

BIODIVERSITY IS NOT FOR SALE



“All of life is about flows, there is no static entity. That is why biodiversity weaves the infrastructure of life. Biodiversity is not a thing, object, a number. It is what defines us. It is not corporate ‘intellectual property’. It is not a financial asset of those whose greed drives biodiversity extinction and loss”.

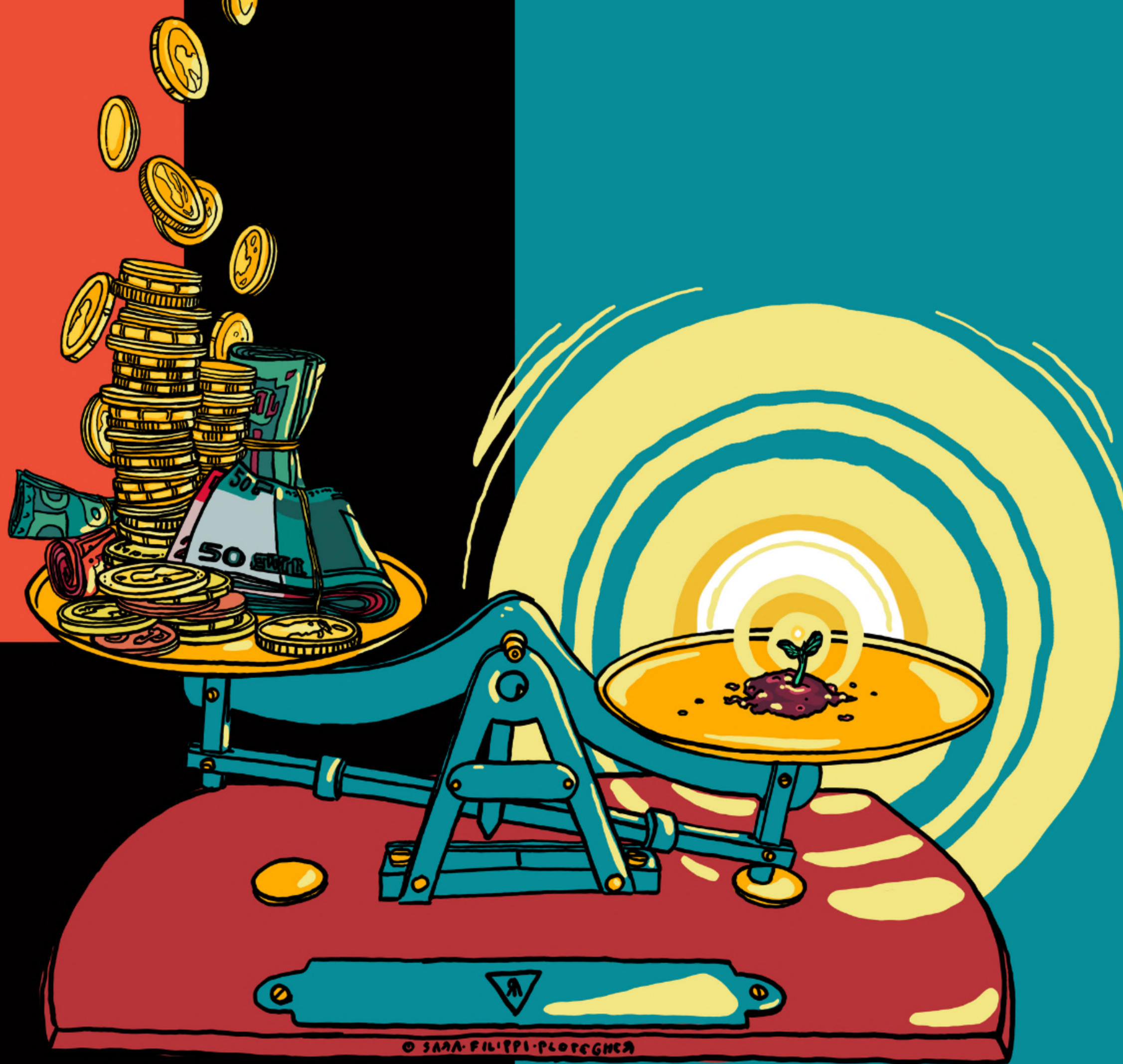
Vandana Shiva



All over the world, custodians of biodiversity—small farmers, indigenous peoples, and communities connected to the land—have been preserving, conserving, and regenerating the world's remaining biodiversity.

The planet is facing a biodiversity crisis, with 69% of global biodiversity having disappeared since 1970. This loss includes not only wild ecosystems but also the rich agrobiodiversity inherited from generations of farmers.

One of the primary drivers of this alarming biodiversity decline is the global expansion of the globalized, industrial agriculture model controlled by corporate monopolies, and characterized by the planting of vast, genetically uniform GMO monocultures replacing wild ecosystems, and the heavy use of agrichemicals.



As the crisis we face deepens, the same actors, giant corporations and power structures that created our current crises are trying to sell us schemes such as financialization of nature through biodiversity credits, the digital preservation of genetic diversity through digital sequencing, and the expansion or deregulation of gene edited and genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

These are being forcefully imposed by a strategic nexus between agribusiness, biotech, big data corporations, research centers, governments, financial institutions and philanthrocapitalists without any consideration of its potential impact. Although presented as solutions, these schemes constitute fundamental threats to the world's biodiversity.



The patenting of seeds and biodiversity through GMOs has paved the way for corporations to claim ownership of digitalized genetic sequences, known as Digital Sequence Information (DSI). While initially meant to preserve genetic diversity, DSI has become a resource for biotech companies to create new GMOs in labs, bypassing biodiversity regulations and opening the door to biopiracy. GMOs also present sources of genetic and biodiversity contamination, as well as increased risks. These technologies undermine the sovereignty of local communities and erode traditional knowledge that has long safeguarded biodiversity. Biodiversity credits, similarly, allow companies to pay for ecosystem degradation without addressing the root causes of biodiversity loss. Both biodiversity credits and the ill-use of DSI reflect a profit-driven mindset that fragments ecosystems to fit financial frameworks with the sole aim of generating profits. Not creating meaningful action that disrupts the status quo responsible for the biodiversity loss in the world.



Inevitably these reductionists and corporate-driven approaches continue the historic, colonial exploitation and commodification of nature at the expense of local communities and biodiversity itself. It is rooted in the desire to control, predict and tame natural processes for the sake of profit under the guise of conservation. At their core, these threats risk commodifying biodiversity, reducing it to isolated species or habitats that can be bought and sold. This not only undermines the complexity of ecosystems but also disregards the vital role of local communities that have stewarded biodiversity for generations. The separation of species from their ecosystems, and local communities from their lands and the biodiversity they steward, is a continuation of what has created the biodiversity crisis. These top-down, profit-driven approaches disregard the interconnected web of life that binds ecosystems and local peoples together. However, these approaches are deeply flawed, as they fail to support the communities that actually preserve biodiversity, allowing for further commercialization and commodification of nature.



To truly conserve biodiversity, we need to remember how to live alongside our local, diverse ecosystems, and regenerate our local biodiversity through the creation of cultures of biodiversity that actively regenerate and steward the diversity around them through biodiverse food cultures, farming practices and sustainable relationships with the land around them. Around the world, small farmers, indigenous communities, and local custodians are engaged in this vital work, as 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity is found on indigenous lands. These communities offer thriving examples of how biodiversity can be conserved and regenerated while living in harmony with nature. Rather than commodifying nature, these custodians of biodiversity must be at the forefront of efforts to reverse the biodiversity crisis.



We must reintegrate biodiversity into every aspect of life—starting with our food.

Local, biodiverse food cultures, based on traditional knowledge and locally available foods, must be revitalized.

These foods, grown from living seeds in biodiverse ecosystems free of harmful chemicals, artificial fertilizers and GMOs represent our collective memory of how to live in balance with nature.

All of our cultures hold threads of this cultural memory before the introduction of ultra-processed foods.

Small farmers play a crucial role in maintaining and enhancing these systems.

They cultivate diversity not just in the fields, but also in culture, community, and resilience.



The creation of poison-free, GMO-free communities is emerging as a significant intervention to address the harm caused by industrial agriculture. These community-led efforts to care for and protect the local commons—water, wild and agro-biodiversity, and food systems—enhance both ecological and social resilience. They protect nature while safeguarding human rights and strengthening local economies, showing that real solutions are rooted in care, not commodification. For example, the creation of Biodistricts offers a powerful model for this approach, where citizens actively participate in the stewardship of their local commons. By working together to protect biodiversity, food systems, and natural resources, these Biodistricts not only address the environmental crisis caused by industrial agriculture but also foster stronger, more resilient communities rooted in ecological balance.



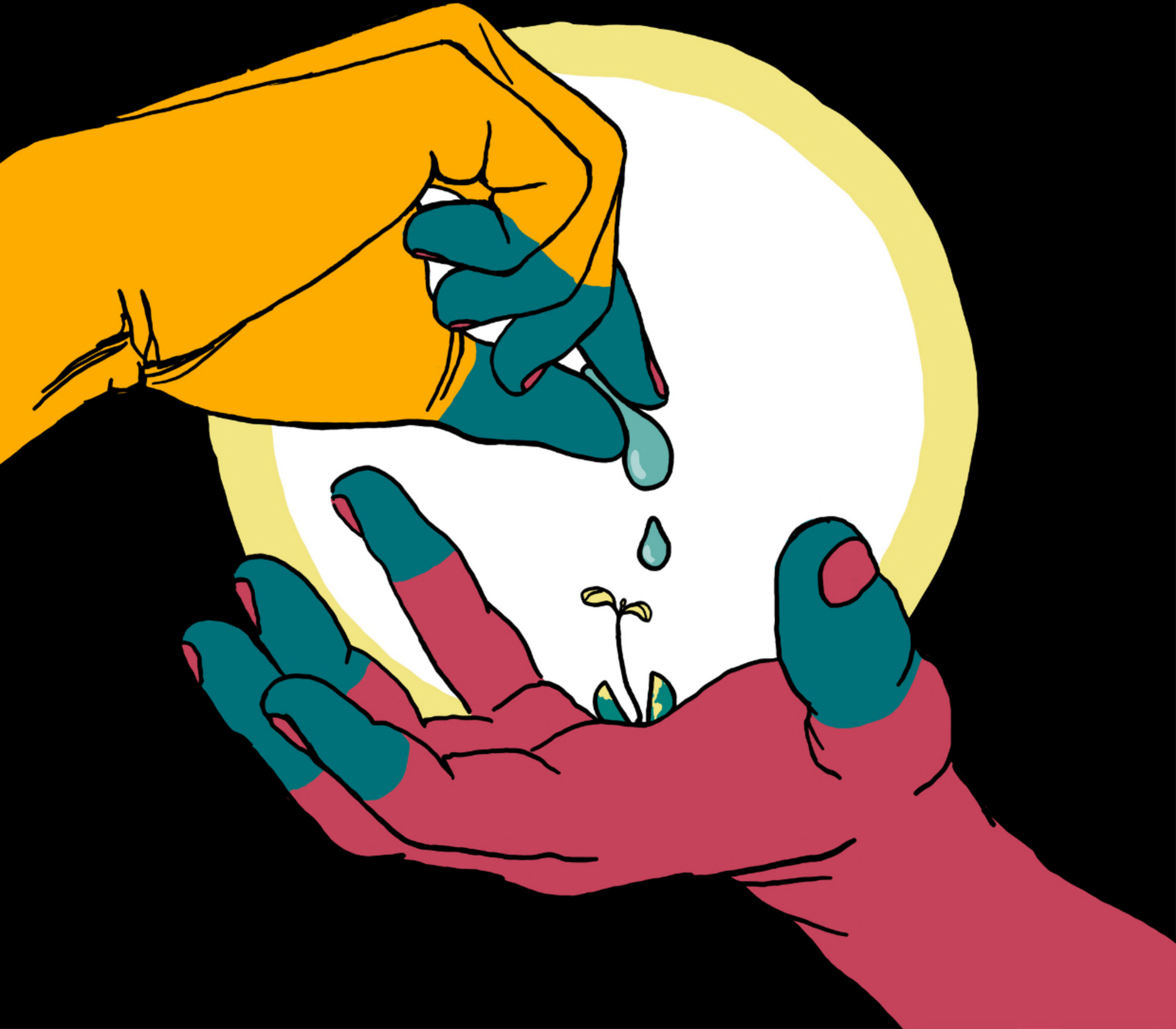
Integrated agroecological as well as pastoral systems offer time-tested methods of cultivating biodiversity while enhancing cultural identity.

These systems, based on ecological knowledge passed down through generations, are deeply rooted in cultures of biodiversity.

They are also rooted in principles of reciprocity, mutual support, and respect for ecological limits.

Small farmers, when working in harmony with local biodiversity, create and maintain diverse, productive landscapes that support both human and ecological well-being, while preserving cultures of biodiversity and local identity.

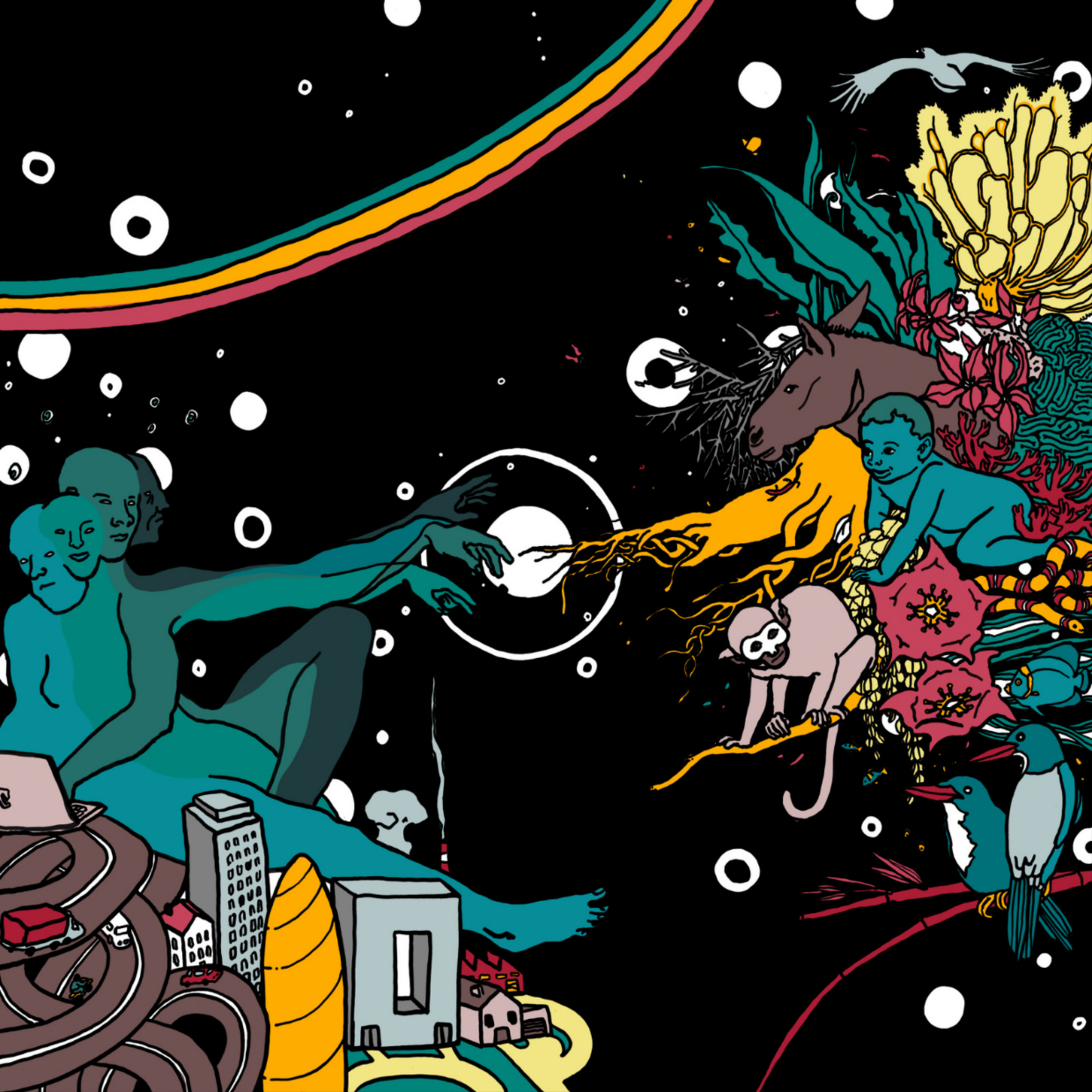
Conservation and regeneration is most effective when it empowers those closest to the land.



We have a responsibility to protect the Earth for future generations.

An important way to facilitate the intergenerational sharing of food wisdom is by developing institutions of ecological teaching and learning for the transmission of ecological knowledge.

By reconnecting younger generations with good agricultural practices and local biodiversity, we not only protect ecosystems but also preserve the wisdom embedded in cultural and food traditions.



As we face this biodiversity crisis, we must recognize and support the true forms of regeneration already being practiced.

The solutions lie not in financialization schemes that commodify life, but in the hands of small farmers, indigenous peoples, and communities living in harmony with nature.

Diverting attention and resources toward profit-driven financial schemes not only fails to address the root of the problem but also silences the voices of those on the front lines of biodiversity conservation.

True biodiversity regeneration requires the centering of care, relationship, and reciprocity with the Earth.

BASED ON NAVDANYA REPORTS AND ARTICLES INCLUDING:

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BIODIVERSITY IS LIFE - Illustrated Booklet, Navdanya international (2022), <https://navdanyainternational.org/biodiversity-is-life/>

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