



TOWARDS POST-2020 EXPERTISE ON #5

THE ROLE OF PROTECTED AREAS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, ON THE WAY TO POST-2020 COMMITMENTS

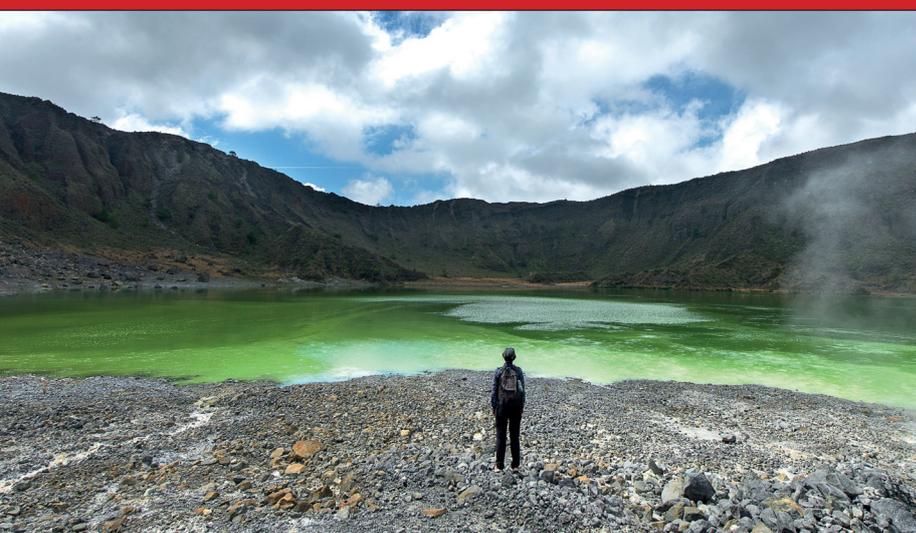
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What are the lessons learnt from 2011-2020 for biodiversity governance? What is the regional role of Protected Areas? The III Latin American and Caribbean Congress on Protected Areas (Lima, Peru, October 2019) offered insights, a way forward and vision of the challenges lying ahead.



**“DEVELOPMENT BASED
ON PROTECTED AREAS
IS SUSTAINABLE:
IT IS LOW-EMISSION,
INCLUSIVE, AND
COMPETITIVE, WITH
A FOCUS ON CIRCULAR
ECONOMY.”**

Fabiola Muñoz, Minister
of Environment, Republic of Peru,
at the III CAPLAC opening.

What is needed to integrate conservation and sustainable use? The road to the renewal of biodiversity commitments for post-2020 by the 193 Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) began over a year ago. The 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the CBD to be hosted by China, will endeavour to reach a new global biodiversity framework to enable the achievement of the 2050 Vision of “Living in harmony with Nature”.

A mandatory stop is the analysis of the role that Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures play in conserving the natural heritage and the environmental goods and services they provide.

The latest Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) assessment shows an alarming situation of unprecedented threats to Nature, highlighting conservation measures as a vital tool for the 2050 Vision and a sturdy sustainable development model. It also demonstrates that conserving and achieving a sustainable use of nature are not only environmental, but also developmental, economic, security, social and moral challenges.

El Chichón volcano, Chiapas, Mexico,
Alberto Gallardo



Purace National Park,
Colombia

1. A LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN APPROACH TO CONSERVED AREAS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Target 11 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011–2020) states that, “By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area- based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes”¹. Since its inception, most scientific analyses of progress towards Aichi Target 11 have tended to measure achievement in terms of protected area coverage. However, coverage alone is not a sufficient indicator for meeting global biodiversity targets, as regards to their ultimate impact on biodiversity loss. As one of the Conventions three objectives, it is of utmost importance to reach the conservation goals not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. The upcoming negotiations will thus be the cornerstone to structure a comprehensive approach to biodiversity governance.

Discussions regarding the potential nature of a follow-up to the post-2020 framework have incorporated, as a central component, the need to achieve the conservation of natural heritage while bringing about a harmonious and sustainable relationship between nature and humankind. As part of this conceptualization process, the organizers of the European Union / RedParques² Pavilion held within the International Union for the Conservation of Nature’s III Latin American and Caribbean Congress on Protected Areas (IUCN III CAPLAC; 14–17 October 2019, in Lima, Peru) offered the opportunity for a side event dedicated to examining synergies between the outcomes of the Congress and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

The III CAPLAC focused on “Solutions for welfare and sustainable development”. The meeting provided a space for the exchange of experiences, debate on the formulation and implementation of public policies, and the involvement of research and academia. At the same time, it provided an opportunity for countries to explore a common

regional position at the next IUCN World Conservation Congress, to be held in Marseille, France, in June 2020. This conference opened the opportunity to frame the debate on aspects relevant to the post-2020 global framework during the Congress and to reflect on the contributions of protected areas, and other effective area-based conservation measures to biodiversity governance, from the perspective of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The multiple dialogues that occurred during the Congress confirmed the region’s leadership when it comes to finding solutions to global problems related to the maintenance of biodiversity. However, it also showed a growing concern amongst protected area managers and conservation scientists, that many protected areas around the world are not achieving the conservation objectives for which they were established. Reasons include a lack of effective management and representativeness.

The Conference underlined several necessary conditions and contributions to improve the effectiveness of protected areas in contributing to reaching the 2050 vision. These included more integrated landscape planning; sustainable productive activities; sound utilization of the spaces adjacent to protected areas; and the involvement and full participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in planning and managing conserved areas. This rests in the fact that most protected areas are embedded within a human and agricultural landscape, and that existing buffer zones are inadequate to alleviate the effects of fragmentation, contamination by agrochemicals, hunting, and unsustainable or illegal logging. The fate of biodiversity within protected areas is therefore inextricably linked to the broader landscape context. Thus, including how the surrounding agricultural matrix is designed and managed is crucial to achieve biodiversity conservation. This in turn touched upon the positive and negative links with populated areas, and the opportunities and risks inherent in the development of urban areas in any biodiversity management plan.

The Congress thus went beyond the matter of conservation, and showed that all aspects of environmental, human and development governance needed to be addressed in a coordinated manner. Connectivity and cooperation at all levels are key towards the many ambitions that will be set in 2020 and beyond.

“A NEW VISION FOR LIVING IN HARMONY WITH NATURE SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THAT AROUND 1 MILLION SPECIES ALREADY FACE EXTINCTION UNLESS ACTION IS TAKEN TO REDUCE DRIVERS OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS.”

Alberto Gallardo, Tenured Professor Universidad Iberoamericana (Centrus)

2. LEARNING FROM THE EXPERTS

The III CAPLAC dialogue with representatives of delegations from Latin America and the Caribbean allowed to help better understand the conservation needs from the point of view of those in charge of managing the region's protected areas.

The side-event took this opportunity to delve into the concrete mechanisms of conservation management and its relationship with sustainable development, answering central questions with the help of a high-level panel of political authorities and practitioners.

What are the best opportunities to reach a sound relationship between Nature and People? What are the contributions of conserved areas to halt biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation? How are they linked to a sustainable use of biological diversity? How to translate them into actionable targets? Which achievements from the past Strategic Framework should be incorporated into the new agreement?

Government institutions, academia, protected areas managers and field actors shared the same consensus: conservation methods, in their diversity, should not only be a target of biodiversity policies, but first and foremost a tool to preserve, sustainably use and promote the richness of our environment, as well as educate and raise awareness.

Costa Rica's protected areas connectivity strategies, the regional RedParques network now led by Mexico, Colombia's park rangers or the European Union's "Larger than Jaguars" strategy³ are as many means to boost the efficiency and contributions of conservation measures to the larger spectrum of biodiversity action.

FROM THIS DISCUSSION, FIVE MATTERS STOOD OUT AS PRIORITIES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE NEW POST-2020 FRAMEWORK:

- + **Advance in generating quality scientific knowledge and use it to devise innovative tools** for an effective management of conservation efforts.
- + **Reinforce monitoring activities;** generate inventories; measure the effectiveness of protected areas management; develop homologated methodologies that allow comparing results between protected areas.
- + **Link conservation with economic aspects and the private sector:** economic valuation of protected areas considering the ecosystem services they

offer; interaction with sustainable productive systems; development of new schemes for economic-compensation mechanisms; innovation and technological advances for the sustainable use of natural heritage.

- + **Develop effective and structured mechanisms** for local, national, transboundary, regional and international governance.
- + **Strengthen connectivity between protected areas.** Promote interconnection between protected areas and other conservation tools.

“THE NEXT DECADE IS CRUCIAL: THE NEW DEAL FOR NATURE AND PEOPLE SHOULD AIM AT GREATER EMPHASIS ON TRANSFORMATIVE AND AMBITIOUS TARGETS THAT HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS AND PROMOTE ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION. THESE TARGETS SHOULD BE INCLUSIVE, FAIR, REALISTIC AND INSPIRING.”

Alberto Gallardo, Tenured Professor, Universidad Iberoamericana (Centrus)

3. THE COP15 CHALLENGES IN THE HORIZON

During the III CAPLAC the message was clear: the next decade is crucial. It is perhaps humanity's last chance to switch its production, consumption and expansion model, to prevent irreversible damages to the Planet.

For this reason, it is necessary to face the important challenges of achieving visibility and valorisation of conserved areas and reaching an ambitious agreement for Nature and People at COP15, with a long-term 2050 Vision aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

THE RATE OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS MAY NOT DECREASE, AND SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEMS MAY DISAPPEAR IF EFFECTIVE, SIMULTANEOUS AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF ADEQUATE MEASURES IS DELAYED MUCH LONGER, WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON:

- + **Identifying which elements are essential to achieve the 2050 Vision.** Thinking not only in terms of area (e.g. 30% of terrestrial ecosystems) but also of meaningful targets that change social behaviours and reinforce good management and governance of protected areas.



Humpback whale, *Megaptera novaengliae*, Marino Francisco Coloane Park, Chile

³ <https://bit.ly/38jITjN>



Selva Lacandona, Chiapas, Mexico, by Alberto Gallardo

- + Developing tools conducive to increasing positive externalities protected areas generate.** Creating targets that include variables of good management, human development and ecosystem health; giving a legal framework to the variety of conservation models (connected areas, regional planning, landscape approach, participatory governance, etc.); offering incentives to protected areas that include sustainable use in their management plans.
- + Considering other crucial elements.** Encouraging equitable biodiversity management; ecological representation of a mix of ecosystems; and connectivity between sites.
- + Achieving a clear message.** Making progress in setting translatable goals to a broad public and decision-makers, to avoid bottlenecks that slow down the development of an ambitious agreement and on the ground ownership.
- + Creating mechanisms to organically link the new framework with other socio-environmental agreements and agendas.** Understanding and promoting the role of protected areas in this regard (including on climate and water regulation, and disaster-risk reduction). The global deal for Nature and People should allow the generation of synergies, especially with the 2030 Agenda (SDGs), climate change-related measures (including Intended Nationally Determined Contributions – INDCs), and any other relevant commitments.
- + Facilitating and supporting actions at national level.** Adopting target that contain clear mechanisms to accompany countries in their progress towards meeting the newly-defined biodiversity goals.
- + Putting greater emphasis on transformative and ambitious changes that halt biodiversity loss and promote ecological restoration.** Promoting changes that are inclusive, fair, realistic and inspiring.
- + Considering all drivers of change and known pressures,** including land use change, climate change, pollution, exploitation of organisms and species, and invasive species; and the converging negative externalities that accelerate biodiversity loss.

- + Acknowledging local heterogeneity in the global agreement.** Setting goals that take urban, rural, agricultural and wild environments into account.
- + Generating links between economy and biodiversity.** Strengthening bonds with the productive and financial sectors to ensure that protected areas and all other conservation measures are seen as spaces that provide ecosystem services and benefits, and to achieve greater cooperation and resource mobilization for nature and human activities.
- + Implementing innovative economic mechanisms to finance the new goals.**
- + Including non-state actors.** The conservation of natural heritage should be an inclusive and cross-cutting issue. The CBD has long recognized the importance of this matter, but the associated decisions are taken elsewhere in sectoral areas (trade, high seas, climate, development policies, etc.). Therefore, biodiversity actors must be able to challenge these arenas and find allies, points of convergence and levers of change.

“OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION METHODS HAVE VARIOUS METHODS OF GOVERNANCE AND OBJECTIVES, BUT THEIR FOCUS IS ON ACHIEVING RESULTS.”

Clara Matallana, Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Research Institute

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