

Ημέρα Περιβάλλοντος: Αναδάσωση!

In Pakistan, a once-threatened pine tree is staging a comeback



When researcher Ashiq Ahmed Khan first visited Pakistan's rugged Sulaiman Mountains, in 1982, he was there to study the **markhor**, a near-threatened goat and Pakistan's national animal.

On his return visit, the

mountains in Balochistan, four years later, though, Khan's focus shifted from the markhor to the pine forest it called home, which had been decimated by deforestation. "It had been cut," said Khan. "It was shocking."

The revelation would lead Khan, 74, who's originally from Peshawar, to launch a campaign to conserve Balochistan's mountain forests and one of their most recognizable trees, the **Chilghoza pine**. Today, some 260km² of forest is protected, much with the help of local residents who were once responsible for felling the trees.



That success is a testament to the ability of communities to band together and revive natural spaces lost to development, said Dechen Tsering from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

“Around the world, forests and other natural spaces are being plundered for their resources. But what’s happening in Balochistan shows that there is a better, more sustainable way to benefit from nature,” she said.

Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) projects like this, harnessing **nature-based solutions** to ensure people adapt and thrive in a changing climate, are fundamental to UNEP’s work. Globally UNEP works on over 45 EbA projects, restoring around 113,000 hectares and benefiting 2.5m people. By protecting ecosystems UNEP also ensures that the animals, such as the markhor, have a place to call home.

In other parts of south Asia UNEP work with partner agencies, such as the **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)** to increase their reach. Mountain areas are some of the hardest hit by climate change and projects such as **Adaptation at Altitude** look at how to increase community resilience and adaption to the threat.

Every year, the world loses 10 million hectares of forests – an area the size of the Republic of Korea. Replanting those forests is a key part of the **United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**, a global push to revive the natural world that launches on 5 June, **World Environment Day**.

