



INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

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BANGKOK, THAILAND

▶ THAILAND LAUNCHES SENATE CONSERVATION CAUCUS

On February 13th, 2020 in Bangkok, Senator General Surasak Karnjanarat announced the opening of a new Senate Conservation Caucus (SCC) in the Senate



of the Kingdom of Thailand, which will be supported by ICCF acting as the secretariat.

SENATOR SURASAK WILL SERVE AS THE FOUNDING CHAIRMAN OF THE NEW CAUCUS

The caucus will initially be comprised of twelve key Senators from across multiple committees, committed to working toward the good management of Thailand's terrestrial and marine natural resources across political lines. Chairman Surasak emphasized that our ancestors have preserved Thailand's natural resources for the benefit of people, and that everyone should work together in a collaborative fashion to ensure that future generations are able to benefit from Thailand's tremendous natural heritage. In particular, there is every reason why legislators from all political parties should work with each other and with other stakeholders to ensure policymaking is informed by best practices and the latest research and information. ICCF President John Gantt delivered a presentation highlighting the achievement of the caucuses that ICCF supports globally and our model of supporting policymaker leadership and working in a multi-partisan fashion to build political will.

Senator Weerasak Kowsurat, the former Minister of Tourism and Sports, led a panel discussion featuring Senator Pisan Manawapat, the former Ambassador of Thailand to the United States, Amata Chairman Mr. Vikrom Kromadit, ICCF President John Gantt, and ICCF Director Todd Koenigs, which featured a lively discussion of the benefits of international cooperation between legislative bodies, as well as strengthening Thailand's first national park, Khao Yai. Senator Pisan, drawing upon his long experience working with ICCF in Washington, D.C. as the former Ambassador, outlined the opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations between the United States, Thailand, and

LEFT: AMATA CHAIRMAN MR. VIKROM KROMADIT ATTENDING THE CAUCUS LAUNCH EVENT

other countries through engagements between the Senate Conservation Caucus in Thailand and the U.S. caucuses and international counterparts. The Senators and ICCF engaged in dialogue with many private-sector, multilateral, government, and non-profit stakeholders present through a Q&A session focusing on leveraging public-private partnerships for both economic and community development, as well as conservation.

JAN. 16, 2020 - REDMOND, WASHINGTON

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: MICROSOFT ANNOUNCES IT WILL BE CARBON NEGATIVE BY 2030



Microsoft Corp. announced an ambitious goal and a new plan to reduce and ultimately remove its carbon footprint. At an event at its Redmond campus, Microsoft Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella, President Brad Smith, Chief Financial Officer Amy Hood, and Chief Environmental Officer Lucas Joppa announced the company's new goals and a detailed plan to become carbon negative.

"While the world will need to reach net zero, those of us who can afford to move faster and go further should do so. That's why today we are announcing an ambitious goal and a new plan to reduce and ultimately remove Microsoft's carbon footprint," said Microsoft President Brad Smith. "By 2030 Microsoft will be carbon negative, and by 2050 Microsoft will remove from the environment all the carbon the company has emitted either directly or by electrical consumption since it was founded in 1975."

The company announced an aggressive program to cut carbon emissions by more than half by 2030, both for direct emissions and for its entire supply and value chain. This includes driving down direct emissions and emissions related to the energy it uses to near zero by the middle of this decade. It also announced a new initiative to use Microsoft technology to help suppliers and customers around the world reduce their own carbon footprints and a new \$1 billion climate innovation fund to accelerate the global development of carbon reduction, capture and removal technologies. Beginning next year, the company will also make carbon reduction an explicit aspect of the procurement processes for its supply chain. A new annual Environmental Sustainability Report will detail Microsoft's carbon impact and reduction journey. And lastly, the company will use its voice and advocacy to support public policy that will accelerate carbon reduction and removal opportunities.



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

MARCH 10, 2020 - WASHINGTON, D.C.

AT ANNUAL MEETING, CO-CHAIRS CELEBRATE BIPARTISAN SUCCESS, LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE

Gathered on March 10th in the US Capitol for ICCF's annual Conservation Council Luncheon, co-chairs of the International Conservation and Oceans Caucuses spoke to members of ICCF's Conservation Council of business, NGO, embassy,

and multilateral partners.

The event highlighted successful bipartisan initiatives of caucus leaders, including:

INCREASING OVERALL FUNDING FOR INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION

"Let me just say this, that 2020 saw Congress appropriate more conservation dollars than ever in the history of the country," said Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), co-chair of the Senate International Conservation Caucus, "and I think that is a significant thing."

"This year I would say [that] thanks to a lot of people in this room the international conservation appropriations is at an all time high, so give yourselves a round of applause for that," said Senator Rob Portman (R-OH), co-chair of the Senate International Conservation Caucus. "So we're on our way, thank you, and let's continue to build on our successes."



ABOVE: SENATOR ROB PORTMAN (R-OH) HIGHLIGHTING THE RECENT SUCCESSSES IN ALLOCATING FEDERAL RESOURCES FOR INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION



REAUTHORIZATION OF THE MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUNDS SEMIPOSTAL STAMP ACT AND THE TROPICAL FOREST CONSERVATION ACT

"I want to just share a couple of recent successes that include fiscal year 2020 language in the appropriations bill requiring the US Postal Service to issue the wildly popular international species stamp to raise money for conservation," said

Senator Tom Udall (D-NM), founding co-chair of the International Conservation Caucus. "We also want to celebrate the reauthorization of the Tropical Forest Conservation Act. Swapping debt for nature is a win-win, absolutely no doubt about it."

AND PASSAGE OF THE SAVE OUR SEAS ACT

"I am pleased that, last Congress, we were all able to work with our Senate Oceans Caucus champions to pass the Save Our Seas Act," said Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), co-chair of the House Oceans Caucus. "It was a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the NOAA Marine Debris Program."

"And it is not just a letterhead caucus," said Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), co-chair of the Senate International Conservation Caucus and founding co-chair of the Senate Oceans Caucus. "It is a working caucus producing bills, treaties, legislation."

ABOVE: REPRESENTATIVE SUZANNE BONAMICI (D-OR) ADDRESSES MEMBERS OF THE ICCF CONSERVATION COUNCIL



"To those of you who support ICCF and OCF," he continued, "I want to let you know that your support is really making a difference. They make it work. They are getting significant bipartisan things done. This is as vitriolic and toxic an environment as I have experienced and yet when it comes to conservation and oceans because of this group bringing people together we are making constant, steady, and reliable progress. So to those of you who have supported ICCF and OCF, keep it up, thank you, your investment is paying off."

Looking forward, co-chairs emphasized the importance of bipartisanship and the unique forum the International Conservation and Oceans Caucuses provide for bipartisan collaboration, identifying some shared priorities for the remainder of the 116th Congress and beyond.

"The other couple of things I wanted to just mention is the bipartisanship of this group," said Senator Udall. "On the Senate side, with Senator Portman and many, many other Republicans, with whom we've really worked together in a bipartisan way, which I think sets a tremendous example around the world. Dave [Barron] and John [Gantt] and I talked about the idea of having conservation caucuses in other legislatures around the world and in other parliaments, and we've done an



ABOVE (RIGHT): SENATOR TOM UDALL (D-NM) | ABOVE (LEFT): SENATOR RICHARD BURR (R-NC)



incredible job at that."

"I've talked about this many times at these gatherings, but it is an unusual organization, I would say even unique, in the degree to which it brings together Republicans and Democrats and the private sector to do good things," said Senator Portman. "I mean, where else do you see Don Young and the most liberal democrats all working together?"

"Taking meaningful action to protect and preserve our planet should not be, and often is not, a partisan issue," said Representative Bonamici. "I've always worked in a bipartisan manner, and I will always look for areas where we can find agreement to move good policy. And, the House Oceans Caucus has identified several priorities this Congress, including addressing environmental stressors like ocean acidification, harmful algal blooms, hypoxia, marine debris, ocean data and monitoring, coastal resiliency, and IUU fishing."

"For the first time I think you see us acknowledge that there's a direct link between conservation and national security," said Senator Burr, "and I think that's an important place to put it in for us to even do greater partnerships and targeted increase in funding in the future."

CO-CHAIRS ARE LEADING ON A NUMBER OF PIECES OF PENDING LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES LIKE MARINE DEBRIS, WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING, AND DEFORESTATION, AMONG OTHERS

"Now, we've introduced Save Our Seas 2.0 to continue to address this pervasive threat of plastic pollution in the ocean," said Representative Bonamici. "This bipartisan bill will accelerate the efforts to clean up marine debris in the ocean, and we're working to move it quickly through the House. It has passed the Senate, and we're doing everything we can to make sure we can get this done on the House side as well. And it's looking very promising."



"I'm one that believes in the oceans," said Representative Don Young (R-AK), co-chair of the House Oceans Caucus. "We're working with my colleagues and with the Senate on it - I'd like to thank the Senator [Whitehouse] and Senator Dan Sullivan also for their work in getting [Save Our Seas] passed out of the Senate."

Said Senator Whitehouse: "Senator Lindsey

ABOVE (LEFT): REPRESENTATIVE DON YOUNG (R-AK)
ABOVE (RIGHT): SENATOR SHELDON WHITEHOUSE (D-RI)



Graham has just given us a date for an appropriations hearing on an international marine plastics waste fund that he would like to see get through the Appropriations Committee."

"The Blue Globe Act," Senator Whitehouse added, "which is our big ocean data bill, has a markup agreed to in the Senate Commerce Committee. They just had to move the date we were given, but we have a markup commitment. And that's always the key step before you can move the bill to the floor, so we're super excited about that."

"We want to reauthorize the wildlife trafficking act, we want to reauthorize tropical forest conservation," said Senator Burr, "but the thing that I want to highlight is that we're on the verge, probably the week after we get back, of permanently funding the LWCF effort in America. People said it could never be done; they said we couldn't permanently reauthorize it, and as soon as we did that, people said that we couldn't permanently fund it. And I've really gotten accustomed to jamming things down people's throat that say it can't be done, but truthfully we couldn't have done it if it wasn't for you and for others."





NATURE'S CHAMBERS

APPROVED REFORM TO MEXICO'S FORESTRY LAW



On February 27th, the Mexican Chamber of Deputies unanimously approved a series of reforms to the General Law of Forestry that redefine key terms in the law to both broaden the scope of its impact and also adhere to international standards. The reforms were presented in June 2019 by Senators Susana Harp and Eduardo Murat, Co-Presidents of the Mexican Conservation Parliamentary Group.

NEW LEGISLATION OFFERS LIFELINE TO MALAWI'S FORESTS

On February 13, 2020, the National Assembly of Malawi passed the Forestry Act Amendment Bill – a critical turning point for environmental protection in Malawi. This exciting milestone has been a long time coming, given that the Forestry Act was last updated in 1997.

The new Act offers a range of increased protections, such as better regulation of charcoal; increased transparency and accountability in the Forestry Sector; increased conservation efforts with broadened management options for the government; better regulation and law enforcement; enhanced penalties and fines; and the provision of a forest development and management fund.

Work to update Malawi's forestry legislation started in 2017 and has been led by the Department of Forestry and supported by USAID through the PERFORM project. In 2018, ICCF's on-the-ground partner, the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (LWT), joined these efforts through work with the Malawi Parliamentary Conservation Caucus (MPCC).

LWT Project Manager Yolanda Ng'oma was in Parliament for the passing of the Act on 14 February and said: "Deforestation in Malawi has reached devastating levels, which is why this new legislation is so important. It's a clear signal that Malawi is serious about protecting one of its most endangered natural resources. We're absolutely thrilled that the Bill was passed with such resounding support and look forward to working with our partners to build a more sustainable forestry sector."

Forestry is a critical environmental and economic issue for Malawi. According to the World Bank, more than half of Malawi's forests and woodlands have vanished over the last 40 years, and those that remain are being 'thinned' through over-extraction and more frequent forest fires. Yet, forests make a substantial contribution to livelihoods and the economy and are needed to protect vital ecosystem services. Going forward, MPCC with support from LWT/ICCF will work to ensure that the provisions in the Act are translated into real protection for Malawi's forests.

YOUTUBE SPOTLIGHT

VISION 2030 INTERNATIONAL PAPER

Q&A WITH SOPHIE BECKHAM
CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL PAPER

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VISION 2030

Vision 2030 is International Paper's commitment to building a better future for people, the planet and our company. Sustainability is about the interdependence between people, the planet, profits, and our products. Our four goals will help us drive sustainable outcomes for people, communities, the environment, and our customers.



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- **Healthy & Abundant Forests:** Lead forest stewardship efforts globally. Our goal is to source 100% of our fiber from sustainably managed forests or recovered fiber while safeguarding forests, watersheds and biodiversity. In addition, we will strive to conserve 1 million acres of ecologically significant forestland.
- **Thriving People & Communities:** Promote employee well-being by providing safe, caring and inclusive workplaces and strengthen the resilience of our communities. Our goal is to achieve zero injuries for employees and contractors and to improve the lives of 100 million people in our communities.
- **Sustainable Operations:** Improve our climate impact and advance water stewardship. We set an ambitious target to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by 35% and reduce our water use by 25%.
- **Renewable Solutions:** Accelerate the transition to a lower-carbon economy through innovative fiber-based products. We strive to advance circular solutions throughout our value chain and create innovative products that are 100% reusable, recyclable, or compostable.

For more information on International Paper's Vision 2030, please visit internationalpaper.com/vision-2030



LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

FEBRUARY 24, 2020 - SAINT LUCIA

THE ICCF GROUP CARIBBEAN PROGRAM LAUNCHES IN SAINT LUCIA AND ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

The ICCF Group has been awarded a three-year grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as executing agency to advance conservation in the Eastern Caribbean countries of Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Lucia.

The project will support national-level parliamentary conservation caucuses in each country, as well as build capacity to support the management of critical protected areas. The ICCF Group launched its program in Saint Lucia and Antigua & Barbuda this past month, holding initial inception workshops in each country.

A large number of stakeholders were present at the launch in Saint Lucia on February 7th, which was co-hosted by the Ministry of Sustainable Development and UNEP. The workshop began with introductory remarks by Caroline Eugene, Permanent Secretary for Hon. Gale T.C. Rigobert, Minister of Sustainable Development and Gender Equity, and continued with a substantive discussion on the project goals and workplan. Participants also included representatives from the Fisheries Division, the OECS Secretariat, the Caribbean Challenge Initiative, the Department of Physical Planning, and the International Conservation Corps.

Participants voiced support for a nonpartisan

conservation caucus in Saint Lucia's parliament, and a discussion on work by the International Conservation Corps to support natural resources management in the Iyanola Region resulted in a decision to support a Voluntary Protection Agreement for private estates in the Iyanola Region through a management plan for the Grand Anse Estate. Following the workshop, the International Conservation Corps conducted a field mission to the Grand Anse Estate on February 10th with the Ministry of Sustainable Development to conduct a baseline analysis.

During the project launch in Antigua and Barbuda on February 11th, Hon. Molwyn Joseph, Antigua and Barbuda's Minister of Health, Wellness, and the Environment, officially endorsed the conservation caucus in the national parliament, calling on the rest of the Cabinet for endorsement, and identified initial priority agenda areas. Followup meetings with additional stakeholders indicated widespread support for the conservation caucus, and numerous conservation topics for the future caucus agenda. These topics include celebrating achievements in reducing plastic waste and no-waste initiatives, addressing sustainable water usage, and supporting sustainable tourism.

The inception workshop for the protected areas management support in Antigua & Barbuda occurred on Monday, February 17th following

a field mission by the International Conservation Corps to Codrington Lagoon National Park for a baseline analysis and extensive consultations with the Park Manager. Additional participants at this inception workshop included members of the Barbuda Council, the Department of Environment, and the Fisheries Division, and the outcome was general support for the revision of Codrington Lagoon National Park's Management Plan, and the drafting of a supporting implementation plan for the park.

The successful launch of the Caribbean program in Antigua & Barbuda and Saint Lucia lays a strong foundation for The ICCF Group's continued work to support international conservation caucuses. The general support for conservation caucuses, engagement of stakeholders, and baseline analyses for the protected areas management work all indicate the strong potential for the program. The ICCF Group looks forward to hosting launch events in Dominica and Grenada in the coming months.





FEBRUARY - MARCH, 2020

AMAZON COMMITTEE OF THE COLOMBIAN CONGRESS AND FUNDACIÓN ICCF COLOMBIA, WORKING TOGETHER

In September 2019, the Leticia Pact was signed between the Heads of State of Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Suriname, Guyana, and Bolivia.

This is a commitment to protect this region, since maintaining the supply of fresh water is one of the main challenges for our planet in the next decade.

The global water cycle is deeply related to the

Amazon rainforest, which is the most important fresh water stream on the planet, providing 20% of total fresh water. Its water flows and reserves help regulate the Earth's climate and are essential for the prosperity of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, as well as for food and energy security.

ABOVE: AUTHOR DIEGO PÉREZ - IAPA PROJECT. TITLE: THE BEST ROOFS ARE PALM. COUNTRY: PERU

THE AMAZON PARLIAMENTARY LEAGUE WILL BE A BREAKTHROUGH IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA, BASED ON INVESTMENT IN BIO-ECONOMICS, INVESTIGATION, AND REAL RECOVERY OF THE AMAZON RAINFOREST AND ITS ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES.

To assist in complying with the 16 points agreed to by the Heads of State in the Leticia Pact, the Amazon Caucus in Colombia, led by the President of the House of Representatives, Carlos Alberto Cuenca Chau; Peruvian and Ecuadorian parliamentarians; and ICCF, undertook a joint

work agenda to generate a legislative scenario of political impact with continental reach. One of the main objectives is the formation of the Amazon Parliamentary League, which would bring together parliamentarians from all the countries in the region that make up the Amazon biome.

AS A PRELUDE TO WHAT WILL BE THE LAUNCH OF THE AMAZON PARLIAMENTARY LEAGUE, WORK IS BEING DONE ON THE STRATEGY CALLED "THE AMAZON TAKES THE FLOOR: SCIENCE, ART, AND THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA"

It is a series of academic, political and cultural activities, intended to make the Amazon more visible in legislatures. The aim is to portray the region's challenges through a photographic exhibition; open academic spaces for discussion; generate debates of political control; and create spaces for new bills that provide solutions to these problems. This agenda of activities is to include face-to-face legislative sessions of the Congress of the Republic.

Representative Harry González, Coordinator of the Amazon Caucus and member of the Caucus: "Colombia's agenda cannot be foreign to the issues of interest to the Amazon, because we are not going to wait for it to end so that we begin to reflect on this territory as important. On the

Important Projects, there is the creation of a Stamp Fund to fight deforestation in the Amazon, and also the Project by which the use of single-use plastics in the country is regulated, on which ICCF has supported."

Representative Henry Correal, Coordinator of the Amazon Caucus and member of the Caucus: "As coordinator of the caucus of the Colombian Amazon, I have hope for the strategy that we have promoted together with the Caucus and various authorities on the matter. We hope that as a result of the joint effort, the necessary policies will be developed and an appropriate regulatory framework will be consolidated that will allow us



to manage the Amazon region sustainably in our region, thereby facilitating the positioning of the issue on the global agenda."

Representative Harold Valencia, coordinator of the formation and implementation of the Amazon League and member of the Caucus: "From Colombia we know that our economy must move from extractive industries to sustainable development. We have great potential in the Amazon region and we want to drive investments in research, bioeconomics and tourism, reforestation programs and carbon credits as strategies to increase associativity, competitiveness, employment and well-being for all. Our next challenge is to increase the citizens' awareness by taking care of climate change."

Representative Carlos Cuenca Chau, President of the House of Representatives and Co-President of the Colombian Conservation Caucus: "In addition to the risks we have in environmental matters, the Colombian Amazon has a high population in conditions of extreme poverty. From the congress we must seek to improve living conditions for these people. They are in charge of taking care of our nature and we must take care of them."

FEBRUARY - MARCH, 2020 - BOGOTA, D.C., COLOMBIA



CONGRESSIONAL TRAINING SERIES: WATER, DEFORESTATION, BIODIVERSITY, & OCEANS

In the Congress of the Republic of Colombia, ICCF Colombia, the Center for Advanced Legislative Studies (CAEL), Global Compact Red Colombia, and the Delegation of the European Union together with allies such as the Swiss Embassy in Colombia (COSUDE) began the Advanced Course: "Competencies for Decision Making: Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Knowledge and Context" with the purpose of promoting political will on environmental and sustainable development issues through 15 training sessions that strengthen current knowledge for informed decision-making by the advisers of the Congressmen who work in the Technical Legislative Units.

These sessions are taking place from February to June. Under the umbrella of the SDGs, together with experts from the main entities of the national government, NGOs and the business sector, sessions will address topics such as biodiversity and strategic ecosystems; hydric resources; deforestation and sustainable forest management; oceans; economic instruments for sustainable development; sustainable communities and cities; energy transition; circular economy and plastics; mining and hydrocarbons; and protected areas and sustainable tourism.

JANUARY 22 - 24, 2020 - MEXICO

QUINTANA ROO: LESSONS IN FOREST AND MARINE MANAGEMENT

From January 22 to 24, the Mexican Conservation Parliamentary Group (MCPG) with the support of ICCF, the Mexican Environmental Policy and Legislation Organization (POLEA), and the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) carried out a visit to Quintana Roo to learn about successful examples of community forest management and conservation of marine protected areas.

The visit was attended by Senators Verónica Delgadillo, Secretary of the Board of Directors and Alejandra León, Member of the Environment

Commission, and by Deputies Julieta Macías, Secretary of the Board of Directors; Irma Juan Carlos, President of the Indigenous Peoples Commission; Nancy Reséndiz, President of the Commission for Civil Protection and Disaster Prevention; and Armando González, Martha Olivia García, and Frida Esparza of the Environment Commission.

The participating members of the MCPG were able to see firsthand a successful example of community forestry in the Ejido system at Noh Bec Ejido, witnessing how activities related to

BELOW: REPRESENTATIVE IRMA JUAN CARLOS, CO-CHAIR OF THE MEXICAN CAUCUS, IN THE COMMUNITY ECOTOURISM CENTER "SIJIL NOH HÁ"



sustainable natural resources usage in the community have had positive benefits for both ecosystems and the economic and social well-being of community members. The mission also visited the Xcalak Reef National Park, a biologically significant site due to its status as a breeding site for numerous species of wildlife. During the tour, legislators learned about a coral restoration project being implemented by CONANP with the support of civil society organizations to combat the effects of coral bleaching. Seeing firsthand the successes and challenges of both the Ejido system at Noh Bec Ejido and Xcalak Reef National Park through this Congressional mission enhanced legislator awareness of potential actions in Parliament to support conservation and the responsible use of natural resources.

FEBRUARY 10, 2020 - MEXICO

THE MEXICAN PARLIAMENTARY CONSERVATION GROUP AIMING TO STRENGTHEN NATURAL PROTECTED AREAS

On February 10th, 2020 the Mexican Conservation Parliamentary Group held an Expert Workshop to strengthen legislative support for the National System of Natural Protected Areas. The workshop was led by Senator Raúl Bolaños and co-hosted by ICCF and the Mexican Environmental Policy and Legislation Organization (POLEA).

The workshop included a presentation by technical experts that proposed strengthening the National Commission for Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and necessary budget and management reforms for Mexico's 182 Protected Areas. A subsequent discussion and Plenary Session proposed constituting CONANP as a decentralized body, the creation of a Protected Areas Fund, prohibition of mining in protected areas, and strengthening of the Environmental Gendarmerie to increase surveillance in protected areas. The ICCF Group looks forward to specific legislative proposals based on the Workshop.



AFRICA

MARCH 2, 2020 - BOTSWANA

BOTSWANA CAUCUS LAUNCH AND ORIENTATION

Since the reauthorization of the Botswana Conservation Parliamentary Caucus (BOCOPAC) in December 2019, membership has steadily grown and currently stands at 35 Members of Parliament.

Among the registered members of the caucus are members of the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Lands and Housing; members of the Portfolio Committee on Wildlife, Tourism, Natural Resources and Climate Change; and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. With parliamentary committee memberships capped at eight Members of Parliament, the caucus provides a broader platform of interaction for the parliamentarians.

On February 25th, ICCF in collaboration with the National Assembly of Botswana held an orientation for the new members to discuss the value of a caucus, the priority environment issues of Botswana, and the development of a strategic plan for the caucus. ICCF presented on the value of the caucus providing a structure for sustained political will and capacity building among parliamentarians. With such a wide range of membership, the caucus will be a vehicle within the Botswana Parliament for creating consensus around good information and solutions among a wide group of policymakers and decision-makers.

Ruud Jansen, the Executive Secretary of the



Gaborone Declaration for Sustainability in Africa (GDSA), led discussion on the overview of Botswana's conservation issues, mentioning particular challenges and prospects. Priority issues for the caucus to potentially address include water, climate change, wildlife economies, the Okavango region development, rangelands, and energy. In addition to these, the importance of ensuring that proper policy and legislation frameworks are in place was highly emphasized. The caucus will be a platform for multi-partisan dialogue to prosper in order to secure sustainable development and conservation solutions. The platform will allow for increased political support for holistic approaches to environmental issues and their implementation.

The challenges of conservation and sustainable natural resource management are too large and complex for any one sector to tackle single-handedly, and with the aforementioned issues, the multi-focal caucus was briefed on the importance of developing a strategic plan. The BOCOPAC strategic plan will help the caucus members articulate the chosen key issues and strategic objectives. The plan is intended to provide guidance to caucus members, the secretariat (ICCF), and future collaborators on how they should focus their efforts during the strategy period.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

These are extraordinary times, and I hope that you and your loved ones are well. Sadly, scientists have been sounding the warning for years about the likelihood of a global pandemic like COVID-19, but their warnings have gone unheeded. We cannot let a catastrophe like this happen again, and ICCF is working with all of our resources to bring about decisive action to combat future pandemics before they start.

COVID-19 emerged from a “wet market,” or wildlife market, in China. These markets are a breeding ground for deadly diseases, such as SARS, MERS, novel influenza strains, and now COVID-19. Some of these wildlife markets have been closed temporarily, but many others remain open in countries on several continents. The wildlife trade is a multi-billion-dollar industry with ties to the same criminal networks that traffic in drugs, humans, and weapons as well as high-value products such as ivory. The markets that have been shut down will inevitably reopen without quick action, paving the way for the next pandemic.

ICCF is working closely with the leadership of the U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus and Oceans Caucus, who are eager to understand the scope of the problem and seek long-term solutions. We are bringing together our partners with expertise to educate Members of Congress as well as the parliamentarians and other

policymakers we support around the globe—in both source and demand countries.

Governments must work to permanently shut down the commercial markets where wildlife is sold for human consumption, better combat wildlife trade, and work across national borders to ensure immediate action as well as long-term solutions. This effort must involve programs to feed people and support livelihoods so those living in poverty are not forced to rely on bushmeat and illegal wildlife trade.

Human lives are at stake. Now, while attention is focused, is the time to act. We are maintaining daily contact with caucus leaders in Congress, convening educational briefings including a Congressional hearing, and facilitating partnerships and creative solutions to this urgent issue.

If we do not act now, we WILL find ourselves facing another pandemic down the road. We at ICCF are committed to doing everything possible to prevent this from happening.

Best wishes,



John B. Gantt
ICCF President

BECOME AN ICCF PARTNER

For partnership opportunities, please contact Therese Tepe - ttepe@iccfoundation.us - +1 (202) 471-4222

