

Abu Dhabi: The IUCN World Conservation Congress brought together more than 10,000 participants.

Under the patronage of the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the congress, which took place from October 9 to 15, 2025, was inaugurated by Crown Prince Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

This global event brought together more than 10,000 participants from governments, civil society, indigenous peoples' organizations, academia, and the private sector to define a common vision for a more sustainable and resilient future.

IUCN President Razan Al Mubarak said, "The decisions taken during the Congress demonstrate that courage, inclusion, and cooperation remain essential to building a future where humanity and nature thrive together." Director General Dr. Grethel Aguilar added, "Unity is stronger than division; a world that values nature is within our reach."

In closing, the Congress emphasized the implementation of the IUCN Global Program 2025–2028, which calls for strengthening ecosystem resilience, accelerating nature-based solutions, and mobilizing more funding for conservation. A renewed commitment to collective and inclusive action for the planet.

[To learn more](#)



Opening panel of IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi

Celebrating Success and Innovation: Africa Shines at the IUCN World Conservation Congress

The Africa Pavilion embodied the diversity, dynamism, and creativity of African initiatives for nature at the heart of the IUCN World Conservation Congress, held under the theme "Celebrating Success and Innovation."

Coordinated by the IUCN Regional Offices for West and Central Africa (PACO), Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO), and the Mediterranean Office for North Africa, the Pavilion served as a true hub for dialogue, experience sharing, and collaboration.

Discussions explored key priorities such as dryland resilience, pastoral landscape restoration, regenerative agriculture, and community-led governance of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). The PACO team presented flagship initiatives on Sahelian landscape restoration, coastal resilience, and the participatory management of protected areas, showcasing the leadership of local communities, women, and youth in advancing Nature-based Solutions (NbS) across the continent.

The Congress reaffirmed Africa's role as a source of innovation and resilience, paving the way for stronger cooperation and new directions under IUCN's Global Programme in the years ahead.

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PACO team at the Africa Pavilion of the World Conservation Congress

Charlotte Karibuhoye Said among the new faces of the IUCN Council

During the World Conservation Congress, members re-elected the Union Council for the coming term. These elections mark an important milestone for the African continent, which now has stronger representation within the organization.

Among the newly elected members is Charlotte Karibuhoye Said, a recognized expert in conservation and governance of protected areas, who was elected Regional Councilor for Africa. With more than 30 years of experience in biodiversity protection and community engagement, she embodies committed and inclusive African leadership.

This election, along with those of other regional representatives, reflects the vitality of the IUCN's African network and its growing role in implementing nature-based solutions. By focusing on priorities such as landscape restoration, ecosystem resilience, and community-based natural resource management, Africa is confirming its place at the heart of global decisions for a sustainable and equitable future.

[Read more](#)



Charlotte Karibuhoye Said, elected Regional Councilor for Africa

Africa charts its new oceanic ambition

In Abu Dhabi, the high-level session entitled “Africa's New Ocean Ambition – High-Level Panel on Africa's Path to Ocean Sector Transformation” brought together African leaders, international partners, and experts around a common vision: accelerating the transformation of Africa's ocean sector toward a sustainable blue economy.

Senegal's Minister of Environment and Ecological Transition, Dr. Abdourrahmane Diouf, spoke during the segment on Africa's ocean transformation, emphasizing the need to move “from vision to implementation.” His participation forms part of the preparatory process for IMPAC6, which Senegal will host in 2026, and reflects the country's strong commitment to the protection of seas and oceans.

On the sidelines of the session, the Minister met with Dr. Aimé Joseph Nianogo, Regional Director of IUCN-PACO, to discuss prospects for enhanced collaboration between Senegal and IUCN on marine governance and the upcoming preparations for IMPAC6.



Dr. Abdourrahmane Diouf, Senegal's Minister of the Environment, in discussion with Dr. Aimé Nianogo, Regional Director of IUCN-PACO, during the Congress.

PACO Champions Africa's Biodiversity Ambition at the World Conservation Congress

Connecting nature, climate, and people was the central theme of the session “Nature–Climate–People (Nexus)”, which highlighted the urgent need to overcome barriers to integrating biodiversity into public policies and national development strategies.

Opened by Hon. Mosese Bulitavu, Minister of the Republic of Fiji, the session provided a platform to showcase concrete examples of how countries are embedding biodiversity into decision-making processes. The CBD focal points from Benin and Madagascar shared progress in implementing their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs), demonstrating tangible steps toward aligning nature conservation with development planning.

In the same spirit, the BIODEV2030 project implemented by IUCN and WWF France, with support from the Agence Française de Développement (AFD)—was presented at the France Pavilion, highlighting nature-positive solutions and innovative financing mechanisms that support their scaling up.

Through this initiative, IUCN-PACO is supporting several countries in the region, including Senegal, Guinea, and Benin, in institutionalizing biodiversity considerations across planning, monitoring, and the implementation of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) at scale.

[Find out more about BIODEV](#)



BIODEV team and its partners, committed to better integration of biodiversity into public policy

Strengthening Cooperation for Water Governance in the Mono Basin

The voice of the Mono Basin resonated at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, held from October 9 to 15, 2025, in Abu Dhabi. With support from the AGeReB and IREE-MONO projects, several stakeholders from the basin took part in discussions on water resource governance in sub-Saharan Africa, with a particular focus on transboundary river basins in Central and West Africa.

The session titled “Integrated Transboundary Water Resources Management in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges, Current and Future Dynamics” brought together the Mono Basin Authority, the Directorate General of Water, the NGO Eco-Benin, the National Center for Wildlife Reserve Management in Benin, the AGeReB project coordination team, and several climate finance experts.

The exchanges deepened reflection on integrated and sustainable water resource management, emphasizing the importance of cross-border cooperation, the active involvement of civil society, and subregional dialogue to preserve wetlands and ensure the equitable sharing of benefits among riparian countries.



Session on integrated management of transboundary water resources at the Africa Pavilion

Towards Plastic-Free African Islands: Cape Verde Launches the IslandPlas Project

On September 30 and October 1, 2025, IUCN-PACO, in collaboration with the National Directorate for the Environment (DNA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, officially launched the IslandPlas Project in Praia, Cape Verde.

Chaired by Dr. Gilberto Silva, Minister of Agriculture and Environment, the launch workshop brought together around 30 representatives from government institutions, the private sector, NGOs, and municipalities.

Funded by The Coca-Cola Foundation, IslandPlas seeks to promote circular solutions to tackle plastic pollution across African islands. The project will establish a plastic waste collection and recycling system, integrating actors from the informal sector in partnership with Caboplast, Cape Verde's main recycling operator.

A national steering committee has also been established, bringing together institutions already engaged in implementing the country's single-use plastic law.

Active in seven African island states, IslandPlas aims to reduce marine pollution, build local capacities, and create green jobs, paving the way toward a truly circular plastic economy on the continent.



Participants at the launch of the IslandPlas Project in Praia, Cape Verde, with Dr. Gilberto Silva, Minister of Agriculture and Environment.

GEF Empowers West African Countries to Advance Integrated Environmental Action

The [Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility \(GEF\)](#), in collaboration with the Gambia National Environment Agency, organized the Expanded Constituency Workshop (ECW) for West African countries in Banjul. The workshop aimed to strengthen dialogue with stakeholders and enhance understanding of the latest GEF programs and policies, while promoting the exchange of experiences and lessons learned from regional initiatives.

Over four days, participants — including GEF and Rio Convention focal points, representatives of civil society, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and partner agencies — engaged in interactive sessions on GEF's integrated approaches. Discussions explored the mobilization of the GEF Trust Fund, GBFF, LDCF, and SGP, alongside cross-cutting themes such as gender equality, stakeholder engagement, and private sector participation.

A dedicated field visit showcased tangible examples of environmental action and impact in the subregion. The workshop ultimately helped strengthen national capacities, improve adaptive management of GEF portfolios, and enhance regional cooperation for more coherent and inclusive climate and environmental action across West Africa.



Participants in the expanded GEF workshop in Banjul, dedicated to strengthening environmental cooperation in West Africa.

LOGMe II: A New Momentum for Sahelian Landscape Restoration in Senegal

The national launch of the LOGMe II project in Ourosogui, in Senegal's Matam region, marks a new milestone in the country's commitment to integrated landscape restoration. Led by IUCN, with financial support from the Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE) and strategic backing from the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the project brings together a wide coalition of stakeholders — local authorities, technical services, researchers, and communities, 50% of whom are women and youth.

The launch event underscored a collaborative and inclusive approach, commended by regional authorities for its effectiveness and ability to create synergies among existing initiatives. Discussions highlighted the importance of local capacity building, transparent partnerships, and sustainable community ownership of project outcomes.

LOGMe II is emerging as a flagship initiative to make the Sahel a land of opportunity, where communities restore ecosystems while strengthening their economic and social resilience.



Launch of the LOGMe II Project in Ourosogui, Senegal.

Community reforestation in Wouro Sidy: LOGMe II takes action

Building on the momentum of the national launch of LOGMe II, IUCN and its partners organized a community tree-planting day in Wouro Sidy. Supported by the Water and Forests Department and local authorities, the activity formed part of Senegal's national campaign, "One Million Trees in 48 Hours."

A total of 100 trees were planted during this symbolic initiative, marking the operational start of the project on the ground. Local residents, elected officials, and technical services came together to restore degraded lands and strengthen vegetation cover in this agro-sylvo-pastoral zone.

This action embodies the spirit of co-construction and community engagement at the heart of LOGMe II. It reflects IUCN's commitment to making ecological restoration a sustainable driver of climate resilience, food security, and local prosperity across the Sahel.



LOGMe II community reforestation: 100 trees planted to restore Sahelian landscapes.

Strengthening the Fight Against Wildlife Crime in Mbam and Djerem National Park

In Cameroon, the organization Forests and Rural Development (FODER), with support from the BIOPAMA Action Fund, has strengthened efforts to combat wildlife crime in the Mbam and Djerem National Park (PNMD), a protected area facing intense pressure from poaching, agriculture, and unsustainable fishing. The project mobilized eco-guards, judicial authorities, and security forces to improve the enforcement of environmental laws. Through the training of 47 judicial police officers, the swearing-in of 17 agents, and the development of a practical field guide, enforcement capacity has been significantly enhanced.

The results are striking: 153 official reports produced, compared to just nine previously, 18 cases prosecuted, 14 rulings delivered, over 9 million FCFA in fines, and the seizure of three tons of wildlife products.

This momentum has strengthened trust between communities and institutions, positioning the initiative as a model for other protected areas across Central Africa.

[Learn more](#)



Eco-guards and judicial authorities in front of the Tibati Courthouse, reinforcing collaboration against wildlife crime in Mbam and Djerem National Park.

Restore, Protect, Sustain: Communities Mobilized for Mangrove Conservation

The Natur'ELLES Project continues its mission to restore mangrove ecosystems and strengthen community leadership in Senegal. In the Sine-Saloum Delta, a validation workshop on bioecological monitoring and community surveillance protocols was held in Fimela, bringing together technical services, CLPAs, MPAs, and ICCAs.

The meeting helped harmonize ecological monitoring tools and train 39 participants, including several women eco-guards, to improve local governance and community participation in the sustainable management of mangroves.

In Casamance, the lessons from this workshop are already being put into practice. In Bignona, Dianki, and Kawawana, local communities have restored 63 hectares of degraded mangroves and planted 1,000 trees in Saloulou to stabilize the coastline.

These concrete actions embody the collective spirit driving Natur'ELLES, connecting science, training, and community action to achieve effective and inclusive mangrove restoration.



Community tree-planting session led by members of the Kawawana ICCA in the commune of Diannah.

Cameroon: CWCS Restores Life to Coasts and Communities

From Douala-Edéa to Campo, Cameroon's coastline faces growing pressure from overfishing, pollution, and mangrove loss, threatening the livelihoods of thousands of families who depend on the sea. To reverse this trend, the Cameroon Wildlife Conservation Society (CWCS) is working to protect coastal ecosystems while improving the well-being of local communities. "Conservation must serve both nature and people," emphasizes Eugène Diyouke, CWCS Coastal Project Manager.

The organization supports fishing villages in developing management plans for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other conservation measures (OECMs) tailored to their local contexts. CWCS also promotes alternative income-generating activities, such as sea snail farming, enabling women to earn livelihoods without overexploiting marine resources.

In partnership with Planet Urgence and others, more than 200 hectares of degraded mangroves have already been restored, strengthening coastal resilience against erosion.

By placing communities at the heart of conservation, CWCS shows that protecting nature also means protecting people — and building a more sustainable future for Cameroon's coasts.



Shellfish harvesting - the main of income for fishing communities in Douala-Edéa National Park, Cameroon.

Mauritania: WACA Mobilizes to End Plastic Bag Pollution

In Nouakchott, the markets came alive with a powerful message: "Say no to plastic bags!" On the occasion of World Oceans Day, the WACA Project, in partnership with the Mauritanian Ministry of Environment, launched a nationwide awareness campaign on the dangers of single-use plastics.

Strong messages were broadcast through media outlets and marketplaces to encourage citizens to give up plastic bags and better protect their environment. The initiative reached hundreds of people, all determined to reduce plastic use and embrace more sustainable habits.

In Mauritania, non-biodegradable waste continues to pollute beaches and soils, kill animals, and threaten public health. Driven by collective energy, WACA's campaign reminds everyone that small actions can have a big impact. The project advocates for sustainable alternatives, recycling, and improved waste management to protect biodiversity and safeguard the livelihoods of coastal communities.



WACA volunteers and partners mobilized in Nouakchott to raise awareness about the dangers of plastic bags and promote sustainable alternatives.

[Learn more](#)

Koudougou: 442 Entrepreneurs Empowered to Drive a Sustainable Green Economy

In Koudougou, 442 entrepreneurs working in the shea, néré, baobab, moringa, and biocompost sectors received tailored support to strengthen the technical, administrative, and financial quality of their business projects.

This business development session, organized in collaboration with the General Directorate for Green Economy and Climate Change (DGEVCC), enabled participants to refine their business plans and enhance both their economic viability and environmental sustainability.

Coming from eight intervention areas, Nazinon, Nando, Nakambé, Djôrô, Goulmou, Guiriko, Bankui, and Tannounyan, the entrepreneurs exchanged with experts and technical partners to improve their management practices and explore new financing opportunities.

Funded by the World Bank and the Government of Burkina Faso under Subcomponent 3.2 of the Communal Landscape Management Project for REDD+ (PGPC/REDD+), this initiative represents a major step toward a more inclusive and resilient green economy, while promoting non-timber forest products as key drivers of sustainable local development.



Entrepreneurs gathered in Koudougou at the close of the business development planning session.

Restoring the Land, Empowering Women: The Successes of the DRYLAND Project in Mauritania

In the arid zones of Mauritania, the DRYLAND Project is turning climate challenges into opportunities for resilience. In 2025, a total of 105 hectares of dunes were mechanically stabilized across five communes, helping to slow desert encroachment and protect farmlands and infrastructure. These efforts also improved rural mobility by opening access to previously isolated areas.

At the same time, 28 women's cooperatives received support to develop income-generating activities such as agricultural processing, small livestock farming, and handicrafts, strengthening their economic independence.

Environmentally, 45 hectares of land were restored using Water and Soil Conservation / Soil Defense and Restoration (CES/DRS) techniques including half-moon bunds and gabion retention structures that helped regenerate soil fertility and protect oases from flooding. A triple victory for women, the land, and community resilience.



Land restoration and local capacity building through the provision of equipment and the application of Water and Soil Conservation (WSC/DRS) techniques.

Togo Commits to the Ocean: Toward the Creation of Its First Marine Protected Area

In Agbodrafo, Togo has officially launched the process of creating its first Marine Protected Area (MPA), with support from IUCN through the WACA Program. This initiative aims to preserve threatened coastal ecosystems, protect biodiversity, and strengthen the resilience of communities whose livelihoods depend on the sea.

During the meeting, Mallé Diagana, Coordinator of the WACA BAR Program, shared experiences from Senegal and Mauritania in sustainable MPA management, highlighting the importance of participatory governance and integrated planning.

IUCN reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Togo throughout the process by mobilizing technical expertise, providing planning tools, and facilitating regional exchange visits.

Backed by the World Bank, the GEF, UEMOA, and the FAO, this process is expected to enable Togo to establish, within a year, a fully operational Marine Protected Area integrated into the West African MPA Network (RAMPAO).



Launch of the process to create Togo's first Marine Protected Area in Agbodrafo, through the WACA Program.

Farms of Hope: IUCN Cultivates Climate Resilience in Ghana

In northern and southern Ghana, demonstration farms established by IUCN Ghana are transforming how farmers adapt to climate change. Under the LOGMe II Project and the Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Program, these experimental plots serve as open learning spaces where women, youth, and producers test climate-resilient crops such as maize, cowpea, and soybean.

From Kasiesa to Lake Bosomtwe, more than 260 farmers have been trained in sustainable agricultural practices, including water management, organic fertilization, seed selection, and integrated pest management.

Results are promising, with germination rates exceeding 90% and a growing adoption of drought-resistant varieties. These farms are more than test fields, they have become living laboratories of climate resilience, fostering dialogue between researchers and farmers and sowing the seeds of a more sustainable and inclusive agriculture across Ghana.



Women farmers taking part in a training session on the LOGMe II demonstration farms in Ghana

Lake Bosomtwe: Protecting a Natural Jewel through Restoration and Local Governance

Around Lake Bosomtwe, Ghana's only natural lake and a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve — local communities are mobilizing to protect an ecosystem increasingly threatened by urbanization and agriculture

In 2025, with support from IUCN through the Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Project, the Otaade Bosomtwe CREMA carried out a major operation to demarcate and restore the lake's shoreline. Over 210 metal markers bearing the inscription "No Activity Beyond This Point" were installed along 9.5 km of the perimeter, clearly defining the core protected zone. At the same time, 500 native Ceiba pentandra trees were planted to restore degraded riparian areas and stabilize the shoreline.

Through this collective effort, communities reaffirm their role as guardians of the lake, strengthening ecosystem resilience to human pressures and climate change.

An exemplary initiative where conservation, participation, and local pride come together to shape a sustainable future.



Demarcation of Lake Bosomtwe's core zone in Ghana — local communities safeguarding the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Supervision and Promotion of GEF Projects in Equatorial Guinea

From September 27 to October 4, 2025, a joint supervision mission was carried out in Equatorial Guinea as part of the implementation of the GEF-7 Project, coordinated by the IUCN Regional Office for West and Central Africa (PACO). Conducted in collaboration with national authorities, INDEFOR, and project teams, the mission aimed to assess progress, engage with technical partners, and strengthen on-the-ground coordination.

In parallel, an audiovisual documentation mission was conducted in Bata to visually capture the project's results and highlight the commitment of local communities. The interviews, videos, and photographs produced will showcase the tangible impact of GEF-supported actions on ecosystem restoration and livelihood improvement.

This combined technical and communication approach enables IUCN to both ensure rigorous monitoring of project achievements and bring visibility to the concrete progress made in the field



Supervision and Content Collection Mission for GEF Projects in Equatorial Guinea

Success stories

Modern Beekeeping Revitalizes Communities around Mbam and Djerem National Park

Not long ago, traditional beekeeping around Mbam and Djerem National Park in Cameroon posed as many risks to bees as it did challenges for local families. Producers relied on rudimentary hives and used fire to harvest honey, destroying colonies and degrading forests. The honey, often of low quality, sold for little profit.

To change this, the organization Forests and Rural Development (FODER), with support from the BIOPAMA Action Fund, trained 130 beekeepers from 12 local communities in modern beekeeping techniques. They received modern hives, smokers, and processing equipment, marking a shift toward more sustainable practices.

The results are striking: production has doubled, and honey quality has improved significantly. Once sold for 1,000 FCFA per liter, it now fetches 3,000 FCFA, recognized locally for its purity. Beekeepers have also learned to build their own hives, strengthening both their skills and independence.

A dedicated WhatsApp network now connects producers and trainers to share tips and best practices. This new dynamic has transformed beekeeping into a sustainable source of income while reducing pressure on wildlife and forests.

Today, Mbam and Djerem honey stands as a true success story — an inspiring alliance between nature conservation and community prosperity.



Les Saveurs du Faso ("Flavors of Faso"), beneficiaries of the PGPC/REDD+ Project, present their baobab syrup.

UPCOMING EVENTS

22 October – 1 November : LOGMe II
Project Management Unit Workshop,
Ouagadougou and Koudougou, Burkina
Faso.

4–6 November: Official Launch of the
WASOP Programme, Mindelo, Cape Verde.

10–12 November 2025: Strategic Planning
and Project Development Workshop for the
GBFF Project, Dakar, Senegal.

18 December 2025: Handover Ceremony of
the Three Monitoring Platforms for
MPAs/ICCAs in Bignona.



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