

Online Seminar
Global Network on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions
“The Key Role of Biodiversity in Support of Sustainable Water & Energy Solutions,
Terrestrial Ecosystems, & Climate Change Objectives”

Summary

13 August 2021

10:00 – 11:30 AM NY Time

1.

4. Mr. Gustavo Ovelar, Head of Environmental Management, ItaipuBinacional, Paraguay, noted the credentials of the panelists and spoke on a project to improve wild animal research planned for 2022 and a collaboration between the WWF and Itaipu to quantify Itaipu's carbon capture. Mr. Ovelar also noted a developing virtual course on climate change using Itaipu's web platform.

5. Panel Presentations: Sharing Experiences on Biodiversity, Water, and Energy for Fighting Climate Change
 - a) Mr. Francisco Dallmeier, Director of the Center for Conservation and Sustainability of the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the National Zoo, United States:

- c) **Ms. Regiane Borsato, Technical Coordinator LIFE Institute, Brazil:** We cannot talk about water and energy without talking about biodiversity. The LIFE Institute, headquartered in Curitiba, Brazil, is a standard-setting organization that is best known for creating the LIFE Methodology for Business and Biodiversity, which is a tool to measure the pressure index of biodiversity and the performance of a business regarding biodiversity. High-performing organizations can receive a certification. This tool has a strong track record, with 11 years of development (6 years in operation), and is considered one of 5 main global metrics for biodiversity, and the most mature and tested for businesses. It has helped in 52 conservation projects, among many other achievements. A newer development, the Sustainable Territorial Management tool, will be released in the coming months, made with help from Itaipu. The “dimensions of discussion” for the STS approach include environmental, economic, and cultural factors. In developing the tool, the LIFE Institute launched an international network to talk about sustainable territorial management issues and held public consultations resulting in hundreds of contributions. The final step is creating local diagnoses and organizing training for local players, so that they can play a major role in this new strategy for ensuring sustainable practices.
- d) **Ms. Bianca Brasil, Program Manager of Business Engagement with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Canada:** The Convention of Biological Diversity, a legally binding agreement for 196 parties from the Rio Conventions, has laid out a modern plan for biodiversity and environmental policy. The post-2020 framework is relevant to business operations, regulatory requirements, and resource mobilization, among others. By 2050, the goal is to be “at harmony with nature.” Leading up to 2030, then, we must take urgent action to recover biodiversity. This plan involves 4 long-term goals, 21 action-oriented targets, and a monitoring framework. The 4 long-term goals include Ecosystems, Species, & Genetic Diversity; Benefits Shared Fairly and Equitably; Human Needs are Met; and Means of Implementation. The plan also includes specific targets, such as conserving and protecting at least 30% of lands and oceans, reducing pollution from all sources to levels not harmful to biodiversity, integrating biodiversity values into policy, regulations, and planning, and redirecting, repurposing, reforming, or eliminating incentives that are harmful for biodiversity. Among the most important steps is to mainstream these ideas so that biodiversity has a central role alongside means of implementation. Biodiversity should be mainstreamed in government, the economic sector, and society at large. Businesses have an important role in recognizing and specifying materiality, integrating values of biodiversity into decisions (including supply chains, operations, and portfolios), increasing funding for biodiversity protection and sustainable practices, and overall providing leadership and commitments.

6. Discussion and Questions

- a) Mr. Dallmeier, speaking on the interconnectedness of biodiversity and climate with business and economic growth, noted that extreme weather, such as that we have

observed in recent months, has seriously impacted the region around the Panama Canal. The Panama Canal depends on water and watershed and accumulation of water during dry season. 7 years ago there was record rain in the region during an extreme cycle. The Canal nearly collapsed. Water flow is more irregular, and banks can become unstable. With the canal in unideal condition, ships may be unable to pass, and there is even concern that some of the latest, largest ships may not fit, which would have a major effect on regional and global commerce. Management of the watershed is essential. Integrating a management system related to monitoring would allow water production to be managed more efficiently. Without that kind of system, there is risk of collapse for business and the economy. This is a more obvious example, but there are plenty of others as well.

- b)** An audience member asked Mr. Scheffer if it was possible to merge hydroelectric power with biodiversity values, since hydro often involves making large reservoirs that could disrupt ecosystems. Mr. Scheffer explained that if these concerns are considered in the planning stages of a project, such as they were over 30 years ago during the planning and implementation of the Itaipu dam, they can be averted. For instance, care was taken regarding the condition of water that flows through the turbines and down the river, because water that is too high in oxygen can kill organisms. We talk about green infrastructure, but we must also work with gray infrastructure. It's important to show the business community the connections between biodiversity and ecosystem services. By getting engineers and environmental scientists together preemptively, major issues can be averted.
- c)** When asked about the emphasis on interconnectivity in the LIFE STS plan, Ms. Borsato noted that, as Mr. Dallmeier said, connectivity plays a major role in biodiversity and genetic diversity within species. Besides that, "nature has no fences" and we need to expand our efforts wherever possible. The effort has to be collective; this is what led to territorial standards. Partnerships and engagement of local players is key. The collective effort is what will ensure preservation of biodiversity. Itaipu is a good model of this in the world of environmental management, but we need similar systems of cooperation within farming communities, co-ops, and more.
- d)** Ms. Brasil was asked about the importance of business engagement and noted that business is interconnected with other factors just like water, energy, climate, and biodiversity. The current crisis is interlinked. Climate and biodiversity need to be addressed as a whole. Business and financial services have a major role to play. Business can help create trends and influence others. They are also especially notable because, in many cases, businesses can have the resources to invest in new solutions, driving progress themselves.
- e)** An audience member noted that new hydroelectric dams are being built across the world. How can new investments (in infrastructure and beyond) make the environment a priority from the very beginning of the project? Mr. Scheffer reiterated that, if you are conscious

of the environmental from the beginning, you can

Annex I – Agenda



Webinar

The Key Role of Biodiversity in Support of Sustainable Water & Energy Solutions, Terrestrial Ecosystems & Climate Change Objectives

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Moderator:

Ms. Lucy Aquino, Country Office Director, World Wildlife Fund, Paraguay

Opening Remarks:

Mr. Luiz Felipe Carbonell, Coordination Director, Itaipu Binacional, Brazil

Panel Presentations:

Sharing experiences biodiversity, water and energy for fighting climate change

Mr. Francisco Dallmeier, Director of Center for Conservation and Sustainability of the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the National Zoo, United States

Mr. Ariel Scheffer, Head of Environmental Management, Itaipu Binacional, Brazil

Ms. Regiane Borsato, Technical Manager LIFE Institute, Brazil

Ms. Jan Cassin, Director of the Water Initiative at Forest Trends, United States

Ms. Bianca Brasil, Program Manager of Business Engagement with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Canada

Discussion and Questions

Closing Remarks:

Mr. Miguel Gomez, Coordination Director, Itaipu Binacional, Paraguay