hunting, subsistence living and poverty are among the greatest risks to species. Denying poor families access to reliable, affordable electricity is a crime against humanity

The Rio+20 biodiversity and sustainability agenda means artificially reduced energy and economic development. It means rationed resources, sustained poverty and disease, and unsustainable inequality, resentment, conflict, and pressure on wildlife and their habitats.

Simply put, 99% of humans and wild kingdom species are being ill served by the 0.1% UN and environmentalist elites gathered in Brazil, and purporting to speak for mankind and planet.

Our Creator has endowed us with a world rich in resources, and even richer in intelligent, hard-working, creative people who yearn to improve their lives and be better stewards of our lands, resources and wildlife. The primary obstacles to achieving these dreams are the false ideologies, anti-development agendas and suffocating regulations being promoted at the Rio+20 Summit.

If we can eliminate those obstacles, the world will enjoy a rebirth of freedom and opportunity, voluntarily stable populations, and vastly improved health, welfare and justice for billions. We will also bring far greater security to Earth's wondrous multitudes of wild and scenic areas, and plant and animal species.

That would be an enormous gain for our planet and people.

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