



Rio Conventions Pavilion Highlights: 18 November 2018

The second day of the Rio Conventions Pavilion, organized by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Regional Office for Africa and partners, focused on the future of sustainability in Africa. Under the overall theme, 'Africa's Ecological Future: For People and Planet,' the event included the launch of the Africa Ecological Futures (AEF) initiative on the conservation of nature, biodiversity and Africa's important natural assets, and mainstreaming AEF thinking into various sector policies like conservation, food, forest and infrastructure.

Five panel discussion sessions took place throughout the day, addressing: Africa-specific findings from recent assessments by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES); the role of Protected Areas to secure Africa's rich biodiversity; the potential of forest landscape restoration and agrobiodiversity in Africa; challenges of urban development; and shaping Africa's ecological future, with a focus on youth perspectives.

The day closed with a reception to celebrate the launch of The Pathfinder Award, which recognizes innovative solutions for ensuring investment in protected and conserved areas.

Opening Session

Chair Yemi Katerere, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Africa, welcomed participants and introduced the theme of the day.

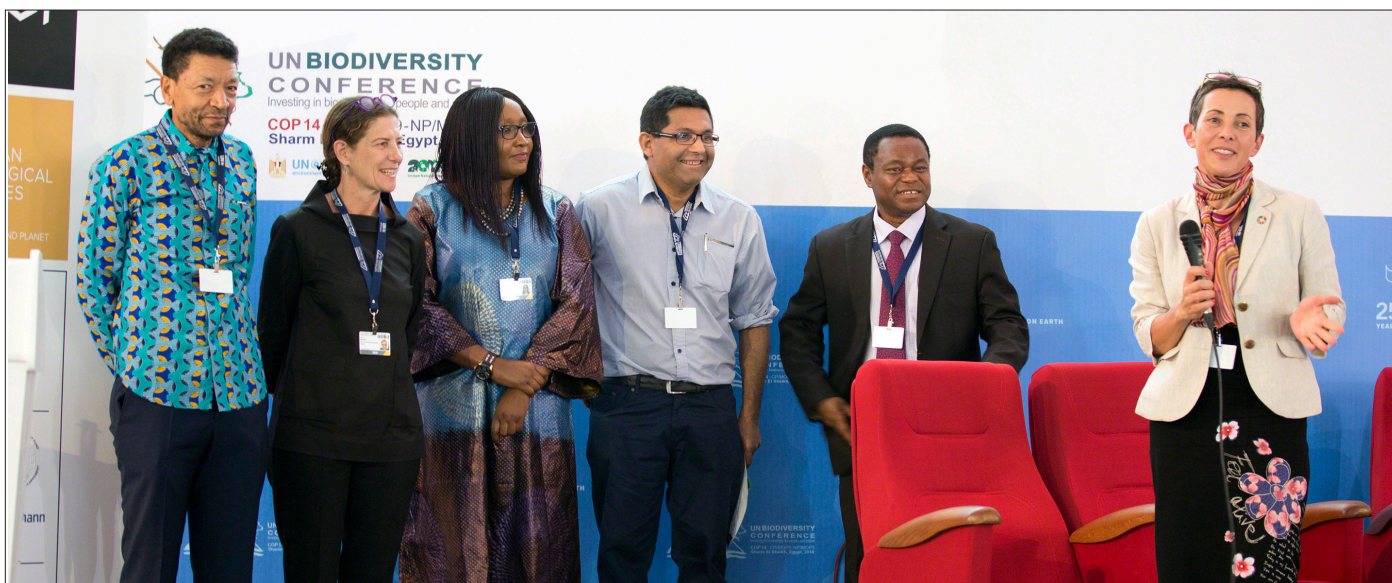
Fred Kumah, WWF Africa, described the past, current and future state of Africa and its impact on the continent's natural resources and biodiversity. He discussed the contribution of the AEF initiative, noting it was co-designed by WWF and the African Development Bank (AfDB) with the aim of enabling convergence and collaboration between ecological and physical infrastructure.

Sara Bertin, AfDB, highlighted how the AEF initiative can contribute to achieve Africa's potential and face its complexities, as well as look at alternative opportunities that combine physical and ecological infrastructure planning.

Yemi Katerere, WWF Africa, emphasized the role of investment in infrastructure, the need to move towards transformation, do things differently by supporting strong governmental institutions, and increase democratic participation to ensure that investments meet people's needs.

Luthando Dziba, Co-Chair, IPBES Regional Assessment for Africa, noted that Africa's natural assets and rich biodiversity are often underestimated, in part because there are few studies assessing the value of nature's contributions to human well-being. He highlighted the AEF report's recommendation for polycentric government approaches that engage multiple stakeholders to undertake periodic national assessments of natural capital.

Answering questions from the audience, panelists shared further lessons from specific African countries, and emphasized that the AEF, IPBES Thematic Assessments and



From L-R: Chair Yemi Katerere, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Africa; Sara Bertin, African Development Bank (AfDB); Rose Mwebaza, AfDB; Saliem Fakir, WWF South Africa; Fred Kumah, WWF Africa; and Corli Pretorius, UN Environment



Julia Barske, WWF Germany

other scenario studies highlight the importance of re-thinking current investment frameworks to factor in their environmental impacts. Responding to a question on how to interpret the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) call for a 1.5°C limit from an African perspective, participants highlighted data challenges, such as adopting a collective index for biodiversity conservation.

Safeguarding the Ecology

This session was moderated by Laurent Some, WWF Africa.

Julia Barske, WWF Germany, presented on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) conservation area, Programme d'appui au Réseau des aires protégées (PARAP). She highlighted PARAP's contribution to the sustainable development of ecosystem services in the country with the assistance of WWF Germany, which undertook data collection from 25 different sites.

Ulrike Tröger, WWF Germany, discussed conservation efforts in the DRC's Salonga Park, Africa's largest tropical rainforest reserve. She highlighted the importance of local participation in ensuring that protected areas are drivers of sustainable development and the role of partnerships in conservation efforts.



Ulrike Tröger, WWF Germany



Matthias Krause, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Matthias Krause, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), gave examples of the ecosystem services mangroves provide and highlighted how important it is to consider their value in infrastructure and coastal development.

In the ensuing discussion, two representatives of the National Parks Authority in DRC explained how the country's forest conservation efforts contribute to conservation even under conflict. They also underlined the need to adopt collaborative approaches to include biodiversity conservation and local people's needs at the center of development.

Reconciling Forest & Food – the Potential of Landscape Restoration and Food Security

This session was facilitated by Adriana Vidal, IUCN.

Heiko Warnken, BMZ, highlighted his country's EUR 10 billion fund for forest landscape restoration (FLR) projects, noting it seeks to support integrated approaches to the sustainable management of forests, land and water resources. Among specific FLR projects underway in Africa, he highlighted funding for national land degradation neutrality (LDN) target setting as part of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15, the African Forest Landscape Restoration (AFR100) Initiative, and 'One World No Hunger,' which supports the rehabilitation of agricultural land and strengthening land governance in 20 African countries.

Charles Karangwa, (AFR100) reported that 27 countries so far have committed to restore over 111 million hectares by 2030, surpassing the initial target. He highlighted the strong commitment made by African ministers at the recently concluded African Biodiversity Summit to restore landscapes that link "people, food and biodiversity."

Laetitia Marie Busokeye, Rwanda Environment Management Authority, stated the country has made a commitment to restore two million hectares – approximately 75% of the total land area in the densely populated country. She said this was due to the realization that addressing the competing needs such as soil and land management, food production, climate regulation and energy access requires restoring tree cover and other vital ecosystem services across all land use systems, including in urban areas.

Issa Katwesige, Ministry of Water and Environment, Uganda, highlighted his country's commitment to restore 2.4 million hectares of degraded land, through diverse approaches,



Anja Gassner, World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)

including: natural regeneration of protected forests; privately-managed natural forests; restoring vital tree species, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)-listed *Prunus Africana* through agro-forestry schemes; and tree planting in urban areas.

Anja Gassner, World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) presented on the ‘Trees on Farm for Biodiversity’ project, which works with communities, governments and civil society organizations in five countries. She listed some achievements so far, including Rwanda meeting 85% of its agroforestry goals with expected economic benefits surpassing USD 700 million, and Uganda’s success in balancing agroforestry while also maintaining its natural protected forests. She lamented that while there are a lot of FLR initiatives, few look at the long-term sustainability of the trees to turn restoration into a viable economic sector.

Roseline Remans, Bioversity International, highlighted efforts to make agricultural land restoration “part of the solution,” noting that a focus on biological diversity within agricultural systems helps to secure essential ecosystem services such as more nutritious diets, energy and soil restoration, and livelihoods.

In discussions that followed, panelists explained some challenges and opportunities for FLR in Africa. They highlighted the implications of not having coherent policies and regulation by neighboring countries, noting the need for



Bianca Notarbartolo, UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)

regional and intersectoral approaches to mainstream FLR. Speakers encouraged involving farmers in agro-forestry activities, and tapping into the expertise that already exists within African countries. They further noted that involving local stakeholders will help create green jobs and add value to the growing investments African governments are making in agro-forestry.

Cities and Infrastructure Development in Africa – Challenges and Risks

This session was facilitated by Kate Newman, WWF, US.

Rose Mwebaza, AfDB, spoke about infrastructure needs for Africa and the Bank’s approach to this. She emphasized that due to population growth in the continent, there is pressure to invest in infrastructure but her institution is looking for more data on future needs of cities so that investments in infrastructure can take into consideration what the city will look like 50 years from now and plan accordingly.

Bianca Notarbartolo, UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), underscored the importance of the nexus between infrastructure and biodiversity to achieve the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. She noted that a transformative future requires an integrated approach for infrastructure development, engagement with other sectors and a change in the narrative.

Saliem Fakir, WWF South Africa, discussed the challenges of addressing rural and urban landscapes in a fragmented way. He underlined how crisis, such as the drought in Cape Town, contributed to re-thinking infrastructure needs in an integrated way, enabling the linking of physical, ecological, and technological infrastructures to build a more resilient future.

Opening discussion on what needs to be done differently for the infrastructure needs in Africa, Chair Newman noted that 75% of infrastructure needed by 2050 has not yet been built. Notarbartolo encouraged upstream planning for future infrastructure needs, and called for a move away from traditional approaches that consider only current needs, with the inevitable need to mitigate negative consequences that arise.

Panelists also highlighted other factors that need to be taken into account when planning infrastructure models, such as the impacts of climate change on buildings.



Roseline Remans, Bioversity International



View of the panel during the discussion on cities and infrastructure development in Africa

The Future of Biodiversity We Want for Africa – A Joint Programme to the Shape Africa's Ecological Future

Focusing on youth perspectives, this closing session was chaired by Monique Ntumngia, Green Girls Organization and 2017 WWF Africa Youth Champion.

Maoga Unelker, Konservation, said biodiversity in Africa is the foundation of the economy but it is not in the best state. She further noted that youth alone cannot achieve the changes that are needed.

Alexandra Rasoamanana, Malagasy Youth Biodiversity Network, stated that her network is pushing forward to have the voice of young Africa heard and encouraged the use of scientific data to be considered in understanding the biodiversity needs of Africa. She added that biodiversity loss is at a critical point for Africa and there is a clear clash between development and conservation objectives.

Echoing the sentiments of other panelists, Iddi Hamisa Nyachenga, Green Power Tanzania, noted that youth-focused interventions present a potential benefit for environmental conservation but they currently lack government support.

Rasoamanana added that her hope is for the decisions and plans of actions that are adopted at COP 14 to be communicated by youth in their respective countries with the message that these decisions need to be understood and implemented by local actors as much as governments.

Launch of the Pathfinder Award

In the evening, participants gathered to celebrate the winners of the inaugural 2018 Pathfinder Awards for innovation and excellence in protected area financing and resourcing. A collaboration of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and Wild Ark, more than 200 nominations were received and judged by an international panel of distinguished experts.

The winners were:

- Mirjam de Koning, Prespa Ohrid Nature Trust, the only transboundary conservation fund in the world, in the watersheds and basins of Albania, Greece, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- Candice Stevens, BirdLife International and the government of South Africa, for her work for creating the first tax incentive in the world for biodiversity that rewards private landowners and communal landowners for declaring protected areas in South Africa;
- Billy Dumaliang, Masungi Georeserve Foundation in the Philippines, for her work on creative engineering building sustainable tourism value in a conservation area, employing 100 park rangers on the ground, and introducing inventive trail experiences; and
- Colin Campbell, Assist Social Capital CIC, for opening access to sustainable independent income streams for innovation in nature conservation in Scotland.



View of the panel during the discussion on The Future of Biodiversity We Want for Africa