



**Environment at the crossroads.  
Aiming for a sustainable future.**  
Gulbenkian Conference 2009  
27 and 28 October

*The future of biodiversity*

Miguel B. Araújo

There is general agreement among scientists that biodiversity is under assault on a global scale and that species are being lost at a greatly enhanced rate. Climate change has recently been regarded as one of the main threatening factors to biodiversity. Yet, there is a possibility that direct impacts of climate change on biodiversity are being overestimated due to an inability of existing models to account for complex mechanisms of species' adaptation. In this talk, I draw on the evidence from past climatic changes to propose that the ability of species to cope with climate changes is substantially greater than forecasted. This proposition does not lead to concluding that ongoing climate changes do not pose an immediate threat to biodiversity. Indeed, the world's biodiversity is being exposed to unprecedented challenges and familiar threatening processes such as habitat modification, overexploitation, and biological invasion are only likely to be compounded by ongoing climate changes. Policies for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change should, therefore, acknowledge the complexities inherent to effective biodiversity conservation. Ideally, such policies should envisage win-win-win strategies, where the positive outcomes of mitigation and adaptation do not compromise biodiversity conservation.



**Environment at the crossroads.  
Aiming for a sustainable future.**  
Gulbenkian Conference 2009  
27 and 28 October



Miguel B. Araújo has authored over 100 publications in internationally refereed journals and books and is one of the top 1% most cited researchers in the field of environment/ ecology.

Within this field, and according to ISI Essential Science Indicators, he is the highest-cited Portuguese scientist. Currently he is the 'Rui Nabeiro' Chair of Biodiversity (visiting full Professor) at University of Évora and a senior researcher of the Spanish Research Council (CSIC). Prof. Araújo is also a Senior Research Associate of the Oxford University Centre for the Environment, an international collaborator of the Copenhagen University Centre for Macroecology, and a member of the International Laboratory on Global Change, a joint venture between the CSIC and the Pontificia Catholic University of Chile. Prof. Araújo also serves as Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *Ecography*, associate editor of the *Journal of Biogeography*, *Conservation Letters*, *Geography Compass*, and is member of the scientific committee of DIVERSITAS' bioDISCOVERY programme. Miguel B. Araújo contributed to the 2007 4th IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change) Assessment Report, for which the IPCC shared the Nobel Peace Prize.

After reading for his PhD in Geography at the University College London and the Natural History Museum, he undertook post doctoral research in the 'Centre d'Ecologie Fonctionnelle et Evolutive' at the CNRS in Montpellier. He was then awarded a Marie Curie fellowship to undertake research at the University of Oxford, after which he spent a year at the University of Copenhagen as a visiting Associate Professor.