

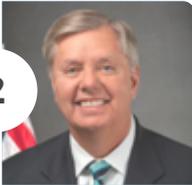


INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

INSIDE

DISCUSSIONS
WITH SENATOR
GRAHAM AND
SENATOR COONS

2



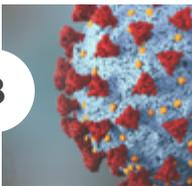
MARINE
GOVERNANCE:
GEF, UNEP &
THE ICCF GROUP

5



ON WILDLIFE
TRADE, ORIGINS
OF COVID-19

8



CONSERVATION
COUNCIL:
PARTNER
HIGHLIGHTS

17



CAUCUS LEADERSHIP - UNITED STATES

▶ U.S. INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION CAUCUS LEADERS URGE ACTION TO PREVENT FUTURE ZOOONOTIC PANDEMICS

Experts have placed the likely origin of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic at a “wet” market in Wuhan, China, where live and slaughtered wildlife are sold for human consumption. In response,



the bipartisan leadership of the International Conservation Caucus in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have written the Trump Administration, calling for action to address wildlife trade practices endangering public health in an effort to stop future outbreaks of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19, SARS, MERS, HIV, and Ebola.

Representatives Henry Cuellar (D-TX), Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), David Joyce (R-OH), and Betty McCollum (D-MN), co-chairs of the House International Conservation Caucus, sent a letter to President Donald Trump on April 8th, urging him to engage world leaders in an international effort to prevent the outbreak of future zoonotic pandemics by eliminating trade in wildlife which threatens public health and bolstering legislation and law enforcement to combat unregulated wildlife trade.

PROGRAMS - UNITED STATES

► ICCF DISCUSSION WITH SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM (R-SC)

Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) joined ICCF for a virtual panel discussion on topics ranging from wildlife markets and COVID-19 to carbon sequestration and illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing.

Senator Graham, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies and the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa, has been vocal in calling for a shut down of China's

The co-chairs committed to legislative leadership and to working with parliamentary leaders around the world to take action to end the harmful global wildlife trade practices believed to have led to this and past outbreaks.

Senators Richard Burr (R-NC), Rob Portman (R-OH), Tom Udall (D-NM), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), co-chairs of the Senate International Conservation Caucus, along with leading members of the Caucus, Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ), Chris Coons (D-DE), and Lindsey Graham (R-SC), sent a bipartisan letter on April 7th to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, encouraging him to work with international partners and other federal agencies to not only close down unregulated wildlife markets that pose a threat to public health, but more broadly, to combat illegal wildlife trade and improve global food security.



high-risk commercial wildlife markets, believed by many to be the source of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Speaking to ICCF Conservation Council partners, the Senator emphasized the need to close these markets in order to prevent the spread of diseases like COVID-19, recognizing also the need to provide food alternatives for those that rely on wildlife

as a protein source. On the topic of COVID-19, discussions also centered around the impact the pandemic is having on developing countries' ability

► ICCF DISCUSSION WITH SENATOR CHRIS COONS (D-DE)

As the country and the world sheltered in place, ICCF took to the web to host its first-ever Virtual Congressional Dialogue, featuring U.S. Senator Chris Coons (D-DE).

The discussion included members of ICCF's Conservation Council of business, NGO, institutional, and embassy partners and focused on a range of conservation issues, including several with direct links to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

As it relates to conservation, discussion around COVID-19 centered on two topics: the impact of the outbreak on the developing world and the virus's

to prevent wildlife poaching and the economic toll it has had on ecotourism-dependent communities.

likely origins in wildlife trade. Partners pointed to exacerbated poverty that drives natural resource depletion and to economies built around conservation and ecotourism, such as community conservancies in Kenya, that have inevitably taken a hit as travel and tourism have come to a halt. Looking at the origins of this and previous pandemics and how future outbreaks could be prevented, participants highlighted the connection to wildlife trade.



AS THE SENATOR PUT IT, "THERE IS A REAL AND URGENT INTERSECTION BETWEEN THE EMERGENCE OF ZOOONOTIC PANDEMICS AND THE ONGOING PREVALENCE OF WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING MARKETS."

On the risk of future pandemics, Senator Coons added, "We also have to be clear-eyed about the likely origin of the next, and the most likely origin of the most lethal pandemic facing us in the future will be from these wildlife trafficking markets," stating later that "We're at risk because animals

are at risk, and animals are at risk because we're tearing down and chewing up the places where they've lived for millennia, and now there's lots of human-wildlife contact. In a rapidly expanding and hungry world, you've got people eating all sorts of stuff in record amounts."

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

► **NATURE'S CHAMBERS**

Reps. Haley Stevens (MI-11) and Anthony Gonzalez (OH-16) introduced bipartisan legislation to reduce plastic waste and improve the global competitiveness of the United States plastics recycling industry.

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30), Ranking Member Frank Lucas (OK-03), and Representative Francis Rooney (FL-19) are original co-sponsors of the legislation.

THE PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING ACT DIRECTS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, CALLS ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION, AND CALLS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS FOR PLASTICS RECYCLING TECHNOLOGIES.

LEARN MORE: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7228>



ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE ICCF GROUP

► **GEF, UNEP, AND THE ICCF GROUP TO PROMOTE ENHANCED TRANSBOUNDARY MARINE GOVERNANCE**



The role of effective transboundary governance in conserving our oceans' large marine ecosystems has never been more important. The ICCF Group is therefore proud to announce a multi-year project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and co-implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to promote enhanced transboundary marine governance.

The project "Facilitating Dialogue And Strengthening Transboundary Cooperation With Legislators To Improve Marine Governance" will leverage and build upon existing and new parliamentary conservation and oceans caucuses throughout Latin America, East Africa, and Southeast Asia to raise awareness about blue economy opportunities and Large Marine Ecosystems Strategic Action Programs (LME SAPs). The outcome of this engagement will be the elevation of marine issues on a national level, and the facilitation of regional cooperation on transboundary marine governance.

The ICCF Group supports eighteen conservation and oceans caucuses in legislatures around the world in developing their conservation agendas into concrete legislation and policies for the promotion of responsible natural resource management. The conservation caucus model is an innovative and proven platform for engagement at the highest levels of government

on conservation issues. Regional engagement by conservation caucuses in the past has resulted in notable achievements, including the Arusha Declaration on Regional Conservation & Combating Wildlife/Environmental Crime, signed by 8 African nations (2014); bilateral and multilateral agreements between Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zambia to address wildlife crime (2014); and the Bogota Declaration, in which Mexico, Colombia, and Peru committed to sustainable forest management (2018).

In this project, the ICCF Group will engage with caucus structures in Colombia and Mexico in Latin America; Kenya, Mozambique, and Tanzania in East Africa; and, Indonesia and Thailand in Southeast Asia to promote blue economy initiatives and reduction of marine pollution at a national level, and the implementation of LME SAPs at the regional level. Project activities will include capacity-building events in each country, convening members of caucuses with stakeholders and experts from the public and private sectors, as well as regional summits to promote transboundary action. The knowledge products that emerge from these engagements will be shared on the IW:LEARN platform to inspire and inform legislatures around the world on these issues and their potential solutions.





OP-ED: BY OCEANS CAUCUS FOUNDATION AND CONSORTIUM FOR OCEAN LEADERSHIP

▶ REBUILDING THE U.S. ECONOMY THROUGH THE BLUE ECONOMY

ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY, INDIVIDUALS ARE GRAPPLING WITH THE ECONOMIC FALLOUT OF COVID-19, WHICH IS BEING FELT IN EVERY SECTOR AND COULD EXCEED ANYTHING WE HAVE EXPERIENCED SINCE THE END OF WORLD WAR II. THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS CONFRONTING THE U.S. ECONOMY WITH AN UNPRECEDENTED CHALLENGE THAT WILL REQUIRE A LARGE RESPONSE FROM FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR THE COMING MONTHS AND MOST LIKELY YEARS TO COME.

Governments are being faced with safely re-opening the faltering economy. This includes addressing immediate needs—stimulus checks, Paycheck Protection Program loans, reopening timelines—but also looking towards the future to ensure we make needed investments now that will allow us to quickly and effectively rebuild the economy we need for tomorrow.

As we rebuild, we have a choice—keep things as they were or adapt to create the economy we want and need—one that better serves our nation and fulfills the needs of the post-COVID-19 world. The blue economy is critical to the stability of our country's economy as a whole. It may not

be the largest sector of the economy, but in the United States, it has better weathered recessions and shown faster job growth than the overall economy. In a recent press release by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), America's marine economy, including goods and services, contributed in 2018 about \$373 billion to the nation's gross domestic product, created 2.3 million jobs, and grew faster than the nation's economy as a whole. Investing in the growth of the blue economy, including all economic activities related to oceans, seas, and coasts, is essential to getting the post-COVID-19 economy back on track.

The blue economy is made up of a number of ocean industries, such as fisheries and

aquaculture, tourism, maritime transport, renewable energy, and other economic activities associated with the ocean. In 2010, shore-adjacent counties, those touched or encompassed by a state's defined coastal zone, contributed more than \$6 trillion to our gross domestic product and accounted for 44 million jobs. The World Bank has estimated that fisheries contribute \$270 billion annually to global gross domestic product. More than 80 percent of trade takes place by sea, and the global ocean economy is expected to double in value to \$3 trillion by 2030, outpacing the growth of the global economy as a whole.

Current and past administrations have acknowledged the importance of improving our understanding and management of our ocean resources.

"We have extraordinary opportunities before us to steward, explore, and utilize the vast resources of America's oceans by embracing public-private partnerships in ocean science and technology" - Kelvin Droegemeier, Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

"Expanding our understanding of the ocean can improve our economic competitiveness, strengthen our national security, protect our environment, and promote continued prosperity." - Mary Neumayr, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality

READ THE FULL OP-ED: internationalconservation.org/united-states/oc/rebuilding-the-us-economy-through-the-blue-economy

While the blue economy was not exempt from the negative impacts of COVID-19, it's clear that revitalizing it will be critical to ensuring our economic prosperity during the post-pandemic years. Investing in the blue economy is essential for the United States to jumpstart our overall economy, but it is also an opportunity to show global leadership in marine industries, data collection, and management. The United States has fallen behind in respect to our investment in ocean data and technology, education, and industries as compared to other countries such as those in the UK, EU Member States, Indian Ocean States, and China. These countries not only recognize the role the ocean plays in economic security, international trade, sustainable development, people-to-people connection, livelihoods, and military development, but invest in it. Now is the time for the United States to do the same—it will ensure our own economic prosperity and global leadership.

Post-COVID-19, we will see a huge focus on job growth and rebuilding the U.S. and global economies. As the current stimulus bills focus on helping small businesses and health care providers, we must begin now to address the other sectors that have been impacted by the shutdown, including the maritime industries, to ensure we can build a strong blue and national economy.

THE ICCF GROUP 2020 LIVE CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFINGS

▶ ON WILDLIFE TRADE, ORIGINS OF COVID-19, AND PREVENTING FUTURE PANDEMICS

The ICCF Group is spearheading global efforts to educate decisionmakers about the links between emerging diseases and wildlife meat markets, human consumption of wildlife, the illegal wildlife trade, and human encroachment into wild areas.

We are working closely with policymakers in the U.S. and around the world who are eager to better understand the scope of the problem and devise

long-term solutions in order to prevent the next pandemic.

In addition to one-on-one policymaker engagement, ICCF has hosted a full schedule of virtual educational programming, including expert briefings for key Members of the U.S. Congress and policymakers in the UK, Africa, and Asia, which have been watched by thousands of viewers on our YouTube channel.

▶ OUR COVID-19 TASKFORCE

MODERATORS

Brian Perkins
Director of Americas Region, Marine Stewardship Council

Dr. Robin Ganzert
President and CEO, American Humane

Edwin Tambara
Director of External Affairs, African Wildlife Foundation

Hon. Nguyen Tuong Van
Secretary General of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)

Melanie Verwoerd
Political Analyst and Columnist

PANELISTS

Dr. Frank Asche
Professor of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, University of Florida

H.E. Najib Balala, EGH
Cabinet Secretary for Tourism & Wildlife, Republic of Kenya

Ben Conniff
Co-Founder, Luke's Lobster

Professor Andrew A. Cunningham
Deputy Director of Science, Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

Julie Decker
Executive Director, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF)

Dr. Chris Dold
Chief Zoological Officer, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment

Mr. Steven R. Galster
International Chair, Executive Director, Freeland Foundation

Shamini Jayanathan
Criminal Barrister

Dickson Kaelo
CEO, Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association

Prof. Nicholas King, PhD, LL.M.
Environmental Futurist, Global Change Analyst & Strategist

Susan Lieberman, Ph.D.
Vice President, International Policy, Wildlife Conservation Society

Mr. Jimmiel Mandima
Deputy Vice President - Conservation, International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)

Thane Maynard
Director, Cincinnati Zoo

Professor E.J. Milner-Gulland
Director, Interdisciplinary Centre for Conservation Science, Oxford University

Sam Mwandha
Executive Director, Uganda Wildlife Authority

Mr. David Quammen
Author, Spillover: Animal Infections and the Next Human Pandemic

Dr. Tara Riemer
President and CEO, Alaska SeaLife Center

Mr. John E. Scanlon, AO
Special Envoy, African Parks & Former Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES)

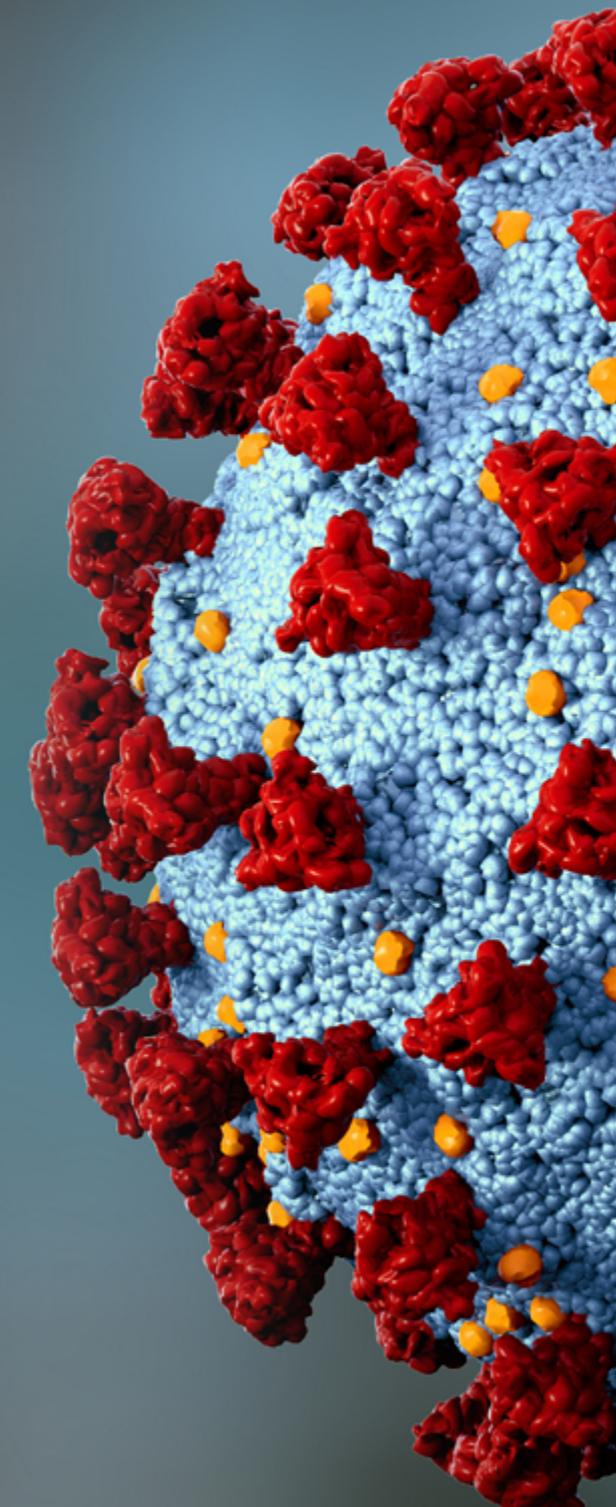
Hon. Nguyen Tuan Anh
Standing Member of the Science, Technology & Environment Committee of the Vietnam National Assembly

Ms. Sallie Yang
Legal Expert, Freeland Foundation

Dr. Christian Walzer
Executive Director of Health, Wildlife Conservation Society

Professor Lee White, CBE
Minister of Forests, Oceans, Environment and Climate Change, Gabonese Republic

Hon. Fikile Xasa
Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Republic of South Africa



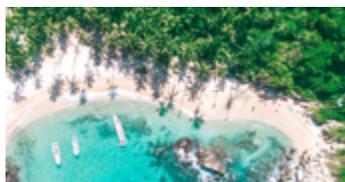
▶ ASIA



Member Parliaments of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in Southeast Asia convened to discuss with expert witnesses the origins of COVID-19, the wildlife trade, and how to prevent future pandemics.

With the permission of the President of AIPA, the forum was chaired by Hon. Nguyen Tuan Anh, Standing Member of the Science, Technology & Environment Committee of the Vietnam National Assembly, and moderated by Secretary General of AIPA Hon. Nguyen Tuong Van. The four expert panelists and representatives from eight AIPA Member Parliaments including Brunei, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam brought to the discussion insights regarding combating illegal wildlife trade and preventing future zoonotic outbreaks. Parliamentarians sought to obtain clarity from the expert panelists about which aspects of the trade have the clearest links to generating risky zoonotic viruses and the provisions to regulate the domestication of wild animals and pets to prevent the potential exposure to zoonotic diseases.

▶ COLOMBIA



Led by the Conservation Caucus and the Oceans Caucus of Colombia, with ICCF support, a dialogue table was held to discuss various efforts of the Colombian National Government and private sector to carry out reactivation post-COVID-19 and the opportunities and challenges faced by stakeholders in the reactivation and development of

responsible tourism in the country.

Reactivation plans from the national to the regional level are focusing on four components:

1. Development of biosafety protocols, and the tourist biosecurity seal that aims to recognize operators who comply with the protocols, and also to generate confidence among travelers and consumers to purchase packages and tourist services
2. Economic support to the tourism sector, such as tax relief, lines of credit, and flexible payment of leases, utilities, etc.
3. Campaigns that promote tourism for Colombians in the country, with a particular focus on the issue of air transport connectivity.
4. Governance, competitiveness, and innovation. Work has been carried out with local entities for

the integral management of destinations, providing support to local governments with technical advice on tourism revival strategies. The national tourist information system has been strengthened with updated information for the development of public policy and commercial and promotional strategies of tourism companies. Likewise, training has been promoted through programs such as the Procolombia export route that covers the entire country; and a new sustainable tourism policy is being developed in Colombia that incorporates: governance and sustainable tourism planning, the reduction of emissions, the administration and use of water resources, the use of non-conventional renewable energy, the disposal of solid and liquid waste, and the protection and conservation of biodiversity.

▶ MEXICO



On May 27th, the Mexican Conservationist Parliamentary Group held a virtual session to discuss the potential for expanding nature-based tourism in Mexico in the face of COVID-19, led by Deputy Irma Juan Carlos with the support of ICCF and its partners POLEA and Reforestamos.

The panelists were Antonio del Rosal, Director of Genuine Experiences, Gloria Tavera, Regional Director of the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and Angelina Martínez, Coordinator for Expediciones Sierra Norte; the virtual briefing reached an audience of over 250 viewers.

The three panelists outlined the current state of tourism in Mexico, the potential opportunities to scale nature-based tourism in its Protected Areas, and the strategies for reopening in a post-COVID-19 world. They concluded that Mexico has great potential to scale its nature-based tourism to generate economic and social benefits, while conserving natural landscapes. For this reason, it is especially important to continue promoting dialogues so that the reactivation of this sector after COVID-19 is successful.

▶ SOUTH AFRICA



CCF South Africa, in conjunction with the Wilderness Foundation, facilitated a virtual session with Members of the South African Parliament, led by the Honorable Fikele Xasa, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Environment, Forestry, and Fisheries, to examine links between the commercial trade

and consumption of wildlife and disease outbreaks like COVID-19, SARS, HIV, and Ebola and to consider steps South Africa can take to prevent future pandemics.



Moderated by Melanie Verwoerd, former Member of Parliament and former South African Ambassador to Ireland, the session saw expert panelists, Mr. David Quammen and Professor Nicholas King, brief Members of Parliament on the status of illegal wildlife trade in South Africa and the science of zoonotic spillover, respectively, fielding questions from Members of Parliament representing all major political parties.

In South Africa and across the continent, lack of tourism revenue since the beginning of the pandemic has resulted in the loss of livelihoods for various communities. Particularly in the rural areas, potential exposure to these types of diseases is on the rise since the pandemic has resulted in a loss of livelihoods for a large number of communities, who now turn to poaching wild animals. Therefore the government must invest in this previously thriving sector that employs thousands of people to ensure alternative methods of livelihood are available to them in case of another global crisis.

The panelists expressed to the Members of Parliament that while South Africa has been a leader in terms of response to the pandemic, by implementing an early lockdown, the nation must also be a leader in trying to prevent future pandemics. Steps towards this can be taken through enhancing security services and customs and border patrol and recognizing that the illegal wildlife trade is an international and transboundary problem that needs unprecedented international cooperation.

▶ UNITED KINGDOM



The United Kingdom All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on International Conservation held a hearing, the first stage of a wider APPG inquiry into the links between commercial trade and consumption of wildlife and disease outbreaks to consider steps to prevent future pandemics.

Whilst the precise origins of COVID-19 are yet to be fully understood, it is widely understood that the human outbreak most likely began in a market in Wuhan, China, that sold live and dead wildlife and domestic animals along with other foods for human consumption.

Oral evidence was provided by Professor E.J. Milner-Gulland, Director, Interdisciplinary Centre for Conservation Science (Oxford University); Professor Andrew A. Cunningham, Deputy Director of Science (Zoological Society of London); John E. Scanlon, Special Envoy, African Parks and Former Secretary General of CITES; and Sue Lieberman, Vice-President, International Policy at WCS. The session explored the issues and the solutions necessary to reduce the health risks associated with wildlife trade, with participants discussing the merits of banning and regulating wet markets.

It was immediately followed by discussion with H.E. Najib Balala, EGH, Cabinet Secretary for Tourism & Wildlife, Republic of Kenya and H.E. Lee White CBE, Minister of Water, Forests, the Seas and Environment, Gabonese Republic, who highlighted the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on conservation and communities that rely on wildlife economy in their respective countries, alongside the solutions necessary to relieve these effects and prevent future pandemics.

▶ UNITED STATES



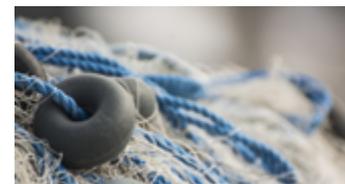
CCF supported the bipartisan leadership of the U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus in hosting a Virtual U.S. Congressional Caucus Briefing, providing an opportunity for leading scientists and conservation experts to formally brief Members of Congress on the link between pandemics and the wildlife trade, implications of shutting down wildlife markets, potential solutions to prevent another pandemic, and opportunities for the United States to lead on this issue.

“In Congress, our immediate focus remains on providing relief to all Americans as we weather this storm together,” said Congresswoman McCollum. “However, even as we respond to the current crisis, we cannot neglect to address the root cause of this pandemic and seek out solutions to prevent the next one. Because, if we don’t address the root causes, the next pandemic could be right around the corner.”

“These zoonotic diseases are very prevalent: they’ve caused millions of deaths and significant economic damage throughout the world,” said Senator Rob Portman (R-OH). “USAID says now that 70 percent of the new human infectious disease outbreaks originate from animals . . . This transmission of disease raises a lot of very tough questions about the relationship between humans and the natural environment, about food safety and security, about food security in some of these developing countries, about the commercial trade in wildlife.”

Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) said, “The science is clear that a major factor in the spread of zoonotic disease is the loss and fragmentation of wildlife habitat and populations and bringing humans and urban populations into closer and more frequent contact with wild animals . . . So, yet again, the more we take care of nature, the more we take care of ourselves.”

▶ OCEANS



The world has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the U.S. seafood sector is no exception. From grounding of fleets to halting production at processing plants, fisheries and seafood companies are being affected to a degree never before experienced.

The Oceans Caucus Foundation (OCF) and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) hosted a briefing highlighting how COVID-19 is impacting the American seafood sector. Panelists discussed the potential long-term economic, social, and environmental impacts of the global pandemic.



Brian Perkins from MSC moderated the panel made up of Dr. Frank Asche from the University of Florida, Ben Coniff from Luke's Lobster, and Julie Decker with the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF). Each panelist had a unique perspective with insight from different sectors of the seafood industry. Congressman Derek Kilmer (D-WA) and

Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK) called in to make remarks on the importance of the fishing industry to their states and constituents highlighting the need to prioritize relief to the industry during and post pandemic. Each panelist had a unique perspective with insight from different sectors of the seafood industry.

PROGRAMS - COLOMBIA

► GOVERNANCE OF LAND TENURE: TOOLS FOR LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT IN COLOMBIA

The Senate of the Republic of Colombia, the Colombian Conservation and Oceans Caucuses, the Center for Advanced Legislative Studies (CAEL), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Colombia, ICCF Colombia, and Mrs. María Paola Rizzo, HQ Land Tenure Officer of the cross-sectional projects of the European Union, carried out a virtual workshop on the Governance of Land Tenure as a tool for legislative management in Colombia.

On this occasion, the presentations covered implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (DVGT) developed by FAO as a tool to contribute to the management of common assets, in this case forests, fisheries, and protected areas, as a contribution to improving the livelihoods of indigenous, Afro-descendant, and peasant communities who depend on the ecosystem services derived from biodiversity, in addition to providing elements for the resolution of socio-environmental conflicts, reducing poverty, and guaranteeing food security.

This virtual dialogue workshop allowed analyzing the importance of the legislative role in solving problems related to land tenure, which remain delicate and require two approaches: on the one

hand, working from the community levels with the rural population promoting sustainable practices and, on the other hand, involving decision makers from the early stages of policy implementation.

► STRENGTHENING COMPETENCIES FOR DECISION MAKING

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 carried out the Advanced Course:

"Competencies for Decision Making: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 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 took place under the umbrella of the SDGs, together with experts from the main entities of the National Government, NGOs, and

the business sector. Topics included biodiversity and strategic ecosystems; hydrological resources; deforestation and sustainable forest management; oceans; economic instruments for sustainable development; communities and land use; sustainable cities; energy transition; circular economy; mining; protected areas; and sustainable tourism.

This advanced course contributed to training on sustainable development and conservation issues, facilitating legislative management based on a comprehensive analysis of the current context, opportunities, and challenges of the country's main environmental issues. Taking place as it did during a time of great national and international hardship because of the pandemic, the course positioned key stakeholders to move forward promptly on these issues once more normal conditions return.



▶ PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: POLEA

POLEA is a Mexican non-profit organization focused on promoting positive changes in the environmental and social agendas of government and Congress at national and subnational levels.

Since 2016 POLEA has established key partnerships with various international and national foundations in order to strengthen Mexican policies related to community forest management: a unique global model with multiple economic, social, and environmental benefits for local communities that own forest lands.

Nearly 70% of Mexican forests are legally common property. The country's experiences have demonstrated that by managing forests sustainably, tangible local benefits can be achieved while conserving ecosystems and biodiversity.

In 2018, with leadership by the Mexican Conservation Parliamentary Group, a new forest law was approved in the Congress. This reform introduced the recognition of community forest management as a priority for forestry policies in Mexico. POLEA played a key role in the process by facilitating dialogues among multiple stakeholders and legislators and generating evidence to improve decision making.

With support from the ICCF Group and POLEA, the Mexican legislators involved in the forest law reform were able to meet with their counterparts of the Colombian and Peruvian conservation caucuses. This provided an outstanding opportunity to discuss and exchange regional strategies to advance in the governance of the forestry sector and comply with the goals of biodiversity and sustainable development acquired under various national and international frameworks.

"OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH ICCF HAS PROVIDED US THE POSSIBILITY TO STRENGTHEN OUR WORK AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL BY BEING ABLE TO JOIN FORCES WITH INDIVIDUALS AND LEGISLATORS COMMITTED TO THE CONSERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT."

ANDRES AVILA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, POLEA

▶ HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ICCF CONSERVATION COUNCIL

VOLKSWAGEN GROUP SOUTH AFRICA PROVIDES MEDICAL FACILITY TO RECEIVE 3300+ COVID-19 PATIENTS

Volkswagen Group South Africa (VWSA) announced plans to provide a temporary medical facility for COVID-19 patients and delivered on that promise, handing over the first phase of the project to the Eastern Cape Department of Health.

VWSA designated a 66,000m² former plant as an overflow facility to provide care for those diagnosed with COVID-19. With funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), VWSA completed the first phase of equipping this facility, which can now accommodate 1,485 patients, including those who require oxygenation. Once the second and third phases are complete, the facility will be able to accommodate more than 3,300 patients.

Aside from managing the process of equipping the facility, VWSA contributed 1.3 million Euros for the facility, as well as the procurement of protective gear for staff at regional tertiary hospitals, regional Primary Care Clinics, and COVID-19 test centers. 600,000 Euros of this funding will be used in support of the National Health Laboratory

ABOVE: Andrew Muir, CEO of the Wilderness Foundation Africa (left) and Thomas Schaefer, Chairman and Managing Director of VWSA (right)



Service (NHLS) branch in Port Elizabeth, which is responsible for the majority of COVID-19 testing in the metro. The branch is currently facing immense pressure amid challenges that include the shortage of testing kits. The assistance from VWSA will include the sourcing of necessary equipment and improving the process flow of testing – all with the goal of doubling the laboratory's daily average output of tests.

"We have learned that collaboration is key when facing an unprecedented threat such as COVID-19," said Thomas Schaefer, Chairman and Managing Director of VWSA. "This pandemic requires us to act decisively and with speed. VWSA has answered this call by completing and delivering phase 1 of the medical facility at the time when it is desperately needed by our Metro which is currently experiencing an alarming increase of infections. We are honoured to be able to provide this facility so our communities can receive the care they need during this difficult period of our lifetime."

RAINFOREST ALLIANCE'S REVAMPED STANDARD TO STRENGTHEN PROTECTION OF HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE AREAS

SOURCE: <https://hcvnetwork.org/rainforest-alliances-revamped-standard-to-strengthen-protection-of-high-conservation-value-areas/>



The HCV approach will help boost conservation and secure livelihoods in Rainforest Alliance certified farms.

This June, the Rainforest Alliance launched its updated Sustainable Agriculture Standard (SAS), raising the bar for the way farms and products are certified and focusing on continuously improving agricultural production and conservation across scales.

Within the SAS, the HCV approach will help producers become aware of the risk they might pose to areas valuable for ecosystems and local communities. "The Rainforest Alliance recognizes the value of the internationally recognized HCV framework for identifying and managing critical environmental and social values in production landscapes," says Henriette Walz, Global Theme Lead for Deforestation at Rainforest Alliance, and part of the team that worked with HCVRN on tailoring the HCV approach for the updated standard.

Under the new SAS, producers will not be able to certify their crops, if they grow them on lands where natural ecosystems have been cleared for agriculture, which makes it a "non-conversion" standard. But despite ruling out the risk of land clearing, usually the biggest threat to HCVs, the standard still factors in other threats to environmental and social values. This is where the HCV approach comes in. "It provides a framework

to maintain natural ecosystems, while providing extra social safeguards, so the standard requires farmers to maintain and enhance HCVs," explains Olivia Scholtz, senior project manager at the HCVRN Secretariat. "In the new standard, the approach is used to understand threats, maintain values, and how to put in place a management and monitoring plan for those HCVs."

"The new standard supports HCVs protection, through requirements for no-deforestation and no-conversion," says Walz. "It also includes criteria for wildlife protection, mapping production areas and ecosystems, soil conservation, protecting natural ecosystems, natural vegetation and water, as well as requirements for protecting the rights of local communities."

The SAS also adds extra protection to HCVs, which are defined using a risk-based approach, developed by HCVRN and Rainforest Alliance's Standards team. A risk-based approach is a process that simplifies how requirements for HCV protection are used in a standard. "We want to understand if there are any gaps in the standard's existing requirements" HCVRN's Scholtz says. "The farmer starts with a questionnaire that helps them understand the level of risk their production poses and the type of measures they need to take."

"Certificate holders will assess their risk based on a few questions regarding their location relative to protected areas, Key Biodiversity Areas, Intact Forest Landscapes, Ramsar sites, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, local communities and communal lands. For example, if a Rainforest Alliance Certified farm is identified to be in or near a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), then specific management actions will be required to protect the KBA's associated conservation feature, such as important animal and plant life present," says Walz.

The HCV risk questionnaire is linked to the risk assessment all certified farms now need to conduct, and is aligned with Rainforest Alliance's newly created geospatial database, where farms must provide georeferences for their farms' boundaries.

According to Walz, the HCV approach will focus initially on big farms, with highest impacts expected for instance in Brazil and Ecuador, where certified banana, coffee, and cocoa farms are individually certified.



INTERNATIONAL PAPER JOINS FORCES WITH ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION AND L'OREAL USA TO RESTORE CRITICAL MONARCH BUTTERFLY HABITATS

SOURCE: <https://www.3blmedia.com/News/Arbor-Day-Foundation-Joins-Forces-International-Paper-and-L'Oreal-USA-Restore-Critical-Monarch>

Alongside key corporate partners International Paper and L'Oreal USA, the Arbor Day Foundation has announced a partnership with the Land Life Company to support reforestation efforts for critical Monarch butterfly habitats in Estado de México, Mexico.

This partnership will support efforts to replant and

restore degraded areas of the "Zona Nucleo," the breeding ground for the Monarch, beginning June 2020.

"We are grateful to partners like International Paper and L'Oreal for their commitment to restoring the forest ecosystems that provide



the necessities of life for both wildlife and local communities," said Dan Lambe, president, Arbor Day Foundation.

Each year, millions of Monarchs migrate to this area to spend winter among the Oyamel trees, fir trees that protect the butterflies from seasonal rain and cold. However, areas of Zona Nucleo require restoration due to illegal logging and wildfires. Land Life Company works alongside CONAFOR (Mexican Ministry of Forestry), CONANP (Ministry of Protected Natural Areas) and the World Wildlife Fund to restore degraded forest land, protecting the

Monarch's habitat for generations to come. This initiative also engages local communities that rely on the forest for their livelihoods, water, and food. These communities play a critical role in patrolling Monarch nesting grounds to prevent illegal logging.

The Monarch butterfly is an important pollinator that contributes to the health of our planet. However, due to climate change and loss of habitat, especially in Mexico and California, its population has fallen by more than 80 percent since the mid-1990s.

"WE ARE COMMITTED TO BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET. BY JOINING FORCES WITH THE ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION AND L'OREAL, WE CAN MAKE MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTIONS TO BOTH," SAID DR. ALISSA CAMPBELL SHAW, SENIOR MANAGER, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IP FOUNDATION. "AT INTERNATIONAL PAPER, THE FIBER USED TO MAKE OUR PRODUCTS COMES FROM RESPONSIBLY MANAGED SOURCES. WE WILL NOT KNOWINGLY ACCEPT FIBER FROM ILLEGALLY LOGGED FORESTS OR FROM FORESTS WHERE HIGH CONSERVATION VALUES ARE THREATENED BY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES. WE ARE SO EXCITED TO IMPROVE THIS CRITICAL HABITAT WHILE ENGAGING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY THAT DEPENDS ON THIS FOREST."

"We are proud to partner with The Arbor Day Foundation and support its mission to restore and protect the critical forest habitat for over one billion monarch butterflies," said Stéphane Rinderknech, President and CEO, L'Oréal USA. "The Great Monarch Migration is one of our planet's most precious natural wonders, and the butterfly is a critical pollinator and the living embodiment of

beauty. At L'Oréal, we have a global commitment to sustainability and protecting biodiversity is at the heart of our L'Oréal for the Future program."

"It's a privilege to work with our partners, along with the local communities, who are so passionate to restore this area for a very special butterfly," said Willemijn Stoffels, Chief Operating Officer at Land Life Company.



ABOVE: HALO and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) discuss how to safely transport COVID-19 patients.

THE HALO TRUST RESPONDS TO COVID-19



Where it is safe to do so, HALO continues to keep families safe by destroying landmines and other explosive hazards.

And where possible, HALO is serving the broader humanitarian need caused by COVID-19 in the countries where it operates. To date, HALO has conducted over 1,500 COVID-19 response activities in over 10 countries, reaching over 700,000 individuals.

ZIMBABWE

Through the support of United States Department of State, HALO transported three COVID-19 screening booths to hospitals, which allow for the safe screening of suspected cases without placing health personnel at risk. HALO teams have travelled over 13,000 miles delivering medical supplies such as PPE and screening booths, transporting doctors and nurses to conduct trainings and health education

sessions, and driving health technicians to conduct contact tracing operations.

SOMALILAND

In Hargeisa, Somaliland, there are just two ambulances for a population of 1.2 million, and only one COVID-19 treatment center. Medics had no protective visors, and the hospital bus to transport them to work was broken. HALO has deployed ambulances to transport COVID-19 patients to the hospital, has repurposed protective gear for doctors and nurses, has fixed the hospital bus, and has set

up an alternate care facility to ensure the sick can be screened safely and efficiently.

MYANMAR

For the tens of thousands of displaced families living in temporary camps in Myanmar, social distancing measures are all but impossible, and estimates suggest 70,000 displaced people in the area don't have access to adequate aid. Thanks to funding from UNOCHA, HALO purchased vital hygiene kits and, working with local authorities, delivered these kits to 13 IDP camps.

MICROSOFT IS BUILDING A PLANETARY COMPUTER TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY

SOURCE: <https://www.greenbiz.com/article/microsoft-building-planetary-computer-protect-biodiversity>

“The species of the world are connected with each other. I think that’s actually one of the lessons, the real reminders, if you will, of the year 2020, as we all live every day with the issues obviously created by COVID-19,” observed Microsoft President Brad Smith, during a video launch Wednesday for the company’s latest sustainability push – an ambitious initiative to support global biodiversity.

Smith’s remarks, of course, refer to the links tracing the novel coronavirus back to animal origins, a phenomenon that has become far more common as humankind encroaches on forests, wetlands and other habitats.

During the modern era, Smith noted, wetlands that purify and store water for thousands of species have been reduced by 87 percent while coral reefs have declined by 50 percent – data points explored

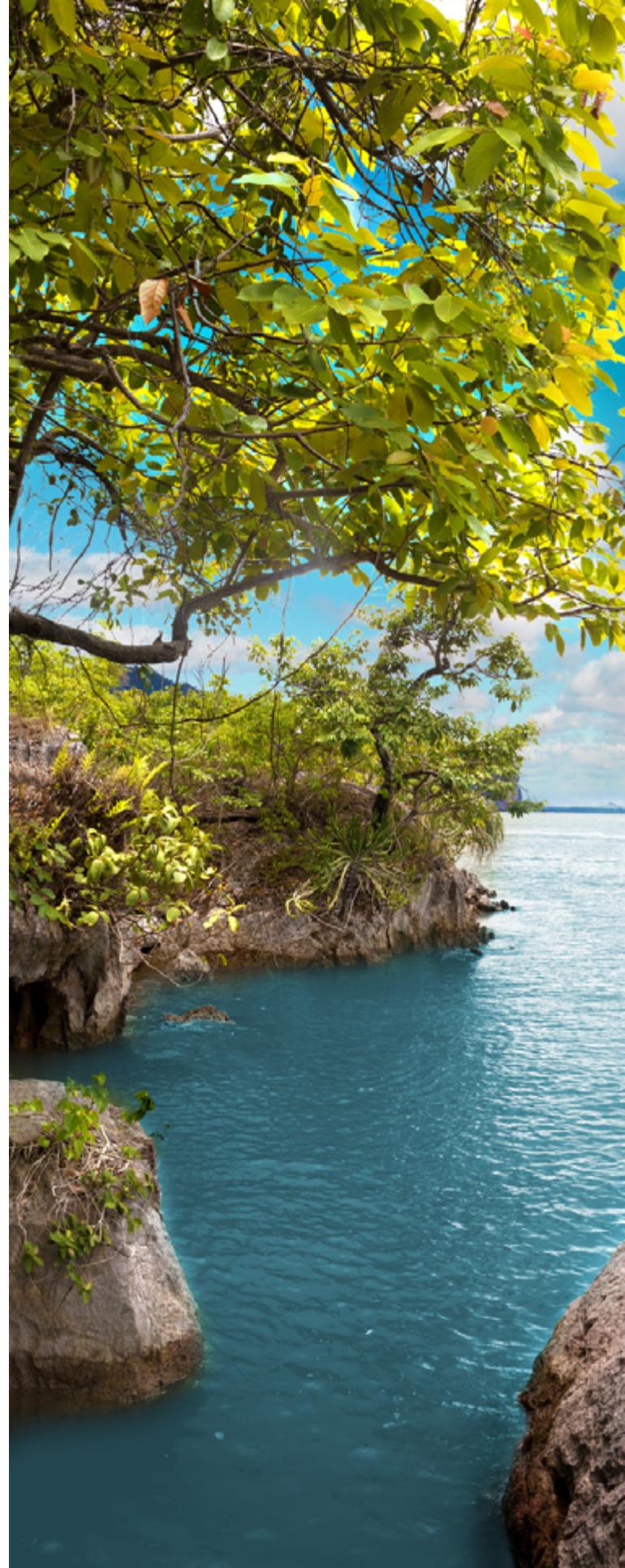
in the United Nations’ first global assessment (PDF) of ecosystems and biodiversity published in 2019. An estimated one-quarter of species are threatened with extinction, which could amplify the collapse of other habitats.

That backdrop makes Microsoft’s new commitment – a master plan to create a “Planetary Computer” for assessing, monitoring and managing natural ecosystems data – more timely. The initiative builds on Microsoft’s 2.5-year-old AI for Earth program, which has supported grants for more than 500 environmental data projects in 81 countries. Google and Amazon have invested in cloud resources and artificial intelligence platforms working toward similar missions, but not on the grand scale that Microsoft seeks to achieve.

The species of the world are connected with each other. I think that’s actually one of the lessons, the real reminders, if you will, of 2020.

In a unique gesture (at least for the tech industry), Microsoft has also committed to protecting more land than it uses by 2025; its operations footprint is about 11,000 acres of land globally, an area about three-quarters of the size of Manhattan. Its partners in that effort are the Nature Conservancy and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

“WE DEPEND ON CLEAN AIR, WATER, FOOD, MEDICINE, ENERGY AND BUILDING MATERIALS THAT NATURE PROVIDES, BUT THESE VERY ECOSYSTEMS ARE THREATENED OR ALREADY IN DECLINE.” SMITH WROTE IN A BLOG WITH MORE DETAILS ABOUT MICROSOFT’S BIODIVERSITY MISSION. “MAINTAINING NATURE FOR THE BENEFIT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS IS ONE OF HUMANITY’S GREATEST CHALLENGES. DEPLOYING TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT THIS GLOBAL EFFORT IS ONE OF OURS.”



▶ LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our Conservation Council never fails to amaze, as this edition of our seasonal publication fully demonstrates. From Volkswagen's extraordinary lift in humanitarian assistance in South Africa, to International Paper's much welcomed support to replant and restore the Monarch butterfly's breeding ground in Mexico, the work being done in responding to, and in spite of, the COVID-19 crisis has revealed how resourceful and determined the conservation community is.

In facing these unprecedented times, the ICCF Group has been proactive as well, beginning with our headquarters in Washington. We were honored to host the first digital Congressional Briefing in U.S. history, following our Co-Chairs' "Call for Action" to the Trump Administration. The live event received national attention before it could even air. Not only was the occurrence of a digital briefing unprecedented, but it also addressed the critical, timely issue of the health dangers posed by high-risk wildlife trade practices in an effort to stop future outbreaks of zoonotic diseases.

The event was well received by our global network of legislators as well, and we were asked to spearhead several others, including expert briefings for key policymakers in the UK, Africa, Latin America, and Asia. These events are

as beneficial to building political will as they are ambitious in scope, and we will continue to lead these global efforts, which are vital to understand the nature of the problem and devise long-term solutions in order to prevent the next pandemic.

I am also pleased to write that our work on oceans governance continues to grow. With the support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), we are beginning a multi-year project with our existing caucus networks in legislatures around the world to promote blue economy opportunities and promote implementation of Large Marine Ecosystem Strategic Action Programs (LME SAPs).

This ambitious project will see the ICCF Group furthering its efforts in Latin America, East Africa, and Southeast Asia. We look forward to engaging our caucuses' leadership on these issues of international importance, and wish to thank our partners and friends for their continued support.

Sincerely,



John B. Gantt
President

BECOME AN ICCF PARTNER

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

