
FOREWORD

by Vandana Shiva

John Vandermeer and Ivette Perfecto have in their book *Breakfast of Biodiversity* raised some of the most challenging questions about conservation of biodiversity.

The old conflict of ecology versus economics, environment versus development, has, in the post Rio era, mutated into a conflict about how natural resources will be conserved, by whom and for whom.

The dominant paradigm sees conservation as dependent on financial investments, which are, in turn, linked to increased economic growth, international trade, and consumption. This approach allows continued destruction of the environment and people's livelihoods in the domain of the productive economy, while allowing islands of "set-asides" and "wilderness" reserves, which also displace people and destroy indigenous cultures and lifestyles. In this paradigm, there is an artificial separation of conservation and production, of people and nature. Further, the increased trade and commerce that generate the financial resources central to this paradigm of conservation themselves destroy natural resources, biodiversity, cultural diversity, and people's livelihoods. The result is unsustainable islands of biodiversity threatened with constant erosion by a sea of pollutants and monocultures.

The second paradigm is based on conserving biodiversity as the very basis of production, which ensures that both nature and people's livelihoods are protected. It is this second paradigm that is both people- and nature-friendly that this book articulates. In this paradigm, conservation cannot be isolated from production, investment, and trade. Environmental action becomes inseparable from issues of social justice and peoples' economic rights. As the authors state in closing, "calls for boycotts of tropical timbers or bananas need to be coupled with actions to change investment patterns and international banking pressures."