



SPRING 2023 QUARTERLY REPORT

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Congressional Conservation Leaders Introduce Bill to Create U.S. Foundation for International Conservation

On March 3rd, in commemoration of World Wildlife

ABOVE, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE); Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC); Sen. John Boozman (R-AR); Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM); Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI); Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC); Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN); Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX); Rep. Dave Joyce (R-OH); Rep. Chris Stewart (R-UT).

Day, leaders of the U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus reintroduced the bipartisan U.S. Foundation for International Conservation Act (USFICA), which would create a new foundation by the same name to fund public-private partnerships to support local communities around the world in effectively managing protected and conserved areas.

As the world loses nature, it faces a series of looming crises, threatening stability, food security, economies, development, health, and national security of countries around the world.

**TO AVERT THESE CRISES, USFICA
AIMS TO LEVERAGE PRIVATE FUNDING
TO IMPLEMENT PROJECTS AROUND
PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS
IN THE MOST VULNERABLE PARTS OF
THE WORLD.**

ABOVE: Geoffrey Brown (right), Senior Director, Government Relations, The Pew Charitable Trusts, stands by James Roth (left), Senior Vice President for Global Policy and Government Affairs, Conservation International, as he addresses leaders of the U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus on USFICA. Photo taken on March 29, 2023, at the ICCF Conservation Council Annual Meeting on Capitol Hill.





This focused effort would further aim to ensure that protected and conserved areas - widely recognized as one of the most

important tools for conserving biodiversity that benefits people - receive the dedicated long-term financial support that is

often lacking, complementing programs being implemented by other donor nations and able to augment other successful U.S. Government investments and innovative finance mechanisms.

Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) and Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) introduced the bill in the Senate, along with Senators John Boozman (R-AR), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Thom Tillis (R-NC), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). Representatives David

Joyce (R-OH), Betty McCollum (D-MN), Chris Stewart (R-UT), and Henry Cuellar (D-TX) introduced the House version. Senators Coons and Graham are the Chair and Ranking Member, respectively, of the Senate State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Subcommittee. Senators Coons, Boozman, Heinrich, and Tillis and Representatives Joyce, McCollum, Stewart, and Cuellar are co-chairs of the International Conservation Caucus.

IN A PRESS RELEASE ISSUED MARCH 3RD, SENATOR CHRIS COONS SAID:

“We are at a critical moment for financing the conservation of biodiversity and the lands and waters that sustain our planet’s health. The U.S. Foundation for International Conservation will help meet these challenges by leveraging private funding for solutions that are driven by the local communities who live and work around protected areas – in turn, providing stability to these areas. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing



of CITES, we must also recognize that we can do more to prevent the illegal wildlife trade by effectively managing protected and conserved areas. I look forward to working with my colleagues to quickly advance this important legislation."

Senator Lindsey Graham said:

▮▮ The creation of the Foundation for International Conservation is a win-win in that the bill leverages private capital while supporting the long-term protection of critical landscapes around the world. Investments in conservation lead to food security and regional stability. I am proud to work with my colleagues and stakeholders to position the United States as a leader in international conservation."



Congressman David Joyce said:

▮▮ I am proud to join my colleagues from the House and Senate to introduce the U.S. Foundation for International Conservation Act, which will help attract private funding for long-term conservation projects around the world. These projects will not only help preserve important biodiversity but will also lift up communities and help support our nation's security."

Congresswoman Betty McCollum said:

W I'm pleased to join my colleagues in introducing bipartisan, bicameral legislation to fund public-private partnerships that support local communities around the world in effectively managing protected and conserved areas. Continued U.S. investment in international conservation is essential as we continue to face global challenges like the biodiversity crisis, access to clean water, climate resilience, and more. The U.S. Foundation for International Conservation Act will help protect wildlife and vital ecosystems while supporting local populations."





ICCF Founder David Barron said:

W International conservation is essential to U.S. strategic interests - from good governance, regional stability, and conflict avoidance to poverty alleviation and food security. It is wonderful to see the leadership of the U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus working in a bipartisan manner with the private sector on an innovative new public-private partnership to secure large landscapes for the long-term benefit of people and their communities."

ABOVE: ICCF Founder David Barron (right) and Sen. Chris Coons (left).

LEFT: Rep. Betty McCollum speaks on the importance of continued U.S. investment in international conservation at the ICCF Conservation Council Annual Meeting on Capitol Hill.

VOICES FOR CONSERVATION

Every quarter, *VOICES FOR CONSERVATION* features those who work tirelessly in supporting the mission of the ICCF Group, advancing conservation in the field of governance and in the spirit of nonpartisanship, for the sake of people, wild places & animals, and natural wealth.

FEATURED, THIS QUARTER:

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ON IUU FISHING - AN OP-ED
BY MEXICAN SENATOR RAÚL
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GLORIA SALVADOR

RIGHT: MS. ANGELA CHIKUMBI
CHIMPINDE, EMBASSY OF ZAMBIA.

PHOTO OF THE SEASON





MEXICO IS THE SEA

**AN OP-ED ON THE RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT
ON PORT STATE MEASURES TO PREVENT, DETER AND
ELIMINATE ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED AND UNREGULATED
FISHING (PSMA)**

ABOVE: Arches of Los Cabos, Mexico.



**BY MEXICAN SENATOR
RAÚL BOLAÑOS-CACHO**

The ICCF Group through “Fundación ICCF Mexico” works closely with the General Congress of the United Mexican States, acting as secretariat of the Mexican



Conservation Caucus (MCC) and the Mexican Ocean Caucus (MOC). A comprehensive agenda strengthens political will and builds capacities on biodiversity conservation, communitarian forest management, sound management of natural protected areas, and the path towards a sustainable ocean economy, including issues such as blue carbon, IUU fishing, and ocean acidification, among others.

Senator Bolaños is Co-Chair of the MCC and the MOC and also serves as President of the Environment, Natural Resources, and Climate Change Commission; Vice President of North America in the Executive Committee of ParlAmericas; and 1st Vice President of the Energy and Mines Commission of the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament. He was asked to share his opinion on the recent ratification by Mexico of the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), the first binding international agreement to specifically target IUU fishing. The following is the Senator's reply.

THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT REAFFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF LIVING MARINE RESOURCES, TO FIGHTING IUU FISHING, AND TO PRIORITIZING THE WELL-BEING OF THE COASTAL FISHING COMMUNITIES.

RIGHT: Senator Bolaños-Cacho addressing the Mexican Senate.





On March 1, after a precise analysis of its implication in the national legal framework, the Mexican Senate approved the

FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA).

The PSMA was adopted in Rome, Italy in 2009. The Agreement entered into force on June 5, 2016 and to date has 74 participants including the U.S., which

has been leading this agenda. With the ratification of the agreement, Mexico will become the 75th Party of the PSMA.

THE RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT BY MEXICO WILL GREATLY BENEFIT THE COUNTRY'S FISHERMEN THAT DEPEND ON THE OCEAN, SINCE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PSMA WILL DIRECTLY COMBAT IUU FISHING CONTRIBUTING ULTIMATELY TO THE LONG-TERM CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF LIVING MARINE RESOURCES AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS.

Since the PSMA is the first legally binding instrument on minimum standards to deny port access to foreign vessels that engage in or support IUU fishing, the effective implementation of this agreement will also allow the Mexican authorities to strengthen strategies to combat IUU fishing.

In addition, this agreement represents great opportunities for the country to establish financing mechanisms and technical cooperation, and advancing the commitments acquired under other international agreements,

including the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement "USMCA", the priorities set out in the framework of the G-20, the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, and the Biodiversity Framework Post-2020.

To move forward on the effective implementation of the PSMA, it is fundamental to carry out a detailed analysis of the current legislative and policy framework in order to ensure that Mexico has the necessary tools and provisions



to prevent IUU fishing in its role as a port state. From the Senate of the Republic and the Mexican Ocean Caucus (MOC), we will continue to convene all interested parties, working closely with

the Executive Branch, to trace a critical path that allows us to promote legislations and policies aligned to this important international agreement.

WE HAVE A BIG RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS, AND AS YOU PROBABLY HAVE HEARD: MEXICO IS THE SEA.





CONSERVATION BEGINS WITH STEWARDSHIP

**ON VALORIZING CONSERVATION IN SAINT LUCIA
WITH SENATE PRESIDENT ALVINA REYNOLDS**

ABOVE: Sunrise over the City of Castries, Saint Lucia.



The ICCF Group is working with parliamentarians in St. Lucia and other Eastern Caribbean countries to support biodiversity conservation through enhanced political will and capacity building for improved management of marine protected



areas, marine management areas, and protected areas. This work is supported by a grant from the Global Environment Facility, with the United Nations Environment Programme acting as Implementing Agency.

In light of this effort, the ICCF Group asked the Hon. Alvina Reynolds, President of the Senate of Saint Lucia since 2022,

to answer our questions on conservation in her country and the region. We thank her for her time and support.

THE ICCF GROUP: Madam President, why conservation?

I've been Saint Lucia's Senate President for approximately six (6) months. However, I previously served as an elected Member of Parliament for the district of Babonneau. My professional background is in Education and Social Work, and I was also quite active in Guidance and Counseling. I served as Saint

Lucia's Minister for Health, Wellness, Human Services and Gender Relations from 2011 to 2016.

I grew up and still reside in the rural northeastern part of Saint Lucia of Babonneau, which means "Bar Bon Leau" (The Ridge of

RIGHT: Hon. Alvina Reynolds, President of the Senate, Hon. Claudius J. Francis, Speaker of the House of Assembly and Hon. Dr. Ernest Hilaire, Minister for Tourism, Investment, Creative Industries, Culture and Information.

Good Water). My community is Fond Assau, which translates to the Valley of Assau. Assau is believed to have been a free African who came to Saint Lucia after the end of slavery and settled in that part of Saint Lucia. Those who settled with him kept many of their African traditions with them, including that of Kélé. Hence, the people of the area have always been culturally aware and quite proud of their heritage.

While I am a practicing Catholic, I admire how holding on to traditions brings distinctiveness and uniqueness to a people. It's pretty much the same with nature conservation in general. It gives a space distinctiveness and richness. I believe conservation has to be grounded in the concept of stewardship. We have been gifted with the opportunity to live in a rich community, but that does not mean we can do with



the land and its resources as we see fit. I believe we must manage our environment effectively, thereby preserving these resources for future generations.

The community of Fond Assau shares a valley with much of what is known as the Castries Waterworks Reserve. It is one of the first Forest Reserves in Saint Lucia, and for over a century was the source of water for the city of Castries. The forest is known to all as La Sociere forest. Traditionally, protection of our rainforest was tied to conservation of our water supply. Sadly, over the years, the yields from these supplies have dropped. Some say this may be due to climate change. In small island developing states, that is a real challenge. So, even with good conservation and dedicated stewardship, we face challenges due to external forces beyond our direct control. What is also visible within my community is the nexus between conservation and tourism. People are now seeing the economic benefit from conservation areas. We have the Rainforest Sky Rides in my community, and that brings quite a number of visitors to experience the beauty and ambience of the La Sociere rainforest. Conservation is all of these things for me: beauty, stewardship, and sustainable livelihoods.

THE ICCF GROUP: What do you believe are Saint Lucia's greatest conservation challenges and



opportunities?

Our greatest challenge is providing economic opportunity for prosperity with scarce resources, particularly land resources. Saint Lucia is very small, 238 square miles, and with that we must provide land for food, economic activity, and housing. Not all land is the same. We are quite mountainous, and so the issues of developing these lands are quite challenging. Landslides have not been uncommon in our history. The most famous landslide in Saint Lucia was the Ravine Poisson Disaster, which occurred in 1938. A new road was cut into the country's interior when bananas were becoming a cash crop. The farmers cultivated along the steep slopes, and when the rains came they washed down the hills, killing hundreds. I think, since then, there's been a great attempt at discouraging clearcut hillside farming without careful drainage and soil conservation measures.

There was a time when agriculture was our greatest threat to conservation. However, with economic shifts, I would say the new challenges come from urban

LEFT: Hon. Alvina Reynolds, President of the Senate and Ambassador James K. J. Lee, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York.



expansion, particularly for housing, but also from tourism. In the case of tourism, the desire is more for coastline and beachfront. This has implications for sharing access to the coastline for locals and their own enjoyment and recreation.

Even some of our most beautiful protected areas have had their challenges. Take our Pitons for instance: these peaks that rise out of the sea to heights of over 2,500 feet. They're the iconic image of Saint Lucia and were declared a World Heritage Site in 2004. The challenge is that much of the land in the Pitons Management Area is

privately owned, and many owners are mindful of the real estate value, not so much the conservation value. This has caused much friction over the years. I believe there are many opportunities, however, in that today's visitors are not just looking for the sun, sea, and sand vacation. They marvel at the greenness of the island and the fact that it is ecologically quite special as well. Much of this is not protected or state forest. So, there's an opportunity to expand our protected areas and provide sustainable economic opportunities from these protected areas through eco-adventure-tourism.

THE ICCF GROUP: In your experience, how can the business world and civil society in St. Lucia interact with the Saint Lucian parliament to address issues relating to natural resources wealth management?

This is an interesting question because we don't often see very much direct interaction with

Parliament by these groups, and that should change. I think there is a need to bring forward a National

Physical Plan that would be a point of focus and discussion of the entire country. We can all sit down and discuss the country we want to see: how we want it to look and feel; what we want to protect for all

generations; what we can develop and how we can develop it. That does need national discourse, and I think it would be a great starting point.

THE ICCF GROUP: Why is conservation important to the people of Saint Lucia, and how can the caucus model supported by the ICCF Group assist in advancing national objectives?

I think I've touched on many of these matters in answering the previous questions. Conservation is important for protecting our natural resources and securing these resources for the future. We need our rainforests to protect our water resources and our biodiversity. We need our countryside protected as well to protect our soils and to ensure we can have food security. These are big issues for small island developing states (SIDS) like ours.

Conservation is being appreciated more, but it's still not very well understood as a priority. Bread and

butter issues still dominate in the mindset of the average politician and their constituents, and we still generally have a brick and mortar expectation of what development is. So, the metrics will usually be: how many jobs will this create, how much money will be spent on this project. Valorising conservation is going to help if the politician can begin to see that planting a tree is an investment, doing more with less is a benefit to everyone. So I hope that the caucus model can also begin to educate parliamentarians and their constituents alike in building bipartisan support for a better Saint Lucia.



REFORMING CONSERVATION IN MOZAMBIQUE

ON LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES IN MOZAMBIQUE, WITH SENATOR GLORIA SALVADOR

ABOVE: Hon. Noel Bracio Nandema, Hon. Gloria Salvador from Mozambique and Hon. Shimbwa Mwinyi from Kenya during a field visit to Gazi Bay, Kenya focused on the importance of Mangroves.



The ICCF Group partnered with the National Assembly of the Republic of Mozambique to support the formation of the Mozambique Parliamentary Forum on Conservation (MPFC), implemented under the direction of the Commission on Agriculture, Economy, and Environment. The overall objective of the MPFC is to ensure that Mozambique strengthens



the engagement of its leaders, supporting the adoption and implementation of holistic policies for sustainable natural resource management in order to achieve sound biodiversity conservation and economic development.

As the Vice Rapporteur of the Commission on Agriculture, Economy and Environment within the Parliament of Mozambique, the Hon. Gloria Salvador has chaperoned the growth of

the MPFC in Mozambique's parliament. We spoke with her to learn of her vision for the caucus, and to speak about the strengths, challenges, and lessons learned since its establishment.

THE ICCF GROUP: What inspires you to participate in conservation issues in the Commission on Agriculture, Economy and Environment?

Environmental conservation involves corrective actions and maintenance of the integrity as well as the quality of the environment. As a member of this Commission on Agriculture, Economy and Environment, I feel I must do my best by contributing

directly for the good conservation of our environment. It inspires me to look at other corners of the world and see that when the environment is well taken care of, everything around it also prospers.

THE ICCF GROUP: What are the key strengths of the Commission on Agriculture, Economy and Environment?

The Commission, as the name

suggests, has as its three focal

points: agriculture, economy and environment. Mozambique regards agriculture as the sector that must provide the development of the country. The Commission, in its supervisory mission, must excel in the observation and implementation of all government plans established for agriculture, pressuring the government at all levels to create practical conditions for an efficient and mechanized agricultural system throughout the country.

As with agriculture, the Commission is also the supervisory body for the economy, to better assess the degree of compliance with everything that affects that field of activity. If we take into

account that the main sources of income are from fishing, agriculture, mining, natural gas extraction, forestry, and tourism, then the Commission should pay greater attention and focus to the development of activities in these areas.

As for the environment, environmental degradation puts many families at risk, so the Commission deals with this directly, working to sensitize communities towards good behaviour and practices leading to environmental conservation, also interacting with the government to create conditions that demotivate communities from harmful practices.

THE ICCF GROUP: What are the greatest challenges in nature and conservation issues in Mozambique?

The biggest challenges have been those to do with environmental

degradation, deforestation, exploitation, and indiscriminate

mining. On the legislative side, Mozambique has the opportunity to create greater pressure on the use of resources and, through sources such as the Committee,

must apply corrective but also coercive measures for the various offenders who mistreat our nature.

THE ICCF GROUP: Why is legislative action and institutional change important and impactful in addressing nature and conservation issues?

Legislative action and institutional change are indeed important in addressing issues concerning nature and conservation because with these instruments we can regulate and strengthen our institutions. Strict enforcement of our laws can impact all measures taken around

nature and conservation in our communities. Institutional change can be impactful in communities, allowing bans on the practice of harmful activities that threaten the conservation, reproduction, quality, and quantity of biological resources which are especially threatened by extinction.

THE ICCF GROUP: What were some of the key lessons you took from the Regional Field Visit to Gazi Bay in Kenya?

Kenya, from what I've seen, is one of the few countries in Africa that

truly cares about environmental conservation. During the field



visit, the biggest lesson was to better preserve our environment. I saw that the community at Gazi Bay loved to take care of the environment and they understood very well the value that conservation adds to their lives.

Mangroves in Gazi Bay grow and reproduce in a healthy manner, and it was wonderful to see the coexistence between man and animal sharing the same space in a healthy way.

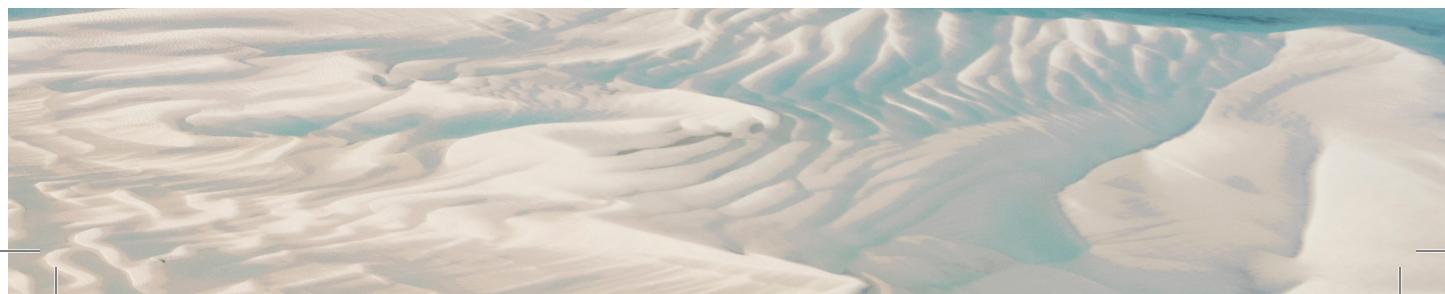
THE ICCF GROUP:

What kind of resources, knowledge, capacity, or skills does the MPFC need in order to improve on its performance?

The issue of resources is the biggest Achilles heel that afflicts Mozambique, and my office is no exception. There is a lack of financial resources to train and transfer new technologies to those in need. There is a lack of resources to go in search

of new experiences in other corners of the world. There are limited skills or abilities to deal with mechanized agriculture, for example, for the conservation of the environment, which is degrading at the speed of light with each passing day. Therefore,

BELOW: An Island in Vilankulo, Mozambique, as seen from above.



financial resources are essential
for improving performance in

this and other areas mentioned
hereinabove.

RIGHT: Rep. Chris Stewart (R-UT).

BELOW: Sen. John Boozman (R-AR).





ICCF IN THE UNITED STATES

CAUCUS CO-CHAIRS, ICCF CONSERVATION COUNCIL MEMBERS OUTLINE PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR

At ICCF's annual meeting with Conservation Council partners, held March 29th in Washington, leaders of the International Conservation Caucus (ICC), Oceans Caucus (OC), and Senate Climate Solutions Caucus (SCSC) highlighted successes in the previous Congress and outlined some priorities for the year ahead.

International Conservation
Caucus Co-Chairs, Senator Martin

Heinrich (D-NM), Senator John
Boozman (R-AR), Representative

Chris Stewart (R-UT), and Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN), highlighted caucus-led efforts in the 117th Congress, including continued bipartisan support to fund international conservation and reauthorizations of the Tropical Forest and Coral Reef Conservation Act, END Wildlife Trafficking Act, and Global Food Security Act.

Entering the 118th Congress, Co-Chairs emphasized the continued need for Congress to work on a bipartisan basis to advance international conservation efforts, the importance of being good stewards of natural resources for the next generation, and the clear nexus between international conservation and protecting America's national security interests. ICC Co-Chairs recently reintroduced the U.S. Foundation for International Conservation

Act (USFICA), which would create a new foundation by the same name to fund public-private partnerships to support local communities around the world in effectively managing protected and conserved areas. Speaking at the March 29th event, members reiterated the important role that private-sector partners play in promoting good natural resource management.

House Oceans Caucus Co-Chairs, Representative Jenniffer Gonzalez Colon (R-PR) and Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) represented the Oceans Caucus and laid out their main priorities for this year and the 118th Congress: continuing to focus on ocean data and monitoring funding programs, coastal resilience and adaptation, blue carbon opportunities, marine debris, and IUU fishing. One topic

RIGHT: Anna Schneider, Senior Vice President, Industry-Government Relations at Volkswagen Group of America.

that Congresswoman Bonamici brought up specifically was a focus on public marine science and education. She noted the importance of public awareness on oceans issues in order for their support in Congress prioritizing policy solutions.

Senate Climate Solutions Caucus Co-Chair, Senator Mike Braun (R-IN) highlighted one of the caucus' first major legislative accomplishments since forming in 2019, the Growing Climate Solutions Act, establishing a greenhouse gas technical assistance provider and third-party verifier program. Senator Braun further emphasized the continued importance of bipartisanship in finding solutions and the integral role that the private sector, across all industries, has to play in climate mitigation.



SENATE INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION CAUCUS ANNOUNCES THREE NEW CO-CHAIRS



The Senate International Conservation Caucus (ICC) has announced new leadership for the 118th Congress. ICCF would like to welcome Senators John Boozman (R-AR), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), and Thom Tillis (R-NC) to the caucus leadership, and we look forward to working with them toward advancing U.S. leadership in international conservation.

The trio joins Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) as bipartisan Co-Chairs of the ICC in the Senate. Senators Boozman and Tillis take over for

Senators Richard Burr (R-NC) and Rob Portman (R-OH), who retired from the Senate at the end of the 117th Congress. Senator Heinrich

ABOVE, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Sen. John Boozman (R-AR); Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM); and Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC).

will take over for Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), who will

continue in his role as Co-Chair of the Senate Oceans Caucus.

ICCF thanks the outgoing Co-Chairs, whose leadership over the years has produced a lasting impact, driving bipartisan solutions to address international conservation challenges, including forest conservation, threatened and endangered species conservation, poaching and illegal wildlife trade, IUU fishing, and marine debris.

Senator John Boozman of Arkansas has served in the U.S. Senate since 2011. In the 118th Congress, he is expected to continue serving as the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry in addition to serving on the Appropriations, Environment and Public Works, and Veterans'

Affairs Committees. Boozman is a longtime champion of policies to protect wildlife and wetlands. As a member of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, Boozman helps direct funding to preserve waterfowl habitat. He also serves as Co-Chairman of the Senate Recycling Caucus.

// "I'm grateful for the leadership of the International Conservation Caucus in bringing together voices and ideas from around the world to work toward the common goal of conservation. I look forward to strengthening efforts to protect our planet in a truly collaborative way for the sake of future generations in the U.S. and across the globe," Boozman said.

Senator Martin Heinrich of

New Mexico was elected to the

Senate in 2012. He is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, where he chairs the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Subcommittee. The Senator also chairs the Joint Economic Committee and serves on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Prior to being elected to the U.S. Senate, he served two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, prior to which he served four years as an Albuquerque City Councilor, including time as City Council President. Before holding elected office, Senator Heinrich was a contractor at Phillips Laboratories, served in AmeriCorps for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was the Executive Director of the Cottonwood Gulch Foundation, led the Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness, and founded a small public affairs consulting firm.

Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina has been a member of the Senate since 2015. He is a member of the Senate Finance Committee, where he is Ranking Member of the Social Security, Pensions and Family Policy Subcommittee, the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, where he is Ranking Member of the Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection Subcommittee, the Senate Judiciary Committee, where he is Ranking Member of the Intellectual Property Subcommittee, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, and the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The Senator previously served in the North Carolina House of Representatives and was Speaker of the House from 2011-2014. His time in public office follows a 22-year private sector career, including as a top-level executive at PricewaterhouseCoopers and IBM.

// The United States is a leader in conservation efforts to protect our rich natural beauty, and we must work to spread those efforts around the world for future generations,” said Senator Tillis. “I am proud to co-chair the ICC in the 118th Congress, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to find bipartisan solutions for worldwide conservation efforts.”

To view a complete list of the members of the International Conservation Caucus in the House and Senate, please visit: <https://www.internationalconservation.org/where-we-work/united-states/icc>

MONGOLIA DELEGATION HOSTED BY ICCF IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Members of the Mongolian Parliament formed in April 2022 the Nature Conservation Caucus (NCC), a group of legislators uniting to help preserve Mongolia’s environment. Mongolia is a young democracy, moving to a multiparty system when the Cold War ended. Sandwiched between Russia and China, Mongolia eagerly seeks ties and trade with like-minded democratic countries in Asia, Europe, and elsewhere. Its territory is rich in a wide variety of minerals, making mining the main engine of economic growth. The other main segment of the economy is traditional, nomadic livestock herding, which provides a livelihood for over 220,000 families. The country’s grasslands are some of the most diverse in the world, and are critical in sequestering carbon. Its forests face challenges from global warming, pests, and loss of permafrost, while over one-third of its territory is desert.

In February 2023, four NCC | members, including its chair and



deputy chair, came to Washington for meetings with U.S. Government and NGO partners on conserving Mongolia's vital natural resources. The group is seeking knowledge and assistance in sustaining grasslands in the face of overgrazing, managing protected areas, overseeing the mining sector in an ecologically sound manner, and enacting sustainable land use and water use policies. In meetings with

federal agencies including the Department of State, Department of Interior, and EPA, as well as The Nature Conservancy, the Global Environment Facility, and senators and committee staff on Capitol Hill, the NCC delegation built new ties to expand cooperation and exchange of information on land management, illegal mining, national parks, cashmere markets, and other topics.

ABOVE: Mongolian Conservation Caucus Delegation Meeting with Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD).

TRANSBOUNDARY CONSERVATION IN AFRICA DISCUSSION WITH CEO OF PEACE PARKS FOUNDATION

CCF hosted a lunch with Peace Parks Foundation CEO Werner Myburgh, Regional Manager Dr. Bartolomeu Soto, and Chief Development Officer Lilian Spijkerman, who were all in Washington, DC from South Africa, to discuss Transboundary Conservation Areas in Africa: areas that encompass one or more national boundaries.



Peace Parks Foundation was founded in 1997 by HRH Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, Nelson Mandela, and Dr. Anton Rupert with a dream and a vision that the establishment of peace parks, or transfrontier conservation areas (TFCAs), in southern Africa would contribute to peace, economic and environmental prosperity, and the protection of biodiversity and natural capital.

Participants discussed the role and opportunity that public-private partnership models provide to foster TFCAs, and the opportunity that the U.S. has to leverage investments to encourage support for protected areas, adopt technology, and help mitigate illegal wildlife trafficking and organized crime. It has been shown that TFCAs are serving as a beacon for stability and the protection of biodiversity.



ICCF COMMEMORATES 50 YEARS OF CITES ON CAPITOL HILL

March 3rd, World Wildlife Day, marked 50 years since the signing of the Convention on International Trade of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in Washington, DC in 1973. To commemorate this milestone, ICCF brought together leaders in Congress, the administration, the NGO community, and the private sector to highlight global efforts to address illegal wildlife trade. Speakers,

including Senator Chris Coons, Congressman John Garamendi, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Director Martha Williams, CITES Secretary General Ivonne Higuero, Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime Chair John Scanlon, ICCF Group Executive Vice President Susan Lylis, and Ecuadorian Ambassador Ivonne A-Baki, discussed the impact of CITES and the continued challenges countries face in regulating wildlife trade and combating wildlife crime.

CITES, which entered into force in 1975, provides a framework

to regulate international trade of species, aiming to support

LEFT: Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime Chair John Scanlon.

BELOW: Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA).



the sustainability of species in the wild while ensuring trade is conducted legally and is traceable through the issuance of permits and certificates.

In the U.S. the Endangered Species Act designates the Department of the Interior as the CITES implementing agency, with these duties being carried out by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in partnership with other federal agencies. In 2022, USFWS inspected more than 167,000 shipments of wildlife and wildlife products at major U.S. ports of entry, with a declared value of more than \$5.4 billion USD. The United States also supports

capacity building in nations that are a Party to CITES to ensure effective implementation of the Convention and global leadership for conservation, and USFWS has deployed special agent attachés to serve at U.S. embassies in strategic regions throughout the world to provide training and capacity building, and to combat wildlife trafficking in support of CITES.

The ICCF Group, working through parliamentary conservation caucuses, has provided legislators a platform to make a tremendous impact in elevating conservation issues in their respective countries.

In particular, caucus leaders in Africa, including in Kenya, Gabon, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zambia, have driven measures to strengthen laws against poaching and illegal wildlife trade. Malawi, as one example, which had previously sought not to be bound under CITES with respect to the listing of elephants, now has some of the strongest legal protections in the world against poaching and trafficking. However, despite progress made since the signing of CITES, challenges remain in addressing illegal wildlife trade, an illicit industry the World Bank values at between \$1-2 trillion annually.

// CITES was designed 50 years ago to regulate trade in certain species, not fight transnational organized crime,” noted John Scanlon, Chair of the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime and former CITES Secretary General. “The stakes are high, and, to end wildlife crime, we must now embed tackling it into the international criminal law framework. It’s not a trade issue. It’s a crime issue.”

Several developing states have called for a new international agreement to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking, and last year sponsored a resolution adopted by the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on “Strengthening the international legal framework for international cooperation to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife.” The United States was among cosponsors of the resolution, and the American Bar Association and others have recently endorsed the call for a

new agreement.

On World Wildlife Day, co-chairs of the International Conservation Caucus also announced the introduction of the U.S. Foundation for International Conservation Act, which would create a foundation by the same name to fund public-private partnerships and leverage private funding to support conservation area management and local communities around the world.

// As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of CITES,” wrote Senator Chris Coons in a press release, “we must also recognize that we can do more to prevent the illegal wildlife trade by effectively managing protected and conserved areas.”



CLEAN ENERGY STAFF BRIEFING

On March 21st, ICCF hosted a U.S. Congressional Staff Briefing highlighting the business case for affordable clean energy and some of the barriers. ICCF partnered with the Clean Energy Buyers Association (CEBA) to bring a distinguished industry panel together to discuss how carbon free energy and clean energy are not just good for the environment, but a sound business decision.

Panelists included:

- Miranda Ballentine, CEO, CEBA
- Johnny Key, Director of Energy and Power Solutions, Freeport McMoran



- Chad Easton, Director of Government Affairs, Nucor
- Sara Decker, Senior Director of Federal Government Affairs, Walmart

Walmart, Freeport McMoran, and Nucor all have a large presence in the U.S. and take their environmental footprint and bottom lines very seriously. Wholesale energy markets are

important in keeping producers offering competitive prices as well as renewable options, which is important for businesses like Walmart, which has a zero (not net zero) emissions goal by 2040,

ABOVE: The panel addresses questions from the audience, during the Q&A section of this U.S. Congressional staff briefing.



Nucor, which has committed to a 35% reduction in GHG intensity by 2030 and whose GHGs are already $\frac{1}{4}$ of the global average, and Freeport, which has a net zero goal by 2050.

Each of the panelists pointed to some barriers that have made it difficult to procure clean energy or will in the future as global energy demands increase. First, wholesale energy markets offer companies and businesses

ABOVE: Chad Easton, Director of Government Affairs, Nucor.

more options on where their energy comes from, making it possible to prioritize clean energy procurement. States that don't have wholesale markets create less competitive markets, meaning utilities don't have to offer more clean energy solutions. Transmission capability is also a challenge. Investments in microgrids are needed so that electricity customers are able to access power generated by clean energy sources such as

solar panels. Permitting reform was something each panelist noted, and it is a hot topic on Capitol Hill. If companies, or the administration, are going to meet clean energy demands and goals, permitting reform needs to happen so companies can build infrastructure in a timely manner. Lastly, definitions and standards are incredibly important, especially if companies are going to be held accountable for reaching their clean energy goals.

THE ICCF GROUP IN ASIA

ICCF GROUP TO IMPLEMENT HEALTHY FOREST PROJECT IN MONGOLIA

Mongolian boreal forests are recognized as having high ecological value and significance not only at the national level but also globally. Nevertheless, recent research conducted by the National Forest Agency in 2022 revealed that over 700,000 hectares of forest land have been infected by forest pests and diseases, necessitating defoliation in specific areas of the country. The research concludes that without proper treatment for infested areas, the direct loss of 1.1 billion trees is inevitable within a year.

ICCF has joined with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia, the National Forest Agency, and Rio Tinto Mongolia to implement the "Healthy Forest" project focusing on preserving existing forests and mitigating forest degradation, particularly caused by forest infestation, which is one of the leading drivers

of deforestation. The project aims to treat forest infestation in 300,000 hectares of forested areas within two years and involves capacity development, integration of AI technologies, and pest management programs to ensure that future generations inherit healthy and productive forests.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP ON NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS IN MONGOLIA

On 31 January 2023, the Mongolian Ministry of Environment and Tourism, National Forest Agency, Rio Tinto, and the ICCF Group hosted a workshop on "Public-Private Partnership on Nature-based Solutions for Tackling Climate Change in Mongolia" to improve knowledge on how to better engage the private sector in managing and financing natural capital and nature-based solutions (NbS) to address development and climate change challenges. The workshop further explored the potential for the recently launched "Healthy Forest" project to contribute to global decarbonization efforts, improve Mongolian forest health, prevent further deforestation and forest degradation, and increase access to carbon markets based on public and private partnerships.

RIGHT: Participants at the ICCF Mongolia *Workshop on Public-Private Partnership on Nature-based Solutions for Tackling Climate Change in Mongolia*.

While supporting the Billion Tree National Movement (BTNM), initiated by the President of Mongolia, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and the National Forest Agency raised the importance of protecting the existing forest and mitigating forest degradation, particularly

caused by forest infestation, which is one of the main direct drivers of deforestation.

The project also has the potential to generate carbon emission reduction by integrating NbS. Mongolia is considering options



and opportunities for generating carbon emissions reductions from the forestry sector to support the financing of the BTNM, sustainable development, and NDC commitments by 2030. Within this context, carbon

credits generated as part of the “Healthy Forest” project implementation can help drive real ecosystem restoration and serve as a pilot project for public and private partnerships on NbS-driven carbon financing.

ICCF IN MONGOLIA CO-HOSTS NATIONAL FOREST CONFERENCES, PRESENTS SCHOLARSHIPS

In observance of the International Day of Forests 2023, ICCF co-hosted two national forest conferences with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia, the National Forest Agency, and Rio Tinto Mongolia. The Sixth National Conference on “Forest Policy, Science and Technology of Mongolia” was attended by over 200 representatives from forestry research and education institutions, academia, government organizations, international projects and programs, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and local governments. The conference served to bring attention to forest-related issues and achievements in forest policy, forest science, education, forest technology, and innovation in Mongolia.

The Eighth National Academic Conference, also known as the “Apical Meristem,” provided a platform for various scholars,

researchers, and experts to come together and discuss the latest trends, challenges, and solutions in the field of forestry. A



highlight of the conference, which was organized in partnership with the National University of Mongolia, was the awarding of the Healthy Forest project scholarship certificates to four selected students majoring in

forestry for their research on pest management. The scholarship provides financial support to students who are conducting research in the field of pest management in forests and aims to encourage and support

ABOVE: Sunset over Mongolian valley.

students in their research endeavors and contribute to the development of the forestry sector.

As part of the scholarship program, the students will be trained by a Postdoctoral fellow from the US, who is an expert in forest pest research. The aim

of the program is to prepare these students to become future experts in the field of forest pest management. The selected students will work together under the guidance of the Postdoctoral fellow and will be exposed to various aspects of forest pest management, including the identification, control, and prevention of pests that can



damage forest ecosystems. They will also receive hands-on training in the use of various techniques and tools for pest management, including the latest technologies. By working closely with an expert in the field, they will be able to develop their skills and understanding of the challenges and opportunities

involved in managing forest pests. Ultimately, the aim of the scholarship program is to produce a new generation of experts who can help to address the challenges facing forest ecosystems today, and to ensure that future generations can continue to benefit from these valuable resources.

ICCF IN THAILAND LEADS WORKSHOP ON HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT

In March 2023, ICCF's International Conservation Corps hosted a three-day workshop in Thailand's Khao Yai National Park (KYNP) on Human-Elephant Conflict. Khao Yai is Thailand's oldest national park, and one of its largest parks. The human population around the park has grown considerably in recent years, leading to increased human-elephant conflict when elephants rove into populated areas. The workshop included the Deputy Director General of Thailand's national parks, a representative from the Prime Minister's Office, community leaders, and speakers from academia and wildlife research organizations. The possible steps mentioned during the workshop to address the problem included focusing on habitat management, collecting more data and research on the behavior of elephant herds, and recruiting more volunteers to monitor the issue and report when problems may arise. The group also talked about the need to share more

LEFT: Thai elephant.

information on this topic across the country, between communities as well as between government bodies and academic institutions.

THE ICCF GROUP IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

CONGRESSIONAL WORKSHOP ON RESTORATION IN THE AMAZON

The Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program (ASL), led by the World Bank and ICCF Group, organized the event "Restoration in the Amazon: What is at stake, what policies are necessary and how to involve the private sector?" on Tuesday, February 28, 2023. The event brought together parliamentarians from Brazil, Colombia, and Peru with scientific authorities and representatives of the private sector.

Representatives of the Scientific Panel for the Amazon, Banco Santander, and 11 parliamentarians from the three countries met to discuss the current situation of the Amazon and ongoing initiatives to restore

it. The event aimed to underline the importance of collaboration between governments, the private sector, and local communities to address climate change and preserve the Amazon ecosystems.

Participating parliamentarians included:

- Brazil: Senator Nelsinho Trad and Representatives Arnaldo Jardim, Carlos Gomes, Fred Costa, Pedro Aihara, Zé Silva, and Zé Vitor
- Colombia: Senator Nicolás Echeverri and Representatives Yénica Acosta, Car-

los Ardila, Andrés Cancimance, Mauricio Cuéllar, and Jorge Méndez

- Peru: Congressmen Arturo Alegría, Jeny López, and Karol Paredes, who is also vice president of the Amazon Parliament (PARLAMAZ)

During the meeting, representatives of the Scientific Panel for the Amazon presented the current state of the Amazon and highlighted the importance of restoration. They stressed the need for joint efforts in all the countries of the region, with a focus on the fight against deforestation and forest degradation, the recovery of protected areas, and forest restoration.

The Banco Santander representative highlighted the growing momentum of the reclamation industry in the region, but also noted the need for collective action with governments and political decisions to ensure restoration efforts reach the scale needed.

In turn, parliamentarians echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the importance of collaboration to effectively address the climate challenges facing the Amazon. They also highlighted the need to recognize that many current activities in the Amazon are crucial to the way of life of local people, and that restoration initiatives must take into account their needs and rights.

The event was important in advancing restoration efforts in the Amazon, bringing together diverse perspectives and knowledge to create a future agenda that benefits the region. Collaboration and a shared vision are essential to ensure a sustainable future for the Amazon and its communities.

THIRD FORUM ON PROTECTION OF THE AMAZON IN LETICIA, AMAZONAS

In March, the third Forum on the Protection and Conservation of the Amazon was held in Leticia, Amazonas, organized by Congressman Carlos Ardila, with the support of ICCF and the Assistance Technician of the Rural Development Program with a Territorial Approach (DRET II) of the European Union, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) and

RIGHT, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Furio Massolino, Director of the DRETT II Program, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS); Sandra Perdomo, Manager of Public Policy and Cooperation, Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute; Lorena Torres, Director of Legislative Affairs, Ministry of the Interior; HR Modesto Aguilera; HR Carlos Mendez; Colonel William Javier Lara Avendaño, Commander of the Amazonas Police Department; HR Yenica Acosta; HR Mauricio Cuella; HR Victor Tovar; HR Carlos Ardila; Laura Hernández, Head of Legislative Affairs, ICCF Colombia; Jose Antonio Gomez, DRETT II Program Coordinator, AICS; Ana Cubillos, Manager of Projects and Cooperation, ICCF Colombia; Juan Martin Vélez García, Environmental Expert. In the back, Dunia Restrepo, Advisor to HR Carlos Ardila; Yeimy Duque, Advisor to HR Yenica Acosta; and support staff.





the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The goal of the forum was to socialize and strengthen, together with the communities, the bill that seeks more resources to conserve and restore the ecosystems of the Amazon territory.

The briefing was attended by members of the Amazonian parliamentary caucus (PARLAMAZ), members of the

Colombia Conservationist Caucus and the Colombian Oceans Caucus, delegates of DRET II, Ministry of the Interior, Institute

of Amazon Studies (SINCHI), Alexander Von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute, Corpoamazonia, and National Natural Parks (PNN), among other representatives of the national government and local, indigenous, and community authorities.

“ We will be in Leticia to listen to the different actors, more voices and thus be able to enrich our initiative that seeks to generate better conditions for the Colombian Amazon,” noted Representative Carlos Ardila. Ardila affirmed that this bill has already been socialized with the communities of the departments of Putumayo and Caquetá, and the plan is to continue enriching this initiative and gathering the proposals and needs of the six departments that make up the Colombian Amazon.

The Colombian Conservation



Caucus has received support from ICCF and the DRET II Program with the objective that the initiatives for the protection of the "Media Colombia" that make up the Amazon and the

Orinoco are built with and from the communities, and in this way address their true needs with solutions agreed upon with the citizenry.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FOR PARAGUAY

On March 16th, a virtual training session on the topic of Service Crops as a Tool for Sustainable Agriculture was hosted in Paraguay. The event was organized by IDEAGRO Foundation with the support of the FOLUR Paraguay project. The training was conducted by Agricultural Engineer Verónica Sauer, a professional from INTA in Argentina.

During the training session, the importance and advantages of incorporating Service Crops (SC) into income-producing systems for the Gran Chaco region were presented - focusing on the aim of improving water retention,

increasing organic matter in the soil, enhancing microbial activity, and consequently increasing crop yields.

The FOLUR project in Paraguay

LEFT: Ana Cubillos, Manager of Projects and Cooperation, *Fundación ICCF Colombia*, in the field mission to Leticia, visiting one of the tourist places of the region: "The Island of Monkeys."

is led by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADES) with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as implementing entity and ICCF Group as executing organization. The FOLUR project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and co-financed by the public and private sectors, international cooperation, and civil society. The main objective of the FOLUR project is to promote landscape integrity and sustainable value chains in two of the country's main commodities: meat and soybeans.

The project coordinator, Agricultural Engineer Enrique Molas, explained the scope of the project and the importance of the partnership with IDEAGRO in the Paraguayan Chaco for the development of the project's objectives.

Furthermore, the project aims to identify sustainable best practices that are suitable for the country's production system and generate sustainability indicators to achieve a national protocol for sustainable soybeans and meat, through consensus among the entire supply chain and aligned with international markets.

FURTHER READING

- Virtual training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7ui19il7G0>
- Project presentation in Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOgsB-bCLLcY>

RIGHT: Airplane shadow over forest, Andros Island, Bahamas, Caribbean



BAHAMAS: NATIONAL FOREST INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS WORKSHOP

The International Conservation Corps and partners from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) traveled to The Bahamas in February 2023 to conduct a National Forest Inventory Analysis workshop.

This three-day workshop was part of a larger Global Environment Facility project with the Forestry Unit: “Bahamas Pine Islands - Forest/Mangrove Innovation and

Integration.” Training sessions focused on strengthening the capacity of Forestry Unit staff in forest inventory data management and analysis.

Implementation of the National Forest Inventory as a part of the National Forest Monitoring System is critical for protecting,

managing, and restoring The Bahamas' forests.

ADVANCING CONSERVATION IN THE CARIBBEAN

In January and March, ICCF teams traveled to Grenada, where they met with key stakeholders, including the Fisheries Division, government officials, and representatives of the private sector and NGOs, to discuss the adoption of a Co-Management Agreement for the Grand Anse Marine Protected Area.

In February, ICCF's Chief Conservation Officer, Bill Millan, visited Saint Lucia to meet with key stakeholders, including the Speaker of the House, the President and other members of the Senate, as well as former Prime Minister and Member of

Parliament, Hon Kenny D. Anthony. The Leader of Opposition Business in the Senate and former Minister for Tourism, Information and Broadcasting, Hon. Dominic Fedee shared his views and gave his full support for the establishment of a national



ABOVE: ICCF Chief Conservation Officer Bill Millan (left) meets with Director General of the OECS Commission Dr. Didacus Jules (center) during his visit to Saint Lucia.



caucus. Courtesy calls were also paid to the Director General of the OECS Commission, Dr. Didacus Jules and the Head of Environmental Sustainability Division, Mr. Chamberlain Emmanuel. During his meeting with the Director of the St. Lucia National Trust, the two spoke on continuing collaboration on other possible initiatives. During his visit, Bill Milan also attended the island's 44th Independence Day

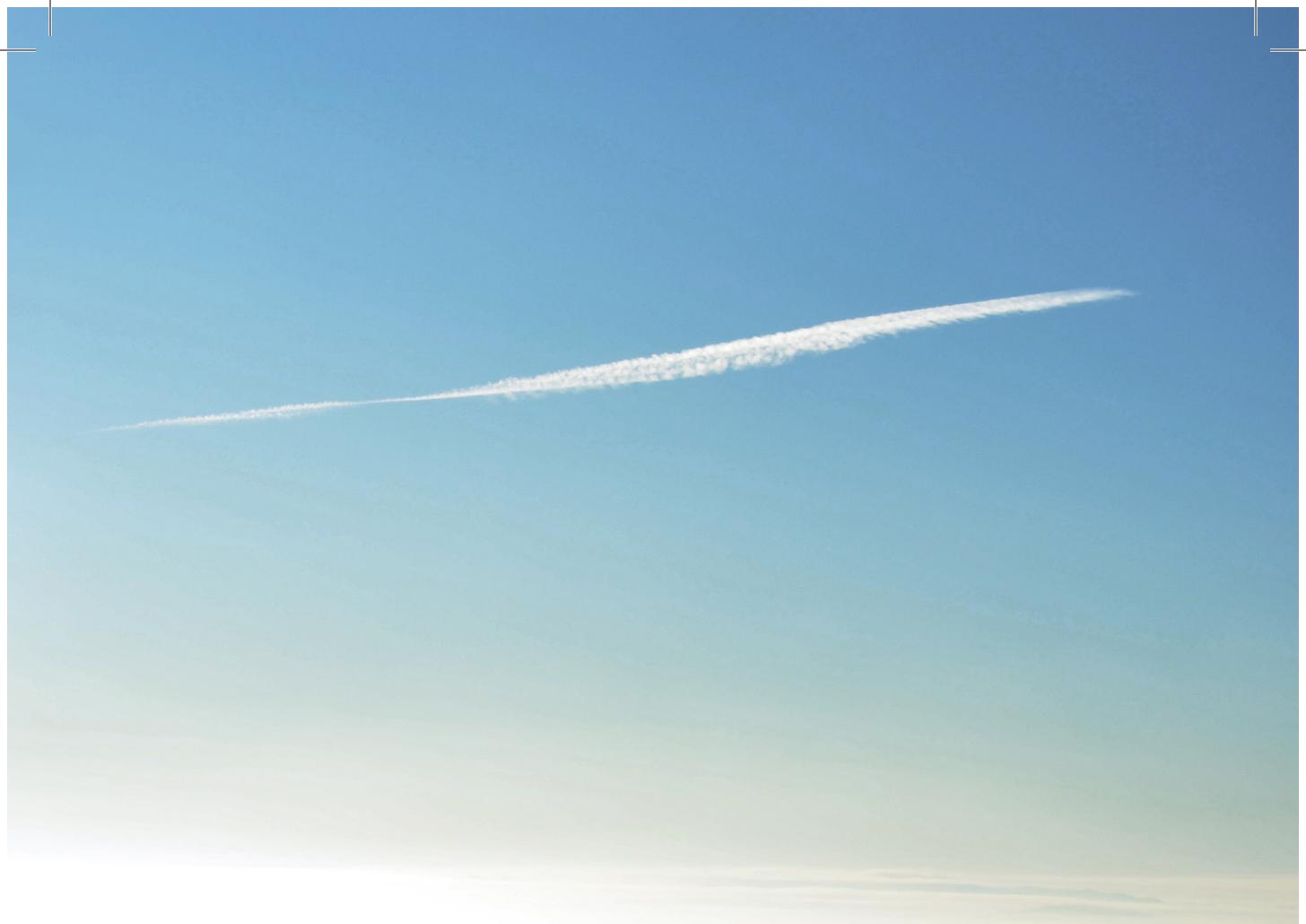
Gala, where he met the Prime Minister, Hon Philip J. Pierre and other government ministers, the former Governor General, and Members of the Diplomatic Corps, including the visiting head of USAID, stationed in Barbados. The visit ended with positive feedback and a commitment towards the formation of a national parliamentary caucus in Saint Lucia.



THE ICCF GROUP IN AFRICA

UNLOCKING CARBON MARKETS IN ZAMBIA

In March, the ICCF Group hosted a briefing for members of the Zambian Parliamentary Caucus on Environment & Climate Change (ZPCECC) on



unlocking carbon markets for national prosperity and environmental impact. The event featured expert presenters from the One Acre Fund and the Empowering Farmers Foundation.

The briefing began with an introduction to carbon markets,

involuntary vs. voluntary carbon markets, measuring carbon

credits, avoided emissions vs. removals, and potential for carbon finance in Zambia. The One Acre Fund then showcased its Intercrop Pilot in Zambia, a project that helps famers increase their revenue by growing trees and improving their soil in exchange for incentive payments during the first four years and carbon payments based on the amount of carbon sequestered thereafter.

Members of the caucus were then briefed by the Empowering Farmers Foundation on their projects in Africa to boost livelihoods of smallholder farming communities and help move smallholder farmers

in sub-Saharan Africa from subsistence to semi-commercial agriculture, as well as the ETG African Emerging Farmer Carbon Abatement Program, which aims to create a sustainable ecosystem by deploying carbon “farming” at scale across the African continent, starting with Zambia, through a comprehensive carbon farming program for emerging farmers.

The briefings were followed by a period of Q&A and discussion.

BELOW: Aerial view of Elephants in the Okavango Delta, Botswana.



WORKSHOP ON ADOPTING A SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK TO ADDRESS IWT, POACHING, AND HWC IN BOTSWANA

The illegal wildlife trade (IWT) is a multi-billion-dollar business that is a major driver of wildlife populations declining in Botswana and beyond. Simultaneously, in Botswana subsistence poaching - hunting for food - is an organized commercial business focused on providing game/bush meat for consumption. Tied to all these, Botswana is home to roughly 130,000 elephants, the largest population of any country in the world, with the population growing at an estimated 5% per annum. While the large herd signals the country's successful efforts in protecting elephants, the resulting human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is a critical issue that must be addressed.

From March 31st, 2023 to April 2nd, 2023, the ICCF Group, in collaboration with the Ngamiland Council of NGOs (NCONGO), hosted a workshop in Maun, Botswana for Members of Parliament, community-based organizations (CBOs), and

community trusts. The workshop focused on addressing IWT, poaching, and HWC, particularly highlighting the role legislators can play in updating Botswana's legislation. Technical presenters were Professor Joseph Mbaiwa from the Okavango Research



Institute, Mr. Siyoka Simasiku, the Executive Director from the Ngamiland Council of Non Governmental Organizations, Mr. Phenyó Butale, ICCF Country Representative, and community leaders from the Okavango Human Wildlife Conflict Foundation (OHWCF) and the Tcheku Community Trust.

The Okavango Delta is one of the world's top safari destinations and generates high revenues that play a critical role in Botswana's economy. However, poverty levels are high in the Okavango Delta, with the poverty headcount in western Okavango at 50-60%. The workshop focused on how human poverty leads to insecurity in livelihoods and in turn to overutilization of resources, with the prevalence of IWT and poaching. Prof. Mbaiwa presented the status of poaching in Botswana, the community's participation in fighting it, and how HWC is

being addressed. Afterwards, Mr. Simasiku introduced leaders from the CBOs and community trusts, who spoke about the challenges their communities face and how parliamentarians could address them. Despite the Okavango Delta being an enclave of tourism, there remains a lack of access to prime tourism land by local people, leaving them marginalized. The existing CBOs and trusts are registered legal entities that represent specific settlements and communities, promoting socio-economic development of the people through a holistic approach focused on the sustainable use and conservation of the flora and fauna. Through the income generated by CBOs and community trusts, they are able to promote rural livelihoods, by providing employment opportunities, income generation, better housing, and infrastructure (such as lodges, roads, offices, water reticulation, and mortuaries). Emphasized by all presenters,

Prof. Mbaiwa explicitly stated that “it is well established by theory and scientific best practice that sustainable conservation of wildlife must consider a socio-ecological framework, not just an ecological framework.” In the Okavango region, the wetlands have been a source of livelihoods for rural people who happen to have lived around them for generations. With the emergence of tourism, they cannot be left behind. In order for conservation to succeed in the long term, local communities cannot be alienated from wildlife benefits. For community-led conservation to succeed, there is a need for more comprehensive wildlife legislation, and the framework in place must focus on integrated land use planning.

To close the workshop, Dr. Butale presented a comparative legislature synopsis, focused on wildlife management laws in the Southern Africa region with

a particular focus on similarities and possible gaps. In the case of Botswana, state security bodies like the Botswana Defence Force, Directorate on Intelligence and Security, and Department of National Parks seem not to be cooperating well in their anti-poaching efforts. This major gap leaves not only the animals in jeopardy, but the people as well who are victimized, especially when poachers go so far as to raid livestock leaving farmers in these rural areas empty-handed. Once again, the need to adopt a socio-ecological framework across the board was emphasized to ensure communities benefit from wildlife in order for them to support conservation. In conclusion, there must be laws, policies, and programs that promote sustainable livelihoods that empower the people of Botswana - not just the animals - to thrive.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends and colleagues:

It is exciting to witness the level of enthusiasm and dedication the United States Congress is showing for conservation. This growing momentum is reflected in the renewed leadership of the nonpartisan caucuses our headquarters in D.C. is tasked to support.

The newly introduced USFICA is co-sponsored by the same political leaders who collaborate regularly in a nonpartisan fashion on international and oceans conservation and nature-based climate solutions. The bill itself should be understood as a milestone for the conservation community at large, as it represents an innovative approach to sustainable financing for conservation -- supporting local communities in effectively managing protected areas by leveraging private funding to implement long-term projects in the most vulnerable parts of the world. If passed, USFICA would have a tremendous

global impact, and we commend the policymakers, private-sector entities, and philanthropists who are working collaboratively to address some of the world's most pressing conservation and natural resource challenges.

It is our continued belief that conservation and development must always reinforce one another. We look forward to continuing to support and to share the legislative caucus model with partners in parliaments around the world, and we wish to thank our many friends and supporters, without whom this important work would not be possible.

Sincerely,



John B. Gantt
President

