



MINISTRY OF TOURISM
AND WILDLIFE



IUCN
AFRICA
CONSERVATION
FORUM 2024
STRONGER TOGETHER



Africa Conservation Forum (ACF) Report

African Solutions for Nature and People

Nairobi - Kenya, June 2024



HEMPEL
FOUNDATION

Contents

I. About the IUCN Africa Conservation Forum (ACF)

II. Executive Summary

- a. Overview
- b. Pre-Forum Events
- c. Forum Opening – Day One
 - i. Keynote Address
 - ii. High-Level Panel Reflection on the Keynote
 - iii. Message from Youth Representatives
- d. High-Level Opening Plenary
- e. Official Opening and Government of Kenya Welcome Remarks
 - i. Parallel High-Level Panel Sessions Under the Banner
“The Future We Need - A New Era for Conservation in Africa”
- f. Forum Day Two and Three
- g. Closing Session - IUCN Voice from Africa

III. Key Messages from the IUCN ACF: IUCN Voice from Africa

IV. Highlights from the Open-Day Forum Sessions

V. Member Events:

- a. Summary of Key Messages from Regional Members-Only Sessions
 - i. Western and Central Africa Regional Session
 - ii. Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Session
 - iii. North Africa Regional Session
- b. IUCN 20-Year Strategic Vision
- c. IUCN Programme 2026-2029

VI. Message from IUCN Africa Regional Directors

Annexes

Annex 1:

Pre-Forum events - Key messages and highlights

- i. Indigenous People and Local Communities Forum
- ii. IUCN Youth Conservation Forum
- iii. Sustainable Finance Mechanisms for Conservation
- iv. Leveraging the Wildlife Economy
- v. Identifying Species Conservation Priorities in Africa: Improving IUCN's Response to the Species Extinction Crisis
- vi. Africa Oceans Forum
- vii. Sustainable Agriculture, Ecosystems Restoration, and Nature-based Solutions Nexus in Africa
- viii. Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) Working Group in Africa
- ix. A Just Energy Transition: Sustainable Development Pathways for Africa

I. About the IUCN Regional Conservation Forums

The IUCN Regional Conservation Forums (RCFs) are held every four years in preparation for the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC), which occurs in the year following the RCFs.

The Regional Conservation Forums (RCFs) bring together experts and IUCN Members from around the world to address critical issues in sustainable development and nature conservation within their respective regions. The primary aim of the RCFs is to unite Members to discuss current challenges, foster new connections, learn about IUCN's upcoming programme of work, and prepare for the following year's World Conservation Congress (WCC). This preparation includes considering what Members will collectively present at the WCC. The Forums provide an essential opportunity for IUCN Members to contribute to key processes in preparing the WCC and shaping its agenda.

As part of this global effort, the IUCN Africa Conservation Forum, the inaugural pan-African event, was convened from 26 to 28 June 2024, Preceded by pre-forums from 24 to 25 June. It drew around 1,000 participants, representing Africa's IUCN Members from governments, civil society, Indigenous Peoples' organisations, experts, and various IUCN partners, who gathered in Nairobi, Kenya.

The event served as a platform to exchange views and experiences in addressing the challenges of conservation and sustainable development on the continent and provided updates on preparations for the WCC, scheduled to take place from 9 - 15 October 2025 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

The main outcomes of the Forum reaffirmed the urgency of transformative actions to address the climate-biodiversity crisis, essential for Africa's sustainable development. This transformation requires Africa-centred solutions that benefit both people and nature, increased investment in Africa's natural assets to support its economies and societies, greater engagement and empowerment of Africa's youth in decisions affecting their future, and a stronger commitment by IUCN to include the voices and concerns of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in its conservation work.



ACF Summary

945  Total Participants

9  Pre forum events over **2 days**

Opening High level panel

7  High level Panels

3  Region Specific Sessions

1  Day Plenary Sessions

27  Member Events

IUCN  Academy Training Sessions

2  Invite Only Events (Private Sector & Donor /IPLC)

 Nairobi National Park Game Drive + SOPACA & ACT 30 Report Launch

 Culture & Nature event

 Presentation of Communication and Education Commission (CEC) Award

Quotes

“

Africa is the continent that has the best-preserved biodiversity in the world, yet the African voice does not come through.

Valli Moosa,
Former IUCN President and former Minister of Constitutional development and Minister of Environment South Africa.

”

“

Africa's dedication to its Sustainable Agenda 2063 left a strong impression on me at the recent Africa Conservation Forum 2024 in Nairobi, organised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). This is a crucial moment for Africa to assert its voice and shape the future of global conservation.

Humphrey Kariuki,
One of Africa's leading business people and serves as Founder and Executive Patron of Janus Continental Group (JCG), Kenya.

”

“

Since Conservation is for communities and the entire world, funding should also be global. This calls for fundamental reform of global financing mechanism and multilateral banks.

Dr Dauda Sembene,
Founder and CEO Africatlyst, Senegal and former director at IMF.

”

“

The Africa Conservation Forum was both enlightening and empowering, offering a dynamic platform for inspiring dialogue, learning, and building new partnerships.

Fatima El-Aaraby,
CEESP Africa Youth Professional Focal Point, Morocco.

”

“

Many African countries struggle with an overemphasis on a few popular protected areas, neglecting countless equally vital regions that deserve our attention and protection.

Silvia Museiya Kihoro,
Principal Secretary State Department For Wildlife Kenya.

”

“

Epoch-making”. That's how the recently concluded IUCN Africa Conservation Forum (ACF) was described. I agree wholeheartedly. For the very first time, IUCN brought all the regions of Africa together to forge a vision for conservation in Africa. We aim to bring the African voice, perspectives, priorities and SOLUTIONS to the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC), which will be held in the United Arab Emirates in 2025. The WCC in turn shapes the global conservation agenda for the years ahead.

Nirmal Jivan Shah,
CEO Nature Seychelles.

”

II. Executive Summary

The IUCN Africa Conservation Forum (ACF) was co-hosted by the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, in collaboration with IUCN. It marked the first-ever IUCN Pan-African Conservation Forum, bringing together the three subregions—Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO), Western and Central Africa (PACO), and the North Africa—that had traditionally held separate Regional Conservation Forums to prepare for the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

Under the theme “African Solutions for Nature and People,” the Forum aimed to catalyse impactful change across the continent by fostering collaboration among governments, NGOs, local communities, the private sector, and international organisations to develop transformative responses to the biodiversity and climate crises in Africa.

The ACF served as a platform to mobilise a common African voice on solutions that integrate nature conservation with sustainable development, ensuring that economic growth in Africa is balanced with the preservation of its rich biodiversity. This approach was particularly important given the multiple global crises, including biodiversity loss, climate change, and increasing socio-economic inequities. The overall goal was to establish resilient conservation efforts that can adapt and thrive in the face of environmental changes, safeguarding Africa's diverse ecosystems while ensuring that economic development remains sustainable and benefits future generations. This requires a long-term commitment to addressing current challenges and effectively anticipating future threats.

Dignitaries from various sectors and organisations participated in the forum. High level Government officials in attendance included several African ministers, Hon. Salim Mvurya, Minister for Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs, Kenya and Minister Zachariah Njeru, Minister of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation, Kenya. Hon. Dr Alfred Mutua, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, Kenya; Hon. Roger Baro, Minister of Environment, Water and Sanitation, Burkina Faso; Hon. Ahmed Omar, The State Minister, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Somalia; and Hon. Nilda Borges, Minister of Environment, Sao Tome and Principe. Senior IUCN leaders present were H.E. Razan Al Mubarak, IUCN President; Dr Grethel Aguilar, IUCN Director General; and

IUCN Councillors from Africa, including Ms Imèn Meliane, IUCN Vice-President; Ms Gloria Chinwe Ujor, Councillor; Mr Ali Kaka, Councillor; and Prof. Brian Child, Councillor. Also in attendance were the IUCN Africa Regional Committee Chairs—Ms Laurence Wete Soh (West and Central Africa), Dr Brahim Haddane (North Africa), and Dr Adalbert Aine-Omucunguzi (Eastern and Southern Africa)—as well as Mr Valli Moosa, former IUCN President and Deputy Chairperson of the Presidential Climate Commission, South Africa, and the three Regional Directors for Africa: Ms Nana Oumou Toure, Mr Maher Mahjoub, and Mr Luther Bois Anukur. The ACF agenda included a one-day open Forum followed by two days of discussions for IUCN Members only.

Over the three days, delegates shared experiences and success stories, discussed the challenges of conservation and sustainable development facing the continent, and explored the opportunities Africa could leverage to safeguard its long-term conservation interests while delivering benefits for both people and nature.

Pre-Forum Events

The Pre-Forum Events, held over two days ahead of the ACF, were organised as independent workshops designed to provide input into the discussions at the main Forum. A total of nine Pre-Forum events were held, focusing on specific topics relevant to the ACF, including: the African Ocean Forum; the Indigenous People and Local Communities Forum; the IUCN Youth Conservation Forum; Sustainable Agriculture, Ecosystems Restoration, and Nature-based Solutions Nexus in Africa; Sustainable Finance Mechanisms for Conservation; Leveraging the Wildlife Economy; A Just Energy Transition: Sustainable Development Pathways for Africa; Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) Working Group in Africa; and Identifying Species Conservation Priorities in Africa: Improving IUCN's Response to the Species Extinction Crisis. These events provided key messages and insights that informed the panel discussions on the first day of the Forum and contributed to the concluding high-level message from the ACF. A summary of key insights and recommendations from the Pre-Forum events is presented in Annex 1 of this report. Detailed reports from the Pre-Forum events that were submitted to the Secretariat are included in Annex 2.

Message from IUCN Africa Regional Directors



The inaugural IUCN Africa Conservation Forum was a resounding success and a powerful testament to our collective commitment to protecting Africa's extraordinary natural heritage. This event brought together over 900 participants from 54 African countries.

In recent years, African nations have increasingly advocated for stronger coordination and unity, as embodied by Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. This pan-African vision for unity, self-determination, and collective prosperity was central to the Forum's mission. The ACF aimed to redefine conservation with a focus on equity by re-evaluating traditional models and developing innovative solutions that address both the needs of African communities and the urgent challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.

The Forum effectively harnessed the power of African unity to amplify our collective voice on the global stage, driving transformative change that benefits both Africa's people and its natural heritage. Reflecting on the ACF's achievements, we are inspired by the resilience and innovation demonstrated, reaffirming our shared responsibility and capacity for meaningful change.

The Forum showcased significant advancements in conservation, from successful community-led initiatives that restore vital habitats and support local economies to groundbreaking research that enhances our understanding of the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability. These accomplishments are not just milestones; they serve as beacons of hope, demonstrating what can be achieved through united efforts.

Despite the formidable challenges posed by climate change and biodiversity threats, Africa must adopt bold, innovative, and adaptive approaches. We need to leverage new technologies, strengthen partnerships, and ensure that people remain at the centre of conservation and sustainable development. Africa's strength in conservation lies in its unity: "Stronger Together." The collaborative efforts of governments, local communities, NGOs, and the private sector are crucial for driving lasting change. The stories of local heroes, the dedication of field teams, the commitment of IUCN Members, and the support from international partners remind us that this is a collective journey. These contributions are integral to advancing IUCN's future vision and programme focus.

As we move forward, let us renew our commitment to this cause. Let us build on our successes, learn from our challenges, and continue to inspire one another. The future of Africa's natural world depends on our actions today. Together, we can create a legacy of conservation for generations to come.

We extend our special thanks to our co-host, the Government of Kenya, our major funding partner, the Hempel Foundation, and all our supporters for their funding, technical, and moral support. Our gratitude also goes to all IUCN Members, partners, and stakeholders for your impressive participation.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication and for being a vital part of this mission!

Luther Anukur, Nana Toure, and Maher Mahjoub

SUMMARY OF THE DAYS:

Day 1:



Forum Opening

The Forum began with welcoming remarks from Mr. Ali Kaka, IUCN Councillor, who emphasised that this inaugural Pan-African Conservation Forum aims to prepare Africa to speak with a unified voice and to develop resolutions and recommendations that bring the continent together in preparation for the 2025 IUCN World Conservation Congress. He underscored the importance of adopting African solutions for both people and nature as the guiding framework.

This was followed by opening remarks from Dr. Grethel Aguilar, IUCN Director General, who welcomed all delegates to the first IUCN Pan-African Conservation Forum and expressed gratitude to everyone who contributed to making the event possible, particularly Kentya—an IUCN State Member—through the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, as well as the generous donors and sponsors. She commended the decision to hold the Forum as a single continent-wide event, embodying the motto "Stronger Together."

Dr. Aguilar reminded IUCN Members of the various opportunities and tools available to support the Union's work. She also highlighted the valuable discussions from the Pre-Forum events, particularly the perspectives shared by the Youth and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities organisations. She stressed the importance of joining forces to develop solutions that benefit both people and nature. Concluding her remarks, she expressed her anticipation of hearing the insights from this Forum to help shape the agenda for the 2025 IUCN World Conservation Congress.



Keynote Address

The plenary session then featured a keynote address on the theme "African Solutions for Nature and People – Creating Transformative Responses to the Biodiversity and Climate Crisis in Africa," delivered by Dr. David Obura, Chair of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES). Dr. Obura presented three main takeaways:

- 1) We are facing a triple crisis—biodiversity loss, climate change, and social inequity—for which time is running out, and urgent action is needed, placing both people and nature at the centre of all solutions that benefit both.
- 2) There is an urgent need for transformative, integrated actions; we must move beyond rhetoric to meaningful action.
- 3) Nature underpins our economies and societies, necessitating increased investment in natural resources.

A high-level panel reflection on the keynote, moderated by IUCN Vice-President Ms. Imèn Meliane, provided further insights from distinguished discussants, including Ms. Chiyedza Heri (Founder, Ubuntu Alliance, Zimbabwe), Dr. Patrick Omondi (Director, Wildlife Training and Research Institute, Kenya, and Chair of the IUCN Kenya National Committee), Mr. Malidadi Langa (Chair, Alliance for Indigenous People and Local Communities - AICA), and Dr. David Obura (Chair, IPBES).

Echoing the points made by Dr. Obura, the panel stressed the urgency of creating transformational solutions and accelerating their implementation to address the triple crisis. They highlighted the importance of including Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and youth in the design and delivery of transformative nature- and people-positive solutions. They underscored that conservation benefits for both people and nature must remain central to the discourse. The panel also noted that a multisectoral approach to conservation is essential for successful implementation and that biodiversity should be a cornerstone of climate change management, adaptation, and mitigation efforts, with solutions targeted at local levels and jurisdictions.

Additionally, the panel emphasised that justice, human rights, and equitable values should be at the core of Africa's conservation agenda. IUCN was urged to develop bold and inclusive agendas that attract and retain large-scale financing for nature.



Youth Pre-Forum Report

Following this panel, Youth representatives delivered a message from the Youth Forum, which had taken place over the two days preceding the ACF. The statement highlighted the concerns of young people and their recommendations for a more inclusive approach to conservation.



Official Opening

The Official Opening session began with a welcome address by Mr. Luther Bois Anukur, IUCN Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, at the inaugural Pan-African Regional Conservation Forum. He highlighted the growing demand across Africa for enhanced collaboration, aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063. Mr. Anukur reiterated that the forum aims to foster interaction, share experiences, and critically assess current conservation models to develop equitable solutions for both people and nature. By leveraging the continent's diverse cultures and experiences, the goal is to unite voices and drive meaningful change across Africa.



This was followed by an official address from IUCN President H.E. Razan Al Mubarak, who warmly thanked the Government of Kenya for hosting the Africa Conservation Forum. She also expressed gratitude to the IUCN Kenya National Committee, IUCN Councillors from Africa, and the IUCN Secretariat for their efforts in making the conference possible. H.E. Razan Al Mubarak emphasized that environmental protection and climate action are essential for achieving a sustainable future, economic growth, prosperity, peace, and security. She underscored the importance of working inclusively to promote solutions that benefit both people and nature, in the spirit of “Ubuntu” (“I am because you are”). She also highlighted the importance of charting a course for an ambitious 20-year Strategic Vision as the Union prepares for the 2025 World Conservation Congress (WCC), which will be hosted by her country, the United Arab Emirates. She noted that this event will undoubtedly serve as a major call to action, furthering the mission and vision of IUCN through a more integrated approach to environmental challenges that recognizes the need to incorporate nature into climate strategies.

Following her address, participants heard from a high-level opening plenary panel moderated by IUCN Director General Dr. Grethel Aguilar. The discussion focused on what it would take to shift the paradigm of biodiversity conservation in Africa to deliver benefits for both people and nature.

The panel also explored how African governments could collaborate with the private sector to secure sustainable financing for nature conservation, and what lessons the conservation community could learn from private sector entrepreneurship.

The discussants included: Ms. Silvia Museiya (Principal Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, Kenya), Mr. Humphrey Kariuki (Leading African Entrepreneur, Kenya), Mr. Valli Moosa (IUCN former President and Deputy Chairperson of the Presidential Climate Commission, South Africa), and Dr. Daouda Sembene (Founder and CEO of AfriCatalyst, Senegal)

The panel offered a range of perspectives, notably highlighting that, on a per capita basis, Africa’s natural capital, including biodiversity, generates a significant portion of global wealth, yet this has not translated into the well-being of its people. Nature remains Africa’s competitive advantage, and future planning should focus on building valuation and pricing systems that safeguard the benefits of conservation for people and their nations. The panel emphasized the need for a detailed valuation of natural capital as a basis for macro and micro-level planning and management.

It was also noted that the conservation space is overcrowded with numerous players, leading to duplication of efforts due to poor planning, coordination, and insufficient funding. A panelist stressed the need to move beyond “fortress” conservation models inherited from colonial times and adopt holistic management approaches such as Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM), which promote benefit-sharing, access frameworks, and inclusivity through principles like Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). Africa’s rich indigenous, local, and traditional knowledge should be integrated into conservation science, tools, and frameworks, codified, and contextualized for relevance and scalability. Financial planning and resource allocation mechanisms also need to be tailored to suit local contexts.

To encourage private sector involvement in financing nature conservation, the panel suggested that governments consider offering a range of tax and fiscal incentives to attract interest from the financial and private sectors to co-invest in conservation. Investing in nature is a local and global public good, requiring diverse funding frameworks to develop and implement suitable portfolios for conservation. The panel also called for reforms in the global conservation financing architecture to address systemic gaps that lead to risk aversion and highlighted the need for more innovative solutions, such as Debt-for-Nature Swaps (DFNS). Additionally, debt-distressed nations in the region should be supported to access finance for conservation. There is a need to tailor natural resource policies, enhance transparency in public-private partnerships, establish risk profiles, and support de-risking instruments for credit enhancement in Africa.



The official opening segment concluded with welcome remarks and the formal opening of the Forum by Dr. Alfred Mutua, Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife of Kenya, representing H.E. Dr. William Ruto, President of the Republic of Kenya. In his address, Dr. Mutua welcomed participants to Kenya and highlighted the country's longstanding partnership with IUCN as an IUCN State Member. He emphasized Kenya's significant contribution to global biodiversity conservation discussions, particularly through the actions and strategies it has implemented to support the Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the CBD-COP 15 in 2022.

Dr. Mutua also discussed the various challenges that Kenya, like many parts of Africa, faces in its biodiversity conservation efforts. These challenges include human-wildlife conflict, inadequate financing, species loss, and overall environmental degradation. He stressed the need for innovative approaches and partnerships to unlock opportunities that provide win-win solutions for both people and nature. Such approaches involve placing local communities at the centre of conservation efforts, engaging and empowering Africa's youthful population, and strengthening collaboration among African nations and various stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society.

Following the official opening, discussions continued in six parallel high-level panel sessions under the theme "The Future We Need – A New Era for Conservation in Africa." The panels addressed the following topics:

- 1) Responding to the biodiversity and climate crisis
- 2) Regenerative actions
- 3) Innovative finance
- 4) The rising demand for infrastructure development in Africa – is there room for nature-positive solutions?
- 5) Fragility, conflict, and the environment
- 6) Inclusive conservation – equity, justice, and rights

Several key messages and recommendations emerged from these discussions, which are summarized in Section IV of the report.

The remainder of the open-day Forum was dedicated to numerous Members' side events and other standalone events, held in parallel sessions.



Day 2

On the second day of the Forum, IUCN Members convened in parallel regional sessions to discuss topics relevant to each region (Eastern and Southern Africa, Western and Central Africa, and North Africa) and to hear initial presentations on the IUCN 20-Year Strategic Vision and the IUCN Programme 2026-2029. These presentations provided an opportunity for Members in each regional group to offer initial feedback on the two documents. It was noted that this is only the beginning of the consultation process, with the Secretariat accepting comments until 20 October 2024.





Nairobi National Park

The host country, in collaboration with the Kenya Wildlife Service, generously hosted IUCN Members for an afternoon excursion to Nairobi National Park. This excursion set the stage for the launch of the second edition of the "State of Protected and Conserved Areas" (SOPACA) Report for Eastern and Southern Africa by IUCN and the Regional Resource Hub during the African Regional Conservation Forum. The report, now aligned with the new Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, provides crucial data and insights to help governments guide conservation efforts, track progress, and enhance the management of protected and conserved areas in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The SOPACA report highlights both successes and challenges in the region, emphasising the need for more inclusive governance. It recommends actions such as strengthening community involvement, incorporating indigenous knowledge, fostering sustainable tourism, and leveraging technology for conservation. The event also featured IUCN's Act30 initiative and included contributions from key stakeholders, such as the European Union Delegation to Kenya and the Kenya Wildlife Service.



Day 3

On the third and final day of the Forum, IUCN Members reconvened in a plenary session to hear a presentation on the 20-year Strategic Vision for the Union, delivered by Ms. Imèn Meliane, IUCN Vice-President, followed by a round of initial comments, questions, and answers. The plenary also included a presentation on the IUCN Programme 2026-2029 by Prof. Brian Child, IUCN Councillor, and a presentation on the IUCN Financial Strategy by Mr. Mark Salway from the Secretariat. These presentations were also followed by rounds of initial comments, questions, and answers.

Members were reminded that the IUCN Programme 2026-2029, its accompanying Financial Strategy, and the 20-year Strategic Vision documents are currently in draft form for Member consultation, with the period for input and comments open until 20 October 2024. Members were also given the opportunity to hear presentations from IUCN Commissions on their programmes of work in Africa, introduced by Mr. Sean Southey, Chair of the Commission on Education and Communication (CEC). Various IUCN Commissions were represented by their Chairs or Regional Vice-Chairs.

The Members then participated in a session focused on key processes in preparation for the 2025 IUCN World Conservation Congress, structured around three topics:

- 1) The 'Road to Congress,' introduced by IUCN Secretariat staff.
- 2) IUCN governance matters, including elections and proposed changes to statutes and regulations, presented by Ms. Gloria Chinwe Ujor, IUCN Councillor.
- 3) The Motions process and the implementation of IUCN Resolutions, introduced by IUCN Secretariat staff.

This session served as a brief induction, particularly for Members who have not yet attended an IUCN WCC, to familiarise them with the various requirements, procedures, and timelines for participating in the Congress and submitting motions for potential consideration.




Closing Session

After three days of insightful exchanges and discussions in various workshops, high-level panels, and plenary sessions, the inaugural ACF concluded. The closing ceremony began with a presentation of five key high-level messages from the Forum, framed as the "IUCN Voice from Africa" (see Section III of the report). This presentation was delivered by Mr. Maher Mahjoub, Regional Director for the IUCN North Africa/Mediterranean Cooperation Center, who emphasised that these five messages capture the common voice of IUCN in Africa, addressing critical leverage points that emerged or were highlighted during the Forum and the Pre-Forum events. He noted that these points are essential for ensuring that IUCN's work in Africa has a meaningful positive impact for both people and nature. Mr. Mahjoub also mentioned that the broader outcomes from the rich discussions and exchanges that took place in various workshops, high-level panels, and plenary sessions would be detailed in the comprehensive report of the Forum, which the Secretariat would finalise in the coming days.


In their closing remarks, IUCN leaders, including the Director General and IUCN Councillors, celebrated the significance of this inaugural IUCN Africa Conservation Forum, highlighting how it demonstrated strong and united African leadership and incorporated African perspectives that will contribute to the 2025 IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC). They thanked the Government of Kenya and all other supporters for a successful momentous event.



III. Key Messages from the ACF: IUCN Voices from Africa

1  **We have run out of time!**


Existing actions are inadequate and true transformation means moving from transformation rhetoric to integrated actions in the biodiversity-climate nexus now.

2  **We want people at the centre**

People have to be at the centre of all solutions – nature and people positive solutions are needed.

3  **We need investment**

Africa needs to ramp up investment in its natural assets in support of its economies and society.

4  **Let us unleash our youth**

Africa is a youthful continent and innovative solutions require the voices and aspirations of its youth.

5  **We hear the voice of Indigenous People and Local Communities**

Additional Significant Commitments

Continuing the Africa Conservation Forum

1 We are committed to continuing the Africa Conservation Forum (ACF) as a vital platform for advancing conservation, sustainability, and the well-being of our continent, ensuring the protection of Africa's rich biodiversity for current and future generations.

2 In this regard a strong recommendation was made to host in one venue like Davos Economic forum in Switzerland to ensure continuity – the Kenya government announced its intention to partner with IUCN and continue hosting the ACF every 2 years.

Continental wide initiatives for Conservation

The Africa Conservation Forum prioritized to pursue the following initiatives with aim to catalyze impactful conservation efforts and sustainable development across the continent.

1. Great Blue Wall
2. Strengthening the Alliance for Indigenous People and Local Communities (AICA).
3. Conflict to Co-existence Initiative
4. Africa Nature Financial Framework
5. Private Sector-Led Regenerative Agriculture Initiative
6. Fragility, Conflict, and Environment Initiative

IV. Day 1 Session Highlights

This section highlights the key messages that emerged from the high-level panels in the opening plenary and the 6 parallel high-level panels on day 1 of the Forum.

Opening plenary panel:

Issue: what would it take to shift the paradigm of biodiversity conservation for Africa and transform mindsets for a success story benefiting both people and nature?

The following key points were made:



PANEL 1

Responding to the Biodiversity and Climate crisis

Issue:

The tight inter-relatedness of biodiversity and climate change is being increasingly recognized. The need for fully integrated nature-based solutions to them is key to the resilience and adaptation of communities and people across the African continent. The panel was invited to explore potential solutions through the lenses of some of the most pervasive and pressing challenges, such as the escalating human-wildlife conflicts, including managing water for people and biodiversity, increasing risks of invasive alien species and zoonotics, and securing rights and access to indigenous and traditional landscapes and seascapes and the natural resources within for local communities.

The panel was moderated by Mr. Michel Masozera (Director for Policy and Partnerships Africa, WCS) and included as speakers: Dr. Arne Witt (Regional Africa and Asia Coordinator for Invasive Species, CABI, South Africa); Dr. Thomas Nyariki (Conservation of nature, animal resources management and agrifood systems specialist and Director of HAGREN Consultants Ltd, Kenya); Dr. Rodgers Lubilo (CBNRM Specialist and Chair, Zambia CBNRM Forum); Dr. Nirmal Shah (Chief Executive Officer of Nature Seychelles).

Discussion Highlights:

- IUCN should help develop guidelines and mainstream the One Health approach across sectors.
- Invasive alien species are not just a problem for biodiversity in Africa but for people's livelihoods as well, severely impacting ecosystem services, such as water provision and food security, and these impacts are accelerating and compounding with climate change. Yet, current level of investment in controlling and managing biological invasions is disproportionately small considering the scale of these impacts (e.g. only about 1-2% of GEF funding is going to invasive alien species problems).
- Human-wildlife conflicts need to be addressed at multiple levels for sustainable solutions; local people obviously need to be at the centre of dealing with this issue.



Regenerative Actions

Issue:

Restoring the productivity, diversity and resilience of ecosystems across Africa is crucial for biodiversity and sustaining people's livelihoods, health, and wellbeing. This approach will become central to conservation, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, water management, and various economic sectors. Support through development processes, the Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, and sustainable production initiatives should be harnessed across landscapes and waterscapes to make conservation the foundation for achieving these goals. The panel was invited to discuss effective regenerative actions needed for food production, such as agroecology, marine resources and ecosystems management, sustainable use of wild species, and ecosystem restoration, including forest landscape and wetlands restoration.

The panel was moderated by Ms. Charlotte Karibuhoye (Founder and CEO, Interface pour la Nature, Senegal) and included as speakers: Mr. Domingos Gove (Director, Food Agriculture and Natural Resources – FANR- SADC Secretariat); Dr. Adalbert Aine-Omuchunguzi (East African Regional Manager, International Crane Foundation/Endangered Wildlife Trust Partnership, Uganda); Dr. Rym Zakhama (Assistant Professor, High Institute of Biotechnology and Sidi Thabet and Researcher, Laboratory of

Diversity, Conservation and Monitoring of Biological Systems at the Faculty of Science, Tunisia); Mr. John Nakel (Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania – SAGOT).

Discussion Highlights:

- We should be ambitious to break boundaries because nature and ecosystems have no boundary.
- Enabling environment with adequate policy to favor regenerative actions in agricultural land is required. We need to come up with local based approaches that are friendly and acceptable to the communities.
- It is important to put people at the centre of conservation strategies and especially ensure benefits to local communities.
- Conservation should be given higher attention than restoration because human actions in restoration efforts cannot fully reconstitute what nature does. Where nature has been degraded, restoration approaches have value.
- Wetlands are effective nature-based solutions as they regulate floods, water and provide other ecosystem services such as water purification and specific habitat and livelihoods.



Innovative Finance

Issue:

Donor aid and existing funding mechanisms to mitigate the impacts of global economic trends on Africa's biodiversity and climate resilience are increasingly overwhelmed by the pace and scale of change. Current approaches are not succeeding in directing sufficient funding to the ground, reflecting the power dynamics between donors and recipients. Innovative financial options and new perspectives are more necessary than ever.

This panel, comprising representatives from various conservation finance sectors and respondents from recipient communities, was convened to assess the current situation, highlight promising innovations, and explore opportunities and barriers to getting funding directly to the point of impact at the grassroots level.

The panel was moderated by Mr. John Kamanga, Co-Founder of the South Rift Association of Land Owners (SORALO), Kenya, and featured the following speakers: Mr. David Emmett (Senior Manager, Biodiversity Partnerships, Hempel Foundation, Denmark); Dr. Mwangi Githiru (Chief

Conservation Officer, Wildlife Works, Kenya); Ms. Geilan Malet-Bates (Senior Programme Coordinator and Blended Finance Lead, Centre for Science and Knowledge, IUCN, representing the Subnational Climate Fund); and Mr. Thomas Yatich (EU Delegation, Kenya).

Discussion Highlights:

- Conservation actions should build on local financial institutions to better align funding with local needs and reduce dependency on external funds
- Effective conservation funding requires collaborative coalitions that bridge donor perspectives with ground-level needs and capacities.
- Efforts should focus on building the capacity of direct project beneficiaries to minimise reliance on intermediaries and optimise the impact of funds.
- Engaging the private sector through mechanisms such as carbon credits and biodiversity credits offers a viable business model for conservation actions.
- Establishing policy frameworks for carbon markets is important to ensure equitable revenue distribution to communities and provide regulatory oversight.



PANEL 4

Demand for infrastructure in Africa

Issue:

Infrastructure is essential for economic growth and societal advancement, providing access to markets, energy, and services, and helping to lift people out of poverty. In Africa, infrastructure projects are rapidly developing, often with biodiversity considered a secondary concern. By 2050, 25 million kilometres of linear infrastructure are projected to be built, including ports, energy networks, and urban centres, significantly impacting natural environments. The key question is: how can nature-positive solutions reduce the negative impacts of this development in the coming years?

The panel was invited to explore current infrastructure examples (such as roads, powerlines, urban infrastructure, ports, and pipelines), their ecological and social impacts, and potential nature-positive solutions to balance these trade-offs for both people and nature.

The panel was moderated by Ms. Lucy Wariungi, Executive Director of the Africa Conservation Centre, and included the following speakers: Ms. Caroline Aguti Mugisha, Head Health, Safety & Environment Coordinator Climate Change, Coordinator, Ministry of Energy and Mineral

Development, Uganda); H.E. Ambassador Nancy Karigithu (Kenya Special Envoy for Ocean and Blue Economy); Mr. Alex Ngari (Migratory Birds and Flyways Programme Manager for Africa, BirdLife International); Dr. Arthur Muneza (East Africa Coordinator, Giraffe Conservation Foundation, Kenya); and Mr. Alexis Coffi Aquereburu (Mayor of Aneho, Togo).

Discussion Highlights:

- Africa needs infrastructure to address numerous challenges, including job creation, energy access, and security, while also conserving its unique nature and heritage.
- When assessing the impacts of infrastructure on nature and communities, government ministries often lack the necessary skills to verify compliance with national regulations, particularly regarding strategic environmental impact assessments and the monitoring of mitigation measures.
- The marine environment is frequently overlooked when evaluating the impacts of infrastructure projects.
- Government ministries need to collaborate to ensure they have a holistic view of current and planned activities, and to help identify common solutions to shared problems.



PANEL 5

Fragility, Conflict and Environment

Issue:

It was noted that 40% of civil wars in the past 60 years have been linked to competition over scarce resources. People in conflict zones are highly vulnerable to climate and environmental crises. Fourteen West and Central African countries, most affected by environmental degradation and climate change, are also experiencing conflicts, which further reduces their ability to address these challenges. This panel was convened to discuss the impact of the fragility-conflict-environment nexus on African communities and its threat to achieving sustainable development goals by 2030. It was also tasked with exploring preventive strategies, solutions, and recovery plans to help African states and communities address this dual vulnerability.

The panel was moderated by Ms. Nana Toure, Regional Director for IUCN West and Central Africa, and included the following speakers: H.E. Hon. Roger Baro (Minister of the Environment, Water and Sanitation, Burkina Faso); H.E. Hon. Ahmed Omar (State Minister for the Environment, Somalia); and Dr. Grethel Aguilar (Director General, IUCN).

Discussion Highlights:

- Local communities should be placed at the centre of our concerns for nature conservation; we must address people's needs and work collaboratively with these communities.
- Politics alone cannot solve all conflicts arising from the use of the environment and its resources; public diplomacy is often necessary for conflict resolution.
- Investing in youth education and employment is crucial to addressing their increasing involvement in armed groups.
- Developed countries have a significant role to play in resolving environmental issues in Africa through technology transfer and capacity-building.



Inclusive Conservation – Equity, Justice and Rights

Issue: Recent years have seen a growing recognition among African and international governments, donors, and conservation agencies of the need to engage Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) to achieve conservation and sustainable development goals. This engagement is crucial for advancing rights-based approaches to conservation in the interest of equity and fairness. The inclusion agenda has two main aspects: recognising and respecting IPLC rights and securing tenure over their land and resources, and ensuring inclusive natural resource management governance that enables effective participation in policymaking through legitimate organisations.

Despite these efforts, IPLCs still struggle for legal recognition and control over their lands, access to resources, acceptance of their cultural identities and governance forms, and acknowledgement of their role in biodiversity conservation. Although IPLCs have conserved biodiversity for millennia, they remain marginalised, risking exclusion from biodiversity, climate change, and sustainable development agendas.

The panel was invited to address these issues, focusing on land rights and tenure, drivers of biodiversity loss, benefit-sharing, human-wildlife conflict, and sustainable funding for IPLC organisations. It was also asked to present IPLC positions and practical measures to inform the IUCN 2026-2029 Programme and other policy processes.

The panel was moderated by Dr. Holly Dublin (Special Advisor, IUCN ESARO) and included the following speakers: Hawe Hamman Bouba (AIWOCAN, AU Commissioner on Human Rights, Cameroon); Mr. Malidadi Langa (Chair, AICA Steering Committee); General Tondassma (Head of Parks and Reserves, Côte d'Ivoire); and Dr. Shylock Muyengwa (Programme Director, Resource Africa).

Discussion Highlights:

- Increase the credibility and accountability of NGOs that claim to represent Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and local communities (LCs).
- Recognise the rights of IPs and LCs (including human rights, natural resource rights, and land rights) in legal policies and regional frameworks, such as those within the African Union.
- There is an urgent need to move from theoretical discussions to real implementation; inclusion often remains an aspiration rather than a reality on the ground.
- IPs and LCs should not be used for marketing purposes by others seeking funds, resources and recognition in their name but rather they should be supported in securing direct access to funding.
- IPs and LCs should not be used for marketing purposes by others seeking funds, resources, and recognition in their name. Instead, they should be supported in securing direct access to funding.
- Access to justice for IPs and LCs must be strengthened by providing them with free legal services tailored to their specific needs, such as securing their land rights and protecting them as environmental defenders.

Nature & Culture Event

Hosted by Kenya's Ministry of Tourism & Wildlife



V. Member Events:



Presentation of Communication and Education Commission CEC Awards



Nature-based Solutions for effective Community Conservation and Climate Action

What Should Conservation-Driven Sustainable Development Look Like in Africa's Protected and Conserved Areas?



Integrated management and sustainable development of the Kenya-Tanzania transboundary marine system: Other Effective Conservation Measures



Resilient Watersheds – Sustainable Finance Mechanism for Protecting and Restoring Africa's Water Towers



For an African Civil Society at the heart of environmental action



Ecosystèmes arides : Cas d'Oasis comme hotspots menacée



Biodiversity, Land and Climate Change in the SADC region





Promotion of environmental and social assessment for reconciliation between Conservation and development



Business case for NBS implementation in Africa (Members invites only)

Indigenous people and Local Communities - governance in Africa



Global Biodiversity Framework and Target 3 in Africa: Achieving GBF Target 3: Technical support for implementing the 30x30 target in Africa OECMs Towards Effective Conservation of Marine and Terrestrial Ecosystems towards attaining the 30x30 GBF target 3 in Africa.



What can IUCN Members do for World Heritage Conservation in Africa?



Les Solutions Fondées sur la Nature en Afrique Les solutions fondées sur la nature pour s'adapter au changement climatique et préserver la biodiversité en Afrique du nord Smart Agri, Transformation of Plants into Botanical Pesticides, Experimentation and Challenges.

Showcasing Rwanda's Community-centric Restoration efforts in Agricultural Landscapes and Opportunities for World Agroforestry Conference 2025 hosted by Government of Rwanda



Wildlife Conversation Community-Centred Human Wildlife Conflict Mitigation: Lessons Learnt From Darwin C&C Project. Born to be Wild: Restoring the Mountain Bongo Population in Kenya Le financement par segment menace la survie de la réserve de biosphère du mono.





Biodiversity Economy & Sustainable Finance

Inclusive Biodiversity Economy, A case Study for South Africa Innovative Financing Solutions for Conservation: Showcasing Trees for Global Benefit Miombo and Sustainable investment for global conservation goals.



Posters/Promotional Events

Poster – Regenerative Agricultural Practices in Communities - A huge contribution to the Wildlife-Based Economy Landscape Scale Restoration of The Hirola Rangelands Education environnementale transformatrice et la préservation des ressources naturelles au Bénin Showcasing Rwanda's Community-centric Restoration efforts in Agricultural Landscapes and Opportunities for World Agroforestry Conference 2025 hosted by Government of Rwanda.

Natural Resources Governance

Natural Resource Governance (NRG) in Protected and Other Conserved Areas Exchange and Discussion for Africa Community Governance for Cheetah Landscapes in Somaliland.



Academy Learning Zone:

- Contributions for Nature Portal Challenge: Strategies to tackle Climate Change
- Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Self-assessment Tool
- Species Conservation Action in Africa
- Global Species Action Plan (GSAP)



Marine and Coastal Ecosystems

Alternative Monitoring and Managing Approaches of the 2nd biggest MPA in Africa using young knowledge exchange programs and involving local communities Aires Marines protégées et protection des espèces menacées marines et côtières au Bénin.



Dialogue between IPLCs and Development Partners

Plastic Pollution in Coastal Ecosystems

Cabo Verde-un pays libre du plastique Case study from Morocco.



Unlocking Direct Funding Access for IPLCs

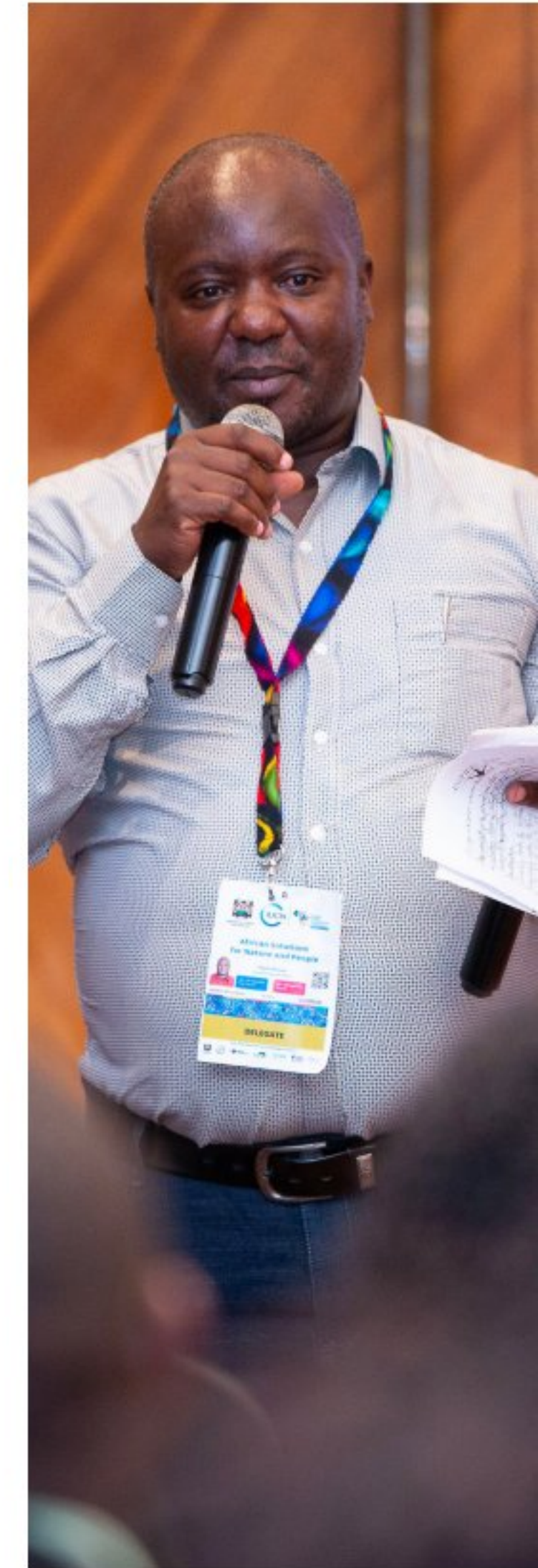


Summary of key messages from the Regional Sessions.

Eastern & Southern Regional Session:

Views on the IUCN 20-year Vision and the 2026-2029 Programme:

- What is transformational about the Vision and Programme? There is no theory of change logic that can enable members visualize the pathways to change;
- There is a need for a logical roadmap how we achieve the expected transformation (i.e. a theory of change from the Vision to the Programme to the actions);
- The identification of issues is mainly around blue and green themes. How about the brown environment? The expected transformation should include green, blue and grey issues;
- There is need for a clear evaluation of the current Programme (Nature 2030) and the 2021-2024 intersessional plan to generate progressive strategies for the new Programme. Need to know what IUCN actually intends to scale up;
- Scaling up should consider all the dimensions of scale – scale-up, scale-down and out-scale;
- There is a lot of resource extraction hence the Programme and Vision need to focus on the extractive sector as well;
- The youth are the largest demographic group in Africa therefore the need for the Vision and Programme to explicitly target them;
- The lack of a regional situational analysis with regards to the context and status of macro and micro issues impacting conservation in the region makes it difficult to identify real issues and connect the draft Vision and Programme to ESARO;
- There is a disconnect between what is proposed and the local reality. The region needs to organize its own process of consultations and member inputs and direction for the new Programme in order to make it demand-driven and participatory;
- IUCN cannot solve all environmental and societal challenges. Therefore, there is need to be strategic and focus on priorities where we have the highest probability of success;
- ESARO needs to incorporate programmes that work with the extractive and energy industries given their impacts on the ecosystems;
- Institutional strengthening of members should be a key priority including capacity building at country levels;
- There is need to amplify the People agenda;
- Priorities should be contextualized to align with regional relevance;
- Human-wildlife conflicts and land use systems management need attention;
- Private sector financing for conservation is an essential yet missing link;
- Transformational agenda should broadly embrace aspects of One Health, gender, reproductive health, population dividend and governance;
- Approaches need to move from technical management to capacity building and policy influence with people at the center of planning;
- How does IUCN choose to deliver the Vision? The draft is unclear;
- Cross-sectoral integration is central to the success of the Vision;
- ESARO should integrate regional frameworks fronted by economic communities such as Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC) and Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).



Biodiversity Economy & Sustainable Finance

Inclusive Biodiversity Economy, A case Study for South Africa Innovative Financing Solutions for Conservation: Showcasing Trees for Global Benefit Miombo and Sustainable investment for global conservation goals.

Natural Resources Governance

Natural Resource Governance (NRG) in Protected and Other Conserved Areas Exchange and Discussion for Africa Community Governance for Cheetah Landscapes in Somaliland



Les solutions fondées sur la nature en Afrique

Les solutions fondées sur la nature pour s'adapter au changement climatique et préserver la biodiversité en Afrique du nord Smart Agri, Transformation of Plants into Botanical Pesticides, Experimentation and Challenges.

North Africa Regional Session:

i. Recommendations on the 20-Year Vision:

A - The Approach

- IUCN's position at the international level in events related to global conservation frameworks (e.g., CBD, UNFCCC) should be strengthened by adopting a harmonised voting approach during negotiations.
- The consultation on the IUCN vision should include other government stakeholders, beyond IUCN members, to better reflect sectoral issues affecting conservation.
- Effective and planned communication among IUCN members should be standard practice.
- The IUCN vision should be adopted by its members in the implementation of their respective projects.
- Human-nature symbiosis should be proposed as the foundation of a new approach in response to global challenges.

B - Strategic Axes of Intervention

- Technical support from different members for the adoption of suitable governance methods should be a priority focus of policies and advocacy, acting as a catalyst for change.
- The Water-Energy-Food-Environment (WEFE) Nexus should be considered in the transformation area relating to food systems and sustainable agriculture.
- The use of innovative technologies, including AI, should be clearly defined and well delineated in the new IUCN vision.

ii- Recommendations on the 2026-2029 Programme

- The territorial, cultural, and ecosystem specificities endemic to the North African region, including those of different local communities, should be considered in the programme (this point has been emphasised several times regarding the integration of local specificities).
- Economic and social development must be at the heart of the conservation programme.
- Good practices (whether cultural practices, conservation techniques, traditional medicine, artisanal production, etc.) should be recognised and scientifically re-evaluated.
- Fundraising mechanisms should be well established in the programme

iii- Common Recommendations on Vision and Programme

- Strengthening and involving members in the implementation of the IUCN vision and programme should be encouraged by fostering closer ties among members, offices, and commissions.
- Young people should be more involved in setting the vision and the programme.

Western & Central Regional Session:

CONTRIBUTION MEMBRES PACO A LA VISION ET PROGRAMME DE L'IUCN.

i. Governance:

- Revitalise and/or establish and run a network of national committees.;
- Implement operational governance tools.
- Promote environmental and intergenerational leadership.
- Promote the principles of good governance in organisations (reporting, accountability, inclusiveness, transparency of management at the national and sub-regional levels);
- Establish an inclusive and financially autonomous governance mechanism with the Secretariat's support.
- Develop a system for capitalising on initiatives developed by national committees.
- Set up and maintain an institutional communication system (newsletter, website, etc).

ii. 20-Year Vision: African Conservation Solutions for the Benefit of Nature and Communities

- Rely on traditional ways of life to design strategies for conservation and the economic and social development of grassroots communities.
- Capitalise on indigenous knowledge and traditional practices in designing biodiversity conservation policies and strategies.
- Eliminate geographical compartmentalisation

between different continental regions in the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development approaches and processes.

iii. 4-Year Programme 2026-2029

- Encourage national committees to develop project and programme proposals to submit to financial partners with the support of the IUCN Secretariat through more effective operationalisation of the "One Programme" approach.
- Establish a system for periodic monitoring and evaluation of the "One Programme" approach.
- Create a database on members' areas of expertise within the national committees to better engage them in the development process and implementation of the Secretariat's projects and programmes.
- Integrate the issue of pollution, particularly plastics and other waste, into marine and terrestrial ecosystems.
- Highlight actions relating to access to land for women and youth.
- Promote action research and traditional knowledge and practices during the implementation of biodiversity conservation projects and programmes and sustainable development initiatives.





IUCN 20-year Strategic Vision

Summary of messages from Members' plenary session of 28 June 2024

- Build a Vision on the issues of nature conservation and the resilience of local and Indigenous communities.
- Incorporate into the Vision a mechanism for building the capacity of local, national, and sub-regional stakeholders in the sustainable management of natural resources.
- Include a sustainable resource mobilisation system within the Vision.

IUCN Programme 2026-2029

Summary of the feedback from Members' plenary session of 28 June 2024

- Give priority to members' expertise in implementing the four-year Programme.
- Promote the use of technology and intelligence in strategies for the conservation of natural resources and the socio-economic development of communities, in collaboration with African universities.
- Promote local knowledge in nature conservation strategies and in mechanisms for adapting to climate change.

Annexes

Annex 1:

Key messages and highlights from the Pre-Forum events.



1. Indigenous People and Local Communities Forum

On behalf of its constituent member organisations at local, national, and regional levels, AICA requests IUCN's guidance on the means and mechanisms needed to establish AICA's formal membership and facilitate a process of increasing IUCN membership of IPLC organisations, in line with the APAC aspiration to put people at the centre of conservation.

Land and Resources Rights:

- We call on IUCN to publicly condemn the appropriation of community lands for conservation wherever it occurs if it does not meet Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) requirements and is not based on human rights approaches. We urge IUCN to commit to community-led and driven conservation and create space for innovation around conservation in different contexts in Africa by investing in Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPs & LCs) as conservators; assisting them to identify, declare, and govern areas of biodiversity importance on their existing lands, under fair and workable conservation conditions; making this the cornerstone of expanding biodiversity protection.
- We also call on IUCN to recognise and advocate that certain already gazetted Protected Areas, which historically belong to living Indigenous communities, can be safely returned to these communities under clearly defined conservation conditions. This is particularly relevant to living hunter-gatherer communities, which hold a deeply embedded and irreplaceable identity with specific domains after thousands of years of belonging.

Sustainable Finance and a Just Energy Transition for African Peoples:

- Strengthen the capacities of Indigenous Peoples and communities by offering direct and flexible long-term

funding (in terms of funding timelines and reporting requirements) towards conservation initiatives and renewable energy projects led by Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

- Facilitate the establishment of dedicated, fit-for-purpose IPLC funding mechanisms to catalyse local biodiversity, climate, and human wellbeing actions.

Ecosystem Restoration:

- Ecosystem Landscape Restoration Programmes should build on Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and periodically showcase and discuss local to regional success stories and challenges while developing microfinance schemes and subsidies for IPs and LCs.
- Adopt agroforestry, voluntary carbon credit, and payment for biodiversity stewardship approaches.

Human-Wildlife Conflict:

- Considering that wildlife conservation intersects with other sectors, effective human-wildlife conflict prevention and mitigation must be anchored at a landscape level and adopt integrated and multisectoral approaches to ensure actions address both root causes and symptomatic issues.
- IUCN should leverage its convening power to increase funding provisions that protect wildlife corridors, grazing lands, and settlement areas through inclusive and participatory land use planning. This should be in addition to promoting the use of local and Indigenous knowledge, strategies, and methods that can be adapted for conflict resolution. Implement adequate and fair, gender-sensitive compensation mechanisms within the challenging framework of poor governance to ensure that conservation is beneficial to communities that coexist with wildlife. This includes proper and appropriate benefit-sharing mechanisms that consider the multifaceted nature of human-wildlife conflict, involving ecological, social, and economic aspects.



2. IUCN Youth Conservation Forum

African youth have the potential and passion to drive effective conservation initiatives if given the necessary support and opportunities. Engaging youth in conservation efforts leads to innovative solutions and sustainable outcomes.

- Create platforms for youth to voice their opinions and contribute to decision-making processes.
- Strengthen legal frameworks to support human rights, protect environmental rights, and uphold sustainability principles.
- Promote legal education and awareness programmes focused on environmental rights for young people
- Support youth-led initiatives that demonstrate a balance between development and conservation.
- Explore ways to make funding for landscape restoration less restrictive for youth, enabling easier access to resources.
- Provide training for scientists and communicators in storytelling techniques to make scientific information more engaging and memorable.
- Achieving the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) targets requires an intergenerational and intersectoral implementation, embracing a “whole of society approach.”



4. Leveraging the Wildlife Economy

- **Benefits for People and Wildlife:** The initiative should focus on benefiting both people and wildlife, highlighting the need for an integrated approach to community well-being and environmental conservation.
- **African Leadership and Ownership:** The wildlife economy must be led and owned by Africans, emphasising the importance of local leadership and management skills.
- **Integrating Nature's Value in Economics:** Nature's intrinsic value should be factored into all economic decisions, ensuring sustainable and environmentally conscious practices.

5. Identifying Species Conservation Priorities in Africa: Improving IUCN's Response to the Species Extinction Crisis

- There is a need for greater efforts to emphasise the linkages between climate change and species conservation, and to understand and promote knowledge in this area.
- Elevating species conservation concerns within the climate agenda would strengthen integrated approaches.
- Review existing IUCN tools to ensure they address broader issues, such as poverty reduction, climate change, local and Indigenous knowledge, and the role of species in landscapes.
- Insufficient and uncoordinated data sharing between various sectors is a key barrier to effective species conservation.
- National biodiversity data quality and sharing platforms can help address data deficiencies, thereby facilitating effective coordination and delivery.
- Local actors need support to document traditional knowledge and enhance conservation knowledge.
- Strategies are required to reconcile conservation efforts with economic and infrastructure development ambitions.
- IUCN should lead the development of a sustainable financing strategy for species conservation.
- Protected and conserved areas are a luxury for low-income countries.
- Continental approaches, with a united vision, can promote or break down barriers to subregional collaboration.



3. Sustainable Finance Mechanisms for Conservation

- We currently do not have enough funding to finance nature and its custodians; the global finance gap for nature is approximately USD 700 billion. This shortfall affects people's day-to-day lives, the future of biodiversity, and our capacity to address nature loss.
- Conservation has been overly reliant on a limited set of funding sources, such as government budgets, tourism income, and traditional funding. While these remain foundational and important, they need to be supplemented by a wide range of sustainable instruments, products, structures, and solutions.
- Finance often does not reach the people and places that need it most. A recent US study estimates that only around 10% of available finance for nature and its custodians actually reaches the ground, with carbon finance seeing an estimated 10-40% of funds reaching communities and nature stewards. The private sector has traditionally been siloed from financing nature, but this is changing rapidly. However, more strategic partnerships between conservation actors and private sector partners are needed, along with greater levels of investment in nature, more patient capital, and people willing to pioneer new solutions collectively. This requires time, understanding, and a willingness to jointly pursue solutions that finance real conservation impact.
- The people who matter the most are often not in the room. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, as well as locally-led organisations and associations, have largely been on the sidelines of these engagements. As sustainable finance evolves, it is imperative that each finance solution developed includes equitable benefit-sharing as one of its fundamental building blocks. This involves adopting a rights-based approach from incubation through implementation to impact, with minimum standards and thresholds for beneficiaries regarding the flow of finance. Finance solutions need to be designed with and for the custodians of nature.





6. Africa Oceans Forum

- Strengthen the self-empowerment of Coastal Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and the youth by integrating their knowledge and participation in decision-making on ocean governance. Affirm their role as ocean stewards and custodians of the future, including through increased concessional financing for their solutions and enhanced benefits from a regenerative blue economy.
- Improve coastal and ocean governance by strengthening institutional, legal, and policy frameworks that promote co-management and locally-led management approaches for the effective development of a regenerative blue economy at all scales. This includes enhancing understanding of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) and the IUCN Nature-based Solutions Global Standard.
- Intensify efforts towards achieving Target 2 and Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework by establishing ecologically representative and connected networks of protected and OECM marine and coastal areas. Ensure their effective and equitable governance, restore degraded ecosystems and habitats, and preserve their ecological integrity and responsiveness to local needs, with a focus on safeguarding small-scale fisheries.
- Accelerate the transition to a regenerative blue economy through appropriate strategies at local, national, and regional levels. Support the development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises; strengthen regenerative small-scale fisheries value chains; ensure equitable access to fishing resources; and promote fair international market access for African fish and fisheries products.
- Facilitate innovative disruption in ocean governance and management practices by fostering ocean science and education, applying emerging technologies, increasing investments in state-of-the-art oceanographic research and analytics, designing measurable metrics, and establishing platforms for knowledge exchange and data-sharing.
- Strengthen regional and international cooperation through the establishment and capacity building of collaborative platforms, frameworks, and mechanisms to address transboundary ocean governance. Strengthen south-south cooperation and leadership, promote exchange, learning, and sharing of best practices, and ensure sustainable and innovative financing for ocean conservation.
- Achieve strengthened implementation of the United Nations agreement on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement) by promoting improved awareness and understanding of its provisions, institutional strengthening, capacity building, and technology transfer for its implementation. Work towards achieving a coherent African voice for its accelerated ratification and equitable implementation.
- Unlock ocean innovation at scale through increased research and development of blue technologies. Foster collaboration between the private sector, civil society, academia, research institutions, and government; facilitate exchange on locally appropriate Science to Business Solutions; and develop intellectual property frameworks that ensure fair and equitable benefit-sharing.
- Accelerate measures to combat marine plastic pollution by promoting the design and alignment of efforts with the legally binding agreement on plastic pollution, covering the entire lifecycle of plastics. Support these efforts with a dedicated Multilateral Fund that assists developing countries, ensures a just transition, prioritises waste prevention and reduction, strengthens accountability and responsibility frameworks, and catalyses public-private partnerships and private capital investments for the transition to a circular economy.

7. Sustainable Agriculture, Ecosystems Restoration, and Nature-based Solutions Nexus in Africa

- Unsustainable agricultural practices in Africa drive soil degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change, necessitating Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to balance agricultural demand with natural support services. The forum emphasised the need to address the nexus of food security, livelihoods, climate change, and biodiversity.
- With increasing evidence that farmers have historically been the custodians of nature-based solutions, actors must find the link between local and traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge to formulate actions that ensure the sustainable use and management of ecosystems.
- To promote and scale up NbS for sustainable agriculture, innovative and inclusive financing mechanisms are needed. These should address barriers like limited access and policy gaps, with incentives such as payments for ecosystem services and carbon credits.
- Effective knowledge development and sharing are essential for promoting sustainable agriculture and ecosystem restoration, requiring accessible packaging of NbS information to boost farmer uptake and ownership.
- There is a need to adopt a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to scaling up sustainable agriculture and restoration through NbS. This involves promoting multi-stakeholder dialogues to find common ground and fostering policy coherence.





8. Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) Working Group in Africa

- There is a need to adapt the OECM concept to the African context to make it regionally applicable and implementable.
- There is still inadequate understanding of OECMs across Africa, so further awareness-raising, training, and capacity development are required to recognise, strengthen, and report OECMs in Africa. OECMs provide a pivotal framework for achieving Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) Target 3, among others, and for recognising various area-based and rights-based conservation efforts, particularly those of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). However, this must be based on inclusive national dialogue that considers the diversity of relevant stakeholders.
- The OECM definition is a cross-cutting theme that can engage all parts of IUCN, through the One Programme approach, including Members, Commissions, and the Secretariat.



9. A Just Energy Transition: Sustainable Development Pathways for Africa

- Re-think the integration of ecological infrastructure into a just energy transition by reshaping the narrative towards environmentally sustainable solutions.
- Develop a framework for the circular economy in Africa to address waste disposal and management related to energy transition solutions. Inclusivity of relevant stakeholders, with a special focus on local communities and the private sector, is key to addressing injustices in the energy transition agenda.
- Create more spaces for youth engagement and participation in decision-making for a just energy transition.
- IUCN should utilise all available instruments to elevate Nature-based Solutions and position Africa as a hub for sustainable renewable energy.







ACF 2024 Sponsors and Strategic Partners



MINISTRY OF TOURISM
AND WILDLIFE



IUCN is a membership Union of government and civil society organisations. Together, we work to advance sustainable development and create a just world that values and conserves nature. Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of our more than 1,400 Member organisations and 15,000 experts. This diversity and expertise makes IUCN the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.



Follow us on social media:

- @IUCNe @IUCN_Med @IUCN_PACO
- @IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation @IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa
- @IUCN - Centre de coopération pour la Méditerranée @IUCN ESARO @IUCN PACO