

**Summary of the IUCN
World Conservation Congress
3-10 September 2021**

In a world emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress successfully highlighted the dual existential crises the planet faces: climate change and biodiversity collapse. The Congress, the first major environmental event to be held in a hybrid (in-person and virtual) format, attracted around 6000 registered, onsite participants, in Marseille, France, and 3,500 online participants. It drew significant political attention, in advance of important meetings under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to be held in the coming months.

Highlights of the Congress included:

- the successful organization of a complex, busy meeting following precautionary health measures;
- important contributions from Indigenous Peoples, youth, local authorities, and the private sector, including during four Summits organized on the first day of the Congress;
- an impressive opening ceremony, including a speech by French President Emmanuel Macron making a strong commitment to conservation;
- the Marseille Manifesto, the main outcome document, which highlights that humanity has reached a tipping point, and the window of opportunity to respond to these interlinked climate and biodiversity emergencies is narrowing; and
- adoption of 28 resolutions on a range of conservation and sustainable development issues.

In addition to the decisions taken during the Congress, 109 resolutions and recommendations were adopted through electronic vote by the IUCN Membership in October 2020. Resolutions that attracted considerable discussion and/or attention included:

- on climate change, establishing a Climate Change Commission, as well as promoting integrated solutions on its linkages with biodiversity;
- on biodiversity, including contributions to the upcoming post-2020 global biodiversity framework (GBF);
- on rights, recognizing and supporting the rights and roles of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' (IPLCs) in conservation, as well as protecting environmental defenders;
- on the ocean, protecting deep-ocean ecosystems through a moratorium on seabed mining and taking acting for biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction;
- on health, promoting the One Health approach and addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss to protect human, animal, and environmental health, and prevent pandemics; and

- renunciation of the Doctrine of Discovery to rediscover care for Mother Earth.

Discussions included the lengthiest contact group in IUCN's history on synthetic biology in relation to nature conservation, which resulted in the relevant resolution but, according to many, failed to bridge differing views.

The Congress was structured around seven main themes: landscapes; freshwater; oceans; climate change; rights and governance; economic and financial systems; and knowledge, innovation, and technology. It took place in a hybrid format from 3-10 September 2021.

On the first day of the Congress, 3 September, four Summits were held: World Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nature; Global Youth Summit; IUCN Local Action Summit; and IUCN CEO Summit.

The IUCN Forum took place from 4-7 September, providing a hub of public debate covering the seven Congress themes and the outcomes of the One Planet Summit presented by the host country, France. Over the course of four days, the Forum saw the launch of the IUCN Academy, close to 200 e-posters and the Conservation Action Cafés, generating new ideas and partnerships. Exhibition stands and events and the Nature

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Generation Areas raised awareness and provided first-hand experience of nature to the general public.

The Members' Assembly (8-10 September), the IUCN's highest decision-making body, took decisions on pressing conservation and sustainable development issues. The Assembly also elected the organization's officials for the next four years, including the new IUCN president, Razan Al Mubarak, United Arab Emirates (UAE), the first woman from the Arab world to hold this role.

Despite the challenges, the IUCN Congress was deemed highly successful, and its deliberations are expected to significantly contribute to important multilateral environmental meetings in the coming months, and shape the future of sustainability on the planet.

A Brief History of the IUCN Conservation Congress

IUCN was established in 1948 as an independent scientific organization to "influence, encourage, and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature, and to ensure any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable." It was formerly called the World Conservation Union from its establishment to 1956 and from 1990-2008. IUCN has over 1,400 Members, including 91 States and 121 government agencies, 1,107 national NGOs and 106 international NGOs, 23 Indigenous Peoples' Organizations (IPOs), 52 affiliate members, and scientific and academic institutions and business associations in more than 160 countries. IUCN has six Commissions, constituting a network of about 16,000 volunteer experts on biodiversity conservation. The Commissions focus on: ecosystem management; education and communication; environmental, economic, and social policy; environmental law; species survival; and protected areas (PAs).

The IUCN Congress, held every four years, elects the IUCN's governing body, called the Council. The Council typically meets at least once a year to set the annual budget, decide major policy issues, and review implementation of the IUCN Programme. The IUCN Programme is a high-level, strategic document that mobilizes its Members, Commissions, and Secretariat. The current "Nature 2030 IUCN Programme" for the first time sets its ambition in a decadal timeframe (2021-2030). The Congress also elects the IUCN President, who chairs the Council and guides IUCN's work between Congresses. The IUCN's Members' Assembly takes place during the Congress.

The main functions of the Congress are to, *inter alia*: define the general policy of IUCN; make recommendations to governments and national and international organizations on matters related to IUCN's objectives; receive and consider the reports of the Director General, Treasurer, and Chairs of Commissions and Regional Committees; receive the auditor's report and approve the audited accounts; determine Member dues; consider and approve the IUCN Programme and financial plan for the intersessional period; determine the number of Commissions and their mandates; and elect the President, Treasurer, Regional Councillors, and Chairs of Commissions. The Congress also provides a forum for debate on how best to conserve nature and ensure that natural resources are used equitably and sustainably.

IUCN has been instrumental in developing conservation programmes for major ecosystems, including forests, wetlands, and coastal areas. Drawing on its global network of experts, IUCN identifies categories of threatened species, produces species action plans, and publishes Red Lists and Red Data Books, which detail the status and conservation needs of threatened and endangered species. IUCN also plays a critical



Emmanuel Macron, President of France, and Harrison Ford, Actor and Vice-Chair, Conservation International's Board of Directors

role in supporting PAs worldwide, publishing the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, convening the World Parks Congress, and disseminating guidelines on PA management issues.

1st IUCN Congress: This Congress evolved from the 19 General Assemblies that preceded it, the first of which saw the establishment of the Union. It was held in Montreal, Canada, from 12-23 October 1996, under the theme "Caring for the Earth."

2nd IUCN Congress: Held in Amman, Jordan, from 4-11 October 2000, this Congress convened some 2,000 delegates from 140 countries under the theme "Ecospace,"—a concept that conveys the message that transboundary management of ecosystems is vital for the environmental agenda.

3rd IUCN Congress: This Congress was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 17-25 November 2004 and convened under the theme "People and Nature – only one world." It comprised three principal elements: the Commissions at Work, which assessed the work of IUCN's six Commissions; the World Conservation Forum, which took stock of biodiversity conservation; and the Members' Business Assembly, which addressed governance, policy, and programmatic issues of the Union.

4th IUCN Congress: This Congress was held in Barcelona, Spain, from 5-14 October 2008 and brought together more than 6,600 participants under the theme "A diverse and sustainable world." This formed the basis for developing a compelling vision of the world's conservation potential until 2030 through 12 thematic journeys, including bio-cultural diversity and Indigenous Peoples, energy, forests, conserving biodiversity in productive landscapes, law and governance, and business.

The 5th IUCN Congress: This Congress was held in Jeju, Republic of Korea, from 6-15 September 2012 and hosted 10,000 participants and more than 600 events under the theme "Nature+." The Congress introduced the open knowledge-sharing Forum in addition to the decision-making Members' Assembly. It focused on five thematic areas: exploring nature-based solutions (NbS) to climate change, food security, and social and economic development; valuing and conserving nature; and effective and equitable governance of nature's use.

The 6th IUCN Congress: This Congress was held in Honolulu, Hawai'i, US, from 1-10 September 2016 and hosted more than 10,000 participants under the theme "Planet at the Crossroads." The Congress focused on the collective challenge of attaining the then recently agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It approved 106 resolutions and recommendations aimed at improving the governance, programmes, and policies



Benoît Payan, Mayor of Marseille

of the Union, and presented the Hawai'i Commitments: globally transformative and innovative conservation initiatives to meet the critical challenges and opportunities of our time, including the imperative to scale up action on biodiversity and the SDGs.

World Conservation Congress Report

Opening Ceremony

Asha Sumpth, journalist, opened the session on Friday, 3 September. This was followed by a series of artistic performances.

Zhang Xinsheng, IUCN President, noted urgent calls by scientists to safeguard nature's benefits or pay a terrible price. He recognized the value of gender equality and called for addressing the imbalance in how societies share access to nature.

Audrey Azoulay, Director-General, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), highlighted the need to protect 30% of the planet by 2030, and to reinforce the role of nature education in school curricula, and called for more women in science.

Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council, China, emphasized China's prioritization of sustainable development based on harmony between man and nature. He said promoting multilateralism, NbS, and a circular economy is essential, in the post-COVID-19 recovery period.

David Ige, Governor, State of Hawai'i, US, reiterated Hawai'i's commitment to implementing the 2030 marine conservation goals, stressing that the island state sits squarely on the forefront of climate change.

Benoît Payan, Mayor of Marseille, France, said while cities are at the forefront of protecting biodiversity, they have become "custodians of a garden that is dying." He said former French President Jacques Chirac's statement, "our house is on fire," is still relevant today and added that "our house is still on fire, and we continue to stoke the flames." He said the "hubris of our humanity" means the planet has reached its limit. He stressed building resilient cities, including through rethinking ecosystems and agriculture, and urged putting humanity ahead of profit.

In an interactive session, Emmanuel Macron, President of France, noted that the climate is inextricably linked to the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems, and that upcoming meeting agendas further cement this linkage.

Moderator Barbara Pompili, Minister of the Ecological Transition, France, said the Congress must place ecosystem conservation at the heart of a post-COVID-19 world. She emphasized that all countries must share the responsibility to develop a new post-2020 GBF.

Sebastião Salgado, Brazilian social documentary photographer and photojournalist, noted the world depends on the Amazon for its enormous concentration of biodiversity and important carbon sequestration function. Lamenting its poor state due to, among others, forests being turned into agricultural land, he called for: a planetary ban on Amazon wood products; electrification of Amazonian indigenous areas using renewable energy; and a fair-trade system based on non-predatory economic models.

Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal, European Commission, bemoaned the considerable loss of biodiversity globally, particularly in forest ecosystems. However, he expressed hope this can be turned around by: sharing scientific knowledge; acting in an integrated manner; and working at the local, national, and international levels to reestablish the lost balance among ecological, economic, and social interests.

Mahamadou Issoufou, former President of Niger, highlighted how humanity is living on borrowed time with the ecological debt to future generations increasing daily. He stated that despite not having significant responsibility for environmental degradation, the African Union takes action to address it, focusing especially on the Great Green Wall initiative.

Christine Lagarde, President, European Central Bank, said financial and economic stability is impossible without nature and ecosystem services. She highlighted that humanity's reliance on oxygen, water, and nourishing food is undervalued and frequently excluded in economic assessments. She noted biodiversity bolsters the resilience of societies and economies, and highlighted NbS to climate change.

Gilbert Hounbo, President, International Fund for Agricultural Development, called for reorienting climate funding and harmonizing the way data is measured. He suggested that, at a minimum, 30% of climate funding should be earmarked for investments in biodiversity.

Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister, Greece, highlighted various threats facing the Mediterranean Sea, including marine pollution and unsustainable fishing and transport. Outlining national priorities, he committed to reduce overfishing, declaring that, by 2030, 10% of territorial seas will be "no take" reserves.

Highlighting the European Green Deal, Charles Michel, President, European Council: called for banning single-use plastics; urged increasing the number of PAs; and highlighted the important role polar ice caps play in climate control.

President Macron stressed that the destinies of humanity, climate, and nature are inseparable, and noted the economic impact of nature is underestimated. Regarding the protection of living soils, Macron highlighted ongoing initiatives and focused on pesticides, noting that non-chemical substitutes and resistant plants can phase out pesticides, while maintaining competitiveness. On forests, he called for a clear strategy to fight against "imported deforestation," focusing on specific products that are currently produced in an unsustainable manner, including soybeans and palm oil.

With respect to the ocean, President Macron emphasized the fight against plastic, stressing the need to prevent plastic pollution, including via educational activities. He drew attention to the North and South Poles, highlighting the need for an international legal agenda on global public assets. On instruments and methodology, he called for an agenda that provides a common, clear, and transparent valuation of biodiversity, to put pressure on financiers to protect biodiversity. He concluded by stating the need to reinvent trade policies to be consistent with climate and biodiversity policies, expressing optimism that the continuous fight for a sustainable future will lead to success.

Harrison Ford, Actor and Vice-Chair, Conservation International's Board of Directors, urged people to get to work for justice, mother nature, Indigenous Peoples, marginalized communities, and all the planet's inhabitants. "By preserving just a fraction of the Earth's irreplaceable ecosystems," he said, "we can protect our wildlife, air, water, food, jobs, and climate." He added, "please remember, reinforcements are on the way. They're sitting in lecture halls now, venturing into the field for the very first time, leading marches, organizing communities, but they're not here yet. In a few years, they will be here, in rooms like this, and the world will be better for it."

The opening ceremony concluded with President Macron officially declaring the IUCN Congress open.

World Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nature

Felix Sarazua, Asociación SOTZ'IL, opened this Summit with a spiritual invocation.

Bruno Oberle, Director General, IUCN, expressed hope that humanity will incorporate indigenous knowledge to achieve the SDGs. Aroha Mead, Biological Heritage National Science Challenge, said this inaugural Summit marks a milestone in recognizing Indigenous Peoples' contributions and expertise. Bérangère Abba, Secretary of State for Biodiversity, France, highlighted the importance of fully involving Indigenous Peoples in promoting the 30-by-30 global biodiversity target.

Jenny Springer, IUCN, emphasized IUCN's support of Indigenous Peoples, including by facilitating exchanges and funding indigenous-led programmes. Kanyinke Sena, Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC), described the benefits of IUCN membership, encouraging African and Asian Indigenous Peoples' organizations to join. Kristen Walker-Painemilla, Chair, IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy (CEESP), highlighted a proposal to have a member from the Indigenous Peoples in an elected position on the IUCN Council, to be discussed in the Members' Assembly during the Congress.

José Francisco Calí Tzay, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, highlighted Indigenous Peoples' vulnerability, but also their resilience to climate change. Lucy Mulenkei, International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, drew attention to the Forum's recommendations for the post-2020 GBF. Walter Quertehuari Dariquebe, Amarakaeri Communal Reserve, described efforts that conserved more than 98% of the Reserve's Amazonian forest area.

Andrea Carmen, Executive Director, International Indian Treaty Council, shared solutions, such as seed trading, revitalizing trade routes, and traditional irrigation methods. Aissatou Dicko, IPACC, presented a Burkina Faso study on

intergenerational knowledge, allowing pastoralists to adapt to climate change.

Ramiro Batzin, Asociación SOTZ'IL, presented the Global Indigenous Agenda, with five themes, including promoting indigenous solutions to the climate crisis, and influencing post-COVID-19 agendas to improve indigenous security and livelihoods. Noelani Lee, Executive Director, Ka Honua Momona, led a call to action, *inter alia*, for: States to recognize indigenous leadership; the private sector to provide funding; and academia to value traditional knowledge.

Stewart Maginnis, IUCN, reiterated IUCN's strong support. Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, CEO and Chairperson, Global Environment Facility (GEF), committed to expanding indigenous participation in the eighth GEF replenishment (GEF-8). Stig Traavik, Norway, highlighted support for programmes protecting indigenous rights and livelihoods. Kathryn Isom-Clause, US, outlined her government's support for tribal-led initiatives.

Closing, José Gregorio Díaz Mirabal, Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin (COICA), lamented the loss of hope and made a plea for promises to be fulfilled. Solomon Kaho-ohalahala, Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (KUA), Hawai'i, US, offered an invocation.

Global Youth Summit

The IUCN Global Youth Summit (GYS) was moderated by Camila Perez Gabilondo, IUCN, and Hannah Moosa, Forum Deputy Manager, Switzerland.

Diana Garlytska, CoalitionWILD, emphasized the need to effectively include youth in negotiations and in the blueprint for action on targets, such as legal personhood, green jobs, and biodiversity response.

Bruno Oberle urged transforming society with the passion of youth and the wisdom of indigenous communities. Barbara Pompili emphasized the urgent need for decarbonized energy and for changing societal attitudes to green energy.

Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, Assistant Director-General, UNESCO, highlighted the need for primary education on climate change. Brighton Kaoma, Director, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network Youth, underscored generational inequity and lamented a lack of political will. Alisi Rabukawaqa, IUCN, called for increased economic activities for youth in the Global South. Ron Hallman, President and CEO, Parks Canada, encouraged connecting youth to nature and creating life-long commitments to conservation.

During the panel "Anchoring the GYS Outcome: Looking to the Future," Jayathma Wickramanayake, UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, highlighted the need for dedicated funding to ensure participation of youth and impacted communities in environmental decision-making bodies. Sarah Hanson, Youth4Nature, stated that involving people from different backgrounds will allow their diverse perspectives to shape varied solutions to the environmental problems society faces. Johanna Lissinger Peitz, Ambassador for Stockholm+50, Sweden, showcased efforts to strengthen youth participation in national delegations, working groups, and informal consultations.

The virtual panel, "Rallying Youth Voices for Biodiversity," provided updates on the GYS Outcome Statement. Manal Bidar, Morocco, reiterated the need for capacity building and knowledge sharing so the "youth can become the leaders the future needs." Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands urged young people to be "revolutionary" and for leaders to include youth on the main stage to ensure tangible change.

The 1 Million Youth Action Challenge initiative was presented and three of the initiative's Ambassadors addressed the Summit. Clive Donnley Omondi, Kenya, noted the SDGs provide a blueprint for a sustainable future and said youth have a collective



Clockwise from left: **Francisco Ramiro Batzin Chojoj**, Asociación SOTZ'IL; **Stig Traavik**, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation; **Anita Tzec**, IUCN; **Carlos Manuel Rodríguez**, CEO and Chairperson, GEF; and **Stewart Maginnis**, IUCN

duty to implement them. Juan Sebastián Avella Dallos, Colombia, said the initiative is a movement of empowerment and action. Insaf Adelmoula, Tunisia, stressed the need to move from words to action to build a sustainable future.

The Summit closed with music and art presentations from AY Young and Alex Basaraba, respectively.

IUCN Local Action Summit

IUCN President Zhang Xinsheng highlighted the organization's work on integrating nature with urban environments and stressed that subnational governments are essential to the success of the conservation agenda.

Emmanuelle Wargon, Minister for Housing, France, highlighted regional-level synergies of action, the territorial preservation of nature, and local ecological transition contracts.

Nicolas Furet, Secretary General, Citeo, shared public and private entity experiences aimed at designing lighter, recyclable eco-packaging.

Bruno Oberle called for transformational change involving infrastructure, services, investment, and behavior. He highlighted the role of all stakeholders in achieving this change.

In a panel discussion on financing the green recovery, panelists called for: a nature-positive economic system; sustainable investment in nature and ecosystem services; mechanisms to deliver investment to subnational authorities; and inclusion of local communities.

Regarding the deployment of NbS, panelists emphasized that these solutions are key to addressing climate change and biodiversity loss, and underpin post-COVID-19 recovery.

They further highlighted local authorities as essential actors for protecting biodiversity, and for linking scientists, citizens, and politicians.

On environmental rights, panelists discussed: the need for the UN Human Rights Council to recognize the right to a healthy environment; the 'Nature for All' initiative; and the role of local authorities and communities in ensuring environmental human rights.

Regarding advancing ecological urbanism, panelists highlighted: tensions between more green spaces and vibrant, functional neighborhoods; the Urban Nature Lab and the Urban Nature Index; and Canada's National Urban Parks programme.

Local Action Summit participants focused on action pledges. Mayors and regional leaders presented actions within their cities, highlighting efforts to: boost biodiversity and native species; rehabilitate the green areas of Tunis; "green" Genoa's port; and address the plastics scourge in Île-de-France's coast. They also called for a new urban plan, and cooperation in advancing climate change mitigation and protecting nature.

In closing remarks, Bérangère Abba highlighted the role of local authorities in protecting the environment and called on all stakeholders to work together.

IUCN CEO Summit

The CEO Summit brought together business leaders from around the world to discuss ideas and initiatives to address the urgent and inextricably linked biodiversity and climate change crises.

Robyn Seetal, IkTaar Sustainability, opened the session underscoring the private sector as an essential part of the solution.

Bruno Oberle stressed that the climate is changing, biodiversity is disappearing, and both are crucial for humanity's survival. He emphasized that businesses "can achieve the best result with limited resources."

Barbara Pompili highlighted the private sector's role, calling for increasing green private investment and stressing companies'



Bruno Oberle, Director General, IUCN

ability to influence their partners and suppliers towards a sustainable pathway.

Three panel discussions ensued. The first panel, moderated by Alan Jope, CEO, Unilever, focused on **safeguarding nature across value chains** and comprised: Florence Jeantet, World Business Council for Sustainable Development; Marie-Claire Daveu, Kering; Madgi Batato, Executive Vice President, Nestlé; Adrien Geiger, L'Occitane Group; Rodolphe Saade, Chairman and CEO, CMA CGM; and Solange Bankiaky-Badji, President, Rights and Resources Group. Participants stressed: their respective environmental initiatives and commitments; the economic importance of protecting nature; and the need for a collective approach to change the current paradigm.

The second panel, moderated by Jennifer Morris, CEO, The Nature Conservancy, focused on **creating new business models and opportunities**. The panel comprised: Jean-Bernard Lévy, Chairman and CEO, Electricité de France; Jean-Pierre Clamadieu, Engie; Harry Breckelmanns, Shell; Helle Kristoffersen, Senior Vice President, Strategy & Business Intelligence, TotalEnergies; and Antoine Frerot, Chairman and CEO, Veolia. Participants stressed the need for innovation and collaboration to strengthen existing initiatives and create new ones. They showcased plans for the climate transition, and discussed relevant objectives and metrics.

The third panel, moderated by Peter Bakker, President and CEO, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, discussed **ways to enable a nature-positive future, moving from commitment to action**. The panel comprised: Alexandre Ricard, Chairman and CEO, Pernot Ricard; Antoine Arnault, LVMH; Nancy Tembo, Minister of Forestry and Natural Resources, Malawi; Kathy Abusow, President and CEO, Sustainable Forestry Initiative; Geoffroy Roux de Bezieux, Chairman, MEDEF; and Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, CEO and Chairperson, GEF. Participants discussed their initiatives, including regenerative practices and environmental education activities; exchanged ideas on establishing a carbon price to provide a clear signal for change; and addressed the political, economic, and governance aspects of the environmental crisis.

IUCN Forum

The Forum included over 600 sessions on the economic, social, scientific, and technical aspects of issues covering the thematic areas of the Congress, ranging from thematic sessions and high-level dialogues to training and capacity-building sessions, as well as exhibitions and social events. The following section summarizes the Forum's opening and closing sessions, the seven thematic plenaries introducing and concluding the themes for discussions, and selected sessions.

Forum Opening

The Forum opening on Saturday, 4 September, set the overall agenda for discussions across the seven Congress themes. Jayathma Wickramanayake moderated, organizing the discussion around opportunities and ways to achieve them.

Bruno Oberle noted the pandemic has revealed our interrelationship with nature, which is “our biggest infrastructure.” Stressing that climate change is visible to everyone while biodiversity “is fading away more silently,” he emphasized humanity’s existence is at stake if urgent action is not taken. He further underscored that COVID-19 recovery packages must not harm nature and climate, and a reasonable percentage should be invested in rebuilding natural capital.

Barbara Pompili underscored there will be no development unless it relates to ecological transition. She called for decarbonization, stressing this transition is not about restrictions, but about drivers and opportunities. She expanded on specific actions governments must take, such as retrofitting buildings, changing public procurement, and environmental impact advertising.

Frans Timmermans noted humanity has an incredible opportunity for a fundamental reset, cautioning that if the transition is not successful, future generations “will be fighting wars over water and food.” He said markets cannot solve everything, calling for reinventing regulation.

Ana María Hernández Salgar, Chair, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), called for institutional bridges among the medical, veterinary, and conservation communities to reduce the risk of future pandemics. She reiterated the linkages among biodiversity, climate change, and health, calling for mainstreaming biodiversity considerations in all sectors.

Christine Lagarde emphasized the need to eliminate fossil fuel subsidies and set a carbon price. She highlighted three drivers that prompt central banks to incorporate climate into monetary policy: prioritization of science; activism, especially by youth; and accountability mechanisms.

Nisreen Elsaïm, UN Secretary-General’s Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change, underscored knowledge dissemination as the first step in developing the solidarity necessary to address the environmental crisis. She highlighted the need for bold action by all regions, especially major polluters.

Yannick Glemarec, Executive Director, Green Climate Fund (GCF), agreed greening the economic recovery is essential. He emphasized that developing countries need access to green finance, noting that up to USD 4 trillion should be shifted away from unsustainable activities annually.



Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, CEO and Chairperson, GEF, and **José Gregorio Díaz Mirabal**, COICA

Thematic Opening Plenaries

Rights and Governance: This session was moderated by Valérie Dekimpe, broadcast journalist. It featured a multicultural panel, which exchanged views on the interconnection among rights, equitable natural resource governance, and nature conservation.

Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, GEF, stressed the need to: fully recognize Indigenous Peoples as political actors; invest heavily in good governance at the national level; and address institutional failures. José Gregorio Díaz Mirabal, COICA, highlighted the motion to protect 80% of the Amazon by 2025, encouraging respect for Indigenous Peoples’ political and territorial rights. Focusing on the role of women as custodians of biodiversity, Cécile Ndjebet, African Women’s Network for Community Management of Forests, emphasized the importance of gender responsiveness and inclusiveness, and tenure security.

David Boyd, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, underscored that human rights must be placed at the heart of all conservation actions, emphasizing that the existing economic model “wages war on nature.”

Melinda Janki, Justice Institute Guyana, described efforts to fight against offshore oil drilling in Guyana, stressing that rights must be legally protected for them to be properly respected. Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Founder, Tebtebba Foundation, emphasized the efficiency of indigenous governance and said Indigenous Peoples’ rights are key for a sustainable future.

Climate Change: IUCN Deputy Director General Grethel Aguilar moderated this session. Barbara Pompili said “nature is a climate ally, not a passive receptacle of policies.”

Discussing the upcoming 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) to the UNFCCC, Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary, UNFCCC, called for mobilizing biodiversity-neutral or -positive investment for climate action. Laurent Fabius, UNFCCC COP 21 President, said COP 26 must implement and strengthen, not reinvent, the Paris Agreement. Nigel Topping, UN High Level Climate Action Champion, UK, urged turning ambition into action that is informed by science.

On national efforts, Nancy Tembo, Minister of Forestry and Natural Resources, Malawi, outlined initiatives to ensure communities lead on forest regeneration. Patricia Danzi, Director General, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, emphasized engagement with the finance sector to conserve nature.



Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary, UNFCCC



Loïc Fauchon, President, World Water Council

Mina Setra, Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago, called for combining nature and community-based solutions. Harry Brekelmans, Royal Dutch Shell, presented the company's four-pillar corporate strategy of: financial viability; respecting nature; powering lives; and net-zero emissions by 2050.

Economic and Financial Systems: Marianne Haahr, Executive Director, Green Digital Finance Alliance, moderated. Bruno Oberle emphasized enormous opportunities, potentially arising from transforming the industrial sector, which could equal a Marshall Plan times 100.

Lamenting a biosphere stressed beyond imagination, Partha Dasgupta, University of Cambridge, urged companies to disclose risks throughout supply chains to enable consumers to make informed decisions.

Two panel discussions followed. The first focused on **nature-based economic recovery**. It comprised Elliott Harris, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs; Jennifer Morris, CEO, The Nature Conservancy; Magali Anderson, Holcim; Antoine Sire, BNP Paribas; and Yannick Glemarec, GCF. Discussions included: matching nature-positive private investments with public funding; debt-for-nature swaps; improved ecosystem services accounting; and nature-based lending criteria.

The second panel tackled **triggers for action** and included the following speakers: Baomiaotse Vahinala Raharinirina, Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development, Madagascar; Kevin Urama, African Development Institute; Preston Hardison, Tebtebba Foundation; Raffaello Cervigni, World Bank; and Robyn Seetal, IkTaar Sustainability. Discussions centered on stress-testing balance sheets, integrating nature into lending criteria, finance-for-nature, and involving youth and Indigenous Peoples in decision making.

Freshwater: This session was moderated by Paul Logan, marine biologist. Opening the session, Loïc Fauchon, President, World Water Council, observed that water is at the center of NbS, although it is often not prioritized as such.

Bérangère Abba highlighted national efforts to restore and purify water resources, including master plans for water development and management.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary, CBD, highlighted threats to freshwater, noting that management of water systems has focused on water provision for domestic use without ensuring the integrity of water functions.

Martha Rojas Urrego, Secretary-General, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, described the role of wetlands as the most effective carbon sink, critical for water purification and recharge, and for supporting other development objectives.

Panel discussions additionally highlighted: water as a "hidden habitat," with its own unique fauna and flora; the need to rethink water use and adopt emerging technologies; the GCF's strategy to conserve and reuse water through innovative financing mechanisms; actions to integrate water management and ecosystem protection; support from the Netherlands for water basin management; and the role of youth in protecting freshwater biodiversity.

Ocean: Jessica Nabongo, *The Catch Me If You Can*, opened the session. Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, highlighted the ocean's role in human security and encouraged all to support the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Multiple speakers presented initiatives, including France's zero plastic leakage to the sea by 2030, governance on the high seas, and Antarctic Ocean conservation.

During the science-centric panel, speakers presented new tools, including the Global Fishing Index and Marine Manager, which will assess fish stocks globally and track fishing activities via satellite, respectively. Panelists emphasized that better, more accessible data is needed to move fisheries in a sustainable direction. They added that local knowledge from all practitioners must be included in these tools and assessments, as well as more innovative financing to promote sustainable fisheries management, for example, through grants, blended finance mechanisms, and increased risk disclosure.

Landscapes: Anna Jones, journalist, moderated the session. Harvey Locke, Chair, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Beyond the Aichi Targets Task Force, called for linking action under the climate and biodiversity agendas, and urged all UN conventions to adopt a top-level goal of achieving an equitable, nature-positive, carbon-neutral world. Cristelle Pratt, Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States, called for: rebalancing economic growth strategies; adopting a holistic approach to food systems; and ensuring implementation of environmental commitments.

Josefa Tauli, Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), said biological and cultural diversity are too often viewed in opposition, though in reality they enhance each other, as IPLCs have been storing and safeguarding biodiversity for millennia. Christiane Laibach, KfW Development Bank, called for more private sector financing to address ecosystem degradation, and ensuring this financing reaches the developing world. Achim Steiner, Administrator, UN Development Programme, said conservation and human growth can be achieved, and that land use is a good indicator of an economy's ability to bring people and nature together.

Knowledge, Innovation, and Technology: Penelope Smart, IUCN, opened the session. Jean-Michel Blanquer, Minister of National Education, France, stressed the importance of knowledge for continued advances in conservation. Smart said

standards must be applicable over time and relatable between places and standards.

Craig Hilton-Taylor, IUCN, and Emily Nicholson, Deakin University, presented the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, respectively.

Andy Plumptre, BirdLife International, explained that the Key Biodiversity Area designation addresses the need for a unifying framework to investigate sites of importance to biodiversity. Lauren Weatherdon, UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), spoke on the Protected Planet initiative, which is an aggregation of local and national databases on terrestrial and marine protected areas (MPAs). Edward Ellis, Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool, provided an overview of the Tool and its application for generating global biodiversity information.

Shaikha Salem Al Dhaheri, Secretary General, Environment Agency, Abu Dhabi, UAE, said there are many opportunities and challenges for using IUCN data and knowledge tools. Olivier Langrand, Executive Director, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, noted the importance of using available data and tools to ensure impactful funding. Stuart Butchart, BirdLife International, said indicators are essential for monitoring progress in implementation. Seynabou Ba, Founder and CEO, ESG Africa, spoke on the use of biodiversity and conservation knowledge products in the private sector.

Selected Forum Sessions

Update to the IUCN Red List: Bruno Oberle said the newest assessment brings hope, citing evidence showing that some tuna populations are slowly recovering.

Penelope Smart said nature is in trouble, emphasizing the need for good intelligence and information based on sound science to address the problem, which, she added, is the purpose of the IUCN Red List. Beth Polidoro, Arizona State University, said tuna recovery data shows that sustainable fishing is possible.

Questions from participants addressed: criteria used for assessments; an increase in the sharks and rays listed as threatened; and the listing of over 4,000 new species, including trees and fungi.

Spirituality and Nature Dialogue: Responsibility, Inspiration, and Behavior Change: This session was moderated by Grethel Aguilar. Cardinal Peter Turkson, First Prefect, Vatican, said humanity has gone wrong in trying to control and dominate the Earth, rather than conserving and protecting it to ensure it can continue to support human life. Olga Letykai-Csonka, ethnologist, said all nature is animated and alive, and stressed the need to live spiritually in harmony with nature. Noting the majority of the world's population is spiritual or religious, Thomas Schirrmacher, Secretary General and CEO, World Evangelical Alliance, said societal change needs spiritual and religious backing, promoting the understanding that protecting nature is part of faith.

Matthieu Ricard, Founder, Karuna-Shechen, said everything is interconnected, and humanity must work towards increased social justice and sustainable harmony with nature. Fazlun Khalid,

Founder, Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences, lamented that humans have turned the Earth from a source to be nurtured into a resource to be exploited. He said society must delink from consumerism, away from a growth agenda that raids the Earth of its natural resources. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Parmarth Niketan, India, stated society needs to recognize oneness instead of separation, and shift from "I to We, from illness to wellness." Multiple speakers pointed to the golden rule of treating one's neighbor as oneself as essential to conservation.

Cardinal Turkson closed the session, reflecting on the need to shift from a dominion to compassion mindset. He reminded the audience that it is essential to respect the dignity of nature and work together to take care of our common home.

Genetic Frontiers for Conservation: This session, facilitated by Julie Shapiro, Keystone Policy Center, focused on synthetic biology. Shapiro explained that in 2016, IUCN Members requested an assessment on applications of synthetic biology, relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Many members of the IUCN Task Force on Synthetic Biology and Biodiversity Conservation participated in this session.

Kent Redford, Archipelago Consulting, introduced the context of the Genetic Frontiers for Conservation assessment. He said this issue deeply affects two distinct groups of people: those who cannot imagine that more technology can help nature, as nature is already severely impacted by technology; and those who find hope in potential new tools. Lydia Slobodian, Georgetown University, presented highlights from the assessment's governance chapter, noting challenges associated with defining synthetic biology as either process- or product-based, a lack of clarity on national jurisdictions, and accessibility of synthetic biology.

Elizabeth Bennett, Wildlife Conservation Society, focused on applications intended for conservation benefit, stressing risks and benefits. On threat mitigation, she highlighted applications of gene drive technology to tackle invasive alien species and the potential to produce genetically identical species, combating wildlife trade. Regarding species' adaptation, she emphasized increasing genetic resilience and tackling disease.



Todd Kuiken, North Carolina State University

Hilde Eggermont, Strategic Coordinator, Belgian Biodiversity Platform, addressed applications not directly intended for conservation benefits. Noting both positive and negative potential consequences, she highlighted: applications for pest control; environmental engineering, including bioremediation and biomining; and changing frontiers in synthetic biology.

Dan Tompkins, Predator Free 2050 Limited, highlighted significant knowledge gaps and the need for increased awareness of potential consequences to better inform future discussions. Regarding unintended consequences, he highlighted potential impacts on non-target species, global equity, and Indigenous Peoples' self-determination. Ann Kingiri, African Centre for Technology Studies, focused on agricultural applications and the potential benefits, including disease resistance and eradication of invasive species.

Aroha Mead focused on the process of building trust with Indigenous Peoples before discussing technological benefit sharing. Aileen Lee, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, urged conservationists not to sit on the sidelines by opting out of benefit sharing, but to take a proactive approach on synthetic biology. Todd Kuiken, Genetic Engineering and Society Center, North Carolina State University, highlighted recent CBD activities related to synthetic biology, including the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group on Synthetic Biology.

Thomas Brooks, IUCN, reflected on how the conservation community should engage with industry or agriculture, where conservation is not always a priority. He stressed that the discussion on synthetic biology does not take place against a backdrop of a pristine environment, citing examples where traditional conservation has no documented effective responses.

Ensuing discussions focused on: weighing potential risks and benefits; past lessons learned from technological development; prioritizing traditional conservation techniques before applying novel technologies; and whether a governance mechanism could potentially stop synthetic biology applications.

Unlocking a Nature-based Recovery: How to Rebuild After the Pandemic: Keith Tuffley, Citi, moderated the session. Bruno Oberle called for investments that do not worsen the biodiversity crisis and that earmark at least 10% to benefit nature directly. Rémy Rioux, French Development Agency, said training in NbS can enable financial actors to scale up nature-positive financial resources.

Two panels followed. The first discussed **how to unlock nature-positive development**. It comprised Mari Pangestu, World Bank; Odile Renaud-Basso, President, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; Yannick Glemarec, GCF; Izabella Teixeira, UNEP International Resource Panel; and Achim Steiner, UNDP. Discussions included: an integrated, whole-of-the-economy approach; and measuring and managing risks to nature through the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures. Tuffley concluded that while there is no capital shortage, capital must shift to nature-positive development that generates co-benefits for biodiversity and livelihoods.

The second panel focused on **strategies for recovery from the pandemic**, drawing from various economic sectors. It



Bruno Oberle, Director General, IUCN

included: Baomiovotse Vahinala Raharinirina, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Madagascar; Najib Balala, Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and Wildlife, Kenya; Han Jeoung-ae, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea; Victoria Tauli-Corpuz; and Patrick Odier, Bank Lombard Odier & Co. Discussions focused on: collaborating with local communities to preserve nature and prioritize the creation of value chains that do not worsen the biodiversity crisis; the need to create jobs, invest in conservation and tourism, and address these sectors' financing needs in the wake of the pandemic; the Republic of Korea's Green New Deal and differentiated strategies to recover from COVID-19; putting human rights at the center of conservation; and how the finance sector can influence consumers to make investments in NbS.

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: A Recipe for Success: This four-hour session focused on the post-2020 GBF, which is being negotiated under the CBD. Taking place just after the conclusion of the third meeting of the CBD Open-Ended Working Group on the post-2020 GBF, the highly interactive session aimed to ensure the draft framework is "fit-for-purpose" to tackle the biodiversity crisis and achieve necessary transformational change with concrete implementation steps. Participants listened to keynote speeches and gathered in 11 breakout groups to discuss how to strengthen language on proposed elements of the GBF.

Moderator Jane Smart opened the session, outlining its format and stressing the session's outputs will inform the Marseille Manifesto, the main outcome document of the Congress. She focused on the meetings of the CBD Open-Ended Working Group, outlining challenging topics, including resource mobilization.

Bruno Oberle emphasized that "we have a unique and final opportunity to fix the problem." Noting the complexity of biodiversity-related issues, he underscored that negotiators must feel the political pressure for a successful result. He emphasized the need to reduce the pressure on natural resources and reinvest in nature. He said efforts will be fruitless unless they are accompanied by effective resource mobilization. Oberle noted the need to clarify: who will provide the funds; whether public or private money will be utilized and what the balance between the two would be; and what kind of funding channels will be used.



Martha Rojas Urrego, Secretary-General, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Carlos Manuel Rodriguez said while planning for the GBF, analyzing the Aichi Targets must continue, especially regarding what did not work. He emphasized that our major institutional failure is one of the main reasons for our collective inability to address the biodiversity crisis. He highlighted that, contrary to other sectors like education or health, too many agencies manage natural resources, and thus called for an institutional landscape approach. He concluded by saying, “if we are smart and understand the political and economic entry points, I am optimistic that we will be nature-positive by 2030 and on track to being carbon-neutral and pollution-free.”

Marco Lambertini, Director General, World Wide Fund for Nature International, underlined “this is our last chance and there is no room for compromise,” urging science-based action. He stressed the need to understand the consequences of the planetary emergency, not only on the natural world, but also on our lives, economy, society, and health. He explained that one-third of the global workforce depends on healthy ecosystems, noting advancements in understanding the importance of connecting the environment and development agendas. Lambertini highlighted that the required transition does not only entail risks, but also opportunities; while avoiding collapse, humanity has an opportunity to promote sustainable and equitable growth. He emphasized that “we must focus on what is necessary, not what is politically negotiable,” and hold leaders responsible to step up ambition at the necessary level. He urged maintaining the 30-by-30 goal of protecting 30% of the planet by 2030; agreeing on the implementation mechanism; and focusing on 2030, rather than “kicking commitments further down the road.”

Martha Rojas Urrego presented the role of biodiversity-related conventions in the GBF. She stressed that “an unprecedented crisis requires unprecedented efforts to turn the tide.” While noting that cooperation can be challenging as each convention has its own universe, she emphasized “we are all working towards the same objective.” She suggested: aligning relevant conventions’ strategic plans; developing collaborative work programmes and strengthening existing synergies; and using common sets of indicators to measure progress. She concluded stressing that the GBF should be a framework for all, including

biodiversity-related conventions, while avoiding duplication of efforts.

Participants discussed: ways to formalize collaboration on the programmes of work of biodiversity-related conventions; more effective ways to engage a wider public audience; and China’s positions and initiatives as the host country of the forthcoming CBD COP15. They then gathered in 11 breakout groups and, following deliberations, reported back on key messages.

On synergies among the multilateral environmental agreements, proposals included explicitly recognizing global and regional agreements as key implementation mechanisms for the GBF.

Regarding 2050 goals and 2030 milestones, recommendations included: on goals, zero extinction by 2050 across all taxonomic groups and securing integrity of all ecosystems by 2050; and on milestones, net gain in area connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems by at least 30%.

With respect to the relationship between elements of the GBF and national-level implementation, the group proposed: including reference to disaggregating the global targets at the national level and making them context-specific; including incentives to define and implement national targets; aligning reporting mechanisms and complementarity with other processes; and concrete measures to ensure the implementation of global targets at the national level.

On tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming, suggestions included: clarifying the meaning of biodiversity “values,” how they are measured and how to capture non-monetary values; emphasizing sectoral approaches, including a roadmap, clear trajectory and criteria, sectoral regulation, and binding targets; and considering how to measure dependency and impacts of business on biodiversity.

Regarding the vision and mission statement, the group proposed including: as a vision, that by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored, and wisely used; and, as a mission, to take urgent action across society to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, and ensure the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of the use of genetic resources.

With respect to the views and roles of stakeholders, including IPLCs and civil society, suggestions related to: including more ambitious wording on free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC); adopting a human rights-based approach; and adding language on the inclusion of civic spaces as an enabling condition.

On PAs, participants proposed: designating at least 30% of the Earth by 2030 as PAs, while recognizing that as much as 50% may be required; and including freshwater resources.

The group suggested developing a monitoring framework and adopting it alongside goals and targets.

Regarding action targets for 2030, participants suggested including biodiversity-positive spatial explicit plans targeting ecosystems connectivity and key biodiversity areas, as well as recognizing protection mechanisms for IPLCs.

On reducing threats to biodiversity, the group called for inclusivity when discussing species by using “fauna, flora, fungi, and other organisms,” and including in the preamble, reasons



Patricia Zurita, CEO, BirdLife International

why species should be integrated into the GBF. Increasing ambition with explicit reference to zero extinction was also suggested.

On meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing, recommendations included: improving reference to cultural and spiritual drivers and reasons for nature conservation; referencing equity, diversity, and inclusion more explicitly; and clearly referencing NbS.

Mechtild Rössler, Director, World Heritage Centre, UNESCO, reflected on the breakout group reports, focusing on mainstreaming tools and solutions, and learning from past failures. She said the framework needs clear leadership and should prioritize implementation. She added that her office will be aligning this work with the upcoming CBD COP in China, and that the key outcomes from this session should be included in the Marseille Manifesto.

During concluding questions and comments, many participants focused on the potential for targets to be overloaded, which some said could weaken them, and suggested a separate set of indicators to measure success and focus on implementation. Several members expressed concern about the waning time to achieve the targets. Smart suggested members contribute outcomes from the breakout groups and key language to the Marseille Manifesto. She further suggested focusing on the linkages to biodiversity-related conventions and the UNFCCC.

The Transition to Sustainable Agriculture: For People, Food, and Nature: This session, co-hosted by IUCN and the Food and Land Use Coalition, discussed sustainable food production for a growing population, and the importance of including all stakeholders to achieve social, economic, and environmental goals.

Alberto Arroyo Schnell, IUCN, opened the session. Setting the context, Moderator Seth Cook, Food and Land Use Coalition, said modern agricultural systems have produced grave impacts like toxicity, pollution, and soil degradation, which are as serious as climate change yet not receiving adequate attention.

Janez Potočnik, UNEP International Resource Panel, highlighted humanity's unsustainable relationship with nature resulting from the failure to recognize that humanity is embedded in, not external to, nature. He lamented the "charming mass suicide orchestrated by the invisible hand of markets," and said

we must stop confusing consumers by asking them to behave responsibly yet having them pay more to do so. He emphasized that wellbeing and economic development depend on respecting planetary boundaries and treating nature responsibly.

Panelists then shared examples of agro-ecological models that work with, not against, nature.

Patricia Zurita, CEO, BirdLife International, described initiatives that support Latin American meat producers practicing in 800-year-old cultural farming methods that maintain grasslands, and African farmers growing high-quality cocoa without worsening deforestation.

Giulia Di Tommaso, President and CEO, CropLife International, discussed digital precision agriculture, and projects harnessing science and sharing data, to promote soil health and reduce impacts of plant pests.

Dinesh Balam, Watershed Support Services and Activities Network, demonstrated how returning to traditional crops like millet have: developed local economies in Orissa, India; empowered farmers' and women's collectives; and improved nutrition, while using less inputs.

Sue Pritchard, Director, Food, Farming and Countryside Commission, discussed agro-ecological approaches that eliminate synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, adapt diets, and tackle waste, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions without compromising food security.

Panelists highlighted the need for all stakeholders, particularly young farmers, to support the transition to sustainable agriculture. They discussed: transparent, science-based approaches; using data and co-creating knowledge with farmers; emphasizing soil health and regenerative practices; moving from a silo toward a systems-thinking approach; reconsidering economic models that keep millions in poverty while overusing resources; and promoting behavioral change to increase demand for sustainably produced food. They urged ending perverse subsidies that enable destructive agriculture and promote the cheapening of food and impoverishment of farmers, calling instead for green standards enforced through international trade deals.

Zurita said innovation does not require more machines and chemicals, but can mean returning to nature and promoting pollinators and healthier soils.

High Ambition for Protected Areas: Turning Pledges into Action: Moderator Carlos Manuel Rodriguez explained that the session reflects on the challenges for implementing the GBF and how it can be implemented to achieve the 30-by-30 target.

Bérangère Abba said more cross-sectoral information sharing is needed to ensure cooperation and policy coherence, saying policy implementation must be inclusive at all levels.

Andrea Meza Murillo, Minister for Environment and Energy, Costa Rica, outlined plans and challenges related to increasing Costa Rica's MPAs from 2% to 30% this year. She said terrestrial PAs have catalyzed the green economy and MPAs will do the same for the blue economy.

Ivete Maibaze, Minister of Land and Environment, Mozambique, highlighted that 25% of the country is protected and outlined plans to reach 30%. She presented activities

undertaken in the Gorongosa National Park, including the establishment of community areas.

Kazuaki Hoshino, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, said using other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) will be key to achieve the 30-by-30 target. He noted the Satoyama Initiative's potential role in identifying OECMs.

Aminath Shauna, Minister of Environment, Climate Change, and Technology, Maldives, said NbS, access to finance and technology, and the sustainable use of marine resources will be critical for the Maldives to achieve the 30% target.

On the role of IUCN in supporting the 30-by-30 target, Bruno Oberle outlined two main functions: providing data to implement conservation; and transforming data into standards. He noted this will ensure PAs are in the right place, connected, effectively managed, and equitably governed.

Ensuuing discussions focused on: how France is working with mega biodiverse regions; integrated finance for NbS; community-based conservation; challenges experienced by the Maldives in maintaining sustainable tuna fisheries due to limited resources; and Japan's vision to improve PA management effectiveness.

Environmental Defenders: How Do We Support and Mobilize Our Community to Respond More Effectively?

This session focused on environmental defenders and the threats they face, including violence, criminalization, intimidation, and killing. The meeting opened with a traditional blessing from Manari Ushigua, Sápara spiritual leader, joined by indigenous leaders from COICA and a Hawaiian song in memory of the 331 environmental defenders killed in 2020.

Moderator Kristen Walker-Painemilla invited participants to collectively consider how to eliminate criminalization of environmental defenders and seek solutions to this urgent problem.

Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, noted attacks on environmental defenders are underreported and often not investigated or prosecuted. She emphasized that IUCN can help promote protection networks, stressing the need to develop a relevant action plan. She highlighted data collection and awareness raising to systematically protect environmental defenders, and the provision of a robust and inclusive framework.

José Gregorio Díaz Mirabal called for everyone to remember those who have been killed for defending the environment and

called for justice, for the provisions of the Minamata Convention on Mercury to be upheld, and for the International Court of Justice to recognize crimes against nature. Expressing concern over the recent killings of environmental defenders in Kenya, Winnie Sengwer, Defenders Coalition, Kenya, spoke of her organization's work in protecting the wellbeing and building the capacity of local indigenous community members.

Grethel Aguilar questioned progress made toward protecting the rights of environmental defenders, noting more defenders were killed in 2020 than in previous years. She called for all projects to include rights of indigenous communities and FPIC. Joan Carling, Indigenous Peoples Rights International, drew attention to the Indigenous Peoples that are jailed for traditional practices on their lands. Peter Larsen, University of Geneva, said environmental professionals beyond the frontlines also feel unsafe, and that lines of communication between civil society and governments are being eroded. Ernesto Herrera, Executive Director, Reforestamos México, discussed progress made under the Escazú Agreement to provide increased access to information to defend indigenous communities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Discussions focused on: granting indigenous territories the same level of protection as national parks; facilitating surveillance and funding; and the role of conservation communities in providing safe spaces for meeting and networking. Participants further tabled proposals on strengthening IUCN's engagement, including: establishing an in-house grievance mechanism; providing resources to develop relevant programmes; building capacities to engage with defenders; strengthening rights-based conservation; ensuring that IUCN fully adopts a rights-based approach to conservation; and working collectively with the Human Rights Commission and the Special Rapporteurs.

Advancing the Outcomes of the World Summit on Indigenous Peoples and Nature: This session was moderated by Francisco Ramiro Batzin, Asociación SOTZ'IL, and Anita Tzec, IUCN, and opened with an invocation. Jenny Springer, IUCN, introduced the session, explaining the aim is to advance the outcome of the World Summit on Indigenous Peoples and Nature. Batzin provided a summary of the Summit, highlighting the need to consider Indigenous Peoples' rights and needs in all conservation discussions.

Panelists called for: protecting Indigenous Peoples' rights when considering the designation of PAs, and protecting their intellectual properties and traditional knowledge; ensuring access to vaccines and food security of Indigenous Peoples; including indigenous voices in policy and decision making; adopting the Global Indigenous Agenda; trust-building efforts with Indigenous Peoples, noting their rights have been violated for years; additional human and financial resources to support implementation of the Agenda; and support for the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples and the concept of indigenous guardianship.

Most panelists urged implementation of the Summit's outcome, stressing that governments should translate it into



Grethel Aguilar, IUCN Deputy Director General

rules and regulations, so it does not become “paper to be filed away.” Noelani Lee highlighted the motion to renounce the Doctrine of Discovery, which, developed primarily in the 15th century, established a spiritual, political, and legal justification for colonization and seizure of land, and was used for centuries to expropriate indigenous lands and facilitate their transfer to colonizing or dominating nations. Sara Bó Ché, Guatemala, said indigenous groups should not be criminalized for fighting for their rights. Andrea Carmen, International Indian Treaty Council, called for halting implementation or creation of protected and conservation areas until land tenure issues of Indigenous Peoples are resolved. Francisco Souza, Managing Director, FSC Indigenous Foundation, called for a global pact to have a long-term vision for Indigenous Peoples and their relationship with nature, as well as a global indigenous committee responsible for the monitoring and follow-up of the Indigenous Agenda.

Green Finance: Dorothee Herr, IUCN, moderated. Chris Buss, IUCN, noted mobilizing public finance is crucial to upscaling private investments in nature conservation, highlighting the importance of quality assurance mechanisms like the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions (NbS Standard).

Vincent Gradt, CEO, Mirova Natural Capital, discussed Mirova’s two-pronged approach to securing additional financing for conservation. He explained the first step reduces project risk to increase mainstream investor confidence, and the second nurtures more innovative funding by supporting small demonstration projects through instruments like the Nature+ Accelerator Fund.

Jurgis Sapijanskas, GEF, shared two complementary workstreams. First, the GEF works with governments to support niche green finance, creating enabling conditions to increase private funding. Second, the GEF helps redirect harmful financial flows to nature-positive outcomes by, *inter alia*, urging companies, investors, and financial institutions to measure, assess, and disclose their dependencies and impacts on nature under the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures.

Ivo Mulder, UNEP, emphasized that scaling up nature finance requires: increasing blended finance, which reduces risk of unproven and small-scale conservation projects, encouraging private sector funding; developing standardized nature-positive

loan contracts that commercial banks can offer clients; and standardizing metrics to unlock institutional investor support.

Margaret Kim, Gold Standard, underscored the need for standards for high environmental integrity, and assessment of impacts through inventory reporting and impact quantification. She highlighted the NbS Standard as a means of ensuring credible progress toward multiple SDGs.

Participants then discussed, among others: gaps in resource mobilization and monitoring capacities in developing countries; the need for robust monitoring, reporting, and verification mechanisms; the potential of payments for ecosystem services; the need for policy coherence and tackling harmful subsidies; and blended finance models for the private sector to commit to NbS in supply chains.

Restoring the Fabric of Nature and Humanity – Peace, Conflict, and Environment in a Post-COVID-19 World:

Moderator Oli Brown, Royal Institute of International Affairs, noted the session addresses ways in which conservation can, in conflict areas, foster peace.

Tom Lalampaa, Northern Rangelands Trust, Kenya, said sources of conflict in the Northern Rangelands include ownership of illegal firearms by civilians, diminishing grazing lands, and human-wildlife conflict. Alex Dehgan, CEO, Conservation X Labs, stated investing in conservation is investing in stability, food security, water, and livelihoods.

Prince Mostapha Zaher of Afghanistan, lamenting the civil strife plaguing his country. He emphasized “the environment does not understand politics, but it does understand habitat, and we have to absolutely protect it.” Prince Jaime de Bourbon de Parme, Climate Envoy for the Netherlands, drew attention to the clear link between climate and conflict, saying climate change could further destabilize conflict areas.

Saleem Ali, University of Delaware, urged using the natural environment and conservation as vehicles to build peace and resolve conflict. Julia Marton-Lefevre, Bioversity International and the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, stressed it is crucial to build bridges between different communities of practice, such as the spheres of environment and peacebuilding. She added that social and conservation scientists were less willing to collaborate in the past but are now finding avenues to do so. Marton-Lefevre further recalled the important role education plays in conservation. Lalampaa reiterated, “no conservation organization can run away from peace and security issues,” and underscored wildland restoration can simultaneously allow wildlife to thrive and promote peace.

Concluding the session, panelists responded to questions on, *inter alia*: engaging youth throughout the conservation diplomacy and planning processes; youth education on conservation; and the need for the term “peace park” to truly refer to a meaningful project that works to solve a tangible conflict and boosts conservation.

Nature-based Solutions Partnerships: This session was moderated by Radhika Murti, IUCN. Stewart Maginnis, IUCN, highlighted the Union’s work on NbS, including the NbS Standard launched in 2020. He said partnerships, including those



From L-R: Moderator **Dorothee Herr**, IUCN; **Chris Buss**, IUCN; **Vincent Gradt**, CEO, Mirova Natural Capital; and **Jurgis Sapijanskas**, GEF

with IPLCs, academia, and the finance sector, are imperative to ensure NbS deliver on their potential. Guy Ryder, Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO), via video message, stressed there can be no productive economy or decent work without a healthy planet, noting jobs depend on preserving ecosystems.

Director-General Rémy Rioux, via video message, highlighted the French Development Agency's commitment to doubling biodiversity financing to EUR 1 billion by 2025. Ania Grobicki, GCF, said NbS are complex because they embody multiple values and services, and underlined the importance of partnerships in properly valuing and utilizing these assets.

Kazuaki Hoshino, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, outlined national efforts on ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction and highlighted the publication of a practitioner's handbook to promote this solution. Gilles Kleitz, French Development Agency, said his organization has decided to make the NbS Standard central to their mainstreaming activities and use it as the main instrument to "green" different sectors.

Jennifer Tauli Corpuz, Nia Tero, highlighted concerns that the momentum behind NbS will put undue pressure on indigenous land, leading to land grabs, and intensify industrial activities. To address these concerns, she proposed, *inter alia*: clarifying the concept of NbS; and developing standards for equitable sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits with Indigenous Peoples.

Nadine McCormick, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, noted that business, as one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss, must be part of the solution. She added that NbS offer a way to minimize negative impacts on nature and articulate mutual dependencies. She called for breaking down the complexity of NbS and linking it to business and societal needs.

10 Proposals for a Sustainable Planet: Youth Voices for a New Deal for Nature and People: The session was moderated by Christian Schwarzer, GYBN. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, CBD Secretariat, stressed that 35% of the global population is under the age of 20, urging them "to clean up the mess previous generations have made."

Pravali Vangeti, UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme, focused on activities engaging youth to preserve nature and culture in tandem. On youth engagement, she highlighted inclusivity and community empowerment.

Calling for meaningful participation of youth, Alicia May Donnellan Barraclough, UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Youth Network, urged moving away from silos and enhancing landscape capacity to provide sustainable livelihoods.

Alexandre Capelli, LVMH, outlined the corporation's strategy on biodiversity, climate, transparency, and circular economy. Noting the company's transition from sourcing certified materials towards regenerative agriculture, he provided examples of sustainability-related initiatives and partnerships.

Meriem Bouamrane, UNESCO MAB Secretariat, highlighted global interdependencies and collective challenges, underscoring that young people are necessary for the required transformation. She stressed the need to reconcile conservation and sustainable



Melina Sakiyama, Global Youth Biodiversity Network

use, adding that "PAs are important, but the 30-by-30 goal is meaningless if we continue to destroy the remaining 70%."

Melina Sakiyama, GYBN, underscored that while a lot of responsibility is put on younger generations as hope for the future, they are operating without real power and on an ecological debt. She summarized the 10 youth proposals for a sustainable planet, namely: maintaining the integrity of support systems; addressing the root causes of the environmental crisis; regulating and monitoring business activities; mobilizing resources and equitably distributing them; addressing values and behavior; promoting transformative education; furthering inclusion and empowerment; protecting rights and justice; reconciling with nature; and building alliances and dialogue.

Press Conference on the World Summit of Indigenous Peoples: The press conference on the outcomes of the IUCN World Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nature took place on Saturday, 4 September. It focused on the adoption of the Global Indigenous Agenda for the Governance of Indigenous Lands, Territories, Waters, Coastal Seas, and Natural Resources. It featured a panel, comprising IPO representatives, and underscored the importance of recognizing and including consideration of the Indigenous Agenda when developing policy and implementing conservation measures. Panelists discussed: IPLCs' adaptive management capacity; ensuring participation of indigenous women and youth; and recognizing IPLCs' right to FPIC.

Thematic Closing Plenaries

Knowledge, Innovation, and Technology: Co-Moderator Ana Rodrigues opened the session, which featured two panels.

The first panel, on **the application of leading evaluation techniques to conservation practice**, featured Penny Langhammer, Re:wild; Samantha Cheng, American Museum of Natural History; David Gill, Duke University; and Bernardo Strassburg, International Institute for Sustainability. Discussion focused on the use of counterfactual techniques—assessing what would have happened without intervention—to monitor the impact of conservation interventions. Panelists found that conservation is highly positive, but more analysis will be needed in the future.

Gustavo Fonseca, GEF, moderated the second panel, on **conservation knowledge tools and programmes for incentivizing conservation impact**. Panelists were: Philip McGowan, Newcastle University; Elizabeth Bennett, Wildlife Conservation Society; Marc Hockings, University of Queensland; and Bibiana Sucre, Provita. Panelists presented tools developed by IUCN to foster and incentivize further conservation impacts. Tools highlighted included the Species Threat Abatement and Restoration Metric, the Green Status of Species, the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, and Reverse the Red.

Rights and Governance: Phoebe Weston, The Guardian, moderated the session, which focused on the rights of vulnerable groups in conservation.

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, IPACC, said just talking about Indigenous Peoples is not meaningful involvement. She emphasized the need for scientists to respect indigenous and local knowledge. Jose Francisco Cali Tzay opposed the persecution of environmental defenders. Sarah Hanson, Indigenous Youth, Ontario, highlighted the need to recognize Indigenous Peoples' inherent right of belonging to their land.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, CBD, underscored that environmental degradation infringes on the rights of marginalized groups. She highlighted inclusion of IPLCs' views in the GBF, including through indicators in the monitoring framework. Silje Haugland, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, underlined tenure rights, valuing indigenous and local knowledge, and meaningful participation of IPLCs in project implementation.

Discussions highlighted barriers to Indigenous Peoples and youth involvement in the IUCN Congress, specifically registration fees. Participants also noted that conservation should not exclude occupants of the territories and cautioned against land-grabbing projects.

Climate Change: Nigel Topping moderated. Ivete Maibaze Mozambique, called for cooperation, alignment, and integrated responses to achieve social, economic, climate, and environmental goals.

Jochen Flasbarth, State Secretary at the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, said recent extreme floods in Germany "will happen everywhere if we don't act appropriately." He stressed NbS are necessary to achieve climate neutrality targets.

Rukka Sombolinggi, Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara, Indonesia, urged ending the criminalization of Indigenous Peoples and called for adopting nature- and people-based solutions.

Nisreen Elsaïm called for solidarity with the Global South, saying solutions must consider livelihoods and justice. He stressed that, otherwise, the fight for nature and climate will be futile.

Rohitash Dhawan, President and CEO, International Council on Mining and Metals, called for clarity around carbon offset rules and enhanced performance standards to ensure nature-positive climate solutions.



Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee

Teresa Ribera, Minister for the Ecological Transition, Spain, urged embedding science-based biodiversity targets into climate and economic policies.

Andrea Ledward, UK, shared hopes for UNFCCC COP 26, including: all stakeholders working for just change; mobilizing finance for nature; and embedding nature into decision making. Panelists expressed hope COP 26 will achieve real, ambitious action.

Economic and Financial Systems: Moderator Mark Halle, International Institute for Sustainable Development, emphasized that conservation cannot be achieved in an economic system that rewards behavior that destroys nature.

Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UNEP, stressed the need for systemic shifts that converse with the real economy, and understanding that half of global gross domestic product depends on nature.

Ambroise Fayolle, European Investment Bank, said "we are moving in the right direction, but not fast enough." He shared public banks' initiatives on climate change and biodiversity, urging breaking silos.

During discussions, Carlos Manuel Rodriguez highlighted the need to address harmful subsidies, mobilize financial resources, and address institutional failures. Handaine Mohamed, IPACC, underscored that, although IPLCs manage 80% of biodiversity, they are not recognized. Andre Hoffman, MAVA Foundation, emphasized that liberal economics has decided that "short-term profit is more important than humanity's long-term survival."

Akanksha Khatri, World Economic Forum, said 75% of businesses think biodiversity risk will affect their stability, stressing that "we need to talk about opportunities, alongside risk." Philippe Zaouati, MIROVA Bank, underscored that biodiversity-related investment must be scaled up as quickly as possible. Jimena Ojeda Ramirez, youth representative, emphasized the interconnectedness of these issues, urging bolder steps.

Bruno Oberle outlined next steps, including the need for the conservation and business communities to learn each other's language, and changing financing and investment pathways for nature-based recovery.



Akanksha Khatri, World Economic Forum

Landscapes: Harvey Locke moderated. Nikhil Sekhran, World Wildlife Fund, highlighted a fundamental market failure, in which the benefits of nature conservation are long term, but costs are borne immediately by only a few. He said needs must be addressed at the landscape level, particularly the needs of nature custodians.

Bérangère Abba outlined France's efforts, including EUR 650 million set aside for artificial soil recycling and the 30-by-30 target. Minister Baomiavotse Vahinala Raharinirina said Madagascar will triple the number of PAs and highlighted reforms like establishing a department for green diplomacy. Aidan Davy, International Council on Mining and Metals, said the mining industry should engage progressive policies that respect legally designated PAs and establish implementation and progress assessment systems.

Leroy Little Bear, Kainai First Nation, Canada, highlighted the idea of relationship and the need to consider how to relate to everything, including nature. Jochen Renger, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), stressed the landscape approach is apt for a nature-based recovery, and that effective landscape management and restoration is very powerful because it is based on a holistic approach.

Freshwater: James Dalton, IUCN, moderated a panel comprising: Kat Bruce, NatureMetrics; Andre De Freitas, Renova Foundation; Kazuaki Hoshino; Adjany Costa, Advisor to the President, Angola; Callist Tindimugaya, Ministry of Water and Environment, Uganda; Richard Sneider, IUCN; Christian Frutiger, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; Abdoulaye Sene, 9th World Water Forum, Senegal; Hillary Masundire, University of Botswana; and Flemming Moller Mortensen, Minister for Development and Nordic Cooperation, Denmark.

Discussions focused on: the need for water data and stories to capture the imagination of policymakers and the public; the importance of educating stakeholders to achieve behavioral change; the need to focus on the multiple benefits of wetlands; and adopting an integrated, catchment-based approach to freshwater. They noted that achieving SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation for all), elusive before COVID-19, has been further compromised.

Richard Jenkins, IUCN, summarized, highlighting: a call for the GBF to put freshwater on equal footing with land and the ocean; and the need to value, retain, and restore geographical connectivity among freshwater ecosystems.

Ocean: Jessica Nabongo, *The Catch Me If You Can*, moderated. HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco opened the session, highlighting the essential role the ocean plays in human health and livelihoods and the blue economy's potential to restore ocean health, transition to clean energy, and create jobs.

Heremoana Maamaatuaiahutapu, Minister of Culture and the Environment, French Polynesia, told traditional stories on the ocean's interconnectedness to the land. He said society needs to prioritize traditional conservation methods and join the fight against destructive industrial fishing practices.

Jean-Marie Paugam, World Trade Organization, discussed his organization's activities to address plastic pollution and the circular economy.

On collective action, panelists discussed engagement with local coastal communities, waste reduction within the tourism sector, and increased law enforcement. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, highlighted youth education and innovation.

The panel on the Marseille Ocean Outcomes and the role of multilateral environmental agreements in restoring ocean health, included: Serge Segura, Oceans Ambassador, France; Joanna Post, UNFCCC; David Cooper, CBD; Martha Rojas Urrego, Ramsar Convention; and Fred Segor, State Department for Wildlife, Kenya. They highlighted the importance of wetlands to ocean health, the interconnectedness of the ocean to climate mitigation and adaptation, and the ocean's link to local livelihoods.

Peter Thomson, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, closed by reminding everyone that humans belong to the ocean and that society must fight for ocean conservation from a place of intergenerational justice.

Forum Closing

IUCN Deputy Director General SungAh Lee opened the closing session of the Forum. Bérangère Abba lauded the Forum for sending a clear message on the need for urgent action. Speakers then provided summaries of the seven Forum themes.

On the Ocean, Minna Epps, IUCN, said key outcomes included: supporting the call for achieving the 30-by-30 target; and adopting a legally binding instrument on marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Regarding Landscapes, Jonathan Davies, IUCN, presented key messages, reporting discussions on behavior change and consumption habits. Baomiavotse Vahinala Raharinirina said Madagascar is applying landscape approaches to implement a green economy.

On Climate Change, Sandeep Sengupta, IUCN, highlighted that the climate and biodiversity crises should be addressed in an integrated manner.

Regarding Economic and Financial Systems, Juha Siikamäki, IUCN, summarized calls to embed biodiversity into economic

policymaking, remove harmful subsidies, and shift capital towards nature-positive investments.

With respect to Rights and Governance, Jenny Springer highlighted the Global Indigenous Agenda and summarized priorities, including mobilizing all tools, particularly with respect to knowledge, environmental law, institutional strengthening, transboundary cooperation, and technical and financial resources.

David Boyd, UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment, outlined three key actions: recognizing the right to live in a safe, clean, and healthy environment; recognizing and prioritizing legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples' titles and rights; and protecting environmental defenders.

With respect to Freshwater, James Dalton said conservation of freshwater systems should be a development priority. Alex Dehgan called for a new generation of conservation entrepreneurs to bring solutions for freshwater and the planet.

On Knowledge, Innovation, and Technology, Binbin Li, Duke Kunshan University, China, noted standard metrics and datasets for biodiversity already exist, but maintaining their coverage and quality requires investment and innovation.

Closing the session, Bruno Oberle highlighted that the Forum will publish a manifesto organized around core messages on climate, biodiversity, and pandemic recovery and the economy. He closed the Forum at 7:09pm.

Members' Assembly

The Members' Assembly, IUCN's highest decision-making body, organizes its plenary sessions as Sittings. During the Congress, nine Sittings were held. The first was convened on Saturday, 4 September. IUCN President Zhang Xinsheng, via video, opened the Assembly and Members approved the meeting's agenda and established the Congress Committees, allowing the contact groups on the motions to begin their work. Since President Zhang was unable to attend the Congress due to COVID-19-related restrictions, the first Sitting was chaired by Vice President Ali Kaka.

The Members' Assembly convened in an additional eight Sittings from Wednesday 8 to Friday 10 September. On Wednesday, during the second Sitting, IUCN President Zhang Xinsheng lauded the successful start of the first hybrid IUCN Congress. He highlighted the Assembly's role, which includes shaping the post-2020 global agenda for nature conservation. Zhang added that although the COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis, it is also an opportunity to reshape the relationship between humans and nature. Vice President Kaka chaired the second Sitting.

Antonio Benjamin, Chair, World Commission on Environmental Law, IUCN, opened the third Sitting by announcing the new IUCN song, "Prayer for Ganesh and Baobab," performed, via video, by Japanese musician Iruka.

On Thursday, Vice President Malik Amin Aslam Khan chaired the fourth Sitting and Vice President John Robinson chaired the fifth and sixth Sittings.

On Friday, Bureau Member Mamadou Diallo and Vice President Kaka chaired the seventh and eighth Sittings, respectively.

On Friday evening, during the ninth and final Sitting, the closing ceremony was held.

The following sections summarize the proceedings, organized by agenda item.



Jenny Gruenberger, IUCN Council

Appointment of the Credentials Committee

On Saturday, 4 September, IUCN Vice President Ali Kaka introduced the agenda item, including proposed terms of reference (GR-2021-1.1/1-Annex 1-Rev) and membership (GR-2021-1.1/1-Annex 7), which were approved, following a vote. Jenny Gruenberger, Chair of the Credentials Committee, explained voting and speaking rights.

Adoption of the Agenda

On Saturday, Ali Kaka presented the revised agenda (CGR-2021-1.3/1-Rev). He noted a proposed motion to amend the Rules of Procedure, which would refer all motions to an online vote within one month following the Congress, to be discussed during the third Sitting of the Assembly. Following a vote, the Assembly approved the agenda.

Appointment of Congress Committees

On Saturday, Ali Kaka drew attention to the terms of reference for each of the Committees (GR-2021-1.1/1-Annexes 2-6) and presented the proposed membership for the Resolutions, Governance, and Finance and Audit Committees. Following a vote, the Assembly approved the terms of reference and membership of the Committees.

Presentation by the Resolutions Committee about the Schedule of Contact Groups for all Motions

On Saturday, on behalf of the Council's Motions Working Group, Jon Paul Rodríguez, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, presented the process on motions. He reminded Members that 19 motions have not been completed through electronic voting and will be discussed in the contact groups together with the governance motions and other urgent motions tabled. He noted that 19 new and urgent motions had been tabled and that the Resolutions Committee would decide on their admissibility. Following a vote, the Assembly approved the procedure and code of conduct for the contact groups as contained in document CGR-2021-1.5.

PAKISTAN requested suspending the election of the President to conduct the second presidential candidate debate that had been cancelled. He further recalled Resolution 19.6 of 1994, stating that the President should be from a different economic region than that of the Director General.

Nilüfer Oral, Elections Officer, noted that: the second debate was conditioned on all three candidates being physically present

in Marseille; and the 1994 motion applies to nominations by the Council, not by Members, adding that nothing in the statutes contains such a restriction. She concluded no irregularity with the nominations exists. PAKISTAN requested discussing the motions in the Resolutions and Steering Committees. Ali Kaka requested Pakistan to submit the motions to the Resolutions Committee, in the right format, which can decide to bring it to the Steering Committee.

Presentation of the “Marseille Outcomes” Process

Following the positive experience with the Hawai‘i Commitments, the Council’s Congress Preparatory Committee developed a process called the Marseille Manifesto to deliver a strong, focused outcome statement for this Congress.

Jennifer Mohamed-Katerere, IUCN Council, presented the main components of the outcome statement. She said it will be a communiqué from the Congress, containing strategic key messages that are globally relevant and convey an ambition for action. Mohamed-Katerere outlined the preparatory and engagement processes, and presented the thematic content of the document, which would be structured around post-COVID-19 nature-based recovery, the post-2020 agenda and the biodiversity crisis, and the climate emergency.

Council Motion Granting Postponement of the Obligation to Pay the 2020 Dues

Ali Kaka presented the relevant document (GR-2021-1.7/1), noting that its adoption requires a two-thirds majority in each house. Following a vote, the motion was approved.

Director General’s Report

On Wednesday, 8 September, during the , Bruno Oberle presented his report, which is structured around: IUCN activities from 2017-2020; key challenges and ways to address them; and future actions.

On past activities, he highlighted overall success in programme delivery, noting Life on Land and Climate Change were the two strongest pillars, followed by Life Below Water.

With respect to challenges, Oberle distinguished financial, organizational, and political obstacles. He noted the Union’s growing portfolio of projects and activities is accompanied by increased cost and risk, and expressed concern about declining financial reserves. He highlighted the need for IUCN to reposition itself in an increasingly complex policy environment.

Overcoming challenges, Oberle underscored, requires: managing risk and increasing efficiency; increasing the Union’s membership and the geographical spread of partners; strengthening Member engagement; identifying new business models; and addressing organizational challenges.

With respect to future activities, Oberle emphasized reaching out to a broad group of stakeholders outside the conservation realm. He highlighted strategic initiatives, including the Contributions for Nature platform, a technological tool that allows the transformation of project results into geographical descriptions of impacts. He added the need to influence the ongoing negotiations on the post-2020 GBF, which, he said, currently lack the necessary ambition. Oberle further discussed



Russell Galt, Head, IUCN Urban Alliance

nature-based recovery, highlighting NbS, and agriculture and land health, noting agriculture is a complex sector, but necessary for the protection of biodiversity. He focused on data and financing for nature initiatives, and highlighted the IUCN Academy, which aims to harness the Union’s expertise and build capacities.

Oberle then responded to interventions from CAMEROON, ECUADOR, BANGLADESH, and IUCN Vice-President John Robinson, US. He noted IUCN is addressing the challenge of underinvestment in agriculture in the Global South, yet overly subsidized in the Global North; clarified IUCN conducts due diligence before receiving financial support from industry; agreed IUCN needs to leverage knowledge within the Commissions; and said IUCN will prepare more detailed guidelines to implement the various Programme workstreams.

Discussion of Issues of Strategic Importance for the Union and Reports from the Summits

Report on the Results of the IUCN One Nature, One Future GYS: On Wednesday, Camila Perez, IUCN Commission on Education and Communication, and Hannah Moosa, Forum Deputy Manager, presented key messages saying the priority issues for youth include rights of nature, green jobs, nature education, and addressing the digital divide. They summarized the youth’s call to action for: intergenerational understanding that youth are well informed and able to make genuine contributions; the opportunity to co-design programmatic work; and ensuring fair and equitable inclusion and representation of different stakeholders, including youth. They expressed optimism that: the IUCN Youth Strategy, to be completed in 2021, will build on the outcome documents from the GYS; the IUCN Youth Advisory Committee will support implementation of the new youth strategy; and the new heritage, culture, and youth team will ensure youth engagement moves forward purposefully.

Report on the Results of the IUCN Summit for Cities, Local Authorities, and Subnational Governments: On Wednesday, Russell Galt, Head, IUCN Urban Alliance, presented key messages from four technical roundtables. On financing the green recovery, he said subnational governments need streamlined access to international development finance. With respect to deploying NbS, he highlighted the opportunity to transition from a world of artificial scarcity to one of natural abundance. On realizing environmental rights, he stressed the



Gerard Bos, IUCN

fundamental right to a clean, safe, wildlife-rich, and sustainable environment, including in cities. Regarding advancing ecological urbanism, he highlighted that the survival of the natural world is now contingent on the sustainability of the unnatural world, including cities, and highlighted the role of subnational governments.

Report on the Results of the World Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nature: On Thursday, two regional Indigenous Peoples' representatives presented results from the World Summit of Indigenous Peoples and Nature. They highlighted: the historic new categorization of Members within IUCN; and that through regional consultations, an agenda now exists for governance, participation, and investment opportunities.

Report on the Results of the CEO Summit: On Thursday, Gerard Bos, IUCN, focused on key messages, outcomes, and future actions. He stressed the Summit's objective to "ensure business and the private sector are not only on the menu, but also at the table." He highlighted key themes: safeguarding nature across value chains; creating new business models and opportunities; and enabling a nature-positive future. Bos highlighted commitments to action announced by CEOs during the Summit and stressed IUCN has convening power for radical collaborations to spark innovation for new business models. He noted that Marseille shall be remembered as the IUCN Congress where businesses were welcomed as solution providers.

The Influences of Biodiversity Loss and Climate Change on Public Health: On Wednesday, Stewart Magginis, IUCN, opened this strategic discussion, stating biodiversity, climate change, and health are interconnected and urged accelerating implementation of holistic solutions.

Josaia Bainimarama, Prime Minister, Fiji, via video message, said human health is tied to the planet's health, drawing attention to the impact extreme weather events can have on public health systems. He urged supporting NbS to address climate change and biodiversity loss.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO), stated that as the world recovers and rebuilds from the COVID-19 pandemic, "the scale of our responses must match the scale of the problems we face." He noted the establishment, with IUCN, of an Expert Working Group on Biodiversity, Climate Change, One Health, and NbS.

A panel discussion, moderated by Maria Neira, WHO, followed. Neira said reducing vulnerabilities lies in stopping ecosystem destruction, as ecosystems provide the services that ensure basic human health.

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, IPACC, explained that local knowledge on stars and the environment provide climate and disease outbreak predictions, and guide nomadic pastoralism. William Karesh, EcoHealth Alliance, said scientists and public health workers must work together to identify ways to prevent future pandemics.

Julia Miranda Londoño, IUCN, underscored the importance of PAs for human health, and highlighted the work of the IUCN WCPA COVID-19 Protected Areas Task Force. Hans-Otto Pörtner, Co-Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II, said climate and biodiversity are intertwined and solutions for one may harm or benefit the other.

Participants noted the need to: adopt One Health policies; ensure PAs are interconnected, well maintained, and available for humans; and ensure carbon-rich biodiversity to stabilize the climate.

Ibrahim urged moving from talk to action. Karesh called for creative thinking on parks and PAs, to create practical partnerships, including with unlikely partners. Londoño highlighted efforts to promote green businesses to ensure local communities benefit from activities in PAs.

Pörtner proposed IUCN partner with the IPCC and IPBES to define requirements for reaching nature conservation goals.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema called for an integrated and biodiversity-inclusive One Health approach that addresses common drivers of biodiversity loss, climate change, and increased pandemic risk, while supporting better health and wellbeing for all.

Structuring Economies in a Post-COVID-19 World: On Thursday, Angela Andrade Perez, Conservation International, opened this strategic discussion, stating the world faces a basic challenge: how to generate economic opportunities in this emergency, but in a careful, thoughtful way.

Oh Il Young, IUCN, presented initiatives being implemented by the Republic of Korea for a nature-based recovery, including a Green New Deal, a 2050 Carbon Neutrality Declaration, and a green taxonomy and public disclosure requirements for private finance.

Hédi Chébili, Ministry of Local Affairs and the Environment, Tunisia, highlighted pandemic-related challenges, but also stressed positive developments, including regeneration of flora and fauna in certain ecosystems, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Andrea Athanas, African Wildlife Foundation, recalled the 1961 Arusha Manifesto, which set the agenda for the survival of wildlife, stressing that the world has collectively failed, degrading the planet towards existential crisis. She urged "investing in nature as if it matters," making productive systems work for both people and nature, and putting people at the center of all activities.



Swetha Stotra, Global Youth Biodiversity Network

Sonia Peña Moreno, IUCN, highlighted the IUCN Nature-based Recovery Initiative, which aims to ensure the post-COVID-19 recovery is nature-positive. On challenges, she highlighted a lack of political will and knowledge about how investing in nature can support recovery, and limited awareness on what constitutes investing in nature.

During the discussion, Members highlighted: the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities and vulnerabilities; unequal distribution of vaccines is delaying economic recovery in vulnerable countries; collaboration between the CBD and other international organizations is needed to develop performance indicators; IUCN should help develop tools to support actors in designing and implementing effective NbS; natural areas should be devolved to their original owners, IPLCs; and the One Health approach is relevant to both the public and private sectors.

Building a Culture of Conservation Through New Alliances and Strengthening the Agency of Key Actors: On Thursday, Moderator Sean Southey, President, Zamia Media, opened this strategic discussion, stressing the need to build a conservation culture through alliances and partnerships.

Artists Kevin Chang and Kalama Cabigon sang “Hawai‘i 78,” highlighting the Hawaiian motto “Ua mau ke ea o ka ‘āina, i ka pono,” roughly translated as “the life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.”

Southey said culture is “like the seed in a forest; it is local, not top down, and through it, society can be a guardian of nature.” Margaret Otieno, Wildlife Clubs of Kenya, through childhood stories of nature, demonstrated the importance of youth education on nature to foster leadership in conservation. Jessica Sweidan, Synchronicity Earth, considered that diversity creates potential and maximizes resilience.

Xiye Bastida, Re-Earth Initiative, highlighted that the movement to increase PAs does not help IPLCs if it effectively takes land away from them. She added that the key to successful conservation efforts is diversity.

Jon Paul Rodríguez, IUCN, moderated the ensuing panel discussion. Helen Crowley, Kering, reiterated the principles of empathy, transparency, and collaboration. Valérie Verdier, CEO, French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development,

stressed the importance of increased collaboration with Francophones.

Francisco Ramiro Batzin commented, via video, that society should live by “I am you and you are me” values, and respect FPIC and IPLCs.

Swetha Stotra Bhashyam, GYBN, lamented that “youth are tired of seeing the same problems, and the same broken promises,” stressing that GYBN prioritizes justice through rights-based approaches, space for alliances, and increased empathy for all living beings.

On recommendations to realize a global culture of conservation and care, panelists highlighted: relating nature to one’s own life, focusing on local efforts, harnessing technology to combine western and indigenous knowledge, and rebuilding trust through honesty.

Kristen Walker-Painemilla noted the first step in reimagining conservation is to listen and challenged everyone to co-create the future we need. Delegates voted “consumption” as the most important issue needing reimagining.

Developing a Comprehensive Gender Approach at IUCN:

On Friday, Jenny Gruenberger presented this strategic discussion, which included results of a survey conducted by the Council Gender Task Force on improvement of gender-responsive approaches and its recommendations. She said the Task Force recommends, *inter alia*, IUCN setting up a Gender Strategy and Action Plan for gender mainstreaming, and revising the number or rotating the majority of regional Councillors. Following a vote, the Members’ Assembly approved the IUCN gender approach.

Report of the IUCN President and Council

On Wednesday, IUCN President Zhang Xinsheng delivered the report of the President and Council, noting the previous intersessional period, shaped by the global pandemic, has underlined the importance of a sound relationship between humanity and nature.

He highlighted, *inter alia*: the adoption of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS and the IUCN Nature 2030 Programme; a motion requesting the development of a long-term financial strategy; strengthening performance requirements for Councillors; and the appointment of a new Director General. He also outlined recommendations for the next Council, including developing a 20-year strategy, vision, and plan for the Union. Zhang further reflected on governance, leadership, and expectations in the context of reviewing past work and examining prospects for the future.

On Friday, during the seventh Sitting, President Zhang responded to questions on his report to the Assembly. He said IUCN focuses on the Global South, because while the South hosts the majority of key biodiversity areas, it remains fragile, with most countries lacking significant financial resources and capacity. He highlighted the need for, *inter alia*: increased engagement with the South in IUCN programme delivery; and improved diversity and full inclusion of experts and staff from the South in IUCN.

Report from the Election Officer on the Results of All Elections

On Wednesday, Nilüfer Oral, Election Officer, reported on all non-presidential election results, and on the regional representatives to the Council and the Commissions' Chairs.

Members elected Angela Andrade, Colombia (Commission on Ecosystem Management); Sean Southey, Canada/South Africa (Commission on Education and Communication); Kristen Walker-Painemilla, US (Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy); Jon Paul Rodríguez, Venezuela (Species Survival Commission); Christina Voigt, Germany (World Commission on Environmental Law); and Madhu Rao, India/UK (WCPA). Nihal Senanayake Welikala, Sri Lanka/UK, was elected as Treasurer.

Deputy Election Officer Rahmat Mohamad announced the election of Razan Al Mubarak, UAE, as new IUCN President.

IUCN Commissions' Reports, Including Awards, and Reports from All Recognized National and Regional Committees

On Wednesday, Kathy MacKinnon, Chair, WCPA, reported on the work of the WCPA. She highlighted, *inter alia*: preparation of the MPA Global Standards, to be launched at this Congress; the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, which was conceived by the Commission, was piloted there, and is now an effective main programme led by the IUCN Secretariat; the OECM database at UNEP-WCMC; and the COVID-19 PAs Task Force, which produced a report on the impacts of the pandemic on PA tourism.

On Wednesday, the IUCN awards ceremony celebrated those who have contributed to their countries and left a lasting legacy to conservation. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah, Ghana, was awarded the John C. Phillips Memorial Medal, the IUCN's oldest award, for outstanding service to international conservation. Accepting the award, he said, "If we can protect biodiversity, then land degradation and climate change will be a thing of the past." Lisa Dabek, US, was awarded the Harold Jefferson Coolidge Memorial Medal for outstanding contribution to conservation of nature and natural resources. Assad Serhal, Lebanon, Richard Watling, Fiji, Raoni Metiktire, Brazil, and Jane Goodall, UK,



Jon Paul Rodríguez, Chair, IUCN Species Survival Commission

were awarded honorary IUCN memberships for their exceptional contribution to conservation.

On Thursday, Jon Paul Rodríguez, Chair, IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), delivered the report of the Commission, highlighting structure and governance, and major achievements. He noted, *inter alia*, that: the Commission's mandate was updated; membership increased by 26% in the period 2017-2021; and ten intervention letters were delivered to governments and companies in 2021, with three having a positive impact. He highlighted ongoing work on three new centers for species survival, with six more under discussion. On major achievements, he cited 200 Species Green Status assessments and nearly 77,000 Red List assessments and reassessments. He also introduced the award recipients for the: Sir Peter Scott Award for Conservation Merit; George Rabb Award for Conservation Innovation; Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership; and SSC Chair Citation of Excellence 2019.

Antonio Benjamin delivered the report of the WCEL, highlighting increased gender balance in both the Congress Steering Committee (CSC) and the Commission's membership. He lauded the achievements of: the Commission's 10 Specialist Groups; the global Congress, split into regional hybrid events due to the pandemic; the Commission's lecture series and Environmental Week; the Global Judicial Institute for the Environment; and the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law. He noted judges are beginning to recognize governance principles and concluded with a tribute to environmental defenders.

Kristen Walker-Painemilla, Chair, Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP), reported on the Commission's work in two areas: Natural Resource Governance Framework, and People and Nature. She highlighted several activities and achievements, including: the #BuildBackBetter CEESP Virtual Dialogues Series, which engaged Members on solutions to overcoming the challenges of COVID-19; establishing the Global Rights and Governance Programme to advance the rights and roles of Indigenous Peoples in conservation; and youth and intergenerational engagement. In closing, Walker-Painemilla led Members in holding flowers and observing a moment of silence to pay tribute to 331 environmental defenders killed globally in 2020.



Razan al Mubarak, IUCN President-Elect

The discussion considered: investing in vulnerable fishing communities' resilience; ecocide being an act or omission; and the private sector's role in exacerbating climate vulnerabilities.

Angela Andrade, Chair, Commission on Ecosystem Management, delivered the report of the Commission. She noted the Commission currently: includes climate change; comprises 16 thematic areas, 12 specialist areas and five working groups; is present in 14 regions; and has 2,000 members. Highlights, she said, include the publication of over 90 scientific articles and academic papers, and work on ecosystem-based adaptation. Andrade described the Red List of Ecosystems as a flagship project, explaining it had produced more than 25 national evaluations and guides for the application of the Red List of Ecosystems. She further discussed: work focusing on ecosystem restoration and developing guides on eco-disaster risk reduction; newer work on cultural practices and ecosystem management; and the establishment of a rewilding group.

Sean Southey, Chair, Commission on Education and Communication, announced the attainment of the 2,000 membership mark. He highlighted achievements including the #NatureForAll Discovery Zone, which aims to disseminate resources that make it easier for people to connect with nature virtually. He further highlighted the Nature Storybook Toolkit implemented with CEESP, and announced the first video competition award winner, Alejandra Torrez Tarqui from Bolivia. Another collaboration with CEESP, he noted, is the Reimagine Conservation Campaign, which aims to inspire a love for nature in people. On youth engagement, Southey mentioned, among others, the Virtual GYS held in April 2021, the Nature for Youth Oasis at the Congress, and the IUCN Youth Strategy to be launched in January 2022.

Chris Mahon and Ann-Katrine Garn, Chair and Secretary, respectively, of the IUCN Global Group for National and Regional Committee Development, reported on the Global Meeting of IUCN National and Regional Committee Representatives and Country Focal Points, which took place virtually on 3 September 2021. They said recorded presentations of initiatives from six regions were shown and that IUCN's chief scientist addressed how the Contributions for Nature platform can capture information from these initiatives. They highlighted the creation of IUCN's first inter-regional committee, comprising Europe, North Asia, and Central Asia. They also announced the Global Group's message to the Congress: "collaboration is key for conservation." They said the Group will place an item on "reimagining nature" on the agenda of the Group's next meeting.

In the subsequent discussion, Members: highlighted the need to engage policymakers and governments to foster their interest in IUCN's work; urged IUCN to produce a statement calling on governments to create space for people working on natural resources or biodiversity; and proposed creating an inter-regional committee for Asia, West Asia, and Oceania.

Report of the Programme Committee and Adoption of the Draft Addendum to the IUCN Programme 2021–2024

On Thursday, Robinson introduced a draft Addendum (CGR-2021-5.4/1-Rev) to IUCN Programme 2021–2024, a companion



Nihal Welikala, IUCN Treasurer

document to address the broader implications of the pandemic and human health on the Programme.

The International Council of Environmental Law observed tools already exist to prevent future pandemics and spillovers and urged using them.

AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION suggested an amendment in Section 3.1.2. ("People, health and conservation") from "no risk" to "no significant risk" of pathogen spillover, saying zero risk is neither feasible nor necessarily desirable, as it could alienate people from nature. The NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL (NRDC) opposed, saying "no risk" is simply aspirational language and should be kept even if not feasible. Robinson put the proposed amendment to a vote, and Members voted to allow the amendment. Following a second vote, the Addendum was approved as amended.

IUCN Finances

Update from the Director General on the Finances of

IUCN: On Friday, IUCN Director General Bruno Oberle updated the Assembly on: the financial results from 2016-2020; projects for 2021-2024; and key challenges, opportunities, and actions. He noted lower income in 2020 compared to 2016-2019, primarily because of the pandemic, and highlighted reduced operational expenditure, for the same reason. He said the overall result for 2020 is a deficit of CHF 2.4 million, with the costs of the Congress contributing to this. On challenges, he highlighted: declining reserves from CHF 19.5 million to CHF 15 million, combined with a growing portfolio; the programme portfolio not generating a surplus; and heavy reliance on a small number of framework donors for IUCN's unrestricted funding. On actions, he identified: extracting contributions from the programme portfolio to IUCN's corporate costs; investing in raising unrestricted and flexible funding by expanding the number of framework partners to include more countries and philanthropic organizations; and expanding into other areas, such as capacity building and education.

Report of the Treasurer on the Finances of IUCN: Nihal Welikala, IUCN Treasurer, presented the Report of the Director General and Treasurer on the Finances of IUCN in 2016–2020 (CGR-2021-7.1-1). He noted finances were stable for most of 2020 and, although the pandemic aggravated existing financial

pressures and may affect future donor funding, he expressed confidence that IUCN's unique global reach and on-the-ground presence will ensure its strategy and financial model are "fit for future purpose." He highlighted, *inter alia*, strengthening and diversifying revenue sources, maximizing efficiencies, and minimizing risks to address the pandemic's impact on IUCN's financial future. He identified six factors to monitor to increase the Council's financial bandwidth, namely investment in growth and development, project portfolio, reserves, revenue diversification, competitiveness, and governance.

Report of the Congress Finance and Audit Committee and Approval of the Audited Financial Statements for the Year 2020: Ayman Rabi, Chair, Finance and Audit Committee (FAC), delivered the Report of the Congress FAC on the Audited Financial Statements for the year 2020 (CGR-2021-7.3-1), noting a pandemic-related deficit of CHF 2.4 million. He reported that the auditors provided positive feedback regarding internal control frameworks, and that any issues raised have been or are being addressed satisfactorily. He thus recommended approving the 2020 Audited Financial Statements.

He noted IUCN Members voted electronically to appoint PricewaterhouseCoopers as External Auditors for the years 2021 to 2022 and requested the Council appoint the External Auditors for the years 2023 to 2024 following a competitive selection process.

Rabi highlighted motions requiring unrestricted funding, such as the motion on establishing a Climate Change Commission and requested the Congress be mindful of the financial implications of proposed motions, including motions whose financial implications are not easily assessed. He identified crucial issues for the next Council and FAC to consider, including: reducing redundancies in the committee's work within the motions process; providing guidance on considering potential costs when submitting motions; and clarifying responsibilities for implementation and fundraising required by the motions proposed.

In ensuing discussions, Members discussed, *inter alia*: deficit versus operating surplus; regional breakdown of expenditures; membership fee exemptions; financial support for national and regional committees; earmarking funds for external expert advice; and vetting applicants for membership to ensure alignment with IUCN's values rather than simply to maximize funding sources. In response, Oberle explained: the operating surplus was due largely to reductions in project implementation and staff travel due to COVID-19; additional income includes those from philanthropy and subleasing surplus facilities; support is available for Members in financial distress; and efforts to reach philanthropists and strengthen framework partners to increase donor funding. Welikala noted leveraging volunteers for expert advice and securing external assistance when needed. Rabi highlighted the FAC's task is to alert the Members' Assembly when motions have financial implications, hence his focus on those, and noted a grace period is available for membership fees. The discussion also addressed the importance of fees for enabling IUCN to conduct its work.

Jenny Gruenberger presented on the Assembly's participation. She said 1,900 votes were possible at the sixth Sitting of the Assembly. The seventh sitting saw a potential 268 Category A (States and government agencies) votes, 180 Category B (non-governmental organizations) votes and 1,202 Category C (IPOs)

votes. Deallo opened the vote to approve the 2020 Audited Financial Statements, which the Members approved.

Motion Calling for an Online Vote on All Motions Following the Congress

On Wednesday, Benjamin introduced a motion that proposes amending the Rules of Procedure to refer all motions tabled at the Congress and not requiring an immediate decision, to an online vote within one month of the close of the Congress. This motion (CGR-2021-3.2/1) was submitted on 1 September 2021 by 13 IUCN Members. Some Members raised concerns, cautioning against delaying voting during the Congress. Others urged for the motion to pass, saying that organizations for which they hold proxies have struggled to participate meaningfully, due to entry restrictions into France and technical difficulties.

Nicholas Robinson, International Council of Environmental Law, on a point of order, said Rules of Procedure cannot be amended with a motion tabled late, requested the Legal Adviser to rule on the motion's consistency with statutes and the Rules of Procedure, and urged against voting on the motion until such a ruling is made.

Sandrine Friedli Cela, IUCN Legal Adviser, said the unusual circumstances due to the pandemic warrant exceptional consideration, noting this is only feasible with Members' permission, as it implies changes to both the statutes and the Rules of Procedure.

Benjamin submitted the point of order for voting—whether the motion could proceed to a vote without violating any statutes. Following the vote, Benjamin noted that members had voted to allow voting on this motion, which required a two-thirds majority. However, following the vote, the motion was rejected.

Process for Review of New and Urgent Motions

On Thursday, during the fifth Sitting, Vice President Robinson provided a statement from the CSC on the process for review of new and urgent motions and provided an overview of the appeals and the reasons for their rejection.

NRDC, in a motion addressing future pandemics and biodiversity loss, said under Rule 55 on quorum and voting, Members can overturn the CSC's decision. Members voted on whether to overturn the appellants' rejection; however, the vote was unsuccessful. Upon questioning, Robinson further clarified



Ali Kaka, IUCN Vice-President, Kenya



Sandrine Friedli Cela, IUCN Legal Adviser

that the vote did not consider the content of the motion, but rather whether to overturn a matter of process.

The CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND LAW proposed a motion, requesting the presiding officer of the Congress to establish the means to, among others: provide and make public the names of the CSC members and the minutes of the meetings; the details of approvals and the specific reasons for rejections; and call on the new Council to consider making the motions process fairer and more equitable.

Sandrine Friedli Cela clarified that the names are public as CSC members are selected during the Assembly's first Sitting. Noting that while stating the reasons for and clarification of rejections is possible, she cautioned against the full minutes of meetings being released as CSC members should be allowed to deliberate without fear of recrimination. Robinson affirmed IUCN is a transparent organization and the information is available, adding that the process is not faceless.

STOP ECOCIDE INTERNATIONAL requested a vote on whether to overturn their rejected motion on establishing ecocide as an international crime. Following a vote, Members did not overturn the rejection.

During the sixth Sitting, Vice President Robinson opened the floor for further discussion on the process for review of new and urgent motions. Surya Subedi, IUCN Legal Procedural Adviser, opined that the review process is democratic and transparent, and that having to provide detailed explanations for all decisions taken by the CSC would be too burdensome.

NRDC tabled a motion requesting the IUCN Council to “undertake a full evaluation of the process for consideration, review, approval or rejection, appeal, and action by the Congress under Rule 55, of new and urgent motions under consideration by the Congress and make recommendations for changes in the procedures and statutes as necessary. The Council should consult the membership on lessons learned from the Marseille Congress and convene an online discussion process on any proposed recommended changes.”

The LAW AND ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMY INSTITUTE stated the CSC's reason against the motions being “not urgent” is insufficient, and detailed rationale or minutes from the committees should be shared.

The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW added that in the past, minutes were taken by the CSC, meaning it is doable.

Report of the Resolutions Committee and Vote on Motions

On Wednesday, Jon Paul Rodríguez, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, provided a progress report on outstanding motions. Delegates voted and approved the following motions:

- Protection of Andes-Amazon rivers of Peru (the Marañón, Ucayali, Huallaga and Amazonas) from large-scale infrastructure projects;
- Actions to strengthen food sovereignty and security of Indigenous Peoples and peasant communities;
- Renunciation of the Doctrine of Discovery to rediscover care for Mother Earth;
- Protection of deep-ocean ecosystems and biodiversity through a moratorium on seabed mining;
- Taking action to reduce light pollution; and
- Reinforcing the protection of marine mammals through regional cooperation.

Rodríguez reported that 18 new and urgent motions had passed statutory requirements and checks. Eight of those motions were rejected by the Resolutions Committee and were appealed to the Congress Preparatory Committee, which upheld the decision.

STOP ECOCIDE INTERNATIONAL lamented that the motion's appeals process is unclear. The CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND LAW said the rejections are not transparent and the rulings are inconsistent. NRDC requested clarification on the Congress's role in overruling the rejection of motions. The CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEGAL STUDIES argued the suggested amendments to their motion on establishing a climate change commission changes the purpose of the motion.

On Thursday, Rodríguez provided updates on pending motions, noting 11 were still under discussion in contact groups.

He observed that seven motions were ready for voting. Delegates voted and approved:

- Planning of maritime areas and biodiversity and geodiversity conservation;
- Protecting environmental human and peoples' rights defenders and whistleblowers;
- Strengthening the protection of primary and old-growth forests in Europe and facilitating their restoration where possible;
- Strengthening sustainable tourism's role in biodiversity conservation and community resilience;
- Ensuring adequate funding for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species;
- Calling to withdraw draft-permit mining of fossil fuels underneath the Wadden Sea, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and
- Protecting the Okavango from oil and gas exploitation.

Rodríguez reported that following the conclusion of the contact group on a motion on controlling and monitoring trade in croaker swim bladders to protect target croakers and reduce incidental catches of threatened marine megafauna, GERMANY sent a message, proposing deletion of two references to the



Antonio Benjamin, Chair, WCEL

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, saying the IUCN Director-General and SSC have no competence to amend the listings. Motion co-sponsors opposed. Robinson asked the Members to vote on GERMANY's proposed deletions, following which members voted and disapproved. Members then voted and approved the motion.

On Friday, Members voted and approved motions on:

- Recognizing and supporting IPLCs' rights and roles in conservation;
- Towards a policy on natural capital;
- Acting for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction; and
- Avoiding the point of no return in the Amazon protecting 80% by 2025.

Regarding the motion on avoiding the point of no return in the Amazon, ECUADOR said the it comes from the hearts of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon and is a cry from those who have been killed defending its headwaters. Delegates voted and approved the motion.

On Friday afternoon, during the eighth Sitting, the UK asked for the conference report to reflect it had abstained from voting on the motion on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, because key parts of the text were unclear and included language that could have implications for other international negotiations.

Following a vote, Members adopted the motions on:

- Restoring a peaceful and quiet ocean;
- Reducing the impacts of the mining industry on biodiversity;
- Setting area-based conservation targets based on evidence of what nature and people need to thrive; and
- Affirming the right of IPLCs to sustainably manage and utilize wild resources in the context of COVID-19.

Rodríguez reminded Members that the contact group discussion regarding the motion on **establishing a climate change commission** had reached an impasse and the Resolutions Committee had before it a motion with two options: establishing a climate change commission or establishing a global IUCN climate crisis action platform.

Sandrine Friedli Cela, IUCN Legal Adviser, said, due to a lack of consensus on which option to pass, the Assembly is now tasked with voting on whether to accept the option for the

platform. If the vote did not pass, then a vote for the commission would follow. The Chair then proposed these votes take place.

HAWAI'I CONSERVATION ALLIANCE, supported by many, said Article 59 (Council members have a fundamental obligation to serve IUCN with diligence and integrity) may allow a decision by the Assembly, but there is a need for a provision that ensures a commission's purpose is not overtaken by that of a taskforce or platform. He emphasized that the Climate Change Task Force established in 2011 was unsuccessful and should not be replicated.

NATURESERVE said the decision should be made by the Resolutions Committee. Antonio Benjamin suggested an Assembly vote be cast for either a commission or a platform.

Surya Subedi, IUCN Legal Procedural Adviser, proposed considering the Chair's suggestion on voting.

Back-and-forth discussion again ensued on how to proceed. The SOCIETY OF CANTON NATURE CONSERVATION reminded Members that the two options mean the motion is not a consensus text, and the Assembly can only vote on a motion that has reached consensus. The INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF ENVIRONMENTAL LAW concurred, suggesting the vote can only be in accordance with the rules if the Chair puts forward the options.

Members then debated the merits for and against the two proposals. Arguments for a commission included that it is more formal, has a robust structure, and is better placed to take decisions. Some contended a commission would: better serve vulnerable populations and communities; include IPLCs; and bring new experts into the fold.

Arguments for a platform included that it could potentially marshal all of IUCN's convening power to act on climate change, act across the system and operate outside of silos, and have a governance structure that "brings the IUCN family together."

The Chair opened the vote on the amendment on the Platform. It was not approved. The Chair then said the Assembly must vote on the original motion—the Commission. Members approved the motion to establish a Commission on Climate Change.

Rodríguez then introduced and, following a vote, Members approved motions on:

- Developing and implementing a transformational and effective post-2020 GBF; and
- Protecting the Lower Congo River from large hydroelectric dam developments.

Rodríguez reported that the motion **towards development of an IUCN policy on synthetic biology in relation to nature conservation** still had five outstanding proposed amendments. These included: addition of specific reference to the precautionary principle in the preamble; and two alternative provisions in the operative text on whether the Director General and Commissions should be called to remain neutral or to refrain from supporting or endorsing research, until the formal adoption of an IUCN policy on synthetic biology.

Some Members raised concerns that synthetic biology involves the genetic engineering of wild organisms as a tool for

nature conservation and thus the precautionary principle should be included and risks of genetic engineering highlighted. Others raised concerns that the scale of the climate and biodiversity crises warrant consideration of all potential technologies and approaches.

Members voted to include in the preamble explicit reference to the precautionary principle as deserving specific attention, particularly in the context of synthetic biology. They also voted to approve language on the Congress calling on the Director General and Commissions to remain neutral on all aspects of synthetic biology until the formal adoption of an IUCN policy on synthetic biology, remaining cognizant as new understanding develops during the process.

Delegates then voted and adopted the motion as amended.

On the motion on **integrated solutions to the climate change and biodiversity crises**, the Assembly voted to remove brackets around language urging governments and private sector organizations to accelerate an equitable transition to a sustainable energy mix, phase out their dependence on fossil fuels, and end fossil fuel subsidies. The entire motion was then put to a vote and approved.

Regarding the motion on **protecting human, animal, and environmental health, and preventing pandemics through the One Health approach and by addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss**, TANZANIA requested inclusion of references to “animal wellbeing.” The INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR ANIMAL WELFARE, on behalf of several organizations, expressed support for the One Health approach to prevent future pandemics but expressed concern over the insertion of what they referred to a “dangerous qualifiers around the word risk.” Members voted to approve the proposed amendments and then voted on and approved the motion as amended.

Final Outcome

Establishing a Climate Change Commission: In this resolution, the Congress calls on IUCN Members to agree on establishing a new commission with the working title of “The Climate Crisis Commission.” The Commission will aim to mobilize and coordinate the Union and engage with Regional and National IUCN Committees and broader civil society efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change based on the best available science.

The Congress further: decides the new Commission will be funded by extra-budgetary resources; requests the Council to provide guidance on the process to establish an interim Commission Chair and Steering Committee; and directs the Steering Committee to submit a proposal to the Council with recommendations for the new Commission’s Terms of Reference, mode of operation, membership, and leadership.

Protection of Andes-Amazon Rivers of Peru (the Marañón, Ucayali, Huallaga and Amazonas) from Large-scale Infrastructure Projects: In this resolution, the Congress urges Peru to:

- reevaluate the prioritization of the Amazon Waterway Project and prioritize sustainable alternatives, through the creation of a space for dialogue that includes IPLCs; and
- communicate to the communities that would be impacted by the Chadin II and Veracruz hydroelectric dams that the environmental licenses of the projects have expired, and that the concessionaires cannot exercise any rights.

The Congress also encourages Peru to:

- create a framework for protecting Peru’s free-flowing rivers;
- ensure aquatic and riparian ecosystems, and territories of the local populations of the Amazon rivers are not significantly affected by the development of infrastructure projects;
- lead a South American effort for sustainable transboundary water management for the Amazon basin; and
- respect standards set by the ILO in relation to FPIC and prior consultation rights, as a condition for the development of infrastructure projects that affect the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Congress further calls on the Director General to send a letter to the President of Peru regarding the importance of maintaining the free-flowing nature of the Marañón River, and the need to create a relevant legal framework and comply with environmental and social standards for large infrastructure projects. It also calls on the Director General to offer technical support.

In addition, the Congress calls on funding bodies to strengthen their safeguards for infrastructure projects affecting the biodiversity of Amazon rivers; and urges UN agencies to support countries in the region to generate relevant knowledge, strategies, and mechanisms.

Planning of Maritime Areas and Biodiversity and Geodiversity Conservation: In this resolution, the Congress urges States to adopt a forward-looking planning approach for maritime areas by, among others:

- including Indigenous Peoples and all stakeholders in its preparation, assessment, and review;
- developing a strategic, nested approach at the local, national, and regional levels in which the cumulative impacts of all activities will be assessed; and



Zhang Xinsheng, IUCN President

- seeking coherence, organization, and continuity between different maritime, coastal, and terrestrial plans, and with neighboring States.

The Congress also asks States to follow this approach by, among others:

- conducting a systematic diagnosis of knowledge on the biodiversity and geodiversity of marine and coastal ecosystems;
- implementing the precautionary and preventive principles, as well as ecosystem-based management;
- defining and effectively managing MPA networks;
- sharing, with the public, assessments of the cumulative impacts on all offshore and onshore usages;
- measuring the consequences on species and the functioning of marine and coastal ecosystems; and
- anticipating the evolution of cumulative impacts and the need for ecological compensation zones at sea.

The Congress also invites States to:

- guarantee funding for defining and implementing this planning as well as for the open publication of the assessments, if possible; and
- ensure regular monitoring with States and regional organizations concerned.

Restoring a Peaceful and Quiet Ocean: In this resolution, the Congress requests the Council to establish an Inter-Commission Panel of Experts, comprising the SSC, WCPA, and International Maritime Organization members and representatives of the underwater noise-generating sectors, to seek an integrated approach to abating anthropogenic underwater noise pollution in cooperation with relevant entities. In addition, the Congress requests WCPA to make recommendations promoting a precautionary approach on ways to reduce and limit anthropogenic underwater noise in MPAs, Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas, and Important Marine Mammal Areas, by implementing measures to manage certain human activities within and adjacent to these areas.

The Congress calls on Members to, *inter alia*, collaborate with the international community to encourage noise-producing entities to employ best-available noise-reduction and fuel-reduction technologies.

The Congress also encourages UN Members to consider anthropogenic underwater noise pollution within the negotiations for a new international legally-binding instrument on biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Integrated Solutions to the Climate Change and Biodiversity Crises: In this resolution, the Congress requests, as a matter of urgency, the Director General and Commissions, in line with the IUCN Programme 2021–2024, to, among others:

- intensify efforts to pursue, monitor, and adaptively review integrated approaches to solving the biodiversity and climate crises;

- ensure enhanced climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives promote biodiversity conservation, and improved synergies between climate and biodiversity initiatives;
- prioritize the urgent protection/conservation, sustainable management, and restoration of carbon-dense ecosystems;
- support IPLCs to conserve natural ecosystems, to maintain their heritage and livelihoods; and
- emphasize conservation of threatened, endemic, and evolutionary and functionally distinct species.

The Congress also encourages the Council and relevant IUCN components of the IUCN to:

- create a comprehensive and integrated climate change and biodiversity policy framework;
- in cooperation with other relevant organizations, take the initiative to contribute to “learning platforms” to share the latest knowledge on climate change and biodiversity;
- propose options to develop a global partnership on climate change and biodiversity conservation to mobilize IUCN’s membership and youth towards greater ambition and action; and
- call on IUCN and experts to urge their governments and private sector organizations to accelerate an equitable transition to a sustainable energy mix, phase out their dependence on fossil fuels, and end their fossil fuel subsidies.

The Congress calls on Commissions, Members, and partners to:

- be informed in their work by IUCN’s integrated climate change and biodiversity policy framework; and
- take ambitious action to combat climate change and biodiversity loss, and support IUCN’s climate and biodiversity work.

The Congress invites governments and donors to support research on the interactions between climate and biodiversity, particularly on synergies and possible trade-offs, to propose appropriate responses to enhance ecological ambition.

It also strongly encourages governments to, as appropriate:

- reinforce synergies between the Rio Conventions, the Ramsar Convention, and other relevant conventions, as well as between the IPCC and IPBES;
- support the deployment of NbS that promote biodiversity conservation while contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation; and
- raise the ambition of their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement and integrate NbS into implementation of their NDCs, National Adaptation Plans, and long-term strategies, as well as other national, local, and sectoral plans.

Lastly, the Congress encourages IUCN Members and other States, government agencies, and non-State actors to promote the implementation of commitments within the climate and biodiversity action agendas in a transparent and accountable manner, using appropriate indicators for monitoring efforts.

Protecting Environmental Human and Peoples’ Rights Defenders and Whistleblowers: In this resolution, the Congress encourages the Director General to work with State and non-State Members to:

- enhance knowledge, data collection and awareness concerning environmental defenders and whistleblowers, and protection mechanisms linked to other current efforts;
- review the IUCN Programme 2021–2024 in terms of intersections with environmental defender issues;
- develop an IUCN policy and action plan on environmental human rights defenders and whistleblowers, in collaboration with defenders and whistleblowers;
- as part of the IUCN Annual Report, report on the development and implementation of activities related to the policy and action plan;
- engage in direct dialogue with individual State Members to conduct independent fact finding, when relevant, and improve systematic protection of defenders; and
- mobilize resources with interested donor countries to finance activities in support of environmental defenders and whistleblowers.

The Congress also, *inter alia*:

- requests the Commission on Education and Communication, Commission on Environmental Law and CEESP, in collaboration with defenders and whistleblowers and their organizations, to initiate a campaign to promote and support the work of environmental human rights defenders and whistleblowers to protect them from threats and attacks;
- requests National Committees to engage Members, raise awareness, and build capacity concerning the protection needs of environmental human rights defenders;
- urges States to adopt and uphold laws aimed at protecting defenders and whistleblowers, and put holistic protection measures in place for, and in consultation with, defenders and whistleblowers;
- calls on financial institutions and businesses to implement human rights due diligence, including with the use of FPIC for Indigenous Peoples, and further establish and strengthen grievance and redress mechanisms, and hold meaningful and inclusive consultations with defenders, potentially affected groups, and other relevant stakeholders as part of a zero-tolerance approach to violence within supply chains; and
- calls on NGOs and others within the IUCN community to respect, defend, and uphold human rights, and to undertake human rights due diligence and commit to the use of FPIC for Indigenous Peoples.

Develop and Implement a Transformational and Effective Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: In its resolution, the Congress calls on the Director General and IUCN to continue contributing to the GBF's development and to fully support the GBF once adopted.

It also calls on IUCN Members and invites CBD parties, other governments, intergovernmental organizations, all stakeholders, and IPLCs to work, as appropriate, with national level and other counterparts engaged in the CBD to encourage them to join forces to develop, adopt and implement a GBF that, *inter alia*:

- reflects the urgent transformative change necessary to promote a whole of society transition to address direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and secure the planet's life support system;

- contains a Vision for 2050 of living in harmony with nature and an inspirational, and easy to communicate 2030 Mission, thereby aiming to halt and reverse biodiversity loss to achieve a nature-positive world by 2030;
- contains specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound targets and milestones for 2030 to halt and reverse the unprecedented loss of biodiversity and take urgent and transformative action to restore and conserve biodiversity;
- addresses direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and includes ambitious nature-positive sectoral targets to ensure effective sectoral engagement and action;
- can be translated into ambitious local, national, regional, multilateral and sectoral targets, commitments and actions;
- safeguards human rights;
- forms a guiding framework that integrates and achieves CBD objectives, as well as those from other Rio Conventions and biodiversity-related conventions and processes, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- establishes a strong implementation mechanism promoting responsibility and transparency that includes a global stocktake to assess collective progress;
- calls on IUCN to support Indigenous Peoples' participation and work towards implementing protection, conservation and restoration activities with Indigenous Peoples' FPIC, and with appropriate recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights to their lands, territories and resources and full respect for their diverse knowledge systems;
- includes global targets to ensure at least 30% of terrestrial areas and inland waters, and of coastal and marine areas, are effectively and equitably governed, protected and conserved;
- ensures all managed areas are under biodiversity-inclusive sustainable management;
- all the land and waters, traditionally governed and conserved by IPLCs, are appropriately recognized and collectively secured;
- ensures social and economic assessments are conducted in accordance with universally accepted environmental, social and governance standards, or national laws and procedures to afford full social safeguards;
- includes adequate means of implementation towards a pathway to halt and reverse biodiversity loss; and
- is complemented by a robust and comprehensive monitoring framework.

The Congress also calls on the GBF to include, as 2030 milestones:

- increase in the area, connectivity and integrity of ecosystems and zero human-induced extinctions of species, and recovery of the population abundance of species, and safeguard genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species;
- halving the production and consumption footprint and ensuring all relevant public and private decisions support achievement of a nature-positive and equitable world and safeguard human rights;
- fair access to and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge; and

- deployment of adequate financial and other resources to implement the framework, including significantly increasing finance from all sources for GBF implementation and minimizing public and private financial flows that are harmful to biodiversity by 2030.

It also urges all governments to:

- elevate the need to urgently tackle nature degradation and biodiversity loss to the highest political level, including through forthcoming high-level UN meetings;
- fully integrate nature in all key political, economic, cultural, and social decisions;
- secure, as soon as possible, an ambitious legally-binding agreement on biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction;
- take necessary actions to eliminate, redirect, repurpose, or reform subsidies and other incentives identified as potentially harmful to the environment by 2030;
- ensure a successful CBD COP15 and the adoption of a transformative GBF, by using the time between today and the planned January meetings to move the process closer to consensus and desired levels of ambition; and
- pursue efforts to limit global warming to 1.5°C for biodiversity and people.

Actions to Strengthen Food Sovereignty and Security of Indigenous Peoples and Peasant Communities:

In this resolution, the Congress asks the Director General to promote more discussions in the relevant Commissions on the relationship between food security, food sovereignty, and Indigenous Peoples and rural communities, considering the role of traditional and local knowledge. The Congress requests the relevant Commissions to study options to strengthen food sovereignty and security of Indigenous Peoples and small farming communities.

The Congress calls on:

- Members, along with other international bodies, to promote the enactment of a decree to establish mechanisms for the recognition and protection of biocultural heritage in collective and rural territories; and
- States and other stakeholders active in agrobiodiversity issues to ensure that Indigenous Peoples can exercise their right to FPIC regarding matters affecting their territories.

Recognizing and Supporting IPLCs' Rights and Roles in Conservation: In this resolution, the Congress requests the Director General to assemble a task force coordinated by the CEESP, with the participation of IPOs, to develop guidance and strategies for all Members to support indigenous and local community-led conservation efforts. The Congress also requests IUCN and its Members to: ensure decision-making processes concerning protected and conserved areas are inclusive and equitable, with effective representation and participation of IPLCs; and support IPLCs in developing and implementing income-generating sustainable development initiatives. The Congress encourages Members to ensure: IPLCs govern and manage protected and conserved areas, or at least participate fully, equitably, and effectively in decision making; FPIC; and IPLCs' customary and local governance authorities are appropriately recognized in the establishment, expansion, and management of protected and conserved areas.

Renunciation of the Doctrine of Discovery to Rediscover Care for Mother Earth: In this resolution, the Congress:

- renounces the Doctrine of Discovery;

- requests the Council to establish an IUCN Truth and Reconciliation Working Group, to explore and explain best practices for involving Indigenous Peoples in co-stewardship of protected natural areas, conservation of nature, and sustainable use of species;
- urges all States to repeal all legal vestiges of the Doctrine of Discovery, and consider establishing truth and reconciliation commissions through which the history of the Doctrine of Discovery can be revealed and pathways toward justice discovered; and
- urges leaders of all countries to promote new paradigms in conservation, where ancestral knowledge of Indigenous Peoples is incorporated.

Towards a Policy on Natural Capital: In this resolution, the Congress:

- proposes consideration of non-binding principles in the development of an IUCN Policy on Natural Capital; and
- requests the Council to establish an inclusive mechanism for Members to consider the proposed non-binding principles.

The Annex sets out the principles to be considered, which aim to ensure any actions taken to preserve or restore natural capital are equitable, effective, and sustainable.

Reducing the Impacts of the Mining Industry on Biodiversity: In this resolution, the Congress urges ending practices that do not guarantee human safety and nature protection in the long term from the disposal of mine waste into terrestrial, freshwater, marine, and coastal ecosystems.

The Congress also: charges the IUCN Environmental Law Programme with developing guidance on legislation and regulations; and calls on States to effectively regulate exploration, extraction, and processing activities within their territories, and to apply the precautionary approach to the management of risks from the exploration, extraction, and processing phases of mining.

Further, the Congress recommends reducing consumption of primary resources; requests that governments and industries prioritize alternatives to mining virgin raw materials and resource recovery, reuse and recycling of minerals, as well as substitution with renewable materials; invites States and other authorities to develop and implement transition plans to reduce demand for virgin raw materials and phase out their production and instead supply recycled materials and find renewable substitutes; and encourages governments to cooperate in creating medium- and long-term mineral supply and substitution plans, taking biodiversity and human well-being issues into account.



Participants consulting during a break

Protection of Deep-Ocean Ecosystems and Biodiversity Through a Moratorium on Seabed Mining: This resolution calls on State Members to support and implement a moratorium on deep seabed mining. It cautions that issuing new exploitation and exploration contracts, and adopting seabed mining regulations for exploitation, should be conditional on rigorous and transparent impact assessments. It also notes the environmental, social, cultural, and economic risks of deep seabed mining need to be comprehensively understood and calls for implementing the precautionary principle, ecosystem approach, and the polluter pays principle.

Towards Development of an IUCN Policy on Synthetic Biology in Relation to Nature Conservation: In the resolution, the Congress requests:

- the Director General, Commission Chairs, and Members to initiate an inclusive and participatory process to develop an IUCN policy on the implications of the use of synthetic biology in nature conservation to be debated and voted on by the 2024 Conservation Congress;
- the Council to create a working group, composed of IUCN Members and ensuring a balance among genders, regions, perspectives, and knowledge systems; and
- the Council to establish a drafting and participatory review process for the working group to undertake the development of the IUCN policy on synthetic biology in relation to nature conservation.

The Congress also calls on the Director General and Commissions to remain neutral on all aspects of synthetic biology until an IUCN policy on synthetic biology is adopted.

Annexes set out terms of reference for: the inclusive process; establishing a working group; and the policy development process.

Taking Action to Reduce Light Pollution: The Congress calls on all Members and agencies that manage land and water areas to develop, disseminate and implement engagement, education, and outreach programmes to explain the harmful impacts of light pollution, the benefits of preserving natural darkness, and methods to reduce light pollution.

The Congress recommends that, among others:

- natural environments should not be illuminated to reduce or avoid pollution, unless safety is at stake;
- authorities identify, preserve, and restore naturally dark infrastructure to facilitate the functioning of healthy, species-rich nocturnal environments; and
- agencies funding research support research and evidence synthesis on the effects of artificial night lighting on species.

Setting Area-based Conservation Targets Based on Evidence of What Nature and People Need to Thrive: In this resolution, the Congress calls on IUCN components to:

- recognize the evolving science, the majority of which supports that protecting at least half of the planet is likely necessary to address the biodiversity and climate crises, as a foundation for sustainably managing the whole planet;
- support, at a minimum, a target of effectively and equitably protecting and conserving at least 30% of terrestrial, inland, coastal, and marine areas, focusing on sites of particular importance for biodiversity; and

- prioritize support for the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and the implementation of all protection, conservation, and restoration activities with their FPIC, and with appropriate recognition of their rights and full respect for their diverse knowledge systems.

The Congress also encourages competent authorities to implement area-based targets appropriate to regional conditions through participatory, knowledge-based spatial planning processes that include identifying and conserving in effectively and equitably managed protected areas and OECMs.

Reinforcing the Protection of Marine Mammals through Regional Cooperation: In the resolution, the Congress asks States to reinforce marine mammals' protection by:

- identifying marine zones and regions with significant conservation issues for marine mammals;
- reinforcing existing agreements and commitments in these marine zones, regions, and nations, and establishing new agreements and commitments in those with significant marine mammal conservation issues that have yet to enter into agreements or commitments;
- creating, within these regions, reinforced PAs for the most highly threatened marine mammal populations;
- identifying relevant scientific bodies and supporting them in their programme of research and knowledge exchange;
- identifying managers of these zones and supporting them in their knowledge exchange;
- assisting regional networks of MPA managers in defining and implementing strategies for marine mammals' protection; and
- urging States and regional fisheries management organizations to establish mitigation measures to achieve a substantial reduction in bycatches.

The Congress also urges the Convention on Migratory Species and the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling to support States and other competent authorities to implement regional agreements and national commitments, ensuring that, in the short term, this support allows for a significant reduction in the main threats facing marine mammals.

Strengthening the Protection of Primary and Old-Growth Forests in Europe and Facilitating their Restoration where Possible: In this resolution, the Congress requests the Director General to develop a favorable context for conservation by:

- securing an agreement on a practical understanding relevant for all regions of Europe; and



Outgoing Council members from the African Region

- catalyzing the completion of a comprehensive map of primary and old-growth forests across Europe showing location, natural habitats, maturity level, and protective status.

It also encourages European State Members to promote a legal framework for the conservation and restoration of primary and old-growth forests, including:

- setting the strict protection of primary and old-growth forests as a goal for the European Green Deal;
- supporting the creation of warning systems for identifying and preventing new threats as soon as they emerge; and
- assessing and promoting protection in perpetuity, namely through protected areas, as well as through other tools.

Lastly, the Congress encourages European State Members and forest managers to save all primary and old-growth forests by:

- prohibiting timber sourcing from primary and old-growth forests, apart from ancient forests, and ensuring the protection of these forests preferentially through regulatory means possibly based on the due diligence mechanism; and
- catalyzing protection and restoration efforts for primary and old-growth forests.

Acting for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity in the Ocean Beyond National Jurisdiction:

In this resolution, the Congress:

- urges States to expeditiously conclude the negotiation of a new and ambitious international legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction;
- calls on the Director General, Commissions, and Secretariat to provide technical support and to promote and support these actions; and
- encourages IUCN and its Members to promote these objectives and to actively support rapid conclusion, adoption and early ratification and implementation of the instrument once adopted.

Avoiding the Point of No Return in the Amazon Protecting 80% by 2025:

In this resolution, the Congress, recognizing the ongoing deaths and dispossession of IPLCs, urges States to ensure the full implementation of the Durban Accord adopted in 2003 and the Promise of Sydney in 2014, especially regarding PA governance. The Congress also calls on:

- the Director General and Members to support area-based conservation targets, in order to protect, conserve, and sustainably manage at least 80% of the Amazon by 2025, in partnership with and recognizing the leadership of Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon;
- States in the Amazon to work with Indigenous Peoples' authorities and governance structures and recognize their local governance authorities by 2025; and
- States to enact moratoria on industrial activities in primary forests.

The Congress further encourages:

- States in the Amazon to promote efforts to restore at least half of degraded forest areas in the Amazon Basin by 2025; and
- Governments and other funding agencies to increase support for direct, sustained, and equitable financial and technical assistance to Indigenous Peoples to conserve and sustainably manage their territories.

Strengthening Sustainable Tourism's Role in Biodiversity Conservation and Community Resilience:

In this resolution, the Congress calls on:



Outgoing Chairs of the IUCN Commissions

- the Director General to commit dedicated attention for nature-based tourism by including sustainable tourism as a topic, and integrating nature-based tourism events and activities into future Congresses and IUCN conferences; and
- the Commissions to consider creating an inter-commission working group focused on sustainable tourism's role in biodiversity conservation and community resilience.

The Congress further calls on Members and Affiliates to:

- support development of diversified sustainable livelihood activities, skill-training programmes, and alternative protein-sourcing markets in tourism-dependent communities;
- establish enterprise-based partnerships to incorporate conservation and biodiversity monitoring across the tourism supply chain; and
- establish more sustainable financing campaigns to support key biodiversity assets during tourism industry recessions.

The Congress also urges the WCPA COVID Task Force, in collaboration with other Specialist Groups and Task Forces, to strengthen its Call to Action for Rescue, Recovery and Rebuilding.

Ensuring Adequate Funding for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species:

In this resolution, the Congress:

- requests the IUCN Patrons of Nature and the SSC Chair to collaborate closely with the Director General on fundraising for the Red List;
- calls on donors to respond generously to the Director General's fundraising initiative for the Red List;
- encourages donors to help ensure funding is available to support the work of the SSC and Red List Partners in delivering the Red List Strategic Plan; and
- further requests the Director General to ensure, within available resources, the Red List Unit has the capacity to process species assessments in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Controlling and Monitoring Trade in Croaker Swim Bladders to Protect Target Croakers and Reducing Incidental Catches of Threatened Marine Megafauna:

In this resolution, the Congress requests the Director General and the SSC to: by 2023, produce an analysis on the impacts of the demand for and trade in fish maws on croaker species and threatened marine megafauna; and promote consideration of incidental catches of marine megafauna in developing effective policies that specifically address this problem.

Congress also:

- calls on Members to support the establishment of trade regulations on fish maws through national laws and regulations;

- requests the World Customs Organization to mandate harmonized codes for fish maw exports and imports; and
- encourages States that support one or more Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable populations or species of marine megafauna known to be caught in fisheries, and that are not included in a conservation action or recovery plan which incorporates specific provisions regulating these fisheries, to ban fish maw exports until such conservation action or recovery plans are developed and implemented.

Call to Withdraw Draft-Permit Mining of Fossil Fuels Underneath UNESCO World Heritage Site Wadden Sea:

In this resolution, the Congress requests the government of the Netherlands to withdraw the draft-permit for fossil fuel mining in recognition of the global need to protect and preserve the Wadden Sea as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as the global need to prevent damage to critical habitats from greenhouse gas emissions.

Protecting the Lower Congo River from Large Hydro-electric Dam Developments:

- In this resolution, the Congress:
- calls on Commissions and Members to review the recommendations of the World Commission on Dams and other more recent documents, and synthesize these into a contemporary set of recommendations for good practice;
 - calls on the Director General to send a memo to the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo encouraging him to, *inter alia*, support protection and restoration of Lower Congo ecosystems, balance development by enacting legal protections and governance for the Lower Congo, and ensure all contracts involving major infrastructure projects impacting the region include local stakeholders in planning and discussions; and
 - asks the SSC to send a memo to the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo urgently informing him of potential threats to the ecosystems of the Lower Congo based on the development plans for the dams.

Protecting Human, Animal, and Environmental Health, and Preventing Pandemics Through the One Health Approach and by Addressing the Drivers of Biodiversity Loss:

- In this resolution, the Congress calls on Members:
- and invites relevant UN and other international bodies, to promote national, regional and global policies, plans, approaches and potential future instruments and mechanisms to improve preparedness and response and prioritize the need to prevent future pandemics arising from zoonoses by addressing the drivers of biodiversity decline; and
 - to take a One Health approach so wildlife trade does not pose a significant risk to ecosystems, or to human or animal health.

The Congress also calls on Members and invites other governments and relevant stakeholders to urgently address the drivers causing significant risk of pathogen spillover, where relevant.

The resolution urges Members to, *inter alia*:

- promote urgent action on an ambitious One Health approach in key international events and processes notably in the post-2020 GBF at CBD COP 15, UNFCCC COP 26, and upcoming discussions on a potential international treaty on pandemics;
- strengthen measures to reduce the potential of pathogen spillover in human-animal interactions; and

- develop pathogen spillover prevention strategies that include reversing ecosystem loss and degradation and the recovery of ecosystem functions.

Protecting the Okavango from Oil and Gas Exploitation:

In the resolution, the Congress:

- urges Member States to ensure human rights and other international law obligations are a primary consideration in policies and decisions regarding oil and gas exploration and development, and other extractive activities;
- urges Member States to ensure decisions regarding oil and gas exploration and development and other extractive activities respect the right to FPIC; and
- calls on the governments of Botswana and Namibia to ensure strategic and comprehensive environmental impact assessments, *inter alia*, are conducted prior to further exploration and future development of oil and gas resources and other extractive activities in and/or affecting the Okavango River basin and its people.

Affirming the Right of IPLCs to Sustainably Manage and Utilize Wild Resources in the Context of COVID-19:

- In this resolution, the Congress urges:
- the Director General, Council and all IUCN constituents to ensure responses to COVID-19 and any future pandemics are well-considered and socially, economically, and environmentally just; and
 - all Members to ensure investments and implementation of post COVID-19 economic recovery initiatives are nature-positive and fully consider the rights of IPLCs to manage and benefit from natural resources.

The Congress also:

- calls on the Director General, Council, and all IUCN constituents to recognize the right of IPLCs to sustainably use and manage their natural resources, wild species of animals, plants and fungi, within the framework of wildlife and nature conservation laws of their respective countries;
- requests the IUCN Council and relevant Commissions to work on guidance to ensure the use, consumption, and trade of wild species is legal and effectively managed, sustainable, and poses no significant risk of pathogen spillover, with particular regard for the rights and needs of IPLCs; and
- encourages Members to apply rights-based approaches to conservation and advocate for conservation and public health measures and policies that consider the socio-economic, food security, cultural and ecological impacts of those actions for IPLCs.

Governance Motions

On Wednesday, Amran Hamzah, IUCN, provided updates on the work of the IUCN Governance Committee, reporting that the



Amran Hamzah, IUCN

Committee met to consider the 12 governance motions submitted before the meeting, and one new and urgent motion. Noting all motions were considered in contact groups, he said six were ready to be considered by the Assembly. Members voted and approved the following six motions:

- Establishment of an elected Indigenous Councillor position;
- Modification of the term “Regional Councillor;”
- Protection of the intellectual independence of the knowledge- and evidence-based work carried out by IUCN Commissions and the Secretariat;
- Role of Commissions in National and Regional Committees;
- Clarification of conditions for readmission of former State Members; and
- Functions of the IUCN Treasurer.

On Thursday, Amran Hamzah, IUCN Governance Committee, reported that of the remaining seven governance motions, three were ready for voting. Members voted and approved the motion on establishment of operating rules and oversight of National, Regional and Interregional Committees.

Regarding the motion on improvements to the motions process to cap the number of abstentions in order for a motion to be adopted, Hamzah said the contact group reached consensus to withdraw the motion. Following a vote, the Assembly decided to withdraw the motion.

Regarding the motion on improvements to the motions process regarding the majority required to adopt motions, Members voted to defer to the Council for further consideration.

On Friday, Amran Hamzah noted the motion on subnational governments’ membership to IUCN had been referred to a contact group for consideration with the main points of contention relating to the definition of subnational governments, which was revised and agreed, and the voting structure for this motion. He explained the contact group had revised text to give subnational governments a collective vote of one regardless of their number. Following a vote, the motion was adopted.

Hamzah then presented the amended motion on the election of Regional Councillors resident in dependent territories. PARA LA NATURALEZA stated that, as an independent territory at risk from climate change few ways often exist to participate in the Council, and asked for special classification for independent territories to elect Councillors. The amended motion was adopted.

Hamzah presented a motion on the development of a new 20-year Strategic Vision, inclusive of a financial strategy and strategic plan for the Union, with amended language from the contact group. The motion was adopted as amended.

Hamzah presented the new and urgent motion on enabling effective attendance and participation of Members in future sessions of the Congress, as amended by the contact group. The motion was adopted as amended.

The WILD FOUNDATION, on behalf of 17 member organizations, raised a point of order regarding the motion calling for an online vote on all motions following the Congress. He said, recognizing the extraordinary circumstances of this conference during the pandemic, the group is concerned about numerous inconsistencies including, *inter alia*, an apparent overreach of the Steering Committee, the fact that the relevant motion should have only needed a simple majority, and the disenfranchisement felt by many Members. He urged the Council to reflect on what happened at the Congress so this does not set a precedent, as the IUCN must remain united in its work.

Final Outcome

Including Subnational Governments in IUCN’s

Membership: The Congress adopts the following amendments to the Rules of Procedure and the Regulations:

- the resolution adds a new subcategory of Members within Category A to include States, government agencies and subnational governments;
- subnational governments are then defined as governmental entities at the state, provincial, local, territorial, or regional level that have been elected and have effective decision-making authority in the field of conservation and other relevant competencies;
- subnational governments are subsequently added to all listed references of Category A members; and
- the resolution grants one vote to the collective subnational government members within the State.

Election of Regional Councillors Resident in Dependent Territories: An adopted amendment to the Rules of Procedure and the Regulations stipulate that each region will have no more than one Regional Councillor from any one State. However, the resolution states this does not preclude Regional Councillors from the same State as a resident of a dependent territory of that State if nominated by Members of the region where the dependent territory is located.

Establishment of an Elected Indigenous Councillor

Position: The Congress adopts the following amendments to the Rules of Procedure and the Regulations:

- the Congress functions to elect multiple positions, including President, Treasurer, and the newly-established position of Indigenous Councillor;
- Members in Categories A, B, and C have the right to nominate candidates for this position to the Congress;
- the nominations of Indigenous Persons shall be made by five Members eligible to vote, of which at least two are Members of Category C, drawn from more than one State; and
- the Indigenous Councillor will be elected by the Congress.

Modification of the term “Regional Councillor”: The Congress amends the Rules of Procedure so that the term “Regional Councillor” is replaced by the term “Councillors elected from the Regions.”

To Protect the Intellectual Independence of the Knowledge-based and Evidence-based Work Carried Out by the

Commissions and Secretariat of IUCN: The Congress adopts the following amendments to the IUCN Statutes, which protect the intellectual independence and work of the Commissions. The first states that the IUCN may attain its objective by providing scientific information, including traditional ecological knowledge, in the form of assessments, analysis, and advice on the status and trends of nature, including, *inter alia*, on threats and future scenarios. The resolution also adds a requirement to uphold high standards of scientific work free from undue influence or conflict of interest.

Role of Commissions in National and Regional

Committees: The Congress adopts the following amendment to the IUCN Statutes, concerning the national and regional Committees and regional fora, namely that each Commission may nominate an official representative, resident in such a State or Region who may attend, and speak at, meetings of the governing bodies of the National and Regional Committees, without a right to vote.

Clarification of Conditions for Readmission of Former

State Members: The Congress adopts the following amendment to the IUCN Statutes and Regulations, concerning the readmission of Members: States or political and/or economic integration organizations may re-join IUCN by notifying the Director General of their adherence to the Statutes, effective upon payment of the first year’s membership dues. A government agency, national and international non-governmental organization, Indigenous Peoples’ organization and affiliate

meeting membership qualifications may be readmitted by the Council, after paying all outstanding dues.

Establishment of Operating Rules and Oversight of National, Regional, and Interregional Committees: The Congress is requested to, among others:

- acknowledge the outgoing IUCN Council for its reflections on requirements for establishing National Committees, Regional Committees and Interregional Committees;
- ask the next IUCN Council to study these reflections, in consultation with representatives from Members, National/Regional/Interregional Committees and the Global Group for National and Regional Committee Development; and
- authorize the next IUCN Council to develop proposals for consultation with Members and submission to an electronic vote by IUCN Members during the intersessional period.

Functions of the IUCN Treasurer: The Congress adopts a number of amendments to the IUCN Statutes and Regulations concerning the functions of the Treasurer. The amendments address the Treasurer's advice and report to the Congress, and assistance to the Council in its oversight function regarding the financial affairs of IUCN.

Development of a New 20-year Strategic Vision, Inclusive of a Financial Strategy, and Strategic Plan for the Union:

This resolution requests the Council to establish an intersessional working group including IUCN Members to lead and work with the Director General to undertake:

- a global analysis of IUCN to develop options to address points in the External Review of Aspects of IUCN's Governance;
- development of a long-term 20-year strategic vision that includes a financial strategy and strategic plan; and
- establishment of a road map to ensure the Union fulfils its mandated objectives.

The working group should consult with IUCN membership through the process and submit these outlined plans before the next Congress.

Enabling Effective Attendance and Participation of Members in Future Sessions of the Congress:

In this resolution, the Congress establishes an "Advisory Group for the Revision of the Statutes," to work on these relevant matters, and to better prepare future sessions of the Congress for extraordinary circumstances.

The Congress requests the Council to:

- ensure the financial support of Members for the next Congress session is not conditioned by their vote in the current session of Congress;
- prepare draft revisions to the IUCN Statutes and proposals to Members to enhance remote participation of Members and the use of online votes during Congress; and
- determine the composition of the newly established Advisory Group and announce its composition no more than three months after receipt of nominations.

Marseille Manifesto

On Friday, during the eighth Sitting of the Assembly, Jennifer Mohamed-Katerere presented the Marseille Manifesto (CGR-2021-11.1-1). She noted its explicit purpose was to communicate the conclusions and commitments from the Congress, and was not intended to be a policy statement. She remarked the Manifesto was developed in an inclusive manner in consultation with the Friends of the Chair committee, with 10 Members representing all regions. She said, for the first time, Congress outcomes focused on: capturing key commitments from Forum events; a bottom-up process to encourage ambitious commitments; and tracking and monitoring through the Contributions for Nature platform. Members listened to the reading of the Marseille Manifesto and welcomed it by acclamation.



Béragère Abba, Secretary of State for Biodiversity, France

Final Outcome: The Marseille Manifesto, which comes in the midst of a global pandemic, and escalating climate and biodiversity emergencies, notes that climate and biodiversity are not distinct but are rather two aspects of one crisis. The Manifesto highlights that humanity has reached a tipping point, and that our window of opportunity to respond to these interlinked emergencies is narrowing. The Manifesto also notes that fundamental change is needed to build societies that value, protect, and invest in nature in our collective future.

The Congress commits to respecting and harnessing the perspectives and agency of all citizens, pursuing collaboration and partnerships, and recognizing local action as a powerful tool for change.

On countering the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Congress encourages governments, civil society, and the private sector to: restore a positive relationship with nature and people by promoting investments in nature; transition to a nature-positive economy; and prioritize investments in nature that advance social justice and inclusion.

The Congress also commits to:

- halting biodiversity loss by committing to a transformative, effective, and ambitious post-2020 GBF; and
- confronting the risks and impacts of the climate emergency.

The Congress commits to the following actions:

- supporting the establishment and implementation of the Great Blue Wall Initiative;
- supporting and prioritizing the implementation of the first IUCN Global Indigenous Agenda for the Governance of Indigenous Lands, Territories, Waters, Coastal Seas and Natural Resources; and
- establishment of a partnership with the UNFCCC High-Level Champions for Climate Action to enhance and accelerate global and regional net-zero initiatives.

The Manifesto also details the following commitments made during the Congress:

- IUCN with over 30 subnational governments, cities, partner organizations: to expand universal access to high-quality green spaces and to enhance urban biodiversity in 100 cities;
- IUCN with Kering, Holcim, L'Occitane, LVMH, Pernod Ricard: to restore and enhance biodiversity through nature-positive corporate strategies and actions;
- Greece: to reduce overfishing by establishing no-takes zones in 10% of its territorial waters by 2030 and to reduce marine plastic pollution by 60%;
- El Salvador, Belize, Pakistan, Chile, and Région Sud, France: to restore a collective total of 5.5 million hectares, increasing the total Bonn Challenge commitments to over 215 million hectares;
- Germany: to allocate €20 million to IUCN to establish a Forest Landscape Restoration technical expert hub; and

- the International Hydropower Association: to a clear no-go commitment to operations within World Heritage Sites that is binding on all members.

In the Manifesto, the host country France commits to:

- achieve 30% of PAs nationally by 2022 and 5% of its Mediterranean maritime area under strong protection by 2027, 25 times more than the current area;
- help advance the international agenda for the protection of the ocean by organizing, in conjunction with the UN, a One Ocean Summit;
- accelerate the fight against imported deforestation and protect forests with the Alliance for the Conservation of Rainforests;
- promote a treaty on plastic pollution; and
- include financial risks linked to biodiversity loss in economic and financial analyses and strengthen investments favorable to biodiversity, particularly NbS.

Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony convened on Friday evening, 10 September. Following a video and a visual and music performance, Moderator Asha Sumputh, journalist, highlighted several achievements of the Congress, such as: four tuna species showing signs of recovery thanks to national action; the Marseille Manifesto; and the One Ocean Summit announced by French President Emmanuel Macron.

Bérangère Abba lamented the lack of progress on the post-2020 global biodiversity targets, saying that around 30% of species are threatened with extinction. Noting the room for progress is huge, she added that France will take up this global challenge, through actions such as protecting 30% of marine areas and tackling marine waste.

Bruno Oberle described the Congress as a unique environmental global parliament where all stakeholders have a voice. He said the decisions taken here will drive action to tackle the biodiversity and climate crises in the crucial decades to come. He stressed the time for fundamental changes is now. Oberle concluded by thanking the Secretariat staff and the Commissions, and honoring outgoing members of Council, Commission Chairs, Treasurer, and IUCN President.

In remarks to the Congress, Razan al Mubarak, IUCN Council President-elect, lauded Director General Oberle's success in leading IUCN through the pandemic. She stated the new Council should establish its commitment to nature. She underlined the need for the Council to be visionary, and take strong, bold, and ambitious steps to protect nature. Al Mubarak said caring for nature and biodiversity is our ethical duty. She urged those present to fight for nature for its own intrinsic value, not just what it does for humanity. She closed by calling on the conservation community to progress its mission with the sense of urgency that nature demands.

Benoît Payan, Mayor of Marseille, highlighted that local action is a powerful lever and cities can no longer be ignored in the fight against climate change, saying "we are the breeding ground for change." He welcomed the historic decision adopted in Marseille to include subnational governments as members of the Union and said Marseille would be the first member in this new category. He noted Marseille's commitments to go plastic-free, achieve carbon neutrality, develop urban agriculture, and protect 30% of its land and sea territories by 2030. He ended with a clear message from Marseille to the delegates of CBD COP15 in Kunming: "Hear us, get involved, the world is watching."

Didier Réault, Vice-Président, Aix-Marseille-Provence Métropole, expressed satisfaction and thanks for the work of four local entities and the government in making the Congress a resounding success. He thanked the Congress for supporting the motion tabled by France and highlighted successful local biodiversity conservation solutions.



Moderator **Asha Sumputh**, journalist

Anne Claudius-Petit, President of the Energy Transition, Waste Strategy, Air Quality Commission, Bouches-Du-Rhône Région, France, highlighted her region's upcoming work toward a Zero Plastic Mediterranean, the new full membership status of subnational representatives in IUCN, and a partnership with Costa Rica to promote increased protection of marine areas.

Outgoing IUCN President Zhang Xincheng said the 2021 Marseille Congress has shown resilience, being the first hybrid meeting of the Assembly, and is a true milestone for a future era of ecological civilization. He expressed confidence in his successor, expressing humility in handing over the baton to Razan Al Mubarak. The Congress, he said, has turned the pandemic and nature crisis into opportunities for transformational change. He lauded IUCN for achieving a successful meeting that recognizes the importance of partnership and the need to achieve integrated action for biodiversity and the climate change crisis.

President Zhang called on delegates to "forge ahead in action, action, action!" He declared the Congress closed at 22:03 CET.

Upcoming Meetings

International Co-ordinating Council of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB-ICC): The MAB-ICC is the governing body of the MAB Programme and, *inter alia*, assesses priorities, reviews progress made in implementing the Programme, and recommends future research projects. The MAB-ICC also decides on new biosphere reserves and takes note of recommendations on periodic reviews of biosphere reserves. **date:** 13-17 September 2021 **location:** Abuja, Nigeria, and online **www:** en.unesco.org/mab/icc

UN Food Systems Summit: As part of the UN Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs by 2030, the UN Food Systems Summit will provide a platform for ambitious new actions, innovative solutions, and plans to transform food systems and leverage these shifts to deliver progress across all the SDGs. It will be held during the UN General Assembly to set the stage for global food systems transformation. **date:** 23 September 2021 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/en/food-systems-summit

First Part of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP15): The first part of CBD COP15, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are scheduled to take place in a virtual format with limited onsite presence of delegates from embassies and organizations based in China. The first part will include the opening of the meetings and will address agenda items identified

by the Bureau as essential for continuing the operations of the Convention and its Protocols, including the budget. There will also be a High-level Segment on 12 and 13 October. **dates:** 11-15 October 2021 **location:** Kunming, China, and online **www:** cbd.int/meetings/COP-15

Twelfth WTO Ministerial Conference: The 12th Ministerial Conference will take place from 30 November to 3 December 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Conference was originally scheduled to take place from 8-11 June 2020 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Conference will touch on, among other things, plastic pollution. **dates:** 30 November to 3 December 2021 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/mc12_e/mc12_e.htm

UNFCCC COP 26: COP 26, the 16th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 16), and the third meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 3) will convene after being postponed by a year due to the pandemic. **dates:** 1-12 November 2021 **location:** Glasgow, Scotland, UK **www:** unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/glasgow-climate-change-conference

61st Meeting of the GEF Council: The Council, the GEF's main governing body, meets twice annually to develop, adopt, and evaluate the operational policies and programmes for GEF-financed activities. It also reviews and approves the GEF work programme (projects submitted for approval). **dates:** 7-9 December 2021 **location:** Washington, D.C., US **www:** thegef.org/council-meetings/gef-61st-council-meeting

Resumed Sessions of the CBD Subsidiary Bodies and WG-3 on the Post-2020 GBF: The resumed sessions of SBSTTA-24, SBI-3 and the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 GBF are scheduled to reconvene as face-to-face meetings and address, as a core topic, outstanding issues regarding the post-2020 GBF. **dates:** 12-28 January 2022 (TBC) **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** cbd.int/meetings

Resumed Fifth Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2): UNEA-5.2 will take place under the theme "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals." Its aim will be to connect and consolidate environmental actions within the context of sustainable development and motivate the sharing and implementation of successful approaches. At this Conference, UNEA will also discuss whether to establish an intergovernmental negotiating committee towards a new agreement on marine litter and plastic pollution. The in-person session of UNEA-5 will be followed by a Special Session of the UNEA (UNEA-SS), on 3-4 March 2022, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP in 1972. **date:** 28 February to 2 March 2022 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea5

CITES SC74: The 74th meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will meet either in person or in a hybrid format in early 2022 or online in the late fall/winter of 2021/2022. **dates:** 2021/2022 TBD **location:** TBD **www:** www.cites.org

Second Part of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP15): The second part of CBD COP15, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are scheduled to reconvene in a face-to-face meeting in Kunming, China. COP15 is expected to take a final decision on the post-2020 GBF, as well as decisions on related topics, including capacity building and resource mobilization. **dates:** 25 April to 8 May 2022 **location:** Kunming, China **www:** cbd.int/meetings/

CITES CoP19: The 19th meeting of the COP to CITES will meet in 2022. **dates:** 2022 (TBD) **location:** TBD **www:** www.cites.org

For additional upcoming events, see sdg.iisd.org/

Glossary

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEESP	Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COICA	Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon River Basin
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSC	Congress Steering Committee
FAC	Finance and Audit Committee
FPIC	free, prior and informed consent
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GYBN	Global Youth Biodiversity Network
GYS	Global Youth Summit
IPACC	Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities
IPO	Indigenous Peoples Organization
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
MPA	Marine protected area
NbS	Nature-based solutions
NRDC	Natural Resources Defense Council
PA	Protected area
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNEA	UN Environment Assembly
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas