



Environment and Food Foundation (E2F) was fully represented at the IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) by our founder and chief of operations and they were also delegates of Wild Foundation.

Introduction;

The Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) was held in Kigali, Rwanda from July 18-23, 2022. The congress was co-organized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), the government of Rwanda, and the African Wildlife Foundation.

APAC brought together over 2,300 physical participants and 100 virtual participants, representing government agencies, NGOs, Indigenous peoples, youth, academia, and the private sector. As the first ever protected areas conference of this scale in Africa, there was significant momentum around positioning Africa's protected and conserved areas within the broader goals of economic development and community well-being.

Background/introduction to IUCN-APAC.

The African continent alone holds up to 30% of the World's biological diversity, yet home to the World's fastest growing population- with an estimated size to hit about ... by 2050.

The richness in the continent's biodiversity straddle across from the varsiety of landscapes, cultures and traditions, species of flora and fauna – that have long been pivotal towards contributing towards the socio-economic development of the nation's therein.

The inaugural IUCN-APAC, first of its kind steps in at a time when the continent and World at large are faced with the twin crises biodiversity loss and climate change putting Africa even more vulnerable to the adverse impacts of these twin crises.

Relevance of IUCN-APAC towards the African Conservation Agenda

With a size of over 30.37 million sqkm, only about 7% of this total land mass comprises protected and conserved areas. The African continent alone has up to 3,000 total protected and conserved areas stretched across the continental space. With this, it is only paramount that these critical habitats are safeguarded and conserved for future generations.

Whereas there have been ongoing efforts to conserve and protect these landscapes, flora and fauna, these have still not yielded the desired results in ensuring the continent's natural heritage and biological diversity are well protected and conserved.

The COVID-19 pandemic additionally came through with a swing- disrupting both global health and economies, yet the African continent has not been exempted from the adverse effects of the pandemic.

A development paradigm that acknowledges the critical role of protection and conservation of biodiversity is vital towards driving the ambition we need for a sustainable future in Africa.



Expectations going to the Congress from APAC delegates

Setting pace with the inaugural IUCN-APAC came through with lots of ambition and expectations from the week-long Congress. Summarised below are the expectations from our representatives at IUCN-APAC.

Achare Elvis Ayamba	Stephen Mbi
<p>Expectations at IUCN APAC were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To engage in promoting effective co management and equitable governance. To learn from the experiences of other leaders. To inspire others about my experience in conservation. To create new contacts and expand my networks in the conservation space. To build my leadership skills. To acquire success tips from successful environmental leaders and organisations. To gain access to funding opportunities. To showcase my conservation work through presentations, side events and panel discussions. 	<p><i>Congress and Pre-Congress;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brainstorm on new approaches to conservation that take into account IPLC rights and knowledge as well as critical youth perspectives on conservation of biological diversity-build-up from the Congress into the Pre-Congress. - An inclusive space for all- IPLCs, Government, NGOs, Youth, Academia to equally contribute without bias and/ or discrimination towards policies aimed at shaping the African Conservation agenda. - Clear, actionable and achievable milestones steered towards ensuring the integrity of Africa’s protected and conserved areas. - Outcomes that fit into the global policy outlook as well as upcoming international fora from the African perspective; including the Africa Climate Week (ACW22) in the build-up to UNFCCC COP27 and the CBD COP15 later this year. <p><i>Individual;</i></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Share personal experiences from my previous work at the space, learn from delegates from the Congress- Networking with delegates from the Congress.- Opportunities for collaboration, build synergies for collective action- Expound on the interconnectedness of wildlife conservation, biodiversity conservation and climate action in relation to protected and conserved areas.
--	--

One of the highlights was the #NatureForAll Youth Oasis a key pavilion held from July 19th – 22 that included a full agenda of presentations, workshops, and activities targeting an intergenerational audience.

African youth empowerment and storytelling were the overarching themes of the Youth Oasis pavilion, with presenters on these topics coming from across Africa and the world to share best practices. Take a look at nature love stories shared at the #NatureForAll Youth Oasis by Congress participants from Environment and Food Foundation (E2F);

Activities and Engagements:

Side events;

Achare Elvis AYAMBA;

Spoke at two side events at the Youth Oasis in the Congress;

1. Conservation Conversations; Youth and Indigenous knowledge in Co-management of Protected and Conserved Areas hosted by Youth4Nature.

Context and details:

Indigenous knowledge and perspectives have been sidelined for a while in core conservation policy and implementation spaces. Across Africa, youth comprise about 60% of the continental population. To develop an inclusive conservation framework, it is only crucial that both IPLC and youth perspectives are incorporated into developing a conservation framework for the continent.



2. Area based Conservation- Role of youth in enhancing area based conservation and associated opportunities hosted by Global Youth Biodiversity Network- Africa (GYBN-Africa).

Context and details:

An intergenerational dialogue on Area based Conservation- Youth engagement in Area based Conservation; How can African Youth be meaningfully engaged? Hosted by Global Youth Biodiversity Network Africa (GYBN-Africa).



Side events;

STEPHEN MBI;

1. Conservation Conversations; Youth and Indigenous knowledge in Co-management of Protected and Conserved Areas hosted by Youth4Nature.

Context and details:

DOUALA, LITTORAL REGION, CAMEROON. REG NO. 140/G.37/C84/VOLI/SASC
TEL: (+237) 677040017, EMAIL: e2fcameroon@gmail.com,
Website: www.e2fcam.org.



Indigenous knowledge and perspectives have been sidelined for a while in core conservation policy and implementation spaces. Across Africa, youth comprise about 60% of the continental population. To develop an inclusive conservation framework, it is only crucial that both IPLC and youth perspectives are incorporated into developing a conservation framework for the continent.





2. Presentation; Youths and IPLC: Critical insights on their role for the conservation of environment, case of Douala in Cameroon.

Context and details:

Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLC) are Leading the way with prior knowledge of their landscapes and communities- while engaging in activities that ensure the sustainable utilisation of resources in their surrounding. This presentation takes us to the situations and practical scenarios and case studies in Douala- Cameroon.



**Congress events attended;
Achare Elvis Ayamba;**

Attended over 8 events at the Nature For All Youth pavilion/Oasis and the Africa Wildlife Foundation (AWF) pavilion.

Stephen Mbi;

Attended up to 9 different events at the Nature4all Youth pavilion/Oasis, African Wildlife Foundation pavilion and People4Nature pavilion, T3 tents (out of KCC)- including the opening and closing Congress plenaries.

Please take a look at this video by IUCN WCPA and CEC to have a recap of the inspiring and educative sessions at youth Oasis at APAC; <https://youtu.be/nVpDT-5Xexc>

DOUALA, LITTORAL REGION, CAMEROON. REG NO. 140/G.37/C84/VOLI/SASC
TEL: (+237) 677040017, EMAIL: e2fcameroon@gmail.com,
Website: www.e2fcam.org.



Out of Congress engagements and networking sessions;

Achare Elvis Ayamba;

Attended the IUCN WCPA welcome cocktail and networking session.
 Attended the official opening ceremony cocktail session.
 Attended the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) cocktail session.

Stephen Mbi;

Attended the IUCN WCPA welcome cocktail and networking session.
 Attended the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) cocktail session.
 Attended the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) reception.

Key learnings from the Congress:

Achare Elvis Ayamba	Stephen Mbi
<p>The power of storytelling to inspire others for conservation of nature.</p> <p>Better understanding of the need for youths and IPLC in nature conservation.</p> <p>The congress was an eye opener for my future engagements in biodiversity and conservation "Once I was blind now I can see".</p> <p>How to sustain a nonprofit organisation to thrive for centuries.</p>	<p>The African continent has a youthful population thus presents a great opportunity to steer further the conservation agenda.</p> <p>To achieve the set goals of 30*30, all stakeholders- governments, IPLCs, youth and civil society groups must act immediately. However, protecting only 30% will not be enough if we intend to achieve the set minimum 30*30 goal- we ought to set the bar higher by advocating to protect up to half of the planet in order to as well achieve the goal of living in harmony with nature by 2050.</p> <p>The biodiversity and climate crises are directly linked and interconnected- thus should be treated as whole- further recognising the role of nature/ protected areas in addressing the climate crisis.</p> <p>Africa has a full potential of sustainable development; however, we need to strengthen collaboration among the various actors to act for nature now!</p>

Outcomes; (Short and long-term) in relation to the Congress outcomes (Kigali call to Action):

Recommendations and calls to action:

Conservation of at least 30% of Africa Protected Areas by 2030 (30*30 agenda).



Conservation of an average of 50% of Africa Protected Areas as soon as possible (#natureneedshalf) while taking into consideration the respect of indigenous people rights to lands, equitable governance and co management.

Build the capacities and strengthen youth to be changemakers, leading conservation action in their own communities.

Recognise the need to enhance dialogues on nature within upcoming climate discussions and spaces- while acknowledging its role in promoting the same.

More in the [Kigali call to action](#)

Our sincere appreciation to our sponsors WILD Foundation and Coalition WILD who made it possible for us to attend APAC.

Our gratitude was also extended to the congress co-organizers; The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), the government of Rwanda, and the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF).