



# TOWARDS POST-2020 EXPERTISE ON #4

## PERSPECTIVES FROM LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN ON POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY GOVERNANCE



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**On 22-24 September 2019, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), in collaboration with the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework-EU support project, and with the support of the French Cooperation in Chile, organized a regional dialogue in Santiago, Chile.**

The Latin America & Caribbean (LAC) region accounts for 40% of biodiversity worldwide <sup>1</sup>. The region has experienced numerous developments in biodiversity and environmental governance in the last decades. Several institutions and public policies have progressed, but unfortunately there are also examples of setbacks, of lack of harmonization and coordination between different sectors and levels of government. The regional dialogue held in Santiago gathered high-level experts from biodiversity knowledge and management institutions (governmental - including negotiators - and academic) and from institutions with a regional or global perspective, to share their experiences and visions as a contribution to the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework <sup>2</sup>.

**“LATIN AMERICA HAS MANY EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF BIODIVERSITY POLICIES. WE HAVE TO SCALE THEM UP, BUT ALSO DRAW LESSONS FROM PAST MISTAKES. AN EXPERT NETWORK OF REGIONAL BIODIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS WOULD BE HELPFUL.”**

Marcia Tambutti, Biodiversity Expert, ECLAC

# 1. KNOWLEDGE AS A STRATEGIC RESOURCE: BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING BRIDGING INSTITUTIONS FOR BIODIVERSITY

Scientific research on biological diversity has played a major role to put biodiversity issues on the political agenda, but also to seek solutions to better use and manage biodiversity. Throughout the LAC region, several institutions have emerged in the last decades, and have played a major role in developing interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary biodiversity knowledge, ranging from different academic disciplines to local and traditional knowledge<sup>3</sup>.

They have also been of critical importance as hubs of expertise and interfaces for biodiversity management and policies, acting at the intersection of the science, policy, public, and to a lesser extent (but more and more frequently) the private sectors. This institutionalization, and its importance to anchor and bridge biodiversity concerns in the political landscape, is an important lesson coming from the region. It must be noted, however, that a lot of the information provided by these institutions still remains underused by policymakers. In addition, it is still necessary to develop early and comprehensive evaluations that help make policies more dynamic. This should involve local governments, communities, and other concerned stakeholders. This should enable monitoring and collective learning, to achieve better appropriation that can ensure longer stability, transparency and mutual accountability, improving trust and capacity building.

Building and strengthening such institutions requires sustained support over time, especially since changes in national contexts can lead to their weakening. Apart from financial resources, the international framework could also help strengthen these institutions by increasing their legitimacy, e.g. by better highlighting their importance and using them as examples of best practices increasing national capacities on biodiversity. The creation of such institutions could even be suggested as an enabling condition to implement the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, with specific steps for their launch and/or strengthening integrated in a dedicated chapter of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs). This could be completed by a platform of various national institutions, meeting on a regular basis for exchanges of best practices and information, for example under IPBES' umbrella.

These institutions often play a key role in linking national and international scales, both through the advising or even acting role they can play in international negotiations, but also because they are often involved in the development of national policies (for example, of national biodiversity strategies or SDG strategies), in monitoring and reporting tasks, managing open databases, translating relevant technical information to society as a whole and promoting citizen science, among others. They basically stand as unique spaces for dialogue, analysis and monitoring of the implementation of policies. In national contexts where there is a dearth of expertise capacity on biodiversity, focusing the capacity-building efforts on the creation of such institutions could represent a way forward. At the interface of national technical information and the international negotiations playing field, they can help close the gap between the length of the negotiations process and the urge for operational public policies.

**“THE IPBES ASSESSMENTS HAVE FURTHER CLARIFIED THE RESPECTIVE MAGNITUDE OF THE DRIVERS OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS. THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK SHOULD HELP ADDRESS THEM; AND HELP IMPLEMENT BIODIVERSITY POLICIES IN THE REGION.”**

Aleksandar Rankovic, Coordinator on Post-2020 International Biodiversity Governance, IDDRi

# 2. BIODIVERSITY MAINSTREAMING AND MULTI-LEVEL INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION & COORDINATION

Another specific feature in many countries of the LAC region is the recognized need to develop a strong focus on mainstreaming biodiversity across economic sectors, as illustrated by the strong emphasis that the Mexican Presidency of CBD COP13 has put on the subject.

In order to address most drivers of biodiversity loss, important changes in socio-economic sectors are necessary. Harmful subsidies still remain an important issue, as well as the lack of strong regulations and their implementation, that is impeding the development of more biodiversity-friendly business models. Productive sectoral ministries need to develop their own plans, actions and strategies to include biodiversity safeguards or re-orient economic activities towards sustainable use in their sectoral policies. The integration of international and national biodiversity targets in



Rufescent Tiger-Heron, *Tigrisoma lineatum marmoratum*, Mato Grosso, Brazil

<sup>1</sup> OECD Environmental Performance Reviews, *Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use in Latin America: Evidence from Performance Reviews*, OECD Publishing, Paris 2018, page 22.

<sup>2</sup> The list of participants is available at: <https://cutt.ly/ur3honj> Videos shot during the workshop are available at: <https://cutt.ly/Ur3hWEQ>

<sup>3</sup> Recognized examples include the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (Conabio, México), the Alexander von Humboldt Biological Resources Institute (Colombia) and the National Biodiversity Institute (INBio, Costa Rica), among others.





ECLAC, Santiago de Chile

<sup>4</sup> See for instance: Kinniburgh, F., Rankovic, A. (2019). Mobilizing the chemical conventions to protect biodiversity - An example with pesticides and the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions. IDDRI, *Issue Brief N°07/19*.

the regulation of every sectoral policy is a necessary pre-requisite to ensure a coherent reorientation on the implementation of these sectoral plans, and it also remains the missing ladder to reach further involvement of the private economic sector.

However, it is important to recognize that in many cases these policies already exist, but they have not been implemented, and that biodiversity concerns are often in a weak position during political arbitration. Biodiversity needs strong and sustained institutional, social, and political support, for it not to be eluded. The previous topic, on the importance of bridging institutions for biodiversity, is thus also relevant for biodiversity mainstreaming, coherence and coordination with other sectors and actors.

Some steps to grant political weight and legal support have been taken in some LAC countries, elevating biodiversity restoration to the status of national priority to leverage support from all sectors of society or integrating biodiversity protection as a constitutional right (Ecuador, Bolivia). Assessing the results of such initiatives could provide important lessons.

It should be added that biodiversity actors can lack the capacity to understand sectoral dynamics and discussions, and, similarly, that sectoral actors often lack knowledge, or concern, about biodiversity issues, even when biodiversity loss poses risks for the long-term prosperity of their own business models. A participatory approach and transparent dialogue with all concerned stakeholders are also an enabling condition to make progress on mainstreaming.

### INCREASING NATIONAL MAINSTREAMING THROUGH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

One thing that has bridged different sectors in different LAC countries, is understanding that working for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use is very deeply linked and synergetic with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), that the countries and different sectors have committed to meet.

Another way of strengthening national mainstreaming is to increase the level of mainstreaming at the international level. This could mean a closer cooperation between the CBD (and other environmental and biodiversity-related conventions and institutions) and conventions and institutions that are addressing different sectors or specific pressures on biodiversity. For example, a closer cooperation with the FAO or the “chemical cluster” could help develop better decisions and strategies, internationally, aiming at reducing pollutants that are important drivers of biodiversity loss (such as excess nutrients, biocides, plastics, etc).

In turn, this closer international cooperation could induce a closer cooperation among actors in charge of different policies at the national level, notably by making them jointly accountable for the implementation of commitments made by their country at the international level in various arenas<sup>4</sup>. Actions undertaken by Mexico in this respect for the agriculture, forestry, tourism, and fisheries sectors to identify ways ahead and alternatives with FAO have yielded some encouraging results. Similar reflections could be developed around international trade issues.

**“ENSURING INTERLINKAGES AND SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK AND THE 2030 AGENDA AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, IN TRUTH MEANS LOOKING FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN DEVELOPMENT MODELS, WHERE THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIODIVERSITY WOULD BE KEY.”**

Sébastien Treyer, Executive Director of IDDRI

## 3. BIODIVERSITY AS A SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

In LAC, the framing of biodiversity as a socio-environmental issue, at the nexus of many Sustainable Development Goals, is particularly pronounced. This is an important perspective that actors of the region can help share internationally. Achieving transformative change will require the prior acknowledgment of the necessary changes in the economic structures that are both at the origin of biodiversity loss but, also, of exclusion and inequalities. Even when national governments are unaware or reluctant to changes of this magnitude, there are many examples of local territories and communities in the region already taking action.

Historically, the region has adopted extractivist models of development, oriented towards the export of commodities to global value chains, with little local transformation of these commodities. On the other hand, the LAC region is very rich in examples of local and sustainable approaches for the use of biodiversity. A common challenge for countries is how to scale up this collection of individual projects or good practices and move towards more systemic changes, leading to a shift in economic models. Scaling up would require shifting different factors simultaneously, such as a better stability of projects in time, an increase in incentives, and changes in the legal framework that could help simplify the development of alternative



Blue Morpho caterpillar, *Morpho peleides*, Tortugero National Park, Costa Rica

models and boost multi-actor governance of natural resources. As such, the region stands as a real laboratory to explore how to reach the social changes that are necessary to achieve sustainable modes of production and consumption. For example, the dynamics of community-based biodiversity management in territories, built up on strong inter-sectoral dialogues with field producers, shall be reviewed.

Successful models of nature-based solutions and ecotourism, that created and distributed economic value out of biodiversity conservation, could be another example to assess.

More financial expertise is needed to understand how to best shift financial flows, both public and private, from harmful to more positive practices for biodiversity, as well as to understand how such shifts could affect different categories of actors and interact with social issues and power struggles.

Here, again, the strong scientific expertise and wealth of traditional knowledge that is found in the region represents an asset, which should be used to share experiences on how to create and increase the space for alternative models of development that are more compatible with sustainability. This could help further develop the knowledge base on how to increase transformative changes of economies, a base that is still weak in the region and worldwide.

closely with each other, but also with other institutions in the region. Even though the LAC region has played a strong role in biodiversity negotiations, it has not yet developed a strong cooperation network on biodiversity.

A stronger regional biodiversity platform could help overcome political coordination challenges caused by the fragmented biodiversity governance, and cope with countries' institutional capacity building needs in terms of environmental monitoring and reporting.

This would enable a better sharing of experience on the challenges that are encountered and the solutions that are found in national contexts that can often display similar features. A stronger cooperation can also help strengthen institutions in their national contexts, providing them with like-minded allies but also a stronger legitimacy.

Furthermore, many lessons learned in one region can also provide insights on issues encountered in other regions: inter-regional partnerships and emulation could help increase the collective strength of these institutions, but also increase collective intelligence at the international level on how to actually put societies on track to achieve CBD's 2050 Vision in the next thirty years.

Such a platform would empower the LAC region in exerting a stronger leadership in international environmental negotiations processes, sharing the richness of its biodiversity management experiences.

## 4. STIMULATING INTRA AND INTER-REGIONAL EMULATION IN THE POST-2020 FRAMEWORK

**“BETTER COORDINATING NETWORKS OF INSTITUTIONS IS KEY TO RAISE AWARENESS AND CONSOLIDATE STRATEGIES, INSTRUMENTS, AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS, TO ADDRESS BIODIVERSITY CHALLENGES AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL.”**

Jeannette Sánchez, Director of the Natural Resources Division, ECLAC

An overall, key insight from the Santiago workshop, is the need for the post-2020 global biodiversity governance to stimulate a stronger regional cooperation among institutions that are at the forefront of biodiversity expertise, management, and policies. Such institutions should work more

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POST2020 BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK – EU SUPPORT IS FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION AND IMPLEMENTED BY EXPERTISE FRANCE. IT AIMS AT FACILITATING A COMPREHENSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESS LEADING TO THE ADOPTION OF AN AMBITIOUS POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK THAT FOSTERS COMMITMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.

