



## Rio Conventions Pavilion Friday, 23 November 2018

On Day 7 of the Rio Conventions Pavilion, various actors working on capacity building in the biodiversity sector held a series of interactive dialogues and workshops.

In the morning, under the theme 'Building Capacity Beyond 2020,' participants reflected on capacity building experiences over the past decade, with a view to identifying and informing future action to support the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (Post-2020 Framework) and the Post-2020 Long-Term Strategic Framework for Capacity Building.

In the afternoon, a workshop took place exploring the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy as a tool for engaging industry and finance in effective biodiversity management.

The day's events were organized by a broad consortium of partners. The morning segment was organized by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) in collaboration with the CBD, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), and the African Elephant Fund.

The Mitigation Hierarchy and Emerging Technologies Workshop was co-organized by the Cross-Sector Biodiversity Initiative (CSBI) and the Equator Principles Association.

In the evening, partners of PANORAMA – Solutions for a Healthy Planet, a multi-thematic, multi-partner initiative for learning, held an event to discuss the contribution of the partnership to global policy targets, particularly around key COP14 agenda items, such as ecosystem-based adaptation, protected and conserved areas, marine and coastal issues and sustainable agriculture.

### *Building capacity beyond 2020*

**From global to national:** Moderator Niamh Brannigan, UNEP, welcomed participants, noting the discussions would explore the definition of capacity building and panelists would share experiences with capacity building tools, project designs, lessons learned, and key takeaways that can support the achievement of the three Rio Conventions.

Jyoti Mathur- Filipp, CBD, reiterated that a strategic approach to capacity building is central to implementation of the CBD, as well as enhancing adaptive management under the Post-2020 Framework.

Jamie Cavalier, GEF Secretariat, said the institution increasingly emphasizes multifocal area projects, as well as integration through learning platforms, to enhance synergies in implementing the Rio Conventions.

Lilian Chimphopo, CBD Focal Point, Malawi, discussed how capacity building for local communities impacts their knowledge, ways of thinking and infrastructure.



From L-R: **Patrick Chesney**, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat; **Warwick Harris**, Marshall Islands; **Lilian Chimphopo**, Malawi; **Jamie Cavalier**, Global Environment Facility (GEF) Secretariat; and **Sonia Peña Moreno**, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)





Sonia Peña Moreno, IUCN

Patrick Chesney, CARICOM Secretariat, emphasized that capacity building “is not a science” and should build skills, integrate local communities and help diffuse understanding about biodiversity.

Warwick Harris, CBD Focal Point, Marshall Islands, shared information on the state of environment reporting and highlighted the challenges of data collection in the country.

Sonia Peña Morena, IUCN, noted capacity-building approaches need to be adapted to different contexts and cross-cutting needs, as well as to addressing long-term and systemic challenges.

Responding to questions from the audience on how to ensure adequate expertise and training is provided to decision makers, Cavalier highlighted the role of GEF’s environmental conservation caucuses, which bring together experts on themes requested by parliamentarians and facilitates South-South exchanges among peers from Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Other panelists underscored the importance of providing ongoing training to lower-level staff to encourage employee retention and growth of institutional expertise. It was also emphasized that citizen science should be promoted encouraging outreach to people with the “living knowledge” of our environment.



Philippe Mayaux, European Commission



Lucy Mullenkei, Indigenous Information Network

**Into the future – the post-2020 frameworks:** Introducing the panel, Brannigan posed the question: “How can the USD 50 billion in annual funding for capacity building programmes be used more effectively?”

Erie Tamale, CBD Secretariat, discussed some ideas for moving capacity building beyond “business as usual.” He highlighted strategic priorities at the global level, including: providing visionary leadership; strengthening core institutional capacities linked to specific thematic issues and biodiversity targets; and developing a Theory of Change containing long-term outcomes, benchmarks and indicators to support the shift towards more ambitious and integrated programming.

Philippe Mayaux, European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), noted the need for more integration at both sector and scale levels. He remarked that traditional workshop approaches “are clearly not working” and called for a greater focus on sharing real-life examples of integrated landscape approaches that show multiple benefits.

Lucy Mullenkei, Indigenous Information Network, noted that while a lot has been done, current capacity building programmes are not sufficiently inclusive. She said that local communities benefit most from practical experiences, involving learning and exchanges with other communities experiencing similar challenges.

Hilary Allison, UNEP-WCMC, emphasized the need for global programmes to: balance broad and outreach-oriented approaches with deeper engagement, such as peer exchanges; build on what has been done so far; invest in mainstreaming; and pay equal attention to technical capacities and “soft skills” such as storytelling and building multi-stakeholder platforms.

Erik Wikramanayake, Environmental Foundation, Sri Lanka, noted the need to increase capacity to tell compelling stories to engage the general public on biodiversity and climate issues. He called for harnessing existing capacities at the national level, such as within universities.

Easter Galuvao, SPREP, highlighted the importance of sub-regional institutions as capacity building and knowledge exchange platforms, using examples from the Pacific. She



Frazer Lanier, Citigroup



Kat Bruce, Nature Metrics

highlighted environmental impact assessments as an important tool for mainstreaming capacity building, as well as the importance of elevating capacity needs at issues on the regional political agenda.

Responding to Brannigan's challenge to "identify one capacity building action you would not spend money on," most panelists proposed drastically cutting back on workshops, with one speaker saying that this should be extended to COP sessions as well. Others highlighted the need to reduce duplication of capacity-building projects and shift the focus to implementation and monitoring of progress.

In their final messages, panelists concluded that the post-2020 capacity building framework should: be more practical, contextualized and inclusive; place more focus on data; recognize multiple forms of knowledge; target the "worker bees" within institutions; strengthen monitoring of progress; and enhance synergies across diverse initiatives.

### ***The Mitigation Hierarchy and Emerging Technologies***

This workshop session took place in the afternoon and focused on reviewing industry practices, trends in host country laws and regulations, and supporting tools and technologies across the four stages of the mitigation hierarchy: avoidance, minimization, restoration and offsetting.

Introducing the session, Frazer Lanier, Citigroup, explained that speakers would highlight best practices covering the four stages of the hierarchy – a guidance tool for development projects to minimize negative impacts on biodiversity – developed by the CSBI.

**Biodiversity impact avoidance:** Elaborating on the mitigation hierarchy concept, Jonathan Ekstrom, The Biodiversity Consultancy, explained that biodiversity is the "living natural capital asset class," which has paid us guaranteed returns every year in human history. Outlining the four stages of the mitigation hierarchy, he noted that avoidance often involves a decision to change the expected or normal course of action and identified biodiversity screening as a cost-effective method for implementing avoidance.

Rose Mwebaza, African Development Bank, discussed imperatives for agricultural transformation in Africa noting that the growing population rise in the continent requires increased infrastructural investments of up to USD 20 billion per annum. She discussed how the Bank is testing new partnership approaches, such as a joint project on futures thinking with the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) and UNEP aimed at creating scenarios and interactive maps to influence investment and policy decisions.

Yajna Nath Dahal, CBD Focal Point, Nepal, presented a case study related to the 'Shifting of East-West Railway Alignment to Avoid Chitwan National Park Nepal' project and explained how it integrates climate reliance and natural capital.

**Biodiversity impact minimization and restoration:** The second panel discussed successful examples of mitigation at the corporate level and highlighted some key performance indicators companies use to demonstrate minimization and restoration.

Bala Pisupati, Forum for Law, Environment, Development and Governance (FLEDGE), highlighted that people have different perceptions of biodiversity offsetting, hence it is also important to look at micro-level activities and small-scale project investments for mitigation.

Andrew Plumpton, BirdLife International, shared lessons and unforeseen challenges faced in some mitigation techniques used by companies to minimize impacts for bird areas in Central and East Africa.

Kat Bruce, Nature Metrics, stated that biodiversity is fundamentally a big data challenge therefore big data tools are needed to know what needs to be measured and to do so in a more effective timeframe.

In the discussion, panelists noted by 2030, USD 90 trillion will be needed for global infrastructure but the challenge is how to weave human infrastructure into natural infrastructure so that the biosphere can continue to support us.

**Biodiversity impact offsetting:** This panel was facilitated by Veronica Lo, Equator Principles Association, and explored the case for voluntary offsets and payments for ecosystem services to make conservation of ecosystems profitable and self-perpetuating.





Tim Hirsch, GBIF Secretariat

Introducing the discussions, Ekstrom described offsets as “a last resort to address residual impacts on biodiversity and/or ecosystem services.” He proposed a practical approach to making decisions on offsets that entails asking questions related to whether the proposed offset or biodiversity outcome is ecologically and technically feasible, and socially and politically acceptable.

Ekstrom highlighted some examples of landscape level offsets, including an International Finance Corporation (IFC) funded project linked to the Oyu Tolgoi gold and copper mine in Inner Mongolia, and five legal protected areas introduced by Rio Tinto as part of a mining concession in Madagascar. Among some good practices, he noted the importance of: linking offsetting objectives with National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans; estimating the technical and financial costs of an offset before completing the avoidance plan; and ensuring that the mitigation action is part of an iterative feedback loop of adaptive management.

Frazer discussed the experience of the Equator Principles Association – a network of 94 global financial institutions involved in project financing – in incorporating the IFC performance standards on biodiversity protection within project financing and monitoring. Noting that avoidance should always be the first principle, he explained the network’s role in developing guidance on how to mainstream conservation principles across the entire project cycle.

In the ensuing discussion, participants emphasized the importance of involving all stakeholders in offset design, noting such schemes can be viewed as part of a corporate or even NGO “land grab.” Highlighting an example from Australia, one participant pointed to the difficulty of implementing such schemes due to inadequate oversight and a lack of clear guidelines on limits to offsetting.

In response to a question on how funders monitor adherence, Frazer noted the importance of building in mitigation measures into loan agreements and ensuring links to independent monitoring on the ground as part of due diligence by financial institutions.



Jamison Ervin, UNDP

### **New Technologies and the Future of the Mitigation**

**Hierarchy:** Frazer Lanier moderated this closing panel. He explained that speakers would share emerging industry trends in biodiversity data sharing and emerging technologies in the biodiversity data collection and monitoring space that have the potential to improve our ability to effectively implement the mitigation hierarchy.

Jamison Ervin, UNDP, drew attention to the importance of stepping back and analyzing why the mitigation hierarchy matters. Analyzing the forest sector, she presented a framework for understanding drivers of change, including market pressures, risks, societal values, and transparency technologies.

Tim Hirsch, Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), highlighted the potential opportunity for biodiversity data information sharing from the private sector and how the CBD encourages this in Decision XIII/31. He gave guidance on how to search for data on topics such as environmental impact assessment on the GBIF website.

Kat Bruce, Nature Metrics, talked about environmental DNA and explained that when animals are in contact with water, they shed cells that contain DNA traces. She explained that this DNA is detectable for approximately 48 hours and one sample can help identify hundreds of species. Bruce maintained that while E-DNA has its limitations like every survey method, this method is nonetheless well validated and brings significant cost reductions due to the ease of sampling.

Andrew Plumtre, BirdLife International, presented the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) criteria and thresholds and informed the audience that companies who sign up for the KBA consultative forum can access critical data for informed decision-making.

In discussions, panelists discussed how to address the disconnect between industry and government and the need to combine expertise and develop conflict resolution skills for conservation.