



2023

Year in Review

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YEAR IN REVIEW

INTERNATIONAL

THE ICCF GROUP ADVANCES LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVATION BY BUILDING POLITICAL WILL AMONG PARLIAMENTARY AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS, BY CATALYZING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING BETWEEN POLICYMAKERS AND OUR EXTENSIVE NETWORK, AND BY

SUPPORTING MINISTRIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS. LEGISLATIVE OUTCOMES, PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS, & IMPROVED LAND MANAGEMENT DEMONSTRATE THAT OUR MODEL IS A COST-EFFECTIVE, SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION TO CONSERVATION GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES.

UN REPORT SHOWS CLEAR MAJORITY OF STATES NOW FAVOUR A NEW GLOBAL AGREEMENT AGAINST WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

VIENNA, DECEMBER 7

An updated report released this week by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) shows a clear majority of States support a new global agreement to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking.

According to a preliminary analysis conducted by the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime (EWC) at the request of Angola, 78% of responding States are either in favour of a potential additional Protocol to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) on tackling wildlife trafficking, or are open to discussing it.

Released ahead of the reconvened 32nd session of the United Nations

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in Vienna, Austria, the updated report compiles the views of 73 Member States and the European Union (EU) on strengthening the international legal framework for cooperation to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking. The report represents the updated version of a document released by UNODC in May 2023 and summarises the views expressed by 13 additional Member States.

The Member States variously expressed their views, including possible responses “to address any gaps that may exist in the current international legal framework to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife.” Importantly, the question of whether to introduce a new global agreement in the form of an additional protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) was asked.

At the request of Angola, a preliminary and partial technical review of the findings was conducted by the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime (EWC). The preliminary analysis reveals that,

of the 73 Member States and the EU expressing a view on a possible additional protocol to prevent and combat wildlife trafficking, 78% are either in favour of a potential additional Protocol to the UNTOC, or are open to discussing it.

Of the 78%, 54% are in favour of a Protocol, while 23.9% are open to discussing it, with some States suggesting specific provisions to include within a Protocol, and others suggesting its scope could be broadened to include other crimes that affect the environment. Only 10.5% did not see the need for a Protocol or suggested an alternative approach.

Notably, a strong expression of support came from Africa, with over 85% of African States either in favour of a Protocol or open to discussing it.

Among the additional States who expressed their views in the updated report is Nigeria. “An additional protocol on illicit trafficking is long overdue.” said the Nigeria Customs

Service (NCS). “There is need for an additional protocol on illicit trafficking in wildlife especially on intelligence gathering and prosecution” added the National



The expressions of support, however, were not limited to the African Continent. The Philippines said that a

“ specific protocol would emphasize how serious and unique wildlife trafficking is as a kind of international organized crime. It would offer a targeted and concentrated strategy to stop this specific type of illegal conduct. An extra agreement would make it easier to harmonize legal requirements between nations, offering a unified framework for combating wildlife trafficking. This would facilitate international cooperation and reciprocal legal assistance while assisting in overcoming legal inequalities. The protocol might set up procedures and commitments that would allow nations to collaborate more successfully in stopping, looking into, and prosecuting wildlife trafficking

Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA).

An expression of support also came from Ethiopia, which responded saying an additional Protocol to the UNTOC would “enhance cooperation among state parties” and bring “the issue of illicit trafficking in wildlife

to the attention of UN international legal framework by raising its profile”. Similar was the view expressed by the United Republic of Tanzania, which claimed to be fully supportive of a Protocol, because “it will enhance efforts to prevent and combat serious and organized crimes”.

ABOVE AND RIGHT, CREDIT: Paul Hilton for Earth Tree Images



instances. It might have clauses addressing capacity building, cooperative activities, and information exchange”.

Positive views were also voiced by South American countries, with Bolivia, Chile and Paraguay talking about an additional Protocol to the UNTOC as a beneficial tool. Finally, in response to Question 13, 52% of

responding states acknowledged there are gaps in the international legal framework to prevent and combat trafficking in wildlife, with a further 20% recognising a series of challenges.

Source: “UN Commission on Crime Prevention ... - End Wildlife Crime.” PRESS-RELEASE-07-DEC, ADM Capital Foundation, 7 Dec. 2023, endwildlifecrime.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/20.05.22-CCPCJ-press-release.pdf.



GLOBAL FINANCING PACT

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION AND THE GLOBAL CRISIS: THE ROLE OF LEGISLATURES IN A NEW GLOBAL FINANCING PACT

In Paris, France, from Wednesday, June 21 to Friday, June 23, 2023, the ICCF Group convened parliamentarians from Latin America, Africa, Europe, and Asia to increase awareness, promote dialogue, and find common ground in responding to issues pertaining to international conservation.

Members of the delegation included:

- Botswanan Member of Parliament Sam Brooks
- Brazilian Members of Congress Socorro Neri and Jose Silva Soares
- Colombian Senator Germán Blanco Alvarez
- Peruvian Member of Congress Luis Arturo Alegría García
- Mexican Federal Deputy Eduardo Murat Hinojosa
- Zambian Member of Parliament Imanga Wamunyima Jr.

LEFT, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Hon. Eduardo Murat Hinojosa; Hon. Luis Arturo Alegría García; Hon. Jose Silva Soares; Hon. Ronan Dantec; ICCF President John B. Gantt; Hon. Germán Blanco Alvarez; Hon. Socorro Neri; and Hon. Sam Brooks.



A workshop, "International Conservation and the Global Crisis: The Role of Legislatures in a New Global Financing Pact," was hosted in the Assemblée nationale (France's lower chamber of the legislature) by

French caucus co-founder Député Hubert Julien-Laferrière, with the support of his counterpart in the Sénat, Senator Ronan Dantec.

ABOVE: Peruvian Member of Congress Luis Arturo Alegría García addresses peers at the interparliamentary workshop in the Assemblée nationale.

The event brought together policymakers and opinion leaders from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America to address international conservation in the context of the global crisis, and the role of parliaments in a new global financing pact.

It also promoted parliamentary leadership and advanced regional cooperation in the sound management of the world's natural resources, and advocated for a

sustainable future for rainforest, ocean, and wildlife conservation for the French Republic and its allies around the world.

POLICY COHERENCE

POLICY COHERENCE PROJECT LAUNCH

In September, ICCF held several workshops to initiate its project funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on Policy Coherence. This project is the first of its kind for the GEF and spans the countries of Mongolia, Colombia, and Zambia.

The focus on Policy Coherence is essential because it is a fundamental way to increase the efficiency of investments to secure tangible and

long-lasting results for the benefit of the environment and people's livelihoods.

Policy Coherence, defined as the "systemic promotion of policy actions that reinforce each other and involve all government agencies and departments, in order to create synergies and deliver tangible and lasting results for the environment and people's livelihoods," according to the Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), involves a thorough review of legal frameworks in all sectors to identify interactions that may weaken or strengthen each other. It provides an opportunity to scrutinize legislation on natural resources, assessing whether they work together or against each other.

This coherence is crucial for the GEF as closing the nature financing gap requires a two-pronged approach: increasing financial flows from various sources and reducing financial needs. Without

this alignment of public policies for global environmental benefits, misaligned domestic policies could diminish the impact on environmental management.

The ICCF Group will carry out the project "Policy Coherence for Global Environmental Benefits" over the next two years, funded by the GEF and executed in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This project will be implemented in three pilot countries: Colombia, Mongolia, and Zambia, with the aim of identifying approaches and promoting mutually complementary legal frameworks, as well as aligning financial resources for global biodiversity benefits through each country's conservation caucuses.

During the inception workshops, the main goal was to identify socio-economic sectors that require a legal framework analysis to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem services. In addition, geographic scopes were established to address policy inconsistencies, and activities necessary for project execution were discussed. Each workshop consisted of two parts, in which the ICCF team presented the project's ambitions and expectations, followed by working groups addressing key questions about policy coherence, legislative review, and knowledge management.

MONGOLIA

The workshops in Mongolia brought together leaders of the Parliamentary National Conservation Caucus with ICCF and other important stakeholders including The Asia Foundation and The Nature Conservancy. The outcome of the workshops was an action plan to address Policy Coherence among the most important land uses in Mongolia.

LEFT: Captain Juan Camilo Forero, Executive Secretary of the Colombian Ocean Commission.





ZAMBIA

The inception workshop aimed to facilitate the integration of environmental objectives into domestic policymaking by fostering synergies, maximizing benefits, and managing trade-offs across economic, social, and environmental policy areas, and by balancing domestic policy objectives with commitments under the multilateral environmental agreements.

COLOMBIA

The workshop highlighted the relevance of strengthening intra- and inter-sectoral dialogue and coordination, emphasizing the existence of sectoral commissions and the need to improve coordination with existing structures such as CCO and the Territorial Planning Commission. Furthermore, the importance of replicating successful dialogue experiences, such as the collaboration between National Parks and Autonomous Regional Environmental Corporations (CARs) at the national level was underscored.

