

## Voice of Nature: Sustainable Solutions for West and Central Africa

**Editorial by Aimé J. Nianogo, Regional Director, IUCN-PACO**

**To all of you who work every day for a living planet.**

As the year draws to a close, we are approaching a major milestone: the IUCN World Conservation Congress, scheduled for October 2025 in Abu Dhabi. More than just an event, this gathering is a strategic crossroads for making Africa's voice heard, sharing our nature-based solutions, and bringing messages from the field to international decision-makers.

For several months now, the IUCN-PACO teams and their partners have been working hard to make the Africa Pavilion a lively, dynamic and influential space. It will not just be a showcase for our results, but a place to illustrate struggles and highlight the often silent efforts of communities, young people, women and the guardians of our forests and coastlines.

In a context where biodiversity is under severe pressure, our responses must be equal to the challenges. This World Congress is an opportunity to reposition our region as a leading player, a source of resilience, innovation and solidarity. I congratulate those who are already working towards this goal, and I invite everyone else to get involved in this dynamic, to propose, share and amplify what we are building together.

For it is by uniting our voices that we will be able to make our mark and ensure that tomorrow's decisions are rooted in the realities of Africa today.

In solidarity,

Aimé J. Nianogo



*Aimé J. Nianogo, Régional Director IUCN-PACO*

## **Accelerating financing for Nature-Based Solutions: foundations laid for PEbAF programme in Abidjan**

From 16 to 18 July 2025, key actors from five French-speaking countries, public development banks, climate funds and sectoral ministries gathered in Abidjan to lay the foundations of the Ecosystem-based Adaptation Financing Programme by Public Development Banks (PEbAF). This strategic workshop, organised as part of the International Development Finance Club (IDFC) initiative with technical support from IUCN, laid the groundwork for an ambitious programme aimed at correcting a major imbalance: to date, less than 3% of these institutions' financing is allocated to nature-based solutions for adaptation.

The objective of PEbAF, which is scheduled to launch in 2026, is to mobilise innovative financing, strengthen technical and institutional capacities, and create an enabling environment for the integration of NbS into public investments. Discussions in Abidjan identified technical and financial challenges and formulated concrete recommendations for developing bankable projects aligned with national priorities. IUCN will support partners in implementation, drawing on its expertise and global NbS standard.

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*Group photo of workshop participants*

## Training tomorrow's eco-citizens in the Mono Transboundary Biosphere Reserve

A wind of ecological commitment is blowing through the Community Biodiversity Conservation Areas (ACCB) of the Mono Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, where an innovative environmental education programme is mobilising young people. Implemented by IUCN PACO in partnership with the NGO Eco-Benin, the AGeReB/Delta-Mono project has resulted in the design of an educational guide and an activity booklet tailored to the local context.

Thanks to these tools, 60 interactive sessions have been held in 14 primary schools, introducing around 1,400 pupils in Years 3 and 4 to biodiversity protection. Educational games, recycling workshops, tree planting and nature observation sessions punctuate this active learning programme, laying the foundations for sustainable environmental awareness in the Mono communities.

For more information: [AGEREB BLOG](#)



## Strengthening community management of protected areas through BIOPAMA

From 27 to 30 May in Lomé, around 30 conservation stakeholders from West and Central Africa gathered for a workshop organised by the IUCN PACO Regional Office to share experiences and build capacity. The event enabled project leaders funded by BIOPAMA Action Fund to share best practices developed in the field and highlight concrete results achieved.

Among the successes mentioned were improved local governance, the promotion of indigenous knowledge in natural resource management, and the mobilisation of communities for sustainable conservation. The workshop also provided a space for collective learning, where participants formulated recommendations to sustain the gains made and strengthen regional synergies.

This initiative illustrates BIOPAMA's commitment to transforming knowledge into action and positioning local actors as drivers of change in protected area management.

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Speakers representing the host country, beneficiaries of the action fund, the coordination team, the project and the African IMET network

## LOGMe II project officially launched in Dakar

From 27 to 29 May 2025, Dakar hosted the regional launch workshop for the project "Sahelian Landscapes, a Land of Opportunities – Expanding Proven Pathways" (LOGMe II), initiated by the Italian Ministry of the Environment (MASE) and the Global Mechanism of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (GM/UNCCD). Implemented by IUCN and its national partners, the project covers five countries: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger, Benin and Senegal. The objective is to strengthen community resilience through land restoration and the development of green jobs.

The event provided an opportunity to present the achievements of LOGMe I, mobilise stakeholders around inclusive governance and lay the foundations for effective regional coordination. A field visit to Thiès illustrated the concrete impacts of nature-based solutions.

This launch marks the beginning of an ambitious new phase for Sahelian landscapes, driven by a shared vision and strong commitments from all stakeholders.

For more information: [Blog LOGMe II](#)



Group photo of participants at LOGMe II project launch workshop

## Restoring coastal green life: mangroves are reborn in Cameroon thanks to community engagement

Faced with the increasing degradation of mangroves in Cameroon, caused in particular by logging for fuel wood, construction and fish smoking, the Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society (CWCS) has been working since 2008 to restore these critical ecosystems. The Cameroon estuary, one of the country's three large mangrove blocks, is at the heart of this intervention.

In collaboration with INBAR, IUCN and the Ministry of the Environment, CWCS has contributed to the development of the MEOR (Model for Sustainable Use and Occupation) for the Mouanko coastal zone, a strategic tool for more sustainable management. Every year, with the support of the French NGO Planète Urgence, around 50 hectares of mangroves are replanted with local species, respecting the ecological balance.

Beyond the ecological aspect, the project relies on strong involvement from local communities. Aware of the importance of mangroves, they actively participate in planting activities and resource management, thus becoming guardians of their own environment. This integrated approach illustrates a successful restoration project combining conservation, community participation and sustainability.

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Community mangrove replanting in Mouanko to preserve Cameroon's estuary.

## WACA puts coastal resilience at the heart of sustainable development at UNOC 3

During the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC 3) in Nice, the WACA programme organised a major side event on the theme: 'Coastal resilience as a foundation for coastal development'. The meeting brought together representatives of regional organisations, national institutions and technical and financial partners involved in the preservation of the West African coastline.

The WAEMU emphasised the importance of regional coordination for the harmonisation of policies and sustainable investments. The PRCM, a member of the IUCN, highlighted the essential role of coastal communities in implementing concrete solutions, such as mangrove restoration and alternative economic activities. The IUCN reiterated that nature-based solutions are a strategic pathway for preserving coastal ecosystems and building resilience to climate change.

The event also provided an opportunity to draw inspiration from international experiences, such as those of the Netherlands in water management. In short, investing in coastal resilience means investing in the stability, prosperity and future of communities in the region.

For more information: [www.wacaprogram.org](http://www.wacaprogram.org).



WACA mobilises stakeholders at UNOC 3 for enhanced resilience of the West African coastline.

## Strengthening skills for the 2025 aerial wildlife inventory of Comoé National Park

As a prelude to the 2025 aerial wildlife inventory campaign in Comoé National Park, a specialised training course was held at the DZNE. Five agents were selected to benefit from this technical training, led by three experts from Aviation Sans Frontières Belgium. The aim was to prepare a team of qualified observers capable of accurately identifying, counting and photographing wildlife from the air.

The rigorous selection process was based on indoor tests using aerial images and ground and in-flight calibrations. At the end of this intensive training, four agents stood out for their visual acuity and mastery of aerial observation techniques.

This capacity building marks a strategic step in the preservation of biodiversity in the Comoé National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

More information: [www.ojpr-ci.org](http://www.ojpr-ci.org)



Trained agents for aerial observation for the 2025 wildlife inventory of Comoé National Park

## Restoring land, strengthening communities: IUCN brings more than 800 hectares of degraded agricultural land back to life in Ghana

In the Wassa Amenfi landscape in Ghana, IUCN is continuing its commitment to ecological and social resilience. From May to June 2025, an ambitious restoration campaign has revegetated 806.8 hectares of degraded agricultural land in nine communities through the planting of 145,000 fruit and indigenous tree seedlings.

Among the species selected were *Milicia excelsa* (odum), *Triplochiton scleroxylon* (wawa), *Khaya ivorensis* (mahogany), *Entandrophragma angolense* (edinam), *Elaeis guineensis* (oil palm) and *Cocos nucifera* (coconut). 761 farmers, including 257 women, benefited from these seedlings as part of agroforestry systems.

In addition to distribution, beneficiaries were trained in planting, maintenance and the importance of local species for forest resource security and ecosystem services. This operation was carefully synchronised with the main rainy season. A second wave of planting is planned for the short rainy season, thanks to community nurseries supported by the project.

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Distribution des semis aux agriculteurs

## Towards renewed cooperation between Cameroon and Chad on the Logone River

On 15 and 16 May 2025, Mbankomo hosted a national strategic workshop dedicated to revising the Moundou Protocol Agreement, signed in 1970 between Cameroon and Chad. This text, initially designed to provide a framework for the joint exploitation of water resources in the Logone valleys, now needs to be adapted to contemporary challenges: climate change, demographic pressure and cross-border resource governance.

Bringing together 25 participants from Cameroonian sectoral ministries, the meeting identified the current limitations of the agreement, in particular its poor implementation and the lack of effective monitoring mechanisms. Discussions highlighted the need to update the protocol to incorporate environmental dynamics and international commitments, in line with the Lake Chad Basin Water Charter.

At the end of the meeting, a roadmap was adopted for bilateral consultations between the two countries. These next steps, supported by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and IUCN, aim to build a renewed, more resilient and equitable framework for cooperation on the sustainable management of shared resources.

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Group photo of participants in the national workshop

## AFRIPAC: Conclusion of a key project for the African voice against plastic pollution

From 20 to 22 May 2025, Dakar hosted the closing regional workshop of the AFRIPAC project, bringing together some 20 representatives from Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Funded by Norad, this ambitious two-year project has supported these five countries in strengthening their negotiating capacities for the future legally binding global treaty on plastic pollution.

The workshop highlighted the progress made by the project, in particular through the presentation of studies carried out (plastic flows, policy assessment, trade, waste management) and the definition of concrete guidelines for the development of National Action Plans.

It also provided a strategic forum for exchange ahead of the 5th session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (CIN-5.2) scheduled for August in Geneva. Discussions focused on the legal obligations of the future treaty, financing mechanisms and the harmonisation of African positions.

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Group photo of participants at the closing workshop

## ACREGIR: Restoring land, strengthening communities

In the arid areas surrounding the Benue and Waza national parks, the effects of climate change are being felt severely. To reverse this trend, the ACREGIR project implemented by IUCN with support from MINEPDED and IFAD has enabled the planting of 108,125 trees in 2024 as part of an ambitious programme to restore 2,000 hectares of degraded land.

Despite challenges related to climate variability and uncontrolled grazing, encouraging results are emerging. Targeted support to 76 beneficiaries, including 8 women and 3 schools, has enabled the maintenance of the most promising plantations, the installation of livestock protection devices and the strengthening of weeding practices.

In addition to promoting optimal plant growth, these actions strengthen the resilience of local ecosystems while placing communities at the heart of ecological regeneration.

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Local communities trained in regenerating degraded land around the Bénoué and Waza parks

## A promising partnership to boost blue economy in São Tomé and Príncipe

July 1, 2025 marks an important milestone in conservation efforts in São Tomé and Príncipe. IUCN PACO has sealed a strategic partnership with the Directorate of Environment and Climate Action (DAAC), under the Ministry of Environment, Youth and Sustainable Tourism.

This agreement lays the foundation for enhanced collaboration around shared priorities: sustainable coastal zone management, combating plastic pollution and promoting the blue economy as a key driver of sustainable island development. Thanks to this cooperation, the IslandPlas project and the IUCN team based in São Tomé are now hosted within the DAAC premises, facilitating constant dialogue and coordinated action in the field.

Beyond a simple administrative agreement, this partnership embodies a common commitment to protect marine ecosystems while providing concrete opportunities for local communities. By combining technical expertise and institutional support, IUCN and DAAC are joining forces to make the blue economy a promising reality for the archipelago.

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## IUCN joins diplomatic corps in efforts to reforest Achimota Forest Reserve in Ghana

On 20 June, IUCN proudly participated in the first edition of the Tree for Life (T4L) initiative organised by the Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources and the Forestry Commission of Ghana. This landmark event is part of the ambitious national goal to plant 30 million trees by the end of the year.

Led by Ms Dorcas Owusuaa Agyei, National Coordinator of the IUCN Office in Ghana, the IUCN delegation joined diplomats, business leaders and representatives of religious organisations for a symbolic planting ceremony in the Achimota Reserve. The day also provided an opportunity to visit areas previously restored by IUCN through earlier initiatives.

IUCN's active involvement demonstrates its unwavering commitment to working alongside the government and local communities to strengthen efforts to restore degraded forest landscapes. It reaffirms its position as a trusted partner in achieving Ghana's reforestation goals, in line with national and global restoration targets.

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*IUCN Ghana plants for life during the first edition of the national initiative 'Tree for Life'.*

## Progress and prospects for WACA discussed in Bissau

From 30 June to July 4, 2025, Bissau hosted the first annual meeting of the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) for WACA ResIP 1 and 2 projects.

Organised by the WAEMU Commission with the support of the Guinea-Bissau authorities, the meeting provided an opportunity to validate progress reports, evaluate previous recommendations and discuss the programme's prospects.

Highlights included the presentation of the results of the ResIP 1 capitalisation exercise, led by IUCN, and the sharing of future directions by the World Bank.

Bringing together the presidents of national committees, regional institutions (WAEMU, ECOWAS, ECCAS) and technical partners (IUCN, PRCM, RAMPAO, CSE, ABC), the CRP strengthened synergies around coastal resilience issues. Meeting twice a year, it ensures the consistency and effectiveness of actions across the entire West African coastline.

for more information: [www.wacaprogram.org](http://www.wacaprogram.org).



*Group photo of CRP members from WACA ResIP 1 and 2 projects gathered in Bissau to strengthen coastal resilience in West Africa.*

## IUCN joins MEDD to celebrate nature and mobilise citizens in Guinea

On June 27, 2025, Conakry vibrated to the rhythm of nature during a joint celebration of the main World Environment Days (forests, biodiversity, climate, etc.), organised by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MEDD).

This initiative raised public awareness of the urgent need to preserve natural resources and strengthen collective commitment to environmental issues.

The IUCN played an active role in this mobilisation, demonstrating its ongoing technical support for the Guinean government's actions for sustainable environmental management.

Following on from this, a clean-up operation was carried out in the port of Tèmènetaye on 28 June, bringing together authorities, young people, women and local communities. IUCN also contributed to this initiative, alongside the MEDD, in favour of a healthier living environment and the preservation of coastal ecosystems.

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*Citizen mobilisation in Conakry for a healthier environment during the Tèmènetaye port clean-up day.*

## Training for better adaptation: IUCN strengthens local climate resilience in Niger

In Tillabéri, western Niger, IUCN and its partners are continuing their commitment to building more resilient territories. From 14 to 19 July 2025, a training course brought together administrative authorities, traditional leaders, technical services and municipal partners to discuss tools for analysing vulnerability and planning for climate change adaptation. This initiative, carried out as part of the REELS project in collaboration with WILDAF, highlighted the TOPSECAC tool, designed to diagnose climate risks and guide adaptation strategies.

Thanks to this session, participants were able to grasp key concepts related to climate vulnerability and sustainable land management. The discussions also strengthened local planning mechanisms by supporting the development of Communal Development Plans (PDCs) in the project's intervention areas. Feedback was unanimous on the quality of the participatory approach and the methodology used.

This training illustrates the desire to place communities at the heart of the climate response by giving them the tools to better understand, anticipate and act on growing environmental challenges.

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*Local actors are being trained in climate vulnerability analysis to better plan for climate change adaptation.*

## Benin mobilises for sustainable biodiversity through the BIODEV2030 project

In June 2025, the BIODEV2030 Phase 2 project reached two major milestones in Benin, marked by strong stakeholder mobilisation to strengthen biodiversity conservation.

From 18 to 20 June in Parakou, 73 participants took part in the official launch of Phase 2 in the Agricultural Development Pole 4 (PDA4).

(PDA4). Through a multi-stakeholder dialogue supported by AFD and in collaboration with the DGEFC, a list of priority actions was jointly developed, integrating sustainable value chains, endogenous knowledge and the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs). These actions will serve as the basis for the development of a bankable project.

A week later, on 25 and 26 June in Cotonou, 60 stakeholders met to identify key reforms in the agriculture and forestry sectors. Three priority Public Policy Instruments (PPIs) per sector were selected to feed into a strategic advocacy note. The participation of elected officials and former ministers underscores the project's strong political support.

For more information: [www.biodev2030.org](http://www.biodev2030.org).



*Participants engaged in a multi-stakeholder dialogue in Parakou to define priority actions for biodiversity*

## Seeding resilience: Nigerian communities commit to climate action through agroforestry

In the communities of Aro-Ajatakiri and Eluama Lodu, located in Abia State in south-eastern Nigeria, a dynamic transformation is underway. Led by the Nigerian Environmental Study Action Team (NEST) with support from PACJA, the pilot project 'Scaling Up Climate Resilience and Nature Solutions in Communities' is giving new impetus to local solutions to climate change.

More than 150 people have been educated about climate impacts, smart agriculture and agroforestry. The distribution of improved maize seeds and more than 250 high-value tree seedlings is already helping to strengthen food security and incomes. Women and young people, who are actively involved, have shown particular interest in dry season agriculture and agroforestry, which are pillars of a more sustainable future.

The initiative is just getting started: it will be extended to other states in the country, with advocacy and community engagement activities to follow. This sends a strong signal that climate resilience is built first and foremost on the ground, with and for communities.

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*Women and young people in Abia are engaging in agroforestry thanks to the NEST project supported by PACJA.*

# Success Stories

## Harvesting the Future: Smart Agriculture to Transform Communities in Ghana

In the rural communities of Nkrankrom and Pensanom, in the heart of Ghana's Wassa Amenfi landscape, a quiet but powerful transformation is underway. With support from IUCN, 47 local farmers have been trained in nursery establishment and sustainable agricultural practices. This visionary initiative is not limited to planting trees; it embodies a paradigm shift towards climate-resilient agriculture that brings hope for the future.

In just two months, the nurseries have produced more than 73,000 seedlings of native species and fruit trees, alongside vegetable crops such as cucumber, okra and chilli peppers. Women, who make up 79% of nursery operators, are playing a leading role in this dynamic, proving that climate resilience also requires inclusion and empowerment.

Among the leaders of this transformation, Mr Robert Ankra, president of the Nkrankrom Farmers' Association, says: "Thanks to the training on vegetable production, we have understood that climate-smart agricultural approaches make farming more practical and environmentally friendly, while increasing yields. Selling vegetables is very profitable, which is why we have identified a new site to expand our production. Knowing that this represents a real opportunity to improve our livelihoods, we have also formalised our agricultural activity by registering it as a green enterprise. This will enable us to attract new funding to expand our scope of action. Thank you to IUCN and the Department of Agriculture for this valuable knowledge.

Faced with the climate emergency and the ongoing degradation of ecosystems, the experience of Nkrankrom and Pensanom shows that another agricultural model is possible: one that is more sustainable, more inclusive and more resilient. Now more than ever, it is time to strengthen support for rural communities, invest in nature-based solutions, and make smart agriculture a pillar of development in West Africa. Every action counts. Let's support those who, every day, are cultivating the future with hope and determination. Together, let's make change happen.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

July 28-31, 2025: LOGMe II national launch workshop in Senegal (Matam - Ourosogui)

July 26: International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem

October 9-15, 2025: IUCN World Conservation Congress – Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)

November 10-21, 2025: COP 30 in Belém, Brazil



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