

Biodiversity Law & Governance Day 2026

Held online during the COP17 of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Yerevan, Armenia

Highlights and Outcomes Statement

11:30 – 20:00 Yerevan AMT / 08:30 – 17:00 London BST | Saturday, 24 October 2026
ONLINE | Join the Conversation #BLGD2026 @BLGInitiative

With appreciation for the support of the CBD COP17 Presidency and community:

COP17 YEREVAN ARMENIA TAKING ACTION FOR NATURE 19-30 OCTOBER 2026

With warmest thanks for the contributions of experts from leading international organisations:

With warmest thanks to our government partners:

With grateful recognition of leading law journals, publishers and other partners:

Biodiversity Law & Governance Day 2026

11:30 – 20:00 Yerevan AMT / 08:30 – 17:00 London BST on Saturday, 24 October 2026

During CBD COP17 in Yerevan, Armenia | ONLINE

On 24 October 2026, during the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Yerevan, Armenia, the **2026 Biodiversity Law & Governance Day** (BLGD 2026) convened online as a full-day symposium, co-hosted by Yerevan State University. The Day offered a timely forum to accelerate implementation, raise ambition and strengthen legal and institutional capacity for achieving the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), bringing together judges, negotiators, legal scholars, policymakers, representatives of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, practitioners, civil society organisations and emerging professionals for knowledge exchange, peer learning and the co-creation of practical legal and governance solutions. BLGD 2026 attracted 4,480 registrants from 170 countries.

The 2026 Biodiversity Law & Governance Day sought to facilitate dialogue, knowledge exchange, capacity-building and action to support effective, equitable and rights-based implementation of the CBD and the KMGBF. Through the Biodiversity Law and Governance Initiative (BLGI), experts from the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL), the University of Cambridge, the University of Costa Rica, Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation (APU), Yerevan State University (YSU) and partner institutions, with the support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), engaged CBD Parties, intergovernmental organisations, observers and partners to accelerate implementation of the CBD and its protocols through law and governance. BLGD 2026 built upon the previous Biodiversity Law and Governance Days convened during CBD COP13 in Cancún in 2016, COP14 in Sharm El-Sheikh in 2018, COP15 in Montreal in 2022 and COP16 in Cali in 2024.

The Day took place as COP17 undertook the first global review of collective progress under the KMGBF, and speakers across the programme acknowledged that implementation is not yet proceeding at the pace or scale required. The programme was organised around the overarching theme *Implementing Biodiversity Law through Treaties, Courts, Finance and Practice*. An Opening Plenary on cooperation and compliance among the biodiversity-related treaty regimes, a Judicial Leadership Plenary on the role of courts and a Closing Plenary on the practice of biodiversity law framed nine concurrent expert roundtables and participatory workshops, held in three rounds.

Themes of Biodiversity Law & Governance Day 2026:

- **Accelerating KMGBF Implementation and Review through Law and Governance:** the first global review of collective progress; implementation gaps identified through national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) and seventh national reports; monitoring, reporting and accountability; domestic legal reform; Indigenous laws and legal pluralism; and institutional coordination and biodiversity mainstreaming.
- **Governing Area-Based Conservation, OECMs and Rights-Based Approaches:** legal recognition and governance of other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs); effective, equitable and durable Target 3 implementation; marine governance and linkages with the Agreement on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement); diverse governance models and community-led conservation; tenure, stewardship, consent and benefit-sharing; and pathways for durable conservation outcomes.
- **Advancing Access and Benefit-Sharing, DSI and Responsible Biodiversity Technologies:** equitable access and benefit-sharing (ABS) implementation; operationalisation of the multilateral mechanism for digital sequence information (DSI) and the Cali Fund; Indigenous traditional knowledge, intellectual authority and data governance; national regulatory approaches; interactions with the Nagoya Protocol and other regimes; and technology-enabled monitoring and accountability.
- **Mobilising Finance, Capacity and Partnerships for KMGBF Implementation:** biodiversity finance and resource mobilisation; legal enabling conditions; reform of harmful incentives; public and private finance; mainstreaming across economic sectors; capacity-building; inclusive implementation partnerships; and sustained cooperation beyond COP17.

Through high-level plenaries, specialist panels, legal roundtables and participatory workshops, BLGD 2026 aimed to:

- Profile legal, policy and institutional innovations that translate KMGBF commitments into effective, equitable and enforceable implementation;
- Connect Parties, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, practitioners, researchers, youth and partner institutions across regions and sectors; and
- Generate concrete outputs, partnerships, capacity-building opportunities and implementation pathways before, during and after CBD COP17.

Implementing Biodiversity Law through Treaties, Courts, Finance and Practice

Biodiversity Law & Governance Day 2026

11:30 – 20:00 Yerevan AMT / 08:30 – 17:00 London BST on Saturday, 24 October 2026

during the CBD COP17 in Yerevan, Armenia | ONLINE

HIGHLIGHTS AND OUTCOMES STATEMENT

Key Messages and Outcomes

This Statement distils the principal messages and outcomes documented in the reports of the plenaries and sessions of BLGD 2026. It distinguishes between messages that recurred across several discussions, recommendations recorded in individual session reports, announcements and follow-up actions, and proposals made by individual speakers. BLGD 2026 did not adopt a collective declaration or negotiated outcome, and none of the statements below should be read as agreed by all participants or as positions of the organising institutions.

Recurring Messages Across the Day

1. **Synergies across agreements and institutions.** Commitments under the biodiversity-related agreements are best delivered together. Examples included joint programmes and shared staff between treaty secretariats and strategic plans aligned with the KMGBF, while national focal points working in silos and fragmented ministerial responsibilities were identified as obstacles to implementation. In access and benefit-sharing, mutual support between the Nagoya Protocol, the GRATK Treaty and the ITPGRFA was seen as essential to avoid duplication and double payments. Speakers extended the call for coherence to the Rio conventions, to the BBNJ Agreement and to addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution together. *(Grand Opening; Opening Plenary; Sessions V, VI and VII; Closing Plenary)*

2. **From commitments to enforceable law.** The targets of the KMGBF need to be translated into national legislation, institutions and budgets, and into sectoral policy, spatial planning, environmental impact assessment and the rules governing investment and trade. Implementation gaps were characterised as governance challenges rather than merely technical ones. *(Grand Opening; Opening Plenary; Session V; Judicial Leadership Plenary; Closing Plenary)*

3. **Law as an enabling condition for finance.** Market-based instruments were consistently paired with legal and regulatory frameworks rather than presented as alternatives. Because ecosystems are public goods, market incentives were considered to require supportive legal frameworks, and investment in conservation and restoration was seen to depend on legal certainty and on the reform of harmful incentives. *(Opening Plenary; Sessions IV and V; Closing Plenary)*

4. **Participation as decision-making.** Indigenous Peoples, local communities and young people should be recognised as rights-holders and decision-makers rather than merely consulted, with free, prior and informed consent, genuine representation, and the resources needed to participate. Indigenous knowledge should be given greater weight, including alongside scientific evidence. *(Opening Plenary; Sessions I, V, VII, VIII and IX; Judicial Leadership Plenary; Closing Plenary)*

5. **Credibility and accountability.** Progress should be judged by the quality and durability of outcomes rather than by area or commitments alone, supported by monitoring, transparent reporting and review. Restoration must never be used to justify continued degradation. *(Opening Plenary; Sessions I, IV, V and VII)*

6. **Courts, the rule of law and future generations.** Courts are increasingly translating principles of international environmental law and intergenerational equity into enforceable domestic standards. Views differed on the respective roles of courts and legislatures in recognising new protections for nature. *(Grand Opening; Opening Plenary; Judicial Leadership Plenary)*

Recommendations Recorded in Session Reports

The following recommendations are recorded in the reports of individual sessions. They reflect the discussions of each session and were not adopted by participants of the Day as a whole.

- **Credible OECMs (Session I):** combine OECMs with other conservation mechanisms rather than treating them as a universal solution; underpin them with appropriate legal and policy frameworks, effective governance and safeguards for the rights and participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities; and strengthen monitoring, transparent reporting and periodic review.
- **Financing nature restoration (Session IV):** pursue a balanced approach that integrates public finance, private-sector participation and effective regulation, taking account of the constraints faced by countries with less developed financial markets.
- **Landscape-seascape restoration (Session V):** advance proactive restoration legislation addressing persistent and historical degradation; strengthen policy coherence across environmental, agricultural, mining, climate and economic policies; connect international commitments with enforceable national laws, clear responsibilities, adequate budgets and transparent monitoring; ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities; mobilise sustainable restoration finance; promote evidence-based and accountable restoration, including in the use of emerging technologies; and strengthen international and cross-sector cooperation.
- **Access and benefit-sharing (Session VI):** develop coordinated national frameworks integrating intellectual property, environmental, development and climate policies; clarify the scope of obligations and establish transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms; strengthen institutional capacity; protect the interests of Indigenous Peoples and local communities through meaningful participation and research ethics; and promote international cooperation on common triggers, clearer allocation of benefits, mutual support between regimes and the avoidance of duplication.
- **Marine conservation and the BBNJ Agreement (Session VII):** as Parties prepare for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the BBNJ Agreement, prioritise meaningful Indigenous representation, accessible financing, institutional coordination and conservation mechanisms that deliver measurable and lasting ecological benefits; mobilise resources and connect donors with implementation needs as immediate priorities.
- **Youth and local governance (Session VIII):** recognise young people explicitly in biodiversity targets relating to finance, monitoring and implementation and in environmental texts; build partnerships with local authorities and youth organisations; and provide access to technical knowledge, resources and negotiation training.
- **Indigenous laws and legal pluralism (Session IX):** recognise Indigenous governance systems and jurisdictions; provide direct financial support to community institutions; and incorporate community-generated knowledge into biodiversity monitoring and national policies.

Announcements and Follow-Up Actions

The following announcements and follow-up actions were documented during the Day. They are steps taken or announced by the institutions concerned, not collective commitments of BLGD 2026.

- The establishment of an **International Law Association Armenia Branch** was initiated: its statutes and initial Executive Council membership have been submitted to the ILA Executive Council, whose confirmation was pending at the time of the Day.
- The **Society for Ecological Restoration** reported that its paper on Proactive Ecosystem Restoration Legislation, including sample legislative text, was under peer review, with publication anticipated in early 2027.
- The **UNCCD G20 Global Land Initiative** described the use of its Global Changemakers Academy for Parliamentarians as a platform for co-developing model restoration legislation with legislators.
- The **IUCN WCEL Biodiversity Law Specialist Group** noted that its 2026–2029 work programme includes legal pathways for Target 3, protected areas and OECMs, implementation of the BBNJ Agreement and its coherence with existing treaties, and rights-based biodiversity governance.

- The **Pontificia Universidad Javeriana** reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the Biodiversity Law and Governance Day.
- Participants were invited to COP17 events on legal pathways for OECMs on 26 and 28 October 2026, and to **Climate Law and Governance Day 2026** on 13 November 2026 at Antalya Bilim University and online during UNFCCC COP31.

Proposals and Opportunities for Future Action

The following proposals and opportunities were put forward by individual speakers. They were not adopted as collective outcomes and are recorded here as possible avenues for future action.

- Include a judicial panel at every future Biodiversity and Climate Law and Governance Day; a proposal for a judicial panel at the next COP was reported to be under active consideration (Judicial Leadership Plenary).
- Adopt proactive restoration legislation at national or subnational level, legislatively decoupling the restoration of persistent degradation from the restoration of new damage (Session V).
- Establish institutions able to represent the interests of future generations and nature before courts, drawing on the model of Hungary's Ombudsman for Future Generations (Judicial Leadership Plenary).
- Strengthen regulators and use environmental impact assessment and mandatory mediation as practical enforcement tools alongside court orders (Judicial Leadership Plenary).
- Strengthen ecological connectivity in the implementation of Target 3, recognising its possible emergence as a principle of international environmental law (Opening Plenary).
- Develop science-verified, technology-enabled platforms connecting credible, locally led restoration projects with investors, subject to transparency, independent verification and community consent (Session V).
- Encourage law firms to establish dedicated nature and biodiversity practices, and embed biodiversity obligations in project-level legal agreements (Closing Plenary).

Implications for Biodiversity Law and Governance

- With the KMGBF entering its first global review, the documented discussions place legal and institutional capacity at the centre of implementation; as noted in the Closing Plenary, the main barriers identified by the IPBES Transformative Change Assessment are largely sociopolitical rather than technical.
- As a framework adopted by decision of the CBD Conference of the Parties, the KMGBF is generally understood not to create new treaty obligations of its own. Its targets acquire legal effect largely through domestic legislation, existing treaty obligations and judicial interpretation, which helps explain the emphasis placed on national legal reform, coordination among treaty regimes and the role of courts.
- The recommendations and proposals recorded in this Statement are directed at legislators, courts, treaty bodies, institutions and practitioners. They are not legal obligations, and they were not adopted as a collective outcome of the Day.

2026 Biodiversity Law & Governance Day Grand Opening

Welcome from Masters of Ceremonies: **Dr Daniel Ruiz de Garibay** (Senior Lecturer, Asia Pacific Univ / Associate Fellow & BLGI Programme Coordinator, CISDL); **Dr Tejas Rao** (Research Director, CISDL / Postdoctoral Research Associate, Univ Cambridge); **Assoc Prof Olympia Geghamyan** (Acting Head, Chair of Civil Procedure / Head, A. Iskoyan Center for Environmental Law, YSU)

Chairs: **Prof Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger WIJA** (Chair, BLGI & Senior Director, CISDL / Chair in Sustainable Development Law & Policy, Univ Cambridge); **Prof Jorge Cabrera Medaglia** (Chair, BLGI & Lead Counsel, CISDL / Professor of Law, Univ Costa Rica); **Prof Yeghishe Kirakosyan** (Professor of Law & Director LLM Intl Courts & Arbitration, YSU)

Welcome: **Prof Hovhannes Hovhannisyan** (Rector, Yerevan State Univ); **H.E. Srbuhi Galyan** (Minister of Justice of the Republic of Armenia); **H.E. Aram Meymaryan** (Deputy Minister of Environment of the Republic of Armenia); **Prof Markus W. Gehring** (Professor in European and International Law, Univ Cambridge / Lead Counsel, CISDL); **Prof Tenia Kyriazi** (Secretary-General, Intl Law Association – UAE)

Session outcomes: Welcoming remarks stressed that international environmental commitments must become effective national legislation, accountable institutions and tangible results, and that biodiversity protection is inseparable from the rule of law, good governance, human rights and responsibilities towards future generations. Post-conflict settings were highlighted as facing intensified environmental pressure, calling for coherent domestic legislation, clear institutional mandates and effective coordination, while the protection of shared natural resources across borders was seen to require international law and constructive engagement. Universities were called upon to connect disciplines so that legal and policy decisions rest on scientific evidence and long-term consequences.

Opening Plenary: Implementing International Biodiversity Law – From Commitments to Cooperation and Compliance

How can leading international biodiversity treaties and organisations accelerate coherent, effective and rights-based compliance with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, despite a challenging geopolitical context?

Hosted by CISDL, Univ Cambridge, Univ Costa Rica, Asia Pacific Univ and Yerevan State Univ

Chairs: **Prof Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger WIJA** (Chair, BLGI & Senior Director, CISDL / Chair in Sustainable Development Law & Policy, Univ Cambridge); **Prof Jorge Cabrera Medaglia** (Chair, BLGI & Lead Counsel, CISDL / Professor of Law, Univ Costa Rica); **Prof Yeghishe Kirakosyan** (Professor of Law & Director LLM Intl Courts & Arbitration, YSU)

Keynote: **Hon Elizabeth Maruma Mrema** (UN Assistant Secretary-General & Deputy Executive Director, UNEP), by video address

Plenary Speakers: **Hon Ivonne Higuero** (Secretary-General, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna & Flora CITES); **Adv Andy Raine** (Executive Secretary, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, CMS); **Adv Maria-Goreti Muavesi** (Chair, IUCN WCEL Biodiversity Law Specialist Group); **Dr Kent Nnadozie** (Secretary, International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food & Agriculture ITPGRFA / FAO), by video address

Session outcomes: Speakers framed COP17's first global review of the KMGBF around the need to translate commitments into national law, sectoral policy, environmental impact assessment and the rules governing investment and trade, with finance, planning and sectoral ministries given clear mandates and budgets. Coherence was a central theme: examples included joint programmes and shared staff between treaty secretariats and strategic plans aligned with the KMGBF, while national focal points for different conventions too often work in silos,

and national-level synergies were identified as the place where implementation ultimately happens. Speakers also described monitoring and reporting as accountability tools, the reform of harmful incentives as fundamental to the Framework, ecological connectivity as essential to Target 3, and secure tenure, free, prior and informed consent, participation and access to justice as conditions of rights-based implementation. Implementation gaps were characterised as governance rather than purely technical challenges, particularly acute for Small Island Developing States with limited institutional capacity.

I. Expert Roundtable: Transitioning from Recognition to Results – Legal and Governance Pathways for Credible OECMs

How can legal and policy frameworks move OECMs from recognition to credible and durable conservation outcomes? What governance arrangements, rights safeguards and participation mechanisms are needed to ensure legitimacy and effectiveness? How can monitoring, reporting and review strengthen OECM implementation under Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework?

Hosted by CISDL and WWF

Chairs: **Dr Daniel Ruiz de Garibay** (Senior Lecturer, Asia Pacific Univ / Associate Fellow & BLGI Programme Coordinator, CISDL); **Dr Harry D. Jonas** (Director, Conservation Areas, WWF-US)

Speakers / Discussants: **Carolina Hazin** (Global Senior Policy Advisor for Area-Based Conservation Measures, The Nature Conservancy; IUCN WCPA); **Laure Germain-Thomas** (Programme Officer for Protected Areas & Naturalness, IUCN French Committee); **Marianne A. Fahed** (PhD Candidate, Holy Spirit Univ Kaslik, Lebanon); **Hari Kushardanto** (Vice President, Rare Indonesia)

Session outcomes: The recognition of OECMs is expanding rapidly, but recognition alone does not guarantee effective and lasting conservation outcomes. OECMs were described as a distinct and complementary approach rather than protected areas under another name, whose credibility depends on appropriate legal and policy frameworks, effective governance arrangements and safeguards for the rights and participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Monitoring, transparent reporting and periodic review were emphasised as essential for accountability. The session concluded that OECMs cannot serve as a universal solution: achieving 30x30 requires combining them with other conservation mechanisms so that recognised areas deliver credible, equitable and durable outcomes.

II. Expert Roundtable: Implementing Biodiversity Treaties in Post-Conflict Settings – From Conflict to Dialogue

How has Armenia implemented its obligations under CBD and other biodiversity treaties, in a post-conflict setting? How do biodiversity treaty obligations apply in the aftermath of a conflict and across contested or closed borders? How effective are compliance and dispute-settlement mechanisms under conservation treaties in such settings? Can shared biodiversity treaty obligations create channels for dialogue, cooperation and sustainable peace between states?

Hosted by Yerevan State Univ (YSU)

Chairs: **Prof Yeghishe Kirakosyan** (Professor of Law & Director LLM Intl Courts & Arbitration, YSU); **Assoc Prof Olympia Geghamyan** (Acting Head, Chair of Civil Procedure / Head, A. Iskoyan Center for Environmental Law, YSU)

Speakers / Discussants: **Dr Gor Samvel** (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action Post-Doc, UiT The Arctic Univ of Norway); **Adv Kristine Khanazadyan** (Founding Partner, Equity Law Partners); **Adv Anna Karapetyan** (Deputy Minister of Justice, Republic of Armenia); **Dr Irina Ghaplanyan** (Senior Climate Change Specialist, World Bank Group)

Session outcomes: Hosted by Yerevan State University, one of the co-hosts of the Day, this expert roundtable was convened in the first round of concurrent sessions to examine how biodiversity treaty obligations are implemented in post-conflict settings, taking Armenia's experience under the CBD and other biodiversity treaties as its point of departure. The programme set out to explore how such obligations apply in the aftermath of conflict and across contested or closed borders, how effective the compliance and dispute-settlement mechanisms of conservation treaties are in these circumstances, and whether shared treaty obligations can open channels for dialogue, cooperation and sustainable peace between States. The relationship between post-conflict settings and environmental governance was also raised in the Grand Opening by the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Armenia.

Chaired by Prof Yeghishe Kirakosyan and Assoc Prof Olympia Geghamyan of Yerevan State University, the roundtable was programmed to bring together perspectives from academic research, legal practice, the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia and the World Bank Group.

III. Expert Roundtable: Rights-Based Conservation, Community Stewardship and Restoration in Africa

How can African countries strengthen rights-based and community-led approaches to biodiversity conservation and restoration? What legal and governance frameworks are needed to support community stewardship, women-led conservation and livelihood initiatives, OECMs and restoration of degraded landscapes? What lessons from Zambia, Benin and other African countries can support effective implementation of Targets 2 and 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework?

Hosted by Afrique Espérance & Développement (AfREDE) & Shibuyunji District Women's Cooperatives

Chairs: **Oyeoussi Charles Balogoun** (CEO & Founder, Afrique Espérance & Développement, AfREDE Benin); **Taza Mulenga Lungu** (Shibuyunji District Women's Cooperatives, Zambia)

Speakers / Discussants: **Brighton Mutali** (Shibuyunji District Women's Cooperatives, Zambia); **Anthony Simukonde** (Executive Director & Founder, Greenit Enviro Management Network, Zambia); **Dieu Donné Razaramaro** (Founder, Mi'Art Eco, Madagascar); **Innocent Antoine Houedji** (Executive Director, Youth Initiative for Land in Africa YILAA, Benin); **Maurras Akakpo** (Executive Director, BIOSPHERE, Benin)

Session outcomes: Hosted by Afrique Espérance & Développement (AfREDE) and the Shibuyunji District Women's Cooperatives, this expert roundtable was convened in the first round of concurrent sessions to examine how African countries can strengthen rights-based and community-led approaches to biodiversity conservation and restoration. The programme set out to consider the legal and governance frameworks needed to support community

stewardship, women-led conservation and livelihood initiatives, OECMs and the restoration of degraded landscapes, and to draw lessons from Zambia, Benin and other African countries for the implementation of Targets 2 and 3 of the KMGBF.

Chaired by representatives of AfREDE in Benin and of the Shibuyunji District Women's Cooperatives in Zambia, the roundtable was programmed to bring together community-based, youth and environmental organisations from Africa, giving particular prominence to practitioner and community perspectives from the continent.

IV. Expert Roundtable: Financing Nature Restoration: Markets, Mandates, or Both?

What is the private-sector business case for financing nature restoration and adaptation today? Given that ecosystems are public goods, is mandatory intervention essential to achieve the goals of 30x30? Can a hybrid model combine the strengths of market-led finance with legal and policy mandates to deliver effective and durable nature restoration?

Hosted by Hogan Lovells Cadwalader

Chair: **Adv Emily Julier** (Counsel Knowledge Lawyer, Hogan Lovells Cadwalader)

Speakers / Discussants: **Eoin Murray** (Chief Investment Officer, Rebalance Earth); **Adv Bryony Widdup** (Partner, Co-Head of Sustainable Finance & Investment, Hogan Lovells Cadwalader); **Ian Herbert** (New Zealand BIOFIN Assessment Lead / Univ Otago Business School / Member, CBD Academic & Research Group); **Adv Harry Wright** (CEO & Founder, Bright Tide); **Sangeeta Laudus** (Strategic Development Advisor, London Wildlife Trust)

Session outcomes: Biodiversity conservation often receives a very limited share of national budgets, and UNDP-supported BIOFIN assessments are helping countries to identify financing needs and strategies. Public subsidies, nature-based carbon credits and other market-driven instruments can encourage private investment, but countries with less developed financial markets face particular constraints. Because ecosystems are public goods, market incentives were considered to require appropriate legal and policy frameworks. In answer to its title question, the session pointed to both markets and mandates: achieving 30x30 depends on a balanced approach integrating public finance, private-sector participation and effective regulation.

V. Expert Roundtable: Advancing Landscape-Seascape Restoration Through Proactive Law and Policy Coherence

How can legal and policy frameworks accelerate implementation of Target 2 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework? What forms of policy coherence, incentives and institutional coordination are needed to scale up effective landscape and seascape restoration, and how can proactive legislation drive them? How can governments, practitioners and international partnerships translate restoration commitments into durable implementation supported by proactive legislation that transcends political cycles?

Hosted by Commonland, with participation from Global Partnership on Forest & Landscape Restoration (GPFLR), Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), WWF, Global Landscapes Forum (GLF), G20 Global Land Initiative & GIZ

Chairs: **Dr Victoria Gutierrez** (Head of Global Policy, Commonland); **Bethanie Walder** (Executive Director, Society for Ecological Restoration)

Opening Remarks: **Dr Yasmine Fouad** (UN Under-Secretary-General & Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, UNCCD), by video address

Speakers / Discussants: **Anita Diederichsen** (Forest Landscape Restoration Global Lead, WWF / Chair, Global Partnership on Forest & Landscape Restoration); **Adv Joann Lee** (Programme Officer, UNCCD G20 Global Land Initiative); **John Colmey** (Co-Founder & Senior Strategic Adviser, Global Landscapes Forum / Senior Director, Landscape Alliance); **Juan Carlos Losada Vargas** (Former Member, House of Representatives of Colombia 2018–2026); **Prof An Cliquet** (Professor of Environmental & Biodiversity Law, Ghent Univ)

Session outcomes: Existing restoration law, whether incident-related, compensatory or place-based, leaves a substantial gap of persistent and historical degradation that depends on voluntary action. Proactive restoration legislation, with measurable targets, deadlines, responsible institutions, monitoring and finance, was presented as a means of closing this gap, and the EU Nature Restoration Regulation was cited as a binding example of time-bound restoration obligations. Speakers argued that framework laws turn targets into duties, enforce coherence where some public policies fund restoration while others subsidise degradation, and confer authority and resources on Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and that durable laws require cross-party coalitions and implementation provisions written into the law itself. Restoration was also presented as a delivery mechanism for synergies between the conventions at the landscape level, and panellists affirmed that restoration must never be used to justify continued degradation. Views differed on whether the precautionary principle supports restoration interventions or may in some circumstances hinder them, with the principle of *in dubio pro natura* proposed as a complement.

VI. Expert Roundtable: Exploring New Developments for the Implementation of Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)

What are the emerging issues, trends and challenges for effective implementation of ABS? How do the Nagoya Protocol, WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge (GRATK Treaty), ITPGRFA and other international regimes intersect, and how can more coherent national regulations be crafted?

Hosted by Univ Costa Rica, Univ Cambridge, Univ Ottawa and Max Planck Institute

Chairs: **Prof Jorge Cabrera Medaglia** (Chair, BLGI & Lead Counsel, CISDL / Professor of Law, Univ Costa Rica); **Prof Markus W. Gehring** (Professor in European and International Law, Univ Cambridge / Lead Counsel, CISDL)

Speakers / Discussants: **Adv Manuel Ruiz** (Fellow, CISDL); **Prof Chidi Oguamanam** (Professor of Law, Univ Ottawa); **Dr Pedro Batista** (Affiliated Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute Munich / Leibniz Institute for Information Infrastructure Karlsruhe); **Prof Christine Frison** (Research Professor, Univ Liège), by video address

Session outcomes: Access and benefit-sharing faces emerging challenges from the growing use of DSI, fragmented international regulation and the limited delivery of tangible benefits to the countries and communities that conserve genetic resources; monetary contributions to new mechanisms remain far below expectations, and voluntary funding has proved insufficient. The absence of an agreed definition of DSI, difficulties in tracing its use, uncertainty over benefit calculation and distribution, and the risk of overlapping obligations and double payments create legal uncertainty. The Nagoya Protocol, the GRATK Treaty and the ITPGRFA operate under different mandates: the GRATK Treaty introduces mandatory disclosure requirements in patent applications but does not establish a comprehensive benefit-sharing system. Coordinated national frameworks, transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms, stronger institutional capacity and the protection of Indigenous Peoples and local communities are needed, together with international cooperation on common triggers, clearer allocation of benefits and mutual support between regimes.

Judicial Leadership Plenary: Nature on Trial – Courts, Rights and Biodiversity

How are courts and judges shaping the implementation of biodiversity law, environmental rights and duties to future generations? What are the most important trends, barriers and opportunities for progress?

Chairs: **Prof Alessandra Lehmen** (Fellow, CISDL / Professor of Law, Univ Caxias do Sul); **Tim Scott** (Senior Policy Advisor on Environmental Governance, UNDP); **Adv Nina Pindham** (Chair, UKELA / Barrister, Cornerstone Barristers)

Plenary Speakers: **Hon Judge Prof Marcel Szabó** (Justice, Constitutional Court of Hungary); **Hon Judge Jawad Hassan** (Justice, Lahore High Court, Pakistan); **Hon Judge Dr Martin Borowsky** (Judge, Regional Court (Landgericht) Erfurt, Germany)

Session outcomes: Courts are increasingly shaping the implementation of biodiversity law. In Pakistan, courts have read a right to a healthy environment into the right to life and given binding effect to principles of international environmental law, including in a case recognising that a child may bring an environmental claim. Hungary's constitutional jurisprudence treats biodiversity as part of the common heritage of the nation, protects the choice, quality and access of future generations, and applies a dynamic principle of non-regression. In Germany, rights of nature have been recognised within EU law through judicial interpretation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The discussion emphasised judicial independence and courage, the use of scientific evidence, and institutions such as an ombudsman for future generations, environmental impact assessment and mediation. Views differed on the reach of judicial creativity: one judge urged courts to interpret the law creatively with an eye to future decades, while another described judge-made rights of nature as a second-best route compared with legislation.

VII. Expert Roundtable: Implementing Target 3: Partnerships, Capacity, and Global Marine Conservation Pathways for 30x30

Four years after the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), which places particular emphasis on a whole-of-society approach to implementation, what is the single most important lesson it can offer BBNJ Parties as they prepare for COP1? How can BBNJ help fill the legal and policy gaps towards implementation of KMGBF Target 3? How can we ensure that recognising community-led and Indigenous stewardship strengthens their rights and authority, rather than simply helping governments meet numerical conservation targets?

Hosted by The Pew Charitable Trusts

Chairs: **Adv Masha Kalinina** (Senior Officer, The Pew Charitable Trusts); **Arianna Beeray** (High Seas Youth Ambassador from Trinidad & Tobago)

Speakers / Discussants: **Fariz Ahmadov** (Senior Policy Advisor, Fisheries & Oceans Canada); **Candeze Mongaya** (Manager, Policy & Government Initiatives, Rare Philippines); **Solomon Kahoʻohalahala** (Hawaiian Elder & Leadership Council Leader for One Oceania)

Session outcomes: The success of 30x30 depends on the quality of governance and on the effectiveness and durability of conservation measures, not on numerical targets alone. The BBNJ Agreement offers an opportunity to fill gaps in marine governance through cooperation among States, international organisations and regional institutions, complementing existing legal frameworks, with clearly defined institutional responsibilities and marine spatial planning as an important tool. Indigenous Peoples and local communities should be recognised as decision-makers rather than merely stakeholders, with free, prior and informed consent and genuine representation, and their participation requires financial and technical support, including to meet the costs of travel. The ocean was recognised as an interconnected system linked to coastal and terrestrial ecosystems and extending to areas beyond national jurisdiction.

VIII. Participatory Workshop: Activating Youth and Local Biodiversity Governance for Implementation Beyond COP17

How can young people participate meaningfully in local biodiversity governance and implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework? How can youth-led action contribute to the protection and restoration of local ecosystems, wetlands and waterways? What legal, institutional and capacity-building partnerships are needed to sustain youth engagement and local implementation beyond COP17?

Hosted by Global Youth Council on Science, Law & Sustainability (GYC-SLS); Voices of Future Generations Children's Initiative (VoFG CI); Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) & Youth Negotiators Academy (YNA)

Chairs: **Portia Garnons-Williams** (Chair, GYC-SLS); **Nico Roman** (Vice-Chair, GYC-SLS / STP Student, UWC Atlantic College); **Ela Martinez** (Programme Manager, VoFG CI)

Speakers / Discussants: **Seth Thomas** (Co-founder, GYBN USA); **Jeremi Trojak** (Councillor & Fenlands Youth Advisor, GYC-SLS); **Michelle Bidima** (Representative, YNA); **Matthew Carvalho** (Health Programme Coordinator, CISDL / Researcher, Georgetown Univ Law Center / YNA); **Sophia Grac** (Councillor & Fenlands Youth Advisor, GYC-SLS); **James Bonsall** (Scholar, Winchester College)

Closing Keynote: **Vienna Swampy** (Indigenous Child Author, Voices of Future Generations / Youth Leader, Samson Cree Nation), by video address

Session outcomes: Youth participation must go beyond consultation and awareness-raising so that young people's contributions influence decisions. Young people act as sources of knowledge for local authorities and as bridges between local implementation and multilateral negotiations, and youth-led initiatives, illustrated by an example from Burkina Faso, can mobilise communities around river restoration and the sustainable management of shared

resources. Restoration should go beyond one-off activities and involve communities in identifying problems and developing inclusive solutions. Sustaining engagement beyond COP17 requires partnerships with local authorities and youth organisations, access to technical knowledge, resources and negotiation training, and explicit recognition of young people in biodiversity targets and environmental texts.

IX. Expert Roundtable: Advancing Indigenous Laws, Legal Pluralism and Diverse Value Systems of Nature in Latin America and the Caribbean

How can Indigenous laws and legal pluralism strengthen implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in Latin America and the Caribbean? How can diverse values of nature, traditional knowledge and community governance be better reflected in NBSAPs and biodiversity policy? What legal and institutional reforms are needed to ensure meaningful participation, rights protection and recognition of Indigenous and local governance systems?

Hosted by Asociación Ciudadana por los Derechos Humanos (ACDH), Latin American and Caribbean Ecofeminist Network and Univ Buenos Aires

Chair: **Prof María José Lubertino** (President, Asociación Ciudadana por los Derechos Humanos / Professor, Faculty of Law, Univ Buenos Aires)

Speakers / Discussants: **Berta Medrano** (Leader, CBD Women's Caucus); **Xiomara Acevedo** (Founder & Executive Director, Fundación Barranquilla+20, Colombia); **Paula Alvarado Mamani** (Assistant Secretary, ACDH Argentina); **Adv María Paula González Espinel** (Coordinator, Alternatives to Development Programme, Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad, Colombia); **Adv Dalia Fernanda Márquez Añez** (Global Co-Chair, UNEP Women's Major Group)

Session outcomes: Indigenous Peoples and local communities should be recognised as rights-holders and essential contributors to biodiversity conservation, not merely as stakeholders. A significant gap persists between international commitments and national implementation, particularly for KMGBF Targets 22 and 23 on participation, access to justice, the protection of environmental human rights defenders, gender equality and women's empowerment, with insufficient funding, measurable indicators and legal protection mechanisms identified as obstacles; Colombia, Mexico and Chile were noted for their progress in integrating these objectives into national biodiversity strategies. The session stressed the links between biodiversity loss and gender inequality, presented ecocentric approaches and the rights of nature as alternatives to conventional conservation models, and identified the Escazú Agreement as a key regional instrument for access to environmental information, public participation and access to justice, and for the protection of environmental defenders. It concluded that effective biodiversity governance requires legal pluralism, gender-responsive policies and meaningful community participation.

Closing Plenary: From Commitments to Delivery – Biodiversity Law in Practice

What does effective implementation of biodiversity law require in practice from lawyers, conservation organisations, governments, clients and institutional partners after COP17?

Chairs: **Prof Marie-Claire Cordonier Segger WIJA** (Chair, BLGI & Senior Director, CISDL / Chair in Sustainable Development Law & Policy, Univ Cambridge); **Prof Jorge Cabrera Medaglia** (Chair, BLGI & Lead Counsel, CISDL / Professor of Law, Univ Costa Rica); **Prof Yeghishe Kirakosyan** (Professor of Law & Director LLM Intl Courts & Arbitration, YSU)

Closing Keynote: **Dr Grethel Aguilar** (Director-General, Intl Union for Conservation of Nature IUCN), by video address

Speakers / Discussants: **Prof Carlos Andrés Echeverry Restrepo** (Associate Professor & Director, Dept of Legal & Political Science, Pontificia Univ Javeriana, Cali); **Tim Scott** (Senior Policy Advisor on Environmental Governance, UNDP); **Adv Bryony Widdup** (Partner, Co-Head of Sustainable Finance & Investment, Hogan Lovells Cadwalader); **Adv Vesselina Haralampieva** (Head of Sustainable Finance Governance & Regulation, EBRD); **Audrey Wagner** (Coordinator, Academic & Research Organisations Caucus to the CBD)

Celebratory Launch of the International Law Association Armenia Branch: **Prof Yeghishe Kirakosyan** (Professor of Law & Director LLM Intl Courts & Arbitration, YSU)

Session outcomes: Speakers called for the interlinked crises of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss to be addressed together, and for binding commitments across all sectors, supported by checks and balances, so that the ambitious targets of the KMGBF are matched by enforceable implementation mechanisms. It was argued that finance alone is insufficient: legal frameworks need clarity, consistency, enforceability and predictability; biodiversity obligations should be embedded in project-level legal agreements; and nature credits and payments for ecosystem services require legal certainty on the ownership of benefits and on verification. Hybrid public-private models, in which the public sector both catalyses finance and sets mandatory rules, were described as the most effective structure. With the main barriers to implementation identified as largely sociopolitical rather than technical, universities, law firms and academic networks were seen as having important roles in research, training and engagement in CBD processes. The Day closed with the initiation of an International Law Association Armenia Branch, whose confirmation by the ILA Executive Council was pending.

With special recognition to BLGD 2026 partners and supporters:

LAW FIRM PARTNER

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS AND NETWORKS

And warmest thanks to our academic collaborators and institutional partners:

CO-ORGANISING AND HOST UNIVERSITIES

ACADEMIC COLLABORATORS