ABOVE: Laura Bermudez, from the international affairs office of the Ministry of Environment, and Luisa Forero, advocacy officer of WWF Colombia.



INCEPTION WORKSHOPS: ENHANCING POLITICAL WILL FOR SUSTAINABLE PROTECTED AREAS FINANCING

Over the past four decades, there has been a ten-fold increase in the number of protected areas listed by the UN, reaching over 104,000 sites in a recent assessment. The area under protection has similarly expanded, from 2.4 million km² in 1962 to over 20 million km² in 2004. This growth represents approximately 12% of the global land surface now defined as protected areas. Discussions on protected area (PA) finance have become a key agenda item during global deliberations on biodiversity conservation.

These discussions center on the actual or potential contribution of PAs to poverty reduction, sustainable development, as well as the more traditional goals of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. A key goal and

necessity in raising funds for PAs is to contribute towards more effective biodiversity conservation.

In order to contribute to the solution, the ICCF Group will

RIGHT: William Garzon and Felipe Guerra from the Planning and International Affairs Office of Colombia's National Natural Parks; Andrea Prada, Financial Sustainability Specialist of WWF Colombia; Claudia Nuñez from the Planning and International Affairs Office of Colombia's National Natural Parks, and Daniela Maldonado, from the Green Business Office of the Ministry of Environment

execute in the next two years the project Enhancing Political Will for Sustainable Protected Areas Financing. This project is part of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)-funded initiative, implemented through the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), aiming to leverage the conservation caucus model to enhance the financial sustainability of protected area systems in Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya, and Mexico.

In seeking to understand the contexts of each of the countries where the project will be

implemented, and identify the activities that should be carried out, the ICCF Group has held three of the four inception workshops, in Colombia, Kenya, and Indonesia.

Each workshop comprised three parts, with the ICCF team led by Jaime Cavelier presenting the ambitions and expectations of the project. ICCF or government agencies in charge of protected areas then set the stage by elaborating on the key aspects of sustainable PA financing. Stakeholders subsequently split into group working sessions to



address questions on the three components of the project: building and enhancing legislative awareness and political will for protected area systems in pilot countries; increasing central government allocations and external financial contributions to

support biodiversity conservation in protected area systems; and knowledge management, sharing, and communications. The groups made their submissions, which will inform the activities on which the project will focus.

COLOMBIA

On November 22, the workshop was held in Bogota, with the participation of HR Julia Miranda, along with representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, National Natural Parks of Colombia, the expertise of Carlos Mario Tamayo, Patrimonio Natural, WWF Colombia, Conservation International Colombia, UNEP Colombia, and others.

Congresswoman Julia Miranda stated that Congress has studied the need to increase the budget and has taken the necessary steps to increase the budget of the country's PA system, especially for operational issues. She also stressed the importance of identifying the value of the environmental services of PAs (e.g., water, ecotourism, carbon

sequestration methodology). Likewise, she welcomed the development of this project to contribute to improve the financial situation of the PA and to commit the national government entities in charge of the allocation and execution of the environmental budget, in order to increase the budget in the coming years.

Colombia's National Natural Parks, as the agency of the Ministry of Environment in charge of the PA system, made a presentation to give the context of the current financial situation of the system and the information available on the valuation of ecosystem services, which needs to be updated.

With these elements, group work was carried out to answer the questions of each of the components, and then the plenary session was held. Part of the conclusions included the need to review and update studies on the value of protected areas; develop awareness activities with Members of Congress, the national

government, and the business sector to increase the national budget item for protected areas and implement financial mechanisms and instruments that guarantee the sustainability of the system in the long term; and communication campaigns to educate about the importance of PAs, also involving citizens and including the topic



RIGHT: Jaime Cavalier, ICCF Vice President of Strategic Partnerships

of protected areas in the national environmental education strategy

and in educational processes at different levels.

KENYA

On November 30th, 2023, the workshop brought together 20 stakeholders from both government and NGOs, including Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) - Wildlife Research and Training Institute, Kenya Wildlife Service, Office of the Attorney General and Department of Justice, The National Museums of Kenya, The National Treasury and Economic Planning, National Alliance of Community Forest Associations (NACOFA), Kenya Wildlife Trust, The Nature Conservancy, and Eden Reforestation Projects. Hon. Rozaah Buyu, Co-Chair of the Parliamentary Conservation and Climate Change Caucus, and Senator Beatrice Ogolla were also in attendance.

The primary objective of the workshop was to present the project and seek the input of stakeholders on the activities required to achieve the expected results.

The workshop opened with Mr. Vincent Ongere, Director of Administration at the State Department for Environment & Climate Change. Mr. Ongere expressed appreciation for the biodiversity project's role in achieving the National Biodiversity

Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPS) and aligning with the new Global Biodiversity Framework. He applauded UNEP for consistently supporting the development of good proposals. Mr. Ongere noted that the lag in realizing Kenya's targets was mainly due to finances, technology transfer, and capacity building. This project is seen as a means to bring in much-needed financial help to address these challenges. In conclusion, Mr. Ongere committed that, as the GEF Operational Focal Point, they would provide all the



necessary support to guarantee the project's successful implementation.

The workshop comprised three parts, with the ICCF team led by Jaime Cavelier presenting the ambitions and expectations of the project. Jill Barasa then set the stage by elaborating on the key aspects of sustainable PA financing in Kenya. Stakeholders subsequently split into group working sessions to address questions on the three components of the project.

In conclusion, Senator Ogolla thanked the ICCF team for extending the invitation to Members of Parliament and urged them to design the activities in a language that would encourage buy-in from Members of Parliament since they play a key role in budget allocation. She assured the ICCF team that she was ready to work with them and be a champion for the project.

ABOVE: Group participants during group working session.



INDONESIA



n December 8, 2023, the inception workshop was held in Indonesia.

It involved 18 participants from various organizations, including governmental bodies, agencies, and NGOs, such as Konservasi Indonesia, Wildlife Conservation Society, Rainforest Trust, Systemiq, and USAID.

Key discussions highlighted the necessity of legal frameworks to boost funding and incorporate Natural Capital Accounting Assessments (NCAAs) into national plans. Various financial mechanisms were explored, like the Nature Swap and Blue Abadi Fund. Recommendations included trust fund establishment, governmental commitments, and knowledge management platforms for effective implementation and local buy-in.

Improving legal frameworks was stressed to channel non-tax revenue for local financing and earmark funds for conservation. Suggestions involved integrating

NCCAs into national development plans, capacity building, and coherence between provincial and national governments. Knowledge sharing challenges and the need for systematic platforms were addressed.

Communication tools' role in translating financial mechanisms to local levels and NGOs' aid in long-term planning were emphasized. Success story showcases were recommended for local community engagement. Coordination challenges between government levels were discussed, emphasizing capacity building and practical

outcomes. Aligning national and sub-national planning documents was highlighted, aiming for improved coherence.

Engagement strategies for the private sector, such as blue and green bonds, were explored despite challenges in identifying partners. Private contributions' significance in financing was acknowledged. Overall, the workshop underscored the need for collaborative frameworks and practical strategies for sustainable protected areas financing.



YEAR IN REVIEW

IN THE UNITED STATES



IN WASHINGTON, D.C., ICCF ADVANCES U.S. LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION THROUGH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATION LEADERS IN THE U.S. CONGRESS.

Informing policy: ICCF educates and acts as secretariat to the leadership of the bipartisan U.S. Congressional International Conservation Caucus, made up of more than 1/3 of the U.S. Congress.

Building political will: We bring together leaders at the highest levels of government, business, and the NGO community, setting the conservation and environmental agenda by coordinating people with scientific expertise, organizations that support and manage programs on the ground, and policymakers who shape legislation.

Championing public-private collaboration: Through ICCF, public- and private-sector organizations collaborate and seek consensus on conservation issues and share their expertise with policymakers, providing sound, market-oriented conservation solutions with the highest standards in accountability, effectiveness, and transparency.

BIPARTISAN U.S. FOUNDATION FOR INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION ACT (USFICA) INTRODUCED IN U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Sponsored by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Rep. Mike McCaul (R-TX), H.R. 6727 would establish the United States Foundation for International Conservation to promote long-term management of protected and conserved areas.

On Tuesday, December 13, 2023 in Washington, D.C., House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Mike McCaul (R-TX), introduced H.R. 6727, the United States Foundation for International Conservation Act of 2023. Original cosponsors of the bill include Ranking Member Gregory Meeks and International Conservation Caucus Co-Chairs Rep. Dave Joyce (R-OH), Betty McCollum (D-MN), and Henry Cuellar (D-TX). Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) and Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC) had introduced the bill in the Senate in March 2023, along with Senators John Boozman (R-AR), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Thom Tillis (R-NC), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI).

The bipartisan measure is to establish and authorize funds for a charitable nonprofit, independent of the United States government, to carry out activities to:

- identify and support implementation-ready projects that would promote the long-term management of protected and conserved areas in developing countries;
- increase private sector investment in international conservation and collaborate with partners;
- and coordinate with eligible foreign governments, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and other stakeholders to ensure positive outcomes.

This new public-private partnership would aim to mobilize significant new funding from both public and private sources to help solidify the type of long-term funding and resources required for the effective management of protected and conserved areas while leveraging the strengths of both sectors.

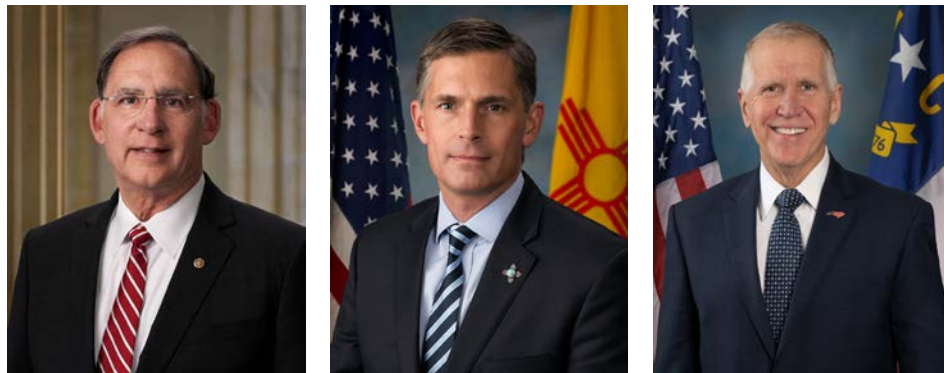
A long list of CEOs and philanthropists have already committed to partnering with the USFIC, including:

- Simon Chaplin, CEO, Arcadia Fund
- Andrew Steer, President & CEO, Bezos Earth Fund
- Wendy J. Paulson, Chairman, Bobolink Foundation
- Laurene Powell Jobs, Founder and President, Emerson Collective
- Harvey V. Fineberg, President, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
- Molly Bartlett, Executive Director, International Conservation Fund of Canada

- Peter Seligmann, CEO, Nia Tero
- James Deutsch, CEO, Rainforest Trust
- Wes Sechrest, CEO and Chair, Re:wild
- Rob Walton, Founder, Rob Walton Foundation
- Molly McUsic, President, The Wyss Foundation

CAUCUS-BUILDING

SENATE INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION CAUCUS ANNOUNCES THREE NEW CO-CHAIRS



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

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 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."



2023 IN *the* SPOTLIGHT

ICCF HOSTS 2023 U.S. CONGRESSIONAL INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION GALA

ICCF Honors Jeff Bezos, Lauren Sánchez, and the Bezos Earth Fund for Extraordinary Global Leadership in Conservation; Gives Tribute to Rob Portman for Outstanding Leadership as Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the International Conservation Caucus in U.S. Congress; and Invites Paraguay President H.E. Santiago Peña with First Lady Leticia Ocampos on Stage for Closing Remarks, at 2023 ICCF U.S. Congressional International Conservation Leadership Gala.

ICCF held its U.S. Congressional Gala on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at the Waldorf Astoria in Washington, D.C., celebrating and raising awareness about the importance of public-private partnerships. Foreign dignitaries, Members of Congress,

and global business leaders gathered to honor Jeff Bezos, Lauren Sánchez, and the Bezos Earth Fund, and other remarkable individuals and organizations, for extraordinary global leadership in conservation.

LEFT: Kevin McCarthy, Speaker Emeritus of the United States House of Representatives



THE ICCF "GOOD STEWARD" AWARD

AMONG THE EVENT'S HIGHLIGHTS WERE REMARKS GIVEN BY EXECUTIVE CHAIR JEFF BEZOS OF THE BEZOS EARTH FUND, FOLLOWING THE AWARD PRESENTATION BY U.S. SENATOR CHRIS COONS, CO-CHAIR OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION CAUCUS.

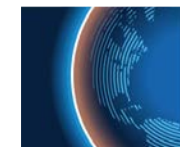


If we look back on our past with a watchful eye, what we really see is a message of hope. We have been confronting challenges since before we've been writing history. And we have always found the faith to rise above them."

-- Jeff Bezos, Executive Chair, Bezos Earth Fund

ABOUT THE BEZOS EARTH FUND

The Bezos Earth Fund, established with a record-breaking \$10 billion commitment from Jeff Bezos to be disbursed as grants, is building a diverse team of thought leaders, problem solvers, and doers from



**BEZOS
EARTH
FUND**

scientific, government, private, and nonprofit backgrounds, all working to deliver transformational change.

THE BEZOS EARTH FUND IS SPURRING INNOVATION AND PROGRESS THROUGH SEVEN KEY PROGRAMS: CONSERVING & RESTORING NATURE; FUTURE OF FOOD; ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE; DECARBONIZING ENERGY & INDUSTRY; ECONOMICS, FINANCE, & MARKETS; NEXT TECHNOLOGIES; AND MONITORING, DATA, & ACCOUNTABILITY. IT HAS PROVIDED MORE THAN \$1.84 BILLION THROUGH NEARLY 200 GRANTS.

TRIBUTE TO ROB PORTMAN

During the event, John B. Gantt, CEO of the ICCF Group, extended his heartfelt thanks to Hon. Rob Portman for his many years of outstanding conservation

leadership, for which ICCF presented him with the first-ever Teddy Roosevelt® International Conservation Award in 2006.

AS CO-CHAIR OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION CAUCUS, SENATOR PORTMAN WORKED TIRELESSLY TO PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES AND WILDLIFE.

In just the past few years, he introduced legislation to reauthorize the Tropical Forest and Coral Reef Conservation Act; reauthorize the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act; eliminate shark fin sales; protect

migratory birds; and promote nature-based climate solutions. He also led on issues such as reforestation, carbon capture, water, fisheries, energy, national parks, and waste management.



I want to thank ICCF for bringing us together (...). It's an extraordinary group, that makes extraordinary strides. Let's continue to stay together.

On this issue, at least. Let's continue to work together, for the good of the planet."

-- The Honorable Rob Portman, U.S. Senator (Ret.)





WITH SPECIAL GUEST HIS EXCELLENCY SANTIAGO PEÑA, PRÉSIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF PARAGUAY

H.E. Santiago Peña and First Lady Leticia Ocampos closed the event walking on stage hand in hand, sharing with the audience an inspiring vision for Paraguay and its

mission to preserve its invaluable forests, which make up 40 percent of the country's territory, and its rivers, which have helped generate the nation's Blue Economy.

ABOVE: His excellency Santiago Peña, President of the Republic of Paraguay



We have decided to leave a legacy for our own country, a legacy for future generations to recognize our history, but, more importantly, to understand that this planet is the only one we have."

-- His Excellency Santiago Peña, President of the Republic of Paraguay

UNGA HIGHLIGHT

HEADS OF STATE RECEPTION AND PARLIAMENTARY WORKING GROUP MEETING DURING UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On September 21, 2023, the International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) convened two events on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York City: a Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) Leadership Reception and a Parliamentarian Meeting on KAZA Collaboration Strategy.

The ICCF Group has been engaged in the KAZA TFCA since 2012, supporting the parliamentary conservation caucuses established

in Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, with strong parliamentary engagement ongoing in Angola since 2017.

Through this engagement, policymakers are empowered to build political will, advance conservation governance, and promote inter-parliamentary collaboration and cooperation.



THE ICCF GROUP AND PARTNER OAK FOUNDATION DEVELOPED PROJECT SAFE PASSAGE, AN INITIATIVE TO BOOST CONSERVATION WORK WITHIN THE ZAMBEZI AND GREATER KRUGER LANDSCAPES, FOCUSING ON COUNTERING THE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE, SOCIAL IMPACT, AND RESEARCH.

Project Safe Passage facilitates support and builds partnerships with NGOs and government

authorities that approach problems in innovative and systematic ways to increase the security of wildlife

and the resiliency of communities within key areas of transfrontier conservation like KAZA. The project works across a platform of numerous grassroots organizations

through a bottom-up approach, considering the gaps, needs, and challenges of local governments, communities, and wildlife.

BELOW: His Excellency Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana.

The KAZA Leadership Reception was led by the President of the Republic of Botswana and Heads of Delegations from KAZA countries and included leadership from the parliamentary conservation caucuses in the KAZA countries.

ICCF was joined by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Environment of Angola, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finance, Minister of Lands and Water Affairs, and Minister of Environment and Tourism of Botswana, and the Ambassador of Botswana to the United States and the Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations.

The remarks made at the KAZA Leadership Reception called for action by KAZA governments, leveraging parliamentary conservation caucuses, to inspire deeper cross-border collaboration, whilst respecting the sovereignty of the constituent states.

One of the key objectives of the KAZA Leadership Reception was for governments to recognize the achievement in the development of the KAZA TFCA, alongside its unique opportunities and challenges. This requires balancing the needs of the region's 2.7 million people, mostly subsistence farmers, with those of the region's wildlife, whose survival and success hinges on the integrity and connectivity of their habitats.

OTHER 2023 HIGHLIGHTS FROM ICCF IN THE UNITED STATES

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SECURITY AND PROSPERITY THROUGH INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION

A U.S. Senate hearing centered around legislation proposed by the Subcommittee's Chair, Senator Chris Coons (D-DE), and Ranking Member, Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC).

OCEANS LEGISLATION AND THE 117TH CONGRESS

An Oceans Caucus Foundation panel briefing to discuss the numerous pieces of ocean legislation passed in the 117th Congress.

CONSERVATION IN THE AMAZON

A panel discussion on Conservation in the Amazon and the Amazon Parliament (PARLAMAZ).

FOOD SECURITY IN TIMES OF GLOBAL INSTABILITY

Event with World Food Programme, Norge Mining, and Halo Trust on achieving food security.

ARMCHAIR DISCUSSION WITH GEF CEO CARLOS MANUEL RODRIGUEZ

An event that included visiting Members of Parliament from around the world.

INDIGENOUS STEWARDSHIP OF NATURAL RESOURCES: PERSPECTIVES FROM ASIA, AFRICA, AND THE AMERICAS

A Congressional Breakfast Briefing co-hosted in partnership with Conservation International.

MARINE DEBRIS AND PLASTIC POLLUTION

A panel discussion on plastic

pollution and steps needed to move towards the Global Plastics Treaty.

**LEADING PHILANTHROPISTS
SPEAK TO IMPORTANCE OF
PUBLIC-PRIVATE INVESTMENT
IN PROTECTED AREAS**

A briefing to U.S. Members of Congress by leading philanthropists investing private resources in the conservation of parks and protected areas around the globe.

**CAPITOL HILL OCEAN WEEK
(CHOW) 2023**

An Oceans Caucus Foundation Congressional Staff Lunch Briefing on Advancements in Ocean Carbon Dioxide Removal (OCDR) with the House Oceans Caucus Co-Chairs and a reception featuring the Senate Oceans Caucus Co-Chairs, co-hosted in partnership with the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation (NMSF).

**TRANSBOUNDARY
CONSERVATION IN AFRICA**

A discussion with CEO of Peace

Parks Foundation to discuss Transboundary Conservation Areas in Africa, on areas that encompass one or more national boundaries.

**50 YEARS OF CITES ON
CAPITOL HILL**

A conversation between leaders in Congress, the Administration, the NGO community, and the private sector to commemorate 50 years since the signing of the Convention on International Trade of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and highlight global efforts to address illegal wildlife trade.

**CLEAN ENERGY STAFF
BRIEFING**

A briefing highlighting the business case for affordable clean energy.

**BIPARTISAN CONVERSATION
WITH NOAA ADMINISTRATOR
DR. RICK SPINRAD**

A briefing to discuss how Congress can better support NOAA's mission as well as the ocean conservation, restoration, and research priorities

of the agency for the upcoming year.

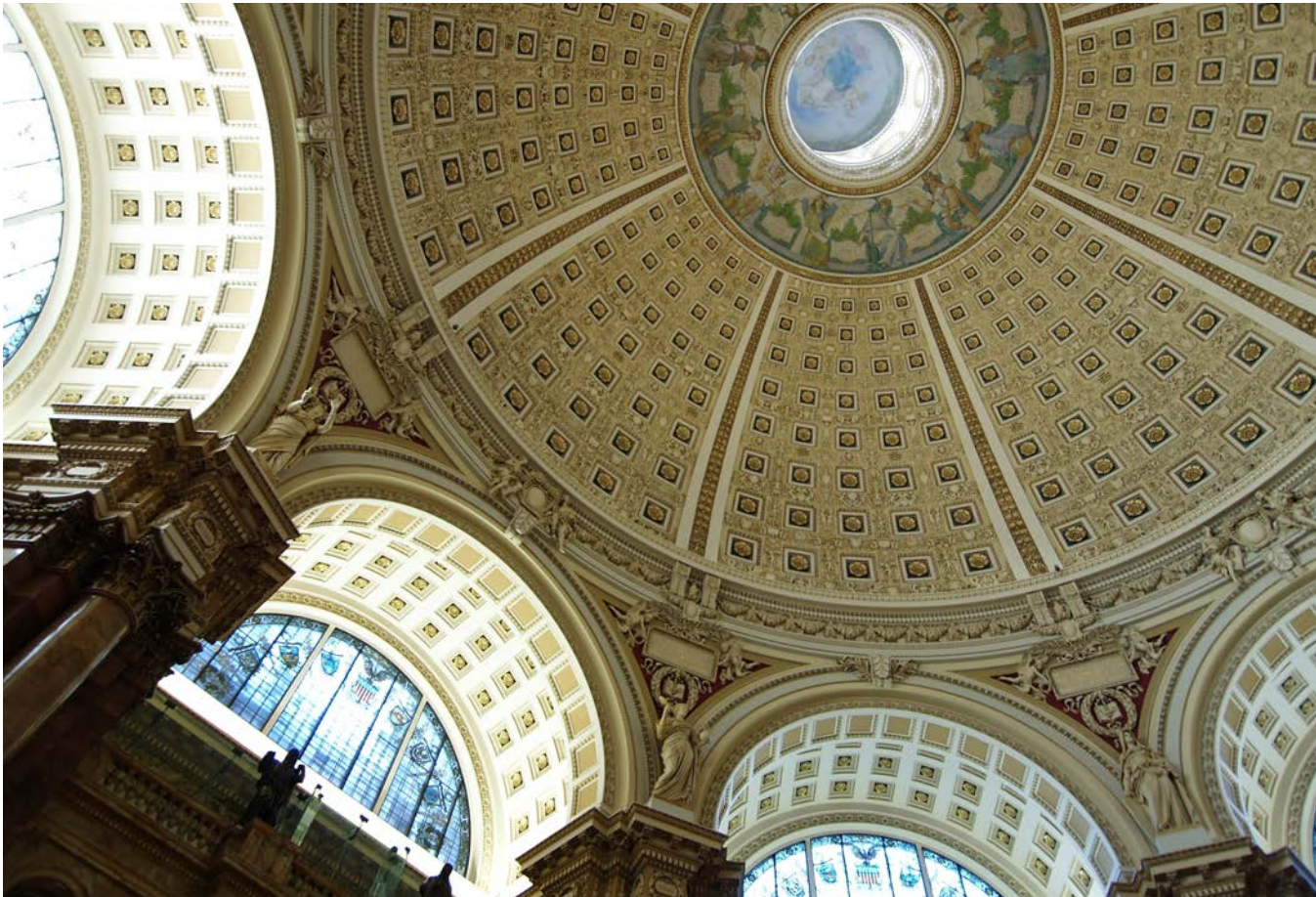
**CONGRESSIONAL WORKSHOP
HIGHLIGHTING PUBLIC,
PRIVATE EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE
A CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

A half-day Congressional workshop consisting of two expert panel discussions on the circular economy and what various stakeholders can do to move the economy and supply

chains from linear to circular.

**DOMESTIC POLICY TOWARD A
GLOBAL PLASTICS TREATY**

A panel discussion focused on policy mechanisms that can reduce use of plastics and tackle plastic waste and other forms of marine debris and highlighted support for policy coherence on this issue.





IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

SINCE 2019, THE ICCF GROUP HAS BEEN DEVELOPING OPERATIONS ACROSS EUROPE, ENGAGING ON THE CAUCUS MODEL IN LEGISLATURES, WITH THE SUPPORT OF PARTNERS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, FRANCE, AND SWITZERLAND AMONG OTHERS.

ICCF-UK develops cross-party coalitions in the UK Parliament to advance domestic legislation that can impact international conservation and supports collaborative working between British parliamentarians and international legislators in pursuit of common goals.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on International Conservation (APPG) provides a forum to address wildlife conservation and biodiversity issues affecting our planet, including ecosystem collapse, species extinction, land degradation, invasive species, illegal fishing, and other threats to international conservation. ICCF-UK is also the European Hub for the ICCF Group and coordinates the ICCF Group's work related to the Commonwealth.

U.K. PARLIAMENTARIANS COME TOGETHER TO DEMAND AN AMBITIOUS GLOBAL PLASTICS TREATY

The United Nations General Assembly founded World Environment Day in 1972 to increase public awareness of environmental challenges and encourage action. It has since grown to be the largest global venue for environmental advocacy and is observed every year on June 5th. At its core, this is what the All Party Parliamentary Group on International Conservation (APPG) is about. As Parliamentarians, members wish to expand their knowledge of the issues facing the environment, and then as a group of cross-party legislators take action to mitigate them.

THIS YEAR'S THEME FOR WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY WAS PLASTIC POLLUTION, UNDER THE CAMPAIGN #BEATPLASTICPOLLUTION.

More than 400 million tonnes of plastic is produced every year, half of which is designed to be used only once. Of that, less than 10 percent is recycled. An estimated 19-23 million tonnes end up in lakes, rivers, and seas. Today, plastic clogs up our landfills, leaches into the ocean, and is combusted into toxic smoke, making it one of the gravest threats

to the planet. Not only that, what is less known is that microplastics find their way into the food we eat, the water we drink, and even the air we breathe. Many plastic products contain hazardous additives, which may pose a threat to our health.

The APPG explored this trophic

transfer of microplastics and bio-accumulation - which is the increasing concentration of toxins within organisms higher up in the food chain - and the impact it is having on marine and bird species as well as the risk to humans. It also heard from experts who attended the most recent round of negotiations in Paris for a Global Plastics Treaty, which is aimed to be delivered by next year.

Experts from the Zoological Society of London, the Plastics Federation, and the Environmental Investigations Agency noted the risk of microplastics being ingested by marine animals and passing up the food chain, causing toxic

harm. What was remarkable was the overall sense of agreement between the scientists, industry, and the NGO community, particularly the opportunities from the Global Plastics Treaty which is being drafted and could come into force as early as 2024, becoming the first global treaty to curb plastic pollution. 94 of the 180 nations in Paris had agreed that some particularly harmful polymers, chemicals, and plastic products - which might include microplastics and PFAs ("forever chemicals") - should be banned or phased out. The draft document will be written in the coming months as a 'springboard' for 'granular discussions of the final treaty text.'

UK Parliamentarians and Ministers have pushed for an ambitious and effective treaty to end plastic pollution, including through the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution, which now has over 50 members and seeks to:

- Restrain plastic consumption and production to sustainable levels;
- Enable a circular economy for plastics that protects the environment and human health;
- Achieve environmentally sound management and recycling of plastic waste.

Further negotiations will take place this November, and the UK APPG will push for a robust outcome at the negotiations.

PARTY CONFERENCE

ICCF-UK PARTY CONFERENCE PROGRAM BRINGS TOGETHER CONSERVATION LEADERS TO ADDRESS KEY CHALLENGES

The UK Party Conference season is a major part of the lifeblood of British politics, having begun over 150 years ago in Victorian Britain. Every year thousands of politically engaged citizens, journalists, campaigners, lobbyists, parliamentarians, and Ministers come together to debate policy and politics. It is a unique British institution, where attendees are able to ask direct



questions of Ministers and Shadow Ministers at the many side events and also walk up to them in the bar and have a discussion – or perhaps join them in a karaoke sing-along. The mix of formality and informality allows for discussion on a range of topics that may not always make it to the Minister's red box.

ICCF-UK held its biggest conference season to date this Autumn, with seven events discussing issues ranging from African conservation to the circular economy, reducing plastic pollution, and a Global Plastics Treaty.

ICCF-UK had discussions with key leaders, including the Rt Hon. James Cleverly (Secretary of State for Foreign, Development and Commonwealth Affairs), Mark Spencer (DEFRA Minister), and Ruth Jones MP (Shadow Minister for Environment), alongside High Commissioners and Ambassadors from Mexico, Namibia, and South Africa and leaders from industry including Mars UK and bodies such as WRAP and the Zoological Society of London. What was clear after the series of events was that although approaches to conservation may differ, there was huge consensus on the importance of conservation, and participants from all political

persuasions had more in common than separated them, including on broad-based policy. This included cross-party and industry commitments towards a strong international treaty on plastics, and the importance of ensuring British supply chains do not cause harm to nature either directly or indirectly. The ICCF-UK Conference season ended with its International Conservation Reception, where over 100 people (including business and NGO leadership, senior politicians, and prospective parliamentary candidates) attended a celebration of all things conservation.

LEFT: Namibian High Commissioner H.E. Linda Anne Scott.



IN AFRICA

THE ICCF GROUP IS WORKING IN EAST, SOUTHERN, AND CENTRAL AFRICA TO FOSTER POLITICAL WILL FOR CONSERVATION AND

SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES.

The ICCF Group coordinates high-level political engagement with expertise on conservation strategies and solutions; facilitates interactions between U.S. and international policymakers, conservation organizations, and government agencies; and seeks to leverage and integrate resources in support of sustainable natural resource management policies.



PARLIAMENTARY CONSERVATION CAUCUS-KENYA (PCC-K) STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

The conservation and management of natural resources play a critical role in realizing Kenya's Vision 2030 - the country's development blueprint covering the period from 2008 to 2030 - as all developments across the economy rely on natural assets in various ways. However, climate change poses a threat to the sustainability of these natural resources and their ability to support the economy.

In response, the Parliamentary Conservation Caucus-Kenya (PCC-K), with the support of the ICCF Group and its partners, developed a Strategic Plan aimed at fostering innovative approaches to drive economic growth, improve livelihoods, and conserve and preserve the ecosystem services provided by the environment.

LEFT: Sen. Hamida Kibwana during the review of the Caucus Strategic Plan.

ON JUNE 22ND, 2023, THE ICCF GROUP HOSTED A BREAKFAST MEETING IN NAIROBI, KENYA WITH MEMBERS OF PCC-K TO REVIEW AND VALIDATE THE STRATEGIC PLAN.

The meeting was attended by 29 members of PCC-K and senators from the Parliamentary Caucus on Climate Action (PCCA). The speakers for this briefing included Hon. Charity Kathambi, Co-Chair of the PCC-K; Sen. Moses Kajwang, Chairperson and Convener of the PCCA; Sen. John Methu, Chairperson

of the Committee on Land, Environment and Natural Resources; Mr. Mamo Boru, Director General of the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA); and Mr. Philip Kilonzo, Head of Programs, Policy and Campaigns at the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA).

In her opening remarks, Hon. Charity Kathambi noted that there exists a disconnect between some environmental policies and emphasized the urgent and critical need for harmonization to address this issue.

She also highlighted the importance of planting trees as a way of tackling the climate crisis and urged the legislators to participate in President William Ruto's initiative to plant 15 billion trees by 2032.

Sen. Moses Kajwang applauded the PCC-K members for developing a comprehensive Strategic Plan

and expressed his belief that the caucuses share a similar vision. He emphasized the members' commitment to conservation matters and urged them to collaborate where their mandates allow. Senator Kajwang pointed out the existing obstacles in accessing climate funds, such as the loss and damage fund and funds for capacity building to address climate change

issues. He acknowledged President William Ruto's administration for its approach to climate finance conversations and the focus on a climate finance architecture that benefits African countries. Senator Kajwang concluded by urging the members to start thinking about how they can participate meaningfully in conversations around Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and their role in the African Climate Summit to be hosted in Nairobi in September 2023.

Sen. John Methu noted that capacity building initiatives on conservation and climate change should be complemented by tangible actions.

He emphasized the need for legislators to work closely with their constituents to implement specific action points. He also highlighted the importance of both caucuses leading discussions on the role of legislators in addressing climate change during the Africa Climate Summit.

Mr. Mamo Boru Mamo began his presentation by stating that the Kenyan constitution is a green constitution, and the country has an enabling legal and policy framework that addresses environmental and climate change issues.

He mentioned acts such as the Environmental and Coordination Act of 1999 and the recently enacted Sustainable Waste Management Act of 2021, which guarantee the right to a clean and healthy environment as long as there is a shared understanding among the public that enhancing the environment's quality is their responsibility. He appealed to the legislators to prioritize the environmental agenda and diligently fulfill their oversight role.

Mr. Boru highlighted the increasing number of litigations NEMA faces from the public, which they encourage, as being accountable to the people is their key role.



Mr. Philip Kilonzo began his presentation by emphasizing that communities should be at the center of any key strategic processes.

He highlighted the importance of analyzing the benefits communities receive from these processes. This significance is even more

pronounced for legislators, as they serve as representatives of the people. Mr. Kilonzo proposed several actions to increase the interests of those they represent in climate crisis issues. These actions include strengthening advocacy efforts collectively as legislators, promoting a just transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient development

ABOVE: Sen. Veronica Maina, Member of the Senate of Kenya.

pathways, and enhancing accountability and oversight measures. He urged the legislators not to confine themselves to national laws but to proactively engage with international agreements. Furthermore, he encouraged them to position themselves as drivers of a global stock-taking process on issues such as reducing carbon emissions.

To conclude the meeting, Ms. Jill Barasa, ICCF Africa Program Director, invited the legislators to share any additional input on the Strategic Plan before its official launch on July 13th, 2023, which will also serve as a public re-introduction of the PCC-K to stakeholders working in Kenya.

CARBON MARKETS

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 One Acre Fund showcased its Intercrop Pilot in Zambia, a project that helps farmers



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.

SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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

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 the illegal wildlife trade (IWT), poaching, and human-wildlife conflict (HWC), particularly highlighting the role legislators can play in updating Botswana's legislation.

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. Despite the Okavango Delta being an enclave

of tourism, there remains a lack of access to prime tourism land for local people, leaving them marginalized. The existing CBOs and trusts are registered legal entities that represent specific settlements and communities, promoting the 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).

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 and promote sustainable livelihoods that empower the people of Botswana - not just the animals - to thrive.

PLASTIC POLLUTION

EAST AFRICAN POLICYMAKERS UNITE IN EFFORTS TO FIND A HARMONIZED REGIONAL APPROACH TO REDUCING PLASTIC POLLUTION

Global levels of plastic pollution are showing no signs of slowing down. Recent figures from the the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) show plastics trade reaching USD 1.2 trillion in 2022. Despite a surge in public awareness and environmental campaigning, a recent report shows that the world is producing a record amount of single-use plastic waste, generating 139 million metric tons in 2021, 6 million metric tons more than in 2019.

International discourse about plastics has reached a pivotal point. In a historic milestone at UNEA-5 in 2022, UN Member States endorsed

a resolution to end plastic pollution by forging an international legally binding agreement by 2024.

As of 2023, 175 countries had adopted the resolution “End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument,” which addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, including its production, design, and disposal.

Against this backdrop, 21 parliamentarians from across the entire East African Community representing each of the 7 member states (Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda) came together to discuss a regional approach and legislative solutions to the problem.

Hosted at ALN House in Nairobi, Kenya, the event was organized by the ICCF Group, ALN Academy, and the Flipflop Project with provisions from UNCTAD. This event was

attended by the parliamentarians together with multiple stakeholders including authorities (NEMA, Kenya), activists, and circular economy experts. Among other topics, the regional caucus explored: the state of legislation across the 7 nation states, possibilities for regional legislation to eliminate certain types of plastics, trade and policy opportunities for plastic substitutes, and the learnings from Rwanda on what is internationally perceived as being a successful case study for an elimination approach to plastics.

One of the discussion points was a draft bill that has been tabled to ban the manufacture, sale, and importation of specific non-essential single-use plastic items across the EAC.

At the conclusion of the caucus event, participants were unanimous in their commitment towards a regional approach to tackle single-use plastics, a transition to a circular economy, including increased use of material substitutes, and ensuring all East Africans can live in a healthier environment in the future.

Regional cooperation was determined as key to tackling the issue, since plastic pollution knows no borders, especially in shared critical ecosystems like Lake Victoria, and where cross-border trade remains a challenge.

AS THE HON. DIDIER MOLISHO FROM THE DRC STATED:



The time for collective action has arrived. If action is limited to one country alone, there will always be a problem through borders with countries that do not act."

As a region, Africa is one of the worst performers when it comes to managing solid waste, with the United Nations estimating that only 10% of plastic waste produced is appropriately managed, and without drastic changes, the total municipal plastic waste generated is projected to increase from 19.2 million tonnes in 2015 to 72 million tonnes per year by 2060. With few current strategies in place to improve it, there is a need to tackle the problem at the source

by eliminating more of the most problematic plastics, a view that has gained support on the EAC agenda.

East Africa has been recognised as a leader in taking legislative action against plastic pollution since Rwanda first implemented a strictly enforced plastic bag ban in 2008. Of the 7 member states, all of them have passed legislation to ban plastic bags and several

have enacted laws against certain single-use plastics, although there is little harmonisation between the laws and, in many of the countries, the bans have not been strictly enforced, leading to ineffective outcomes.

The event was made possible through the contributions by all organizing partners, including support by the Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution programme, funded by UK Aid and implemented in partnership with UNCTAD.

BLUE ECONOMY

TAPAFE FIELD MISSION TO UNGUJA ISLANDS, ZANZIBAR

S seaweed farming stands as Tanzania's third-largest export industry, providing employment for over 25,000 farmers, with 80% being women. Within the Zanzibar Archipelago, seaweed has emerged as the third-largest source of income, contributing to nearly 90% of marine exports. Primarily, the seaweed harvested is dried and utilized in products such as carrageenan or agar for thickening agents in toothpaste, ice cream, cosmetics, and more.

However, the appeal of seaweed farming has waned over the years, no longer holding the same appeal for local communities as it once did.

On September 13th, 2023, the ICCF Group, in partnership with

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), facilitated a field mission for members of the Tanzania Friends of Environment (TAPAFE) to the Muungoni area in the Unguja Islands. This mission followed a workshop held by ICCF and TNC in November 2022, which focused on

strengthening the Blue Economy of the Western Indian Ocean by integrating ecosystem services and effective biodiversity conservation. The workshop delved into the

concept of the Blue Economy and underscored the significance of a comprehensive Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) framework.

The primary objective of the field visit was to enable legislators to identify opportunities that could shape and bolster seaweed farming through legislative actions, as seaweed farming has become a pivotal component within the MSP framework.

The field mission was attended by Hon. Esther N. Matiko, Co-Chair of TAPAFE, Hon. Fredy Atupele Mwakibete, Secretary of TAPAFE, and other TAPAFE members, including Hon. Abdalghafar Idrissa

Juma, Hon. Amina Daudi Hassan, Hon. Asha Abdallah Juma, Hon. Asya Mwadini Mohammed, and Hon. Hawa Mchafu Chakoma.



To commence the mission, Dr. Aboud Jumbe, Permanent Secretary of Blue Economy & Fisheries in Zanzibar, hosted the Members and delivered an informative presentation on Zanzibar's experiences and the untapped potential of the Blue Economy.

This encompassed various sectors like tourism, fisheries and aquaculture, maritime activities, trade and infrastructure, and ocean governance. Dr. Aboud emphasized the Ministry's commitment to implementing interventions aimed at empowering and investing in fisheries and aquaculture. He noted the global seaweed market's enormous potential, as well as challenges faced by seaweed farmers. He concluded by mentioning the Ministry of Blue Economy & Fisheries' plans to establish a processing plant in Zanzibar by next year.

The Members proceeded to the Muungoni area, where local farmers provided insights into seaweed farming processes and the challenges they encounter on a daily basis.

Later, the Members visited a group of local women specializing in producing seaweed-based products, such as oils and soap. Hon. Esther Matiko encouraged these women to seek capacity-building initiatives to enhance their product marketing and competitiveness in broader markets.

In conclusion, the Members expressed their commitment to establishing a clear legal foundation for MSP and increasing their focus on allocating funds or incentives for research and development efforts aimed at refining seaweed farming techniques and enhancing productivity in future budgets.

RIGHT, FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Hon. Fredy Atupele Mwakibete, Hon. Amina Daud Hassan and Hon. Asha Abdallah Juma.



YEAR IN REVIEW

IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

THE ICCF GROUP HAS FACILITATED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONGRESSIONAL CONSERVATION CAUCUSES IN BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, PERU, MEXICO, AND ST. LUCIA.

IN 2023, THE ICCF GROUP ADDED TO ITS SPHERE OF SUPPORT THE REGIONAL CONSERVATION CAUCUS OF COUNTRIES BELONGING TO THE ORGANIZATION OF EASTERN CARIBBEAN STATES (OECS).

OCEANS CONSERVATION

THE MEXICAN OCEAN CAUCUS (MOC) ADVANCES ITS AGENDA OF LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

In 2022, Mexico became the third country in the world to establish an Ocean Caucus, following the United States and Colombia.

The Mexican Ocean Caucus (MCC) was launched with the support of the Federal Government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, seeking to promote an ambitious legislative agenda for the country to advance in the commitments before the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy (Ocean Panel) and other international frameworks.

With the technical advice of various civil society organizations and experts, a Legislative Agenda for a Sustainable Ocean Economy was established for the MCC, including the following priorities:

- 1) conservation and restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems,
- 2) sustainable fisheries and

aquaculture, 3) nature-based solutions, 4) circular economy and ocean pollution (ghost nets), and 5) sargassum.

Since then, MCC members with the support of ICCF Mexico have promoted activities to follow up on this agenda, among them two multi-sectorial briefings to discuss the prospects for a blue carbon legislative framework in Mexico, the participation of MCC members in international dialogues on traceability and trade of seafood products and tackling ghost gears, and a field mission to the San Andres Archipelago and exchange of experiences between legislators from Mexico and Colombia, where

a binational declaration was signed on the challenges and opportunities to move towards a sustainable ocean economy.

In addition, members of the MCC have introduced specific bills to promote the conservation and sustainable use of Mexico's seas, coasts and ocean. These include a bill by Dep. Eduardo Murat to define blue carbon in climate legislation, a bill by Dep. Marcela Guerra and Dep. Carmen Bautista to promote a climate risk atlas for the fishing sector, a bill introduced by Sen. Lagunes to combat ghost fishing gear, and a bill developed by Dep. Jaime Martínez - which entered into force at the end of 2023 after being approved by both chambers - to create and disseminate an official map of the Mexican Republic that includes, for the first time, marine zones, with the aim of raising awareness among the Mexican population about the conservation and sustainability of marine resources.

A major achievement in 2023 was the progress made by Mexico on the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing agenda, thanks to the ratification of the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA) in the Senate. This process was led by MCC senators, including Senator Raúl Bolaños, President of the Environment Committee.

WITH THESE ADVANCES, MCC CONTINUES TO ADVANCE THE SUSTAINABLE OCEAN ECONOMY AGENDA IN MEXICO.

FOREST RESTORATION

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, Carlos 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.

CONSERVATION CAUCUS

FIRST NATIONAL CONSERVATION CAUCUS IN THE CARIBBEAN ESTABLISHED IN ST. LUCIA

On June 26, 2023, a significant milestone was reached in the Caribbean as Saint Lucia established its national conservation caucus--the first in the region. This historic event took place at the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Environmental Sustainability Conference at the Bay Gardens Hotel in Saint Lucia.

The conference, which was hosted by the OECS in partnership with ICCF and the European Union, included a Sustainable Financing Forum, the Validation of the COM:ES Roadmap to 2030, a Partnership Springboard, and an OECS Regional Conservation Caucus meeting. Participants included policymakers, technical officials, development partners, and invited stakeholders and was a prelude to the 10th Council of Ministers Meeting on Environmental

Sustainability (COM:ES-10) which was held in Anguilla in July 2023.

The delegation from Saint Lucia, which established the caucus, included Hon. Shawn Edward, Minister for Education, Innovation, Science, Technology, Vocational Training and Sustainable Development; Senate President Hon. Alvina Reynolds; and Hon. Lisa Cassandra Jawahir, Government Senator. Other signatories to the

RIGHT: Protocol document establishing the SLUCC, L-R: ICCF-Caribbean Program Officer, Hippolyte E. Vitalis, Senator Hon. Lisa Jawahir, Hon. Shawn Edward (Minister for Sustainable Development), and Senator Hon. Alvina Reynolds (President of the Senate).

Saint Lucia National Conservation Caucus (SLUCC) were Senators Allison Jean, Kaygianna Toussaint-Charlery, Dominic Fedee, Noorani Azeez, and Alfred Prospere-Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Rural Development.

Through collaborative efforts, the bipartisan SLUCC seeks to address environmental challenges and promote the conservation of natural resources in Saint Lucia.

The integration of conservation

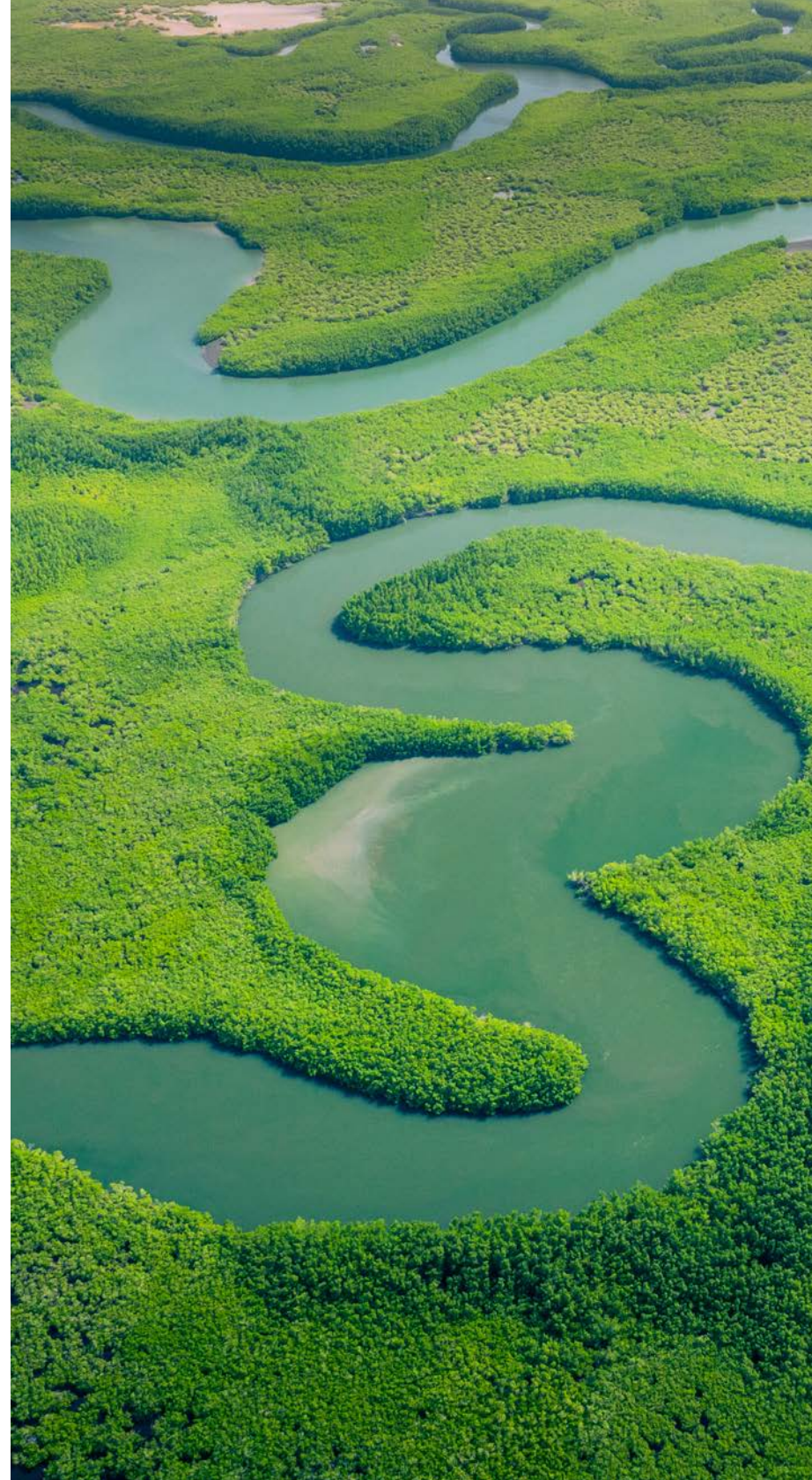
initiatives into national policies and practices will safeguard the country's unique biodiversity, mitigate climate change impacts, and foster sustainable economic growth for present and future generations. The signatories, driven by their expertise and dedication to environmental sustainability, will work together to develop innovative policies, initiatives, and partnerships. Through dialogue and cooperation, they will tackle environmental challenges, protect natural resources, and create a sustainable future for the people of Saint Lucia.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL: PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN COLOMBIA

In a pivotal gathering, the Colombian Conservation Caucus and Oceans Caucus, led by Vice President of the Senate Didier Lobo and President of the House of Representatives Andrés Calle, along with over 30 Colombian Congress members, hosted the Honorable Ambassador of the European Union Delegation in Colombia (DUE), Gilles Bertrand, Paolo Garzotti, Head of Latin America Unit, Directorate-General for Trade, European Commission, Olivier Luyckx, Head of South America Unit for International Partnerships of the European Commission, representatives from EU Member States, the Italian Agency for Cooperation and Development (AICS), FAO, and the International Conservation Caucus Foundation - ICCF, in a working breakfast titled "European Green Deal: Promoting Sustainable Development in Colombia."



This meeting facilitated an analysis of the opportunities and challenges presented by the European Green Deal for sustainable development in Colombia.

During this dialogue, various key topics were explored, including the introduction of the Global Gateway and the Farm to Fork program. It was highlighted how the Regulation on the marketing of products in the European Union - EU - contributes to curbing deforestation induced by EU raw material consumption.

Additionally, the support from the DUE and its Member States for the goals of the National Government in the National Development Plan 2012-2026 "Colombia, a Global Power of Life" was analyzed.

Present Congress members expressed their comments and concerns, addressing fundamental issues such as the challenges and benefits of regulations for the agricultural economy and the certification of agroecological products. Support for projects promoting traceability in sectors such as livestock, fostering forest restoration, and facilitating the export of products to the EU was also emphasized.

Representatives from business associations shared their challenges, including the need for policy instruments to ensure product traceability and compliance with regulations. The importance of working together to ensure sustainability and mitigate the impact of deforestation caused by illegal businesses was emphasized.

The European Union acknowledged the complexity of deforestation challenges in Colombia and noted that regulations are a mechanism to contribute to improving the situation. Committed to joint work, the importance of creating a system that preserves our planet through formal dialogue between legislators, associations, and communities was highlighted.

This meeting reflects the EU's commitment to supporting Colombia in seizing opportunities and improving sectors, meeting standards that facilitate entry into the European market. International

cooperation and collaboration with the private sector are positioned as fundamental principles shared by the EU and Colombia to turn objectives into reality.

This multisectoral dialogue reflects the determination to address the country's real needs and build robust initiatives for sustainable development.



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 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.



OTHER 2023 HIGHLIGHTS FROM ICCF IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARRIBEAN

COLOMBIAN CONSERVATION AND OCEANS CAUCUSES: BIRD CONSERVATION TO DRIVE DEVELOPMENT

An event hosted by ICCF Colombia and the Colombian Conservation and Oceans Caucuses, in collaboration with Audubon Colombia.

COLOMBIAN CONSERVATION CAUCUS AT THE SECOND STOP OF THE BIODIVERSITY ROUTE IN THE ARCHIPELAGO OF SAN ANDRÉS, PROVIDENCIA AND SANTA CATALINA

A series of dialogues and public hearings were held with the support of ICCF Colombia and the active participation of the members of the Colombian Oceans Caucus.

COLOMBIAN CONSERVATION CAUCUS AT THE THIRD STOP OF THE BIODIVERSITY ROUTE

IN APARTADO - NECOCLI REGION IN COLOMBIA

The third leg of public hearings took place, led by Senator Nicolas Echeverry with the support of ICCF Colombia, Conservation International Colombia, Corporation for the Sustainable Development of Urabá - CORPOURABA, and active participation from members of the Colombian Conservation and Oceans Caucus in the Apartado-Necocli region.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN MOVING TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE OCEAN ECONOMY

The leadership of the Conservation and Ocean Caucuses of Colombia and Mexico participated in the regional summit and field mission.

FROM AGREEMENT TO ACTION: IMPLEMENTING

THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK IN MEXICO

The briefing session "From Agreement to Action: First Dialogue with Legislators for the Implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework" was held at the Congress.

INTERNATIONAL CONSERVATION CORPS EMPOWERS PARAGUAYAN PARK RANGERS THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE WORKSHOP AT CERRO CORA NATIONAL PARK

The workshop aimed to strengthen the capabilities of Paraguay's park rangers in managing and preserving natural resources, fostering community engagement, and developing effective interpretation skills within protected areas.

SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS IN PARAGUAY

The FOLUR Project, executed in Paraguay by ICCF, supports progress in the implementation of Urban Land Use Plans in the districts of the Chaco and the Atlantic Forest of Alto Paraná (BAAPA).

COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN PRODUCERS OF THE PARAGUAYAN CHACO AND THE FOLUR PROJECT

The Asociación Agropecuaria de Agua Dulce (APAD) and the FOLUR Paraguay Project, executed in Paraguay by the ICCF Group, signed an agreement that focuses on scientific and technical cooperation, addressing crucial issues such as agricultural, livestock and forestry production, with the primary objective of promoting practices that harmonize with the environment.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FOR PARAGUAY

A virtual training session on the topic of Service Crops as a Tool for Sustainable Agriculture was hosted in Paraguay.

FOLUR PROJECT PROGRESS PRESENTED TO MAYORS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF CHACO’S MUNICIPALITIES

A series of meetings were held in localities of the Chaco with mayors and representatives of the municipalities of Boquerón, Mcal. Estigarribia, Fuerte Olimpo, Filadelfia, and Loma Plata.

SUPPORT FOR THE INITIATIVE OF ENTERPRISING WOMEN IN THE PARAGUAYAN CHACO REGION

The FOLUR Project, together with the Governor's Office of Boquerón and the Municipality of Loma Plata in the Paraguayan Chaco, delivered materials and equipment to the 12 de Noviembre Committee of the town of Villa Urunde'y, District of Loma Plata, Department of Boquerón in the Paraguayan Chaco.

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.





IN ASIA

THE ICCF GROUP IS EXPANDING ITS MODEL OF SUPPORTING PARLIAMENTARY CONSERVATION AND OCEANS CAUCUSES THROUGHOUT THE ASEAN REGION TO FURTHER THE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF LEGISLATIVE LEADERS THROUGHOUT ASIA: MARITIME

ECONOMY, MARITIME SECURITY, SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES, AND GOOD NATURAL RESOURCE GOVERNANCE AND CONSERVATION.

Good natural resource governance is critical to fostering economic and human development and ensuring the sustainable management of environmental resources.



HEALTHY FOREST

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.

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 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.




HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICT

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

ICCF-AIPA-UNCTAD JOINT BRIEFING: TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS MARINE DEBRIS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

 On July 6, 2023, the ICCF Group, ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) co-organized a briefing titled "Technology and Innovation Solutions to Address Marine Debris in Southeast Asia" in Bogor, Indonesia, hybridized through the Zoom platform.

The event facilitated rich discussions and insights on the pressing issue of marine debris in Southeast Asia, exploring existing challenges, policy initiatives, and potential solutions. Opening remarks were delivered by Secretary General of AIPA, H.E. Ar. Siti Rozaimeiriyanty Dato Haji Abdul Rahman, and Director of ICCF Asia, Mr. James Ward. Keynote remarks were delivered by Chairperson of the Committee for Interparliamentary Cooperation of the Indonesian Parliament, Hon. Fadli Zon, and Co-Chair of the Oceans Caucus

in the Indonesian House of Representatives, Hon. Bobby Rizaldi.

Mr. Zul Hilmi Saidin, Senior Officer of the Environment Division at the ASEAN Secretariat, discussed the broad range of policy initiatives conducted in ASEAN countries and ASEAN areas to combat marine plastic pollution.

The region has implemented several frameworks and plans like the ASEAN Framework for Circular Economy and the Regional Action Plan for Combating Marine Debris.

Partnerships with nations like Japan and Norway, as well as entities like the World Bank and UNOPS, have been established to drive reduction efforts. Despite the progress, challenges persist, including lack of upstream coordination, consistent policy and practice for the plastic industry and environmental protection, and implementation of action policies at various levels.

Mr. Reo Kawamura, Director of Resource Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris Unit at the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), addressed the significant contribution of Southeast Asian countries to plastic waste, exacerbated by imports from developed nations. He discussed the role of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) in formulating global solutions,

acknowledging the pivotal role of waste pickers and the potential of public-private partnerships in waste management. He also shared best practices from Japan and Southeast Asian countries, including the harmonized PET bottle design in Japan, bans on single-use plastic in Indonesia, the Philippines' Extended Producer Responsibility Act, and Singapore's Deposit Refund Scheme.

Mr. David Jose Vivas Eugui, Chief of Section a.i. at the Trade, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Branch of the UNCTAD, presented a detailed exploration into potential strategies to control plastic pollution.

Eugui discussed control measures such as tariffs, bans, quotas, recycling targets, and phasing out fossil fuel subsidies to reduce plastic

usage. He advocated for substitutes like natural fibers, agricultural waste, seaweed, glass, aluminum, and bioplastics as alternatives to conventional plastic products. Highlighting an international trade imbalance, Eugui noted that synthetic materials are often favored over natural ones due to tariff discrepancies. To aid policymakers, he showcased an online tool for evaluating environmental impacts of materials. He concluded by advocating for the benefits of plastic alternatives and pledging support for Member States transitioning away from harmful plastics.

During the Intervention Session of AIPA Member Parliaments, Hon. Pehin Orang Kaya Indera Pahlawan Awang Haji Suyoi bin Haji Osman from Brunei Darussalam highlighted efforts such as coastal cleanup campaigns, a marine debris cleanup handbook, and a tax on plastic items. Hon. Putu Supadma Rudana from Indonesia stressed the importance of local wisdom, sustainable alternatives, and a five-point action plan that

includes promoting alternatives to plastic and cultivating a recycling culture. Hon. Ravindra Airlangga, also from Indonesia, proposed a green transition resolution, emphasizing reduction of plastic production, behavioral change, enhancing funding mechanisms, and conservation of biodiversity. Hon. Bobby Adhityo Rizaldi posed questions about promoting successful technology and innovation solutions and asked UNCTAD how governments and businesses can collaborate to promote traditional plastic substitutes in developing countries. Finally, Hon. Adm. Chaiwat Iamsamut from Thailand proposed the establishment of a dedicated unit and fund to tackle marine debris in Southeast Asian countries.



DEAR FRIENDS,

Our activities showcase to international policymakers the critical link between international conservation and economic growth & stability, poverty alleviation, food and freshwater security, and national/regional security. The 2023 Year in Review provides a recap of educational activities that we hosted on important conservation priorities; international events and briefings that we organized for parliamentary caucuses and other stakeholders; on-the-ground expertise that we provided to national parks

authorities; and the exciting partnerships that we formed in support of priority issues.

As always, I wish to thank our partners, without whom our activities and accomplishments would not have been possible.

John B. Gantt
President

