

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY
CAUCUS MODEL
FOR CONSERVATION**





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COVER: Exotic jungle tropical palm leaves design. // Image credit: by [ludmila_m](#) @ Adobe Stock.
LEFT: Dome of the United States Congress. // Photo credit: by [trekandphoto](#) @ Adobe Stock.

CAUCUS BASICS

DEFINING A CAUCUS

A CAUCUS IS AN INFORMAL GROUP OF MEMBERS OF A PARTICULAR LEGISLATIVE BODY, ORGANIZED AROUND A SHARED POLICY INTEREST OR CONCERN - IN THIS CASE, CONSERVATION. LEGISLATORS DO NOT NEED TO BE MEMBERS OF THE RELATED LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE OR COMMISSION, AS LONG AS THEY ARE INTERESTED IN THE SPECIFIC TOPIC.

The caucus provides a space for dialogue between legislators holding differing policy positions through which they can explore innovative, nonpartisan solutions and achieve consensus, serve as a forum to provide access to the best conservation governance solutions, and provide opportunities for policymakers to experience conservation realities first-hand.

Pioneered in the United States Congress in 2006, the International Conservation Caucus with the ICCF as its Secretariat became one of the largest and most bipartisan groups in the U.S. Congress, inspiring the adoption of the model internationally. Caucuses can go by other names (parliamentary forums, groups, etc.) and when supported by the ICCF Group become part of a network of conservation caucuses around the world.

RIGHT: ICCF CEO John B. Gantt addresses co-chairs of the U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus.





THE MODEL IN ACTION

THE FIRST CAUCUS IN AFRICA

THE PARLIAMENTARY CONSERVATION CAUCUS - KENYA (PCC-K)

The PCC-K is the first established international conservation caucus in Africa. Since 2012, the caucus works to ensure Kenya maintains a balance between economic development and conservation. Leadership has prioritized the harmonization of wildlife, water management, forestry, and fisheries laws.

IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

THE ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
ON INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM (APPG FOR
INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION)

Launched in June 2020, the APPG has quickly become a critical vehicle for international engagement within the global network of conservation caucuses, especially on global conservation challenges such as biodiversity loss, sustainable marine management, and species conservation.

LEFT: The Hon. Rozaah Akinyi Buyu, Member of Parliament, Kenya, addresses audience during the Legal Foundations for Transboundary Marine Conservation Summit.

RIGHT: Rt Hon Barry Gardiner, MP, addresses audience at a COP26 side event, organized by ICCF-UK in Glasgow, Scotland.





CORE TENETS OF CAUCUSES FOR CONSERVATION

CONSERVATION CAUCUSES TAKE ON WHATEVER FORM IS DEEMED SUITABLE TO THE HOST COUNTRY, WITH A FEW CENTRAL TENETS THAT ENSURE SUCCESS:

NONPARTISANSHIP

The inclusion of all political parties ensures the democratic nature of conservation caucuses and fosters rich and productive dialogue on issues of conservation.

backgrounds so that a constructive dialogue can be held and members can learn more about the positions held by their peers.

MEMBER-DRIVEN AGENDAS

While the Secretariat supports the caucus and stakeholders participate in caucus activities, the agenda and focus areas for all caucus meetings and activities are decided by the caucus members themselves.

NONEXCLUSIVE

Membership in conservation caucuses is not “capped” at any particular number and remains inclusive of all political parties and

LEFT: Latin American caucus co-chairs participate in a regional workshop on IUU Fishing, hosted by ICCF in Washington, D.C.



THE MODEL IN ACTION

BRIDGING PARTIES IN PERU

THE PERUVIAN CONSERVATION CAUCUS (PCC)

The PCC provides a strong example of the cross-party relationships that can be fostered by the nonpartisan model of conservation caucuses; members from polarized parties have been able to collaborate through caucus activities on important national environmental issues. The achievements from this cross-party collaboration include bans on single-use plastics and jointly signing the Declaration of Mount Vernon in 2018.


LEFT: Old belvedere and flag from Peru on Plaza de Armas, Lima.
Photo credit: by [piccaya](#) @ Adobe Stock.

SETTING CONSERVATION AGENDAS IN NAMIBIA

THE NAMIBIA CONSERVATION PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS (NACOPAC)

The NACOPAC exemplifies the member-driven-agenda tenet, having drafted and published a comprehensive list of caucus priorities at its launch in 2012; NACOPAC's work on the National Parks and Wildlife Act and the Human-Wildlife Conflict Policy resulted in buy-in to facilitate comprehensive stakeholder engagement to support the review and development of both policies.

RIGHT: A red sand dune in the Namib Desert, Sossusvlei, Namibia. // Photo credit: by [Stephen](#) @ Adobe Stock.



THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES

WHILE THE CAUCUS DOES NOT DIRECTLY VOTE ON LEGISLATION, ITS AGENDA AND PROGRAMS HAVE AN IMMENSE IMPACT ON AWARENESS AND CONSENSUS-BUILDING WITHIN THE LEGISLATURE, ADVANCING A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUES AND DRIVING POLICIES FORWARD.

There is no quorum within the caucus model, and a meeting of the caucus may proceed regardless of the overall attendance. In cases where attendance is so low that it affects the ability to have a meaningful discussion, it is at the discretion of the co-chairs of the caucus to reschedule the meeting if warranted. The lack of an upper limit to membership and event attendance creates opportunities for more inclusive dialogue and consensus on conservation policy than may exist within environmental committees or commissions.

Although conservation caucuses cannot vote on legislation as a body, the model has proven to be an effective vehicle for consensus building and policy action.

RIGHT: Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, CEO & Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) highlights the importance of policy coherence across borders to caucus leaders from around the world, at an ICCF roundtable event in Washington, D.C.



CAUCUS STRUCTURE

LEADERSHIP

To foster nonpartisanship, caucuses are led by Co-Chairs from various political parties. They oversee the caucus' agenda and serve as its representatives at international events hosted by the ICCF Group.

LEADERSHIP SELECTION

Upon founding a caucus, chairpersons may be self-appointed. Once a caucus is active, co-chairs are either selected by the ongoing caucus leadership or its general member body.

NUMBER OF CAUCUS LEADERS

The number of Chairpersons will differ for each country, depending upon the structure of

the Parliament and the needs of the members.


At least two chairpersons are recommended, each representing a different political party.


TERM LENGTH OF CAUCUS LEADERS


The term length of Co-Chairs is decided by the caucus membership. This will vary depending on the country and its election cycle for parliamentary seats.

THE MODEL IN ACTION

LEADERSHIP MODELS

 **FROM THE U.S.:** The United States Congressional Senate and House Oceans Caucuses have two Co-Chairs each (one from each major political party). The Senate Oceans Caucus also has two honorary Co-Chairs who serve as Chair and Ranking of the Senate Commerce Oceans Subcommittee. New House Co-Chairs are appointed by previous Co-Chairs at the end of their terms. Honorary Senate Co-Chairs are re-appointed with each new election cycle based on committee assignments and approval of the two standing Senate Co-Chairs.

 **TO THAILAND:** The Kingdom of Thailand Senate Conservation Caucus has one Founding Chairman who helped launch the Caucus in 2020, and two Vice-Chairmen who lead the Caucus.

 **TO MOZAMBIQUE:** The Mozambique Parliamentary Forum on Conservation has five different Co-Chairs who are automatically appointed based on leadership in Mozambique's Environment Committee, a unique feature not shared by any other conservation caucus.

MEMBERSHIP

ANY ACTIVE/CURRENT LEGISLATIVE MEMBER IS ELIGIBLE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CONSERVATION CAUCUS.

The caucus is intended to be all-inclusive of the perspectives held by all parties so that a constructive dialogue can be held and members can learn more about the positions held by their peers. In this way, the caucus model can help in building a greater understanding of various positions and identifying where consensus lies.

Members do not need a specific background in environmental studies or conservation. Any and all backgrounds are welcome. In fact, the diversity of backgrounds and perspectives makes for a more rewarding and substantive dialogue, particularly in how natural resource management can affect other national development goals, such as the creation of jobs, poverty alleviation, national security, and disaster risk reduction.



THE MODEL IN ACTION

THE LARGEST CONSERVATION CAUCUSES

THE ZAMBIA PARLIAMENTARY CONSERVATION CAUCUS (ZPCC)

The ZPCC is currently the largest caucus in Africa, with over 80 Members from Parliament, including the Minister of Home Affairs, Minister of Luapula Province, Minister of Local Government & Housing, and Minister of Information, demonstrating the range of backgrounds and expertise that can support the caucus agenda.

THE COLOMBIAN CONSERVATION CAUCUS (CCC)

The CCC has grown to over fifty members since its founding in 2012; following engagement with the U.S. Congressional Oceans Caucus, key members also launched a Colombian Oceans Caucus in 2017 to focus specifically on marine conservation issues, highlighting the positive outcomes that come from engagement within the global network of conservation caucuses.

LEFT: Columns at the U.S. Supreme Court. Photo credit: by [renaschild](#) @ Adobe Stock.



SECRETARIAT

EACH CAUCUS SECRETARIAT IS AN INDEPENDENTLY REGISTERED AND MANAGED NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION WITHIN THE ICCF GROUP NETWORK.

The ICCF Group serves as the Secretariat for conservation caucuses in countries spanning the United States, Africa, Latin America & the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, and the United Kingdom.

THE SECRETARIAT DOES NOT LOBBY; ITS PURPOSE IS TO SUPPORT THE AGENDA AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAUCUS BY:

- Serving as strategic advisors to help develop caucus agendas
- Acting as organizational staff for caucus activities and events
- Coordinating caucus engagement with key stakeholders and experts

LEFT: Jill Barasa, Program Director for ICCF Africa, at an international reunion of caucus leaders in Washington, D.C.



THE MODEL IN ACTION

CAUCUS SECRETARIATS AROUND THE WORLD

ICCF Colombia, ICCF Kenya, and ICCF Indonesia are locally registered nonprofit entities in the respective countries with multiple full-time staff members to support the caucuses. Each of these Secretariats is connected to the ICCF Group headquarters in Washington, D.C. but has its own bank account and can accept funding and support at the local level. The ICCF Group in Washington, D.C. serves as the Secretariat for many other caucuses, hiring in-country staff to support the activities of the conservation caucuses but overseeing operations from Washington, D.C. Caucuses in Botswana, Mexico, Mozambique, and Tanzania operate this way.

ABOVE: Deputy Marcela Guerra, Vicepresident of Mexico's Congress and founder and co-chair of Mexico's Conservation Caucus, giving remarks at the launch event of Mexico's new Ocean Caucus.

STAKEHOLDERS

A BRAINTRUST OF AGENCIES FROM NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS, LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION NGOS, LEADERS ACROSS INDUSTRIES, AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS COMMITTED TO THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL CAPITAL.

Organizations interested in supporting the caucus' mission and goals can become official partners of the conservation caucus.

Partners collaborate with the caucus and provide technical support/expertise through a variety of programs, including the development of sector-specific strategies, educational briefings, training workshops, field missions, and legislative/policy reviews. Rather than setting the agenda, partners draw on their expertise to add value to the caucus' priorities and work plan and have the opportunity to initiate impactful public-private partnerships through engagement with the caucuses.

The Secretariat will coordinate the engagement between the caucus and the caucus partners from an organizational standpoint, providing the staff and logistical capacity to organize/structure programs and advance projects. Newly formed conservation caucuses will have the benefit of access to global stakeholders of the network of conservation caucuses supported by the ICCF Group.

THE MODEL IN ACTION

CRITICAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Mexican Conservation Parliamentary Group (MCPG) exemplifies the strong network of stakeholders that enrich caucus events, convening government agencies, nonprofits, and private-sector actors together with the caucus to engage in complex conservation challenges. For example, the caucus partnered with Política y Legislación Ambiental A.C. (POLEA), WWF, and Pronatura to conduct a field mission with caucus members from Colombia and Mexico to community forestry sites and natural protected areas to identify opportunities where policy can support sustainable economic development in the context of the post-pandemic green recovery.

The United States International Conservation Caucus (ICC) has a Conservation Council of partners from a variety of sectors, some offering the latest science, others sharing practical know-how to build community-based conservation projects through public-private partnerships. All offer unique perspectives and share a common desire to implement conservation projects safeguarding wildlife and biodiversity, protecting and restoring habitats, and generating economic opportunities and social benefits for surrounding communities who are necessarily the long-term stewards of local natural resources.



GLOBAL NETWORK

ICCF GROUP SUPPORTS CONSERVATION CAUCUSES AROUND THE WORLD AND INCREASINGLY CONNECTS MEMBERS OF CONSERVATION CAUCUSES FROM DIFFERENT NATIONS TO SHARE EXPERIENCES AND BEST PRACTICES REGARDING CONSERVATION CHALLENGES AND POLICY SOLUTIONS.

These exchanges take many forms but have included international bilateral exchanges, delegations to international conferences and summits, and invitations to attend ICCF International Conservation Galas in Washington. These exchanges and delegations are all supported by the ICCF Group, as the Caucus Secretariat.

LEFT: Senator Nelsinho Trad launches "Caucus Brazil" in the Brazilian Congress, with the support of the ICCF Group.

THE MODEL IN ACTION

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

SUPPORTED THROUGH ENGAGEMENT OF THE GLOBAL NETWORK OF CONSERVATION CAUCUSES

ARUSHA DECLARATION

The ICCF Group, collaborating with governments in East and Southern Africa, supported the development and signing of the Arusha Declaration, alongside key development partners, including the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the United Nations Development Programme, and the U.S. Department of State. Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, South Sudan, and Zambia have all signed on to date.

MOUNT VERNON SUMMIT

At the conclusion of the Summit, at the historic home of George Washington in Virginia, legislative leaders representing ten countries across Africa and Latin America signed the Declaration of Mount Vernon, committing to promote conservation and the sustainable utilization of natural resources.

JOIN A GLOBAL PROGRAM

There is no single process to establish a caucus due to national differences and an emphasis on a country-driven process. In most cases, however, the caucus formation is initiated by two or more members from different parties that recognize value in the model and take on the task of recruiting members from various parties to launch the caucus. Often these leaders become the Founding Co-Chairs of the caucus; following the launch event, the members discuss and agree upon the caucus structure and function with the support and guidance of the ICCF Group.

RIGHT: The ICCF Group hosts international delegation of parliamentarians in Washington, D.C.



PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION



Our partners offer unique perspectives and share a common desire to implement conservation projects safeguarding wildlife and biodiversity, protecting and restoring habitats, and generating economic opportunities and social benefits for surrounding communities who are necessarily the long-term stewards of local natural resources.



REQUEST SUPPORT FROM THE ICCF GROUP

CONTACT US

The ICCF Group

25786 Georgetown Station
Washington, D.C., 20007

Email address:

hq@iccfoundation.us

Telephone number:

(202) 471-4222



INTERNATIONALCONSERVATION.ORG

Visit our website, where you can find additional information on the various country approaches and legislative achievements of the conservation caucus model under specific program pages.

LEFT: Colombian Member of Congress Dr. Julia Miranda welcomes International Conservation Corps member and former Chief of Interpretive Planning at NPS Sam Vaughn at an ICCF workshop for park rangers.

ABOVE: ICCF hosts exchange between President of Colombia and Co-Chairs of the caucuses ICCF supports in the United States Congress.

