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IUCN World Conservation Congress Highlights: Monday, 6 September 2021

The Forum continued its work during the fourth day of the IUCN World Conservation Congress with a busy schedule full of thematic sessions, high-level dialogues, and high-level summits.

Highlights of the day included:

- A high-level dialogue focused on the need for a ‘One Health’ approach, emphasized by the emergence of COVID-19;
- An imaginary time travel into the future in an effort to design the necessary conservation measures to turn the tide and halt environmental degradation; and
- A session on agriculture and conservation, showcasing the need to break silos and involve multiple sectors in sustainability efforts.

Deep Time 2029: What Must We Do Now, in 2021, to Successfully Address the Nature Emergency by 2050?

Jane Smart, IUCN, moderated the session. IUCN Director General Bruno Oberle emphasized the need to urgently address resource overexploitation and reinvest in nature. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Chairperson and CEO, Global Environment Facility (GEF), stressed that society needs to eliminate institutional silos existing within governments in order to address natural resource management by 2029.

Basile van Havre, Co-Chair of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF), stated the OEWG work was successful, with high levels of preparation and participation. Looking ahead to 2029, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary, CBD, stated there should be a visible dent in biodiversity loss, adding that all biodiversity-related and other global conventions should work together

toward this common goal. Marco Lambertini, Director General, WWF International, said having a clear goal of net-positive biodiversity gain by 2030 will help drive achievement of the post-2020 GBF. Guy Dubonnet, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), reiterated strengthening the link between culture and nature, adding that protected areas are part of a common human identity. Rita El Zaghoul and Adele Fardoux, High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, expressed hope that language on Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and management of protected areas will be strengthened.

Carla Manjate Rombe, IUCN, said women are powerful agents for engaging in biodiversity conservation, but barriers to involvement must be removed. Melina Sakiyama, Global Youth Biodiversity Network, summarized the youth vision for the future as “wanting to live a life with dignity where we don’t hurt or oppress other cultures, people, and nature.”

Jennifer Tauli Corpuz, Nia Tero, said the GBF should aim at being a strong policy framework allowing IPLCs to continue living in harmony with nature, while ensuring their rights are not alienated. Christina Voigt, University of Oslo, said the GBF must be linked to parties’ legal obligations under the CBD. Tom Brooks, IUCN, underscored the importance of metrics to allow stakeholders to understand their contributions towards achieving the global goals for nature.

David Cooper, Deputy Executive Secretary, CBD, said the GBF must be coherent, able to achieve parties’ vision, and engage all actors, particularly IPLCs. Amy Fraenkel, Executive Secretary, Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), presented a possible vision of the future, which envisages mainstreaming biodiversity into all facets of government. Martha Rojas Urrego, Executive Secretary, Ramsar Convention, said conservation and sustainable development must be equitable and embedded in the principles and rights of the GBF.



Jennifer Tauli Corpuz, Nia Tero



Christina Voigt, University of Oslo



Barbara Pompili, Minister of the Ecological Transition, France



Christof Kutscher, HSBC Pollination, and **Philippe Zaouati**, CEO, Mirova

The One Planet Summit Delivers for Biodiversity

The session opened with the screening of a short video. Moderating the session, Barbara Pompili, Minister of the Ecological Transition, France, set the scene, explaining that the One Planet Summit comprises a number of coalitions and has achieved tangible results by providing real value on the ground.

Via video address, Mari Pangestu, World Bank, highlighted the World Bank's commitment to stop financing oil and gas projects, and an action plan to align all financing with the Paris Agreement goals.

Emphasizing that “we are now living with the consequences of one planet being destroyed by one species,” Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme, noted that the GBF is the latest blueprint to protect biodiversity. She called for “a whole-of-society lift” and global cooperation to galvanize action.

Three panels followed. The first discussed mobilizing public actors for nature and biodiversity and comprised: Jeanne d'Arc Mujawamariya, Minister for the Environment, Rwanda; Remy Rioux, Director General, French Agency for Development (Afd); Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary, UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); and Gregorio Mirabal, Coordinating Body of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon River Basin (COICA). Discussions focused on: the High Ambition Coalition's 30-by-30 target; the role of public banks as “pollinators” in the financial system; slow progress under the Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel; and the need to involve Indigenous Peoples in the One Planet Summit and provide support for biodiversity conservation.

Akanksha Khatri, World Economic Forum, moderated the panel on transforming value chains towards a nature-friendly economy. Yves Blouin, One Planet Business for Biodiversity, reported on scaling up regenerative agriculture with local farmers. Ulrike Decoene, AXA, highlighted the ‘Into the Wild’ report on integrating nature into investment strategies. Hervé Gastinel, CEO, Compagnie du Ponant, drew attention to the Sustainable Actions for Innovative and Low-impact Shipping Charter, which guides shipping companies to adopt sustainable technologies.

Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, CEO and Chairperson, GEF moderated the panel on innovating to finance conservation and ecosystem restoration. Yannick Glemarec, Executive Director, Green Climate Fund (GCF), highlighted the capital- and partner-agnostic nature of GCF projects, which facilitates diverse projects with a wide range of institutions. Benigno López Benítez, Inter-American Development Bank,

underscored the role of nature inclusion in post-COVID-19 recovery projects through increasing the value chain of goods. Ornella Çuçi, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Environment, Albania, highlighted the need to assist small countries with low budgets in supporting sustainable business.

Philippe Zaouati, CEO, Mirova, emphasized the importance of stakeholder involvement in climate-based solutions. Christof Kutscher, HSBC Pollination, highlighted the need to invest in nature and natural capital by scaling up investment opportunities.

Closing the session, Bérangère Abba, Secretary of State for Biodiversity, France, called on participants to go further and faster, consolidate results, and remain vigilant.

Stopping the Tide: Best Practices and Solutions to Tackle Marine Invasive Alien Species

Amelia Curd, French National Institute for Ocean Science, Emmanuelle Sarat, IUCN, and Yohann Soubeyran, IUCN, moderated the session. Piero Genovesi, Chair, IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Invasive Species Specialist Group, introduced the session, highlighting the continuing rise of invasive alien species (IAS) in all regions and environments. He stressed that managing the pathways for the arrival of these species is crucial, as managing marine IAS once they have arrived is difficult.

Teo Karayannis, International Maritime Organization (IMO), said that the IMO's work on IAS is entirely on prevention. He gave an overview of existing global measures for the management of two main shipping-related vectors, ballast water and biofouling, highlighting the Ballast Water Management Convention and the Biofouling Guidelines.

Dan Reading, World Sailing, focused on addressing the recreational boating pathway for marine IAS. He highlighted the GloFouling Partnerships Project, a joint UN Development Programme (UNDP)-GEF-IMO initiative, which aims to promote implementation of the IMO Biofouling Guidelines and ultimately minimize transfer of IAS through shipping, including recreational craft.

Participants then voted on priority actions to address challenges, the top two being: implementing performance measures; and identifying mismatches between IAS research and management to improve species management.

Maria del Mar Otero, IUCN, shared initiatives in the Mediterranean Sea. She said it is the world's most invaded sea and described the Marine Protected Area (MPA)



Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France

initiative, which monitors IAS within the Mediterranean MPA network, has a blacklist of IAS, and conducts capacity building workshops and citizen science. She listed transnational plans like a strategic action programme for the CBD in the Mediterranean, with specific targets for ports and MPAs; regional fisheries management cooperation; and the EU Marine Strategy Framework. She highlighted challenges including MPAs being insufficient to protect biodiversity, and opportunities such as improving mitigation measures and increasing concerted action.

Nicolas Maslach, Saint-Martin National Nature Reserve, presented a case study from Saint-Martin. He described how lionfish and tropical seagrass destabilized the ecological and economic balance of the Caribbean's fragile coastal ecosystems, home to over 2,140 species, and affected ecosystem services provided by coral reefs. To fight invasion, he highlighted the importance of identifying and proving their causes and developing rules to manage invasion vectors.

Participants then voted on key priorities, prioritizing cross-regional cooperation, funding, and capacity building. Genovesi concluded, emphasizing the need for multi-stakeholder cooperation and for prioritizing islands, which are particularly vulnerable to invasion.

BRIDGE - Ten Years of Implementing Transboundary Water Management: Key Lessons and Ways Forward

This session, moderated by Maria Carreño Lindelien, IUCN, focused on the Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE) programme, which, since 2011, has worked on water governance, management, and cooperation in transboundary rivers and lakes worldwide.

Claire Warmenbol, IUCN, opened the session, providing an overview of BRIDGE.

Diego Jara, IUCN, underscored successes around the world via the promotion of dialogue through river basin organizations, and also emphasized socioeconomic and political challenges. He noted that climate change and plastic pollution make the governance of transboundary waters more complex, elevating BRIDGE's importance.

Tariro Davison Saruchera, IUCN, focused on cooperation in the Buzi, Pungwe, and Save Basins, three transboundary water basins, collectively known as BUPUSA, shared by

Mozambique and Zimbabwe. He outlined the BRIDGE journey and discussed a GEF project on the management of competing water uses and associated ecosystems in BUPUSA.

Raphael Glemet, IUCN, focused on transboundary cooperation in the Mekong River in Southeast Asia, shared among six countries. He said the first phase involved knowledge sharing and capacity building, while the subsequent phases operationalized site-level cooperation. He further focused on energy, describing the path towards replacing hydropower with other renewables.

Via video message, Claudia Bastante, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peru, and Segundo Guaiñas, Center of Support for the Rural Management of Drinking Water, Ecuador, shared insights from the Binational Commission for Integrated Water Resources Management in the Ecuadorian-Peruvian transboundary basins.

Armel Mevutan, IUCN, presented on activities in Central and Western Africa, outlining causes of conflicts related to transboundary waters. He underscored encouraging results from the Mano River Union, noting the creation of national and cross-border platforms for cooperation in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte D'Ivoire as well as the Logone River, the backbone of the Lake Chad Basin.

Maria Ana Borges, IUCN, addressed financial sustainability for transboundary cooperation. She stressed that "there is no one-size-fits-all approach" on financial sustainability, which spans sufficient funding, level of self-financing, reliability of fixed contributions, and financial resilience. She discussed priority financing options, cooperation stages, and main cost categories, and focused on the need to diversify sources of finance.

Offering concluding remarks, James Dalton, IUCN, emphasized that signing an agreement does not necessarily lead to technical cooperation and governance mobilization. He noted that climate change impacts increase the need to share data and enable improved forecasting, while also generating investments resulting from political attention. Warning that "we are losing waters three times faster than forests," he called for improving understanding of the role of freshwater systems for the economy.

One Earth – One Health: How Can we Mitigate Future Pandemics?

William Karesh, EcoHealth Alliance, moderated the three-part session on drivers, solutions, and IUCN's role. He said biodiversity loss and changes to land use, food production, and agriculture will indirectly lead to disease emergence.

Highlighting the 'One Health' approach as central to preventing future pandemics, Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France, stressed "humans cannot live healthy lives on an unhealthy planet."

On drivers, David Nabarro, 4SD, emphasized that as new viruses emerge, their capacity for upsetting the social order is huge. He added COVID-19 is here to stay and its impact on humanity is "absolutely inequitable" and must be dealt with for decades to come.

Jon Paul Rodriguez, IUCN SSC, observed that around 43% of emerging infectious diseases are of wildlife origin, and highlighted the importance of identifying them.

On solutions to prevent and mitigate impacts from future pandemics, Karesh explained the importance of risk reduction and prevention over response, informed by disaster governance frameworks.

Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), shared German initiatives around One Health to improve expertise and generate ground-level action, including through: forging alliances among environmental, animal, and human health professionals; strengthening regulation; and reinforcing work on environment-animal and environment-human interfaces.

Chadia Wannous, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), highlighted three priorities for preventing future pandemics: strengthening veterinary capacity to detect and manage infectious diseases at the environmental-human-animal health intersection; reducing risks from domestic and wildlife animal trade; and enhancing information sharing and research.

Nabarro urged meaningful leadership that facilitates cross-professional collaboration. Rodriguez advocated for a global wildlife health authority that could investigate linkages between zoonosis, farming, and wildlife.

The discussion considered the role of leadership to avoid zoonotic consequences in the future, with Nabarro stating there is scope to intensify systems to minimize risks and prevent spill-over events. Wannous said her organization is aiming to support countries at the national level to build one-health platforms, cognizant of regional disparities. Hoven noted a need to invest more in capacity and institution building. She said awareness raising is key to informing the public of what needs to be done to make the future safer for all.

On what steps the IUCN One Programme can take, Rodriguez said resources must be optimized to avoid fragmented approaches and duplicated efforts. Radhika Murti, IUCN, outlined progress made by the Programme, noting the launch of an expert working group with the World Health Organization, among others, to find truly integrated solutions for One Health.

Agriculture and Land Health: The Common Ground Between Agriculture and Conservation

This session was moderated by Asha Sumpth, journalist. IUCN Director General Bruno Oberle highlighted scientific evidence of agricultural practices that can help achieve food security while maintaining nature and reintegrating natural capital. Carlos Andrés Alvarado Quesada, President of Costa



Ingrid-Gabriela Hoven, GIZ



IUCN Director General **Bruno Oberle**

Rica, via video message, underlined that land restoration is the solution for a fair and sustainable ecosystem recovery. He said family farmers are often neglected in the formulation of public policies, and in access to credit and new technologies.

Julien Denormandie, Minister of Agriculture, France, via video message, said the transition to biodiversity conservation and climate resilience must not reduce the number of crops in Europe, only to replace them with imported products that do not adhere to the same standards. Ambassador Giorgio Marrapodi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy, via video message, said collaborating with developing country partners to achieve food security alongside maintaining natural capital is a long-standing priority of Italian cooperation.

Dongyu Qu, Director General, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), underscored the need to protect IPLCs' rights as custodians of biodiversity in their territories. Stewart Maginnis, IUCN, said sustainably managed agriculture can make a major contribution to conserving biodiversity, noting that the GBF's targets should include agroecological approaches.

In the panel discussion, Stephane Le Foll, former Minister for Agriculture and Food, France, said modern farming practices can safeguard soils and contribute to biodiversity protection, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Luc Gnacadja, Governance and Policies for Sustainable Development, noted that eliminating agricultural subsidies and policies that are harmful to biodiversity can release funding. He added governments should subsidize sustainable practices and support farmer-to-farmer knowledge-sharing programmes.

Alice Ruhweza, WWF International, said society needs new landscape approaches that take into account other needs such as livelihoods, safe drinking water, and access to finance. She added that we need to tap into farmers' knowledge more, including sustainable, traditional practices. Donald Moore, Global Dairy Platform, highlighted best practices of sustainable agriculture and the Dairy Sustainability Framework, which monitors and tracks sustainability metrics. Thierry de L'Escaille, Secretary General, European Landowners' Organization, stated that "biodiversity is a crop," and that this message can encourage farmers' support for sustainable agriculture practices.

Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General, FAO, provided concluding remarks, reminding the Congress that they should focus on restoring natural and productive areas, not just protected areas, while also taking into account livelihoods.