

United Nations Climate Change Conference 2021 (COP26)

Commonwealth Secretariat Official and High-level Side Events on the Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands

Summary Reports

November 2021



The Commonwealth



Commonwealth
**CLIMATE FINANCE
ACCESS HUB**

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Executive Summary

The Commonwealth Secretariat hosted two high-level side events, in the margins of the 26th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP 26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to highlight the work of Commonwealth member countries in enhancing action around climate, land and biodiversity targets and incorporating Nature-based interventions. The events also aimed to raise awareness and generate traction on the Secretariat's work programme on the **Call to Action on Living Lands (CALL)** in support of the proposed **Commonwealth Living Lands Charter** which aims to strengthen partnerships and synergies among Commonwealth member states and the Rio Conventions.

The first event, *A Commonwealth Call for Action on Living Lands: Accelerating Action against Climate Change, Desertification and Biodiversity Loss Across the 3 Rio Conventions* was held on 3rd November 2022 at the Commonwealth Pavilion. It focussed on establishing political consensus among the Commonwealth countries on the need to mainstream action around land, climate and biodiversity and catalyse momentum behind the proposed Charter ahead of the proposed 2022 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The event took the form of a facilitated dialogue featuring position statements from prime ministers and ministers of the Commonwealth membership, and a discussion paper on best practices and lessons learned on achieving and sustaining Nature-based Solutions.

The second event, *'Accelerating Climate Finance for Nature Based Solutions in Support of Climate, Land and Biodiversity Targets'* was an official UNFCCC Side Event co-hosted in partnership with the Government of Zambia and Government of Namibia. The event facilitated a discussion around the financing Nature-based Solutions, whilst identifying gaps, challenges and potential solutions for full implementation, drawing on experiences from the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub.

The key reflections and take away messages generated throughout the events highlighted:

- The need for accelerated and increased access to climate finance to propel sustainable management of land, climate and biodiversity, particularly for developing countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- Commonwealth countries recognised the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub support that is assisting member states to mobilise climate finance and the crucial role it could play in enhancing access to financing for Nature-based Solutions.
- The importance of incorporating Nature-based Solutions, community engagement, knowledge sharing, advocacy and innovative financial instruments for scaling up of impact.
- The need for institutional synergies and support to integrate the targets of the Rio Conventions to effectively coordinate action on climate, land, and biodiversity at national and sub-national levels.
- Country support for the Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands and the delivery of its workstreams supported by the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub
- A renewed commitment to set and meet ambitious targets in keeping with 1.5°C global average temperature above pre-industrial levels.

The recording of the two events may be accessed below:

[Cop26 Commonwealth Pavilion Wednesday 3rd November 2021 Afternoon session - YouTube](#)

[Accelerating Climate Finance for Nature based Solutions Climate, Land and Biodiversity Targets - YouTube](#)

PROCEEDINGS OF THE

**A Commonwealth Call for Action on Living Lands:
Accelerating Action against Climate Change,
Desertification and Biodiversity Loss Across the 3 Rio
Conventions**

COP26 High Level Side Event

3 November 2021; 15:00 - 16:00hrs GMT

Background

The Commonwealth Secretariat has launched its work programme on the **Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands (CALL)** to address the effects of unsustainable land use and increasing climatic extremes on food and water security, the destruction of soils, forests and biodiversity, and the associated negative impacts on social and economic livelihoods of people.

The Secretariat work programme on the Call to Action on Living Lands, in existence since 2017, gained momentum after the 2019 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land¹ which triggered the conversation of member countries coming together to work at the juncture of biodiversity, climate change and land. In interconnecting the Nationally determined Contributions, Land Degradation Neutrality Targets and Biodiversity Targets, the Commonwealth Living Lands Charter complements the Commonwealth Charter and broader Sustainable Development Goals.

The Call to Action on Living Lands recognises the need for countries to work at the conjunction of biodiversity, climate change and land degradation to synergise the implementation of commitments agreed to under the Rio Conventions – United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Recognising the remarkable support behind the Living Lands work programme, the Secretariat has commenced extensive consultations with member countries with the view to propose a **Commonwealth Living Lands Charter**. The proposed Charter will strengthen the leadership role played by the Commonwealth in this space. It will also serve as an agreement among the 54 member countries to work towards sustainable land management by integrating the targets of the Rio Conventions with the support of the Secretariat, accredited organisations and other technical and financial institutions and developmental agencies.

The Secretariat possesses the competitive advantage in convening collaborative partnerships with institutions working across the areas covered by the Rio Conventions, namely through a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations and a tripartite agreement with the UNCCD and AUDA-NEPAD. Furthermore, established mechanisms and initiatives of the Commonwealth Secretariat, particularly Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, Commonwealth Disaster Risk Finance portal, and Commonwealth Law and Climate Change Toolkit will act as potential vehicles to facilitate the implementation of the proposed Charter.

¹ [IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land: Summary for Policymakers](#)

Welcome Remarks

Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, in her welcome remarks, set the scene for the Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands by acknowledging the milestones in its development, including consultations which have been conducted with almost thirty Commonwealth member countries. The Secretary General recognised the essential role sustainable land management plays in the fight against climate change and encouraged full participation of the member countries and identified partners in supporting the Living Lands Charter at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2022. She ended by reiterating the Commonwealth's commitment to continue using its convening power, partnerships, and advocacy to support and stand in solidarity with nations most vulnerable to land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change.

Advancing Partnerships to Enhance National Development and Integrate the Rio Conventions Towards Achieving Climate, Biodiversity and Land Degradation Neutrality Targets

Antigua and Barbuda

Hon Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, spoke on innovative financing mechanisms accelerate and scale up solutions to the dual economic and climate challenges for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Considering the need for accelerated climate finance, Prime Minister Browne promoted debt-for-climate swaps as a means to relieve debt burden in Antigua and Barbuda and the wider Caribbean region and highlighted green and blue bonds as mechanisms to raise funding for a green transition.

Underlining the insufficiency of voluntary actions and random acts of charity, the Prime Minister revealed the establishment of a SIDS Commission on Climate Change and International Law between Antigua and Barbuda and Tuvalu whereby heavy polluters will be held responsible under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Antigua and Barbuda pushes for the development of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index towards an inclusive framework for funding for developing countries and SIDS.

Fiji

Hon Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, spoke on how Nature-based Solutions support the agricultural sector of Fiji. The Prime Minister began by setting the context of peril in which Fiji's food security is constantly threatened by floods, drought and rising sea levels.² Fiji has taken steps to combat these threats by developing their comprehensive legal framework and integrating food security into the NAP. Fiji's 2019 NAP on combatting desertification has enabled 8 million citizens to plant trees. The Agricultural Rural Land Policy has enabled sustainable land management with the aim of reaching no net land degradation by 2050. In the face of the pandemic, the Prime Minister shared that Fijians

² [The Commonwealth Blue Charter](#)

and farmers adapted to the changes by encouraging backyard gardens and commercialising new sectors.

Zambia

Hon Eng. Collins Nzovu, MP, Minister of Green Economy and Environment, provided a statement on how Zambia aims to build on the existing support from the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub in country to deliver increased access to climate finance for nature-based solutions. Minister Nzovu underlined Zambia's commitment to delivering on biodiversity targets as evidenced in the country's strategies and programmes through its 2015 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and its engagement in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

By erecting the Ministry dedicated to green economy and environment, Zambia has united functions on forests, climate change, meteorology, biosafety, environment protection. These realignments on portfolio functions will enhance green investments towards Zambia's target for no net loss on land degradation by 2030. Minister Nzovu recognised the Call to Action on Living Lands as a possible solution to financial constraints in achieving national targets and highlighted the government's commitment to partnership for the development of the Living Lands Programme. Minister Nzovu concluded by urging African countries to come together and work towards the various commitments of the Rio Conventions.

Uganda

Hon Beatrice Anywar Atim, Minister of State for Environment, spoke on the state of land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change in Africa and how partners can support each other in developing integrated solutions. Minister Atim shed light on the coordination across Ministries to develop a ten year programme to restore and conserve natural resources in country aiming to retain productivity on land and commercialise agriculture. In anticipation of a national day of tree planting in Uganda, the Minister hopes to connect communities to their land to discourage deforestation and grow species which can earn revenue abroad. Minister Atim concluded by calling upon partners to establish a balance between land use and biodiversity conservation.

Namibia

Hon Minister Pohamba Penomwenyo Shifeta, Minister of Environment and Tourism, shared the country's perspectives on the Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands and recognised the work programme as an opportunity to advance synergies between the Rio Conventions. At the institutional level, the National Committee on the 3 Rio Conventions catalyses and aims to meet targets on biodiversity conservation, land degradation and climate change. Namibia has enacted multi-sectoral policies to facilitate meeting LDN targets, in addition to the third national action programme from 2014-2022 to implement land degradation neutrality (LDN) targets. Minister Shifeta gave full support of the Living Lands Charter and welcomed partnership across the African region and with the Commonwealth Secretariat on advancing the work programme.

Closing Remarks

Mr David Cooper, Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Convention on Biological Diversity, provided closing remarks advocating for investment in biodiversity for land conservation and restoration, climate adaptation and mitigation. In preparation for part II of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) in Kunming, China and finalisation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, an ambitious framework on biodiversity outcomes and implementation is expected. Mr Cooper concluded by underlining that the UNCBD welcomes partnership with the Commonwealth member states and the Secretariat and looks forward to future collaborations.

Mr Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary, UN Convention to Combat Desertification, joined the session by video to underscore the importance and necessity of sustainable land management as the basis for resilience and means to address multiple development challenges. Sustainable land management and land restoration deliver climate adaptation and mitigation, improved resilience to climate shocks, enhanced food security, among other benefits. Mr Thiaw closed the session by advocating for synergy across sectors and financial investments for accelerated action on land and welcomed continued partnership with Commonwealth Secretariat to take forward the work on Living Lands.

Generating Momentum on Living Lands: Event Highlights on Sustainable Land Management from COP26

Event title	Date	Partners	Key Messages/ Way Forward	Links to CALL thematic areas
CVF-Commonwealth High-Level Panel Discussion: Climate Prosperity Partnership	1 Nov 2021	Commonwealth Secretariat, Climate Vulnerability Forum, Bangladesh, Fiji, Maldives, Barbados	<p>A Call on the UK COP26 Presidency to develop a “Climate Emergency Pact”, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (i) ‘Delivery Plan’ for the annual US\$100 billion on climate finance for developing countries from 2020-2024 with 50:50 split of funds between adaptation and mitigation; - (ii) Annual 2030 Ambition Raising platforms mandated for every COP until 2025; - (iii) Substantial progress on loss and damage by fully operationalizing the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage, mandating work for financing options to increase the level of support to frontline communities that experience loss and damage; and - (iv) CVF Climate Survival Leadership Group for COP26 headed by HE A.K. Abdul Momen, MoFA Bangladesh, incumbent CVF Presidency. - ‘Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan and Decade 2021-2030’, that proposes strategic and ambitious investments into a low-carbon high-growth development pathway, to diffuse climate threats on economic progress, while maximizing socio-economic benefits for 1.2 billion people living in countries most vulnerable to climate change. - Forge CVF and Commonwealth solidarity towards strengthening climate financing for resilience and climate prosperity and a way forward for CVF-Commonwealth knowledge sharing and capacity-building collaborations. 	<p>Climate Change, Land, Biodiversity</p> <p>Financing for implementation; Institutional Structure and Governance</p>
Why Nature-based Solutions Are Crucial for Climate and Resilience	3 Nov 2021	Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry, Global Climate Change Alliance Plus, United Nations Environment Programme, Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction	<p>Three identified barriers that hinder the evidence-based integration of NbS into international and national climate and development policy and practice include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenges in measuring or predicting the effectiveness of NbS leads to high uncertainty about their cost-effectiveness compared to alternatives. - Poor financial models and flawed approaches to economic appraisal lead to under-investment in NbS. - Inflexible and highly sectoralised forms of governance hinder uptake of NbS, with grey, engineered interventions still being the default approach for many climate adaptation and mitigation barriers 	Nature-based solutions; Climate Resilient Development
Accelerating Climate Finance for Nature-	5 Nov 2021	Commonwealth Secretariat,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NbS can contribute up to 30% of emission control, yet only 2% of financing goes to SIDS and oceans. 	Nature-based Solutions,

based Solutions - Climate, Land and Biodiversity Targets		Government of Namibia, and Government of Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NbS can help in reaching net zero emissions by 2050. To assist with reaching this goal, Australia is investing 1 billion into the ocean and 2 billion to support adaptation and mitigation initiatives. 	Sustainable Green Cover and Biodiversity, Financing for Implementation
Home of The Race to Resilience - Incorporating Nature Base Solution	5 Nov 2021	Commonwealth Secretariat, The Resilience Shift, Van Oord, Conservation International, Resilience Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White paper, 'Governance of Infrastructure for Resilience', developed by CDRI and Resilience Shift, in partnership with Arup; - NBS implemented in a transparent manner ensuring that designs & implementation are related to human capital have shown to be successful around the world; - Law, land rights and lack of capacity present challenges of incorporating NBS in infrastructure development. 	Nature-based solutions; Climate Resilient Development
Transformative Actions on Food Systems	5 Nov 2021	International Fund for Agricultural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased need for policy shifts in agriculture to promote better use of land while delivering on food, climate, and incomes; - Increased engagement of the UN system in future climate talks to place nature at the centre of the discussion and avoid silos approach to climate change; - Replacement of land use subsidies with incentives for sustainable land management - Bottom up integration of Rio Conventions through national actions 	Climate Resilient Agriculture for Food Security
Achieving Climate, Land and Biodiversity Targets through Global Partnerships and Financing	6 Nov 2021	Government of Namibia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased country-level synergies and collaboration across the 3 Rio Convention focal ministries to enhance access to financing that achieves the climate, land and biodiversity goals 	Climate Change, Land, Biodiversity
Tripartite MoU between African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development, Commonwealth Secretariat, and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification	9 Nov 2021	Commonwealth Secretariat, African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Framework of collaboration to support African countries and regional entities to implement African Union Agenda 2063 Aspirations and UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals focussing on sustainable land and water management, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Strategic Framework (2018-2030) and the proposed Commonwealth Living Lands Charter 	Climate Change, Land, Biodiversity
Green and climate-resilient agriculture - Supporting action at global level and on the ground	9 Nov 2021	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Global Environment Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Action on the ground through green and climate resilient agriculture is essential in supporting countries while maximizing synergies and minimizing trade-offs. - Achieving green and climate-resilient agriculture means reaching synergies and managing trade-offs across the wider 2030 Agenda and other relevant 	Climate Resilient Agriculture for Food Security

			<p>frameworks, including the Paris Agreement and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FAO is working to ensure commitments are better aligned to address food security, the needs of the most vulnerable people and the climate crisis. FAO participates in the development of the Coalition of Action on <i>“Climate Resilient Development Pathways: Food Systems for all beyond 2030”</i> under the UN Food Systems Summit and is actively engaged in the Rio Conventions to ensure collaboration aiming at increased country support and action on the ground. 	
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PROCEEDINGS OF THE

Accelerating Climate Finance for Nature Based Solutions in Support of Climate, Land and Biodiversity Targets

COP26 Official Side Event

5 November 2021; 16:45 - 18:00hrs GMT



The Commonwealth



Commonwealth
**CLIMATE FINANCE
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Background

Nature-based Solutions are increasingly recognised as immediate, low-cost alternatives to address increasing threats to climate, biodiversity loss and land degradation. Successful implementation of such interventions has the potential to deliver a multitude of social, environmental and economic benefits, in addition to reducing climate hazards for the most vulnerable. Consequently, many countries are including Nature-based Solutions in the adaptation components of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). However, there is still urgent need to mobilise additional funding, diversify the investment portfolio, and create innovative financial instruments and financing mechanisms for nature-based initiatives for adaptation. Whilst there are emerging financing mechanisms, Nature-based Solutions continue to be funded primarily by traditional government, philanthropic and grant sources. There is, therefore, a great need to explore more innovative financing mechanisms in order to scale up and increase the uptake of nature-based interventions.

In recognition of this, the Commonwealth Secretariat, in collaboration with the Governments of Namibia and Zambia, hosted an Official Side Event at COP 26 on 5 November 2021 in Glasgow. The event facilitated a discussion around financing Nature-based Solutions, whilst identifying gaps, challenges and potential solutions for full implementation.

The aims and objectives of the event were to:

- Highlight the benefits and increasing need for enhanced coordination around action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets under the Rio Conventions for more integrated and lasting solutions;
- Highlight the existing challenges for unlocking both public and private sector financing to support Nature-based Solutions for adaptation efforts in vulnerable member countries;
- Explore the use of innovative financing mechanisms to support the diversification and expansion of the Nature-based Solutions finance base, combining public and private funding sources; and
- Raise awareness of the Commonwealth Secretariat's programmes and commitments on land degradation neutrality, Nature-based Solutions, and sustainable land management across member countries, particularly the proposed Commonwealth Living Lands Charter, the IPP CommonSensing Project, and the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, etc.

The agenda for the meeting is provided in Annex II and the ensuing sections provide the main discussion points by sessions of the event.

Key Messages

The following key messages were noted:

- Nature-based Solutions can provide a cost-effective way to simultaneously address the interlinked climate, biodiversity and land degradation challenges.
- Commonwealth countries recognised and thanked the Secretariat for the ongoing support from the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub to mobilise climate finance, particularly for Nature-based Solutions.
- Financing for Nature-based Solutions at scale remains a challenge thus innovative financial instruments and financing mechanisms, that also encourage private sector funding, accompanied by capacity building must be explored and made available to implement high-quality natural solutions.
- Despite hurdles faced, Commonwealth member states are striving to implement nature-based interventions and approaches. Partnerships and collaboration are critical in moving forward and fostering shared experiences, knowledge and learning.

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Dr Ruth Kattumuri, Senior Director, Economic, Youth & Sustainable Development, Commonwealth Secretariat, opened the meeting and welcomed all participants and noted the importance of the topic of discussion for achieving climate, biodiversity and land degradation outcomes and significance Side Event in relation to the Commonwealth Secretariat's Living Lands workstream.

Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Commonwealth Secretary-General, in her opening remarks reiterated the vital contribution of nature to human existence. She noted that the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group I contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report provided further irrefutable evidence of the immense threats confronting the globe and the need to act urgently to curb emissions as demonstrated in the 2021 Emissions Gap Report. The Secretary-General stressed the need to deploy an array of sustainable solutions for the benefit of people and planet noting Nature-based Solutions as one approach which offers a cost-effective way to simultaneously tackle the interlinked climate, biodiversity and land degradation crisis, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to adopt green recovery strategies.

However, there are still numerous challenges with accessing the finance to implement solutions that harness the power of nature. In recognition of this, the Secretary-General reported that the Commonwealth Secretariat, under the Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands and utilising its successful tried and tested Climate Finance Access Hub, which has already supported member states to mobilise USD 44 million of climate finance including for nature-based initiatives, will continue to support member states to access all sources of funding to implement and scale up nature-based solutions for targeted and synergistic action across the Rio Conventions. The Secretary-General concluded by emphasising on the spirit of partnership and cooperation. She called upon developed countries to honour their climate finance, and assistance commitments and pledges and for member countries and all

stakeholders, including the private sector, to continue implementing finance to significantly scale up meaningful nature-based interventions in the fight against climate change.

Mr James Larson, Climate Coordinator, Deputy Secretary at Department of the Prime Minister, Australia (on behalf of the Prime Minister of Australia Hon. Scott Morrison MP), commenced his remarks by thanking the Commonwealth Secretary General for recognition and appreciation of Australia's support for the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub. He reiterated Australia's commitment to tackling climate change and achieving net zero targets by 2050. Mr Larsen stressed the importance of Nature-based Solutions quoting a market mechanism under trial in Australia that rewards farmers for increasing biodiversity in addition to reducing emissions. The initiative compliments Australia's Emissions Reduction Fund. To date, 29 percent of Australia's land and ocean is protected in accordance with the global 30 by 30 target. He reiterated Australia's announcement at COP26 to increase the 2020-2025 climate finance funding to support mitigation and adaptation efforts as well as Nature-based Solutions in the Pacific region. In closing, Mr Larsen noted that Australia looks forward to deepening partnerships through the Rio Conventions to work together to lift collective ambitions through Nature-based Solutions.

Hon. Collins Nzovu, MP, Minister of Green Economy and Environment, Zambia, began his interventions by underscoring the need for acceleration on all fronts particularly on climate finance for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) without which disastrous consequences are inevitable. He emphasised that the people of Zambia are looking for solutions, and thus, called on partners to commit to their pledges for climate finance support, level of ambition and for increased South to South cooperation and partnership. He reported that Zambia is ripe for green investment and Nature-based Solutions with over 40 million hectares of land. The Lukanga Swamps in Zambia were highlighted as an example of one of three case studies of Nature-based Solutions under WWF's Blue Heart of Africa initiative. He noted that Zambia's NDC contains two mitigation programmes, with immense adaptation core benefits, aligned with Nature-based solutions, namely sustainable forest management and conservation agriculture. The forest and agriculture sectors are major contributors of greenhouse gas emissions yet anchor the Zambian economy. Thus, mitigation and adaption in these sectors are critical to Zambia's economic development. The Hon Minister stressed the need to catalyse private sector led water and land stewardship through green bankable investments and certified environmental standards of business operations. Minister Nzovu concluded by calling all potential public or private investors in the Commonwealth to join hands with the Government of Zambia in delivering large-scale nature-based solutions.

Hon. Pohamba Shifeta, Minister of Environment Forestry and Tourism, Namibia, in his intervention, reported that Namibia had ratified the Rio Conventions and has impressed the concept of implementing all three Conventions in its approach to promote sustainable land management, build community resilience against climate change, and conserve biodiversity. Minister Shifeta noted that Namibia had accumulated significant knowledge and experiences from ongoing projects and initiatives which can be scaled up to build resilience of communities and ecosystems.

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Tourism is currently implementing a six-year GEF-funded project, ‘Namibia Integrated Landscape Approach for Enhancing Livelihoods and Environmental Governance to Eradicate Poverty’, through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) intended to reduce poverty through sustainable nature-based livelihood strategies whilst promoting biodiversity conservation, restoration of forests as carbon sinks and reduction and reversal of land degradation. The Ministry is also implementing a five-year Green Climate Fund (GCF) funded project on building resilience of communities living in landscapes threatened by climate change. The project aims to increase climate change resilience of productive degraded landscapes in Namibia, through the implementation of ecosystem-based adaptation actions that strengthen socio-economic and ecological systems to sustain livelihoods at the local level and facilitate value chains associated with natural resources. In conclusion, the Minister shared that Namibia’s national strategies and action plans are developed in a synergistic manner, taking into consideration the objectives of the Rio Conventions, leveraging on areas of commonalities, shared human and financial resources and mutual reinforcement at the institutional, programming, and policy levels.

Hon. Flavien Joubert, Minister for Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment, Seychelles (on behalf of Mr Hon. Mr. Naadir Nigel Hamid Hassan, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Trade), opened by thanking the Commonwealth through the Secretary-General for the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub support provided to Seychelles in form of the National Climate Finance Adviser to Seychelles. He emphasised that this was the kind of support Seychelles needed to progress its climate commitments which include nature-based initiatives. Nature-based Solutions, climate, land and biodiversity targets are crucial issues for Seychelles in increasing food security and supporting fisheries and tourism – the key pillars of the economy. He reported that despite Seychelles being a big ocean state it welcomed the proposed Commonwealth Living Lands Charter noting the significant impact of upstream land activities on downstream coastal and marine ecosystems.

To date, Seychelles has been piloting a number of nature-based projects funded by the Adaptation Fund, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank which have demonstrated how simple, low-cost ecosystem approaches can effectively help Seychelles to increase climate resilience and meet biodiversity targets through sustainable land management practices. Additionally, Seychelles has explored blended finance for climate and ecosystem initiatives. He highlighted that the question and focus now is how to scale up and ensure that long-term sustainable and predictable finance is available and thus welcomed the relevance of the side event.

Promoting Nature-based Solutions to Climate Change as an Integral Part of Broader Adaptation and Mitigation Plans and Strategies: The Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands

Mr Unnikrishnan Nair, Head of Climate Change, Commonwealth Secretariat began his brief presentation by noting the genesis of the Commonwealth's work stream on land and climate change. Noting that the work area gained momentum following the 2019 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land and discussions at COP25. Following this, the Commonwealth Secretariat developed the draft Commonwealth Living Lands Charter in December 2019. The proposed Charter will serve as an agreement by the 54 commonwealth member countries to work in partnership towards sustainable land management by integrating the targets of the Rio Conventions.

Mr Nair noted the salient features of the Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands including the five cross-cutting thematic areas that are highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and can also be the drivers of climate change. The thematic areas include sustainable agriculture for food security, sustainable green cover and biodiversity, soil and water management, animal husbandry and livestock and climate resilient development and indigenous people. These thematic areas will be developed and implemented through five implementation strategies, namely evidence-based analysis and policy influence, financing, institutional governance, capacity building, knowledge sharing. Mr Nair outlined that Nature-based interventions will play a critical role under the Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands due to the integrated, cross cutting solutions they offer. He reported that, to date, consultations had been held with over thirty member countries and other partner organizations to inform the proposed Living Lands Charter. The Living Lands programme will utilise established Commonwealth platforms, mechanisms and partnerships with many lead institutions. The implementation of the Living Lands Charter will be facilitated by the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub as well as by mechanisms under the Rio Conventions including the GEF, GCF, Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Fund and the private sector to support enhanced access to funding for Nature-based Solutions.

Advancing Innovative Climate Financing Instruments and Mechanisms for Nature-based Solutions to Achieve Climate, Biodiversity and Land Degradation Neutrality Targets

In the panel discussion, moderated by **Mr. Amine Idriss Adoum, Director, Programmes Management and Delivery, AUDA-NEPAD** representatives from the GCF, WWF, African Development Bank (AfDB), Department of Climate Change within the Government of Mauritius, and Development Bank of Rwanda gave their perspectives on advancing innovative financing mechanisms for Nature-based Solutions.

The following questions guided the discussion:

- **What, in your experience, is needed for countries to access climate financing at scale for addressing the challenges on the ground related to Climate Change?**

Dr Archi Rastogi, Evaluation Advisor ad interim, Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU), GCF highlighted two important points arising from several evaluations by the IEU-GCF, the first being increased private sector financing. He underlined the need for the GCF to focus on catalysing finance which might mean taking risks in the short term and offering more support through grant instruments to create the conditions for the private sector to engage in contexts and geographies where it otherwise would not have. Secondly, the IEU-GCF has found that capacity remains a great barrier and for this reason the IEU-GEF has made recommendations to consider tailor-made approaches that are particularly fit for vulnerable countries especially Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

- **What climate finance windows have the AfDB developed and give examples of the kind of projects that can access financing from your bank?**

Mr Al-Hamdou Dorsouma, Director A.g., Climate Change and Green Growth, AfDB reported that, over the last 10 years, AfDB has significantly increased its climate finance resources to African countries. Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2016, the bank has mobilized about USD12.3 billion as climate finance in various sectors including renewable energy programs, climate smart agricultural programs and climate resilient infrastructure. AfDB has set ambitious targets to allocate at least 40 percent of its annual investments as climate finance, and in 2019, had reached 35 percent; on track to meeting the 40 percent target by 2021. Mr Dorsouma provided examples of funding mechanisms, listing the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program in conjunction with the Global Centre on Adaptation, internal funding windows such as the Africa Development Fund, thematic funds on climate change including the Africa Climate Change Fund and Sustainable Energy Fund for Africa (SEFA) Special Fund. He noted that the AfDB is also an implementing entity of the GCF, GEF and Adaptation Fund, though the bank strives to support member countries in accessing funding directly through capacity building.

- **WWF has great experience working with communities on the ground. Could you share your experience on how capacities of local communities can be built to allow for more financing and achieve scaled up nature-based actions at the local level?**

Ms. Nachilala Nkombo, Country Director, Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) - Zambia, in her intervention shared that the WWF works in communities and places where livelihoods and economies depend heavily on nature and over the years they have

seen a rapid decline of nature. Unfortunately, it those same communities severely affected by climate change that are not receiving the financing they require. Drawing from WWF's vast experiences on the ground Ms Nkombo shared an important lesson gained that is, building capacities of local communities is long term. As such WWF utilises a combination of approaches to invest in building the capacities of communities, including support through grant financing to strengthen the institutional capacities to manage funding and also deliver adaptation and mitigation programs on the ground. Most recently WWF has been working at the landscape level to support big users of biodiversity to develop green bankable projects. She highlighted that WWF recently launched a new fund for small enterprises and small holder farmers to that is looking at incentivize them to work towards green transitions and outcomes.

- **Could you share with the audience some real examples of how the Development Bank of Rwanda has enabled financing for nature-based solutions on the ground in Rwanda?**

Ms. Kampeta Sayinzoga, CEO, Development Bank of Rwanda in her response narrowed down on key issues to address to bring the private sector to the table in developing countries. She noted there is limited liquidity available for private sector at the kind of pricing and maturity that they need to incentive invest in climate finance. The liquidity and pricing is an even a bigger issue if the private sector is to take additional risk on top of their normal risk for instance to try new technologies or new ways of doing business that are more climate friendly. She emphasised that if these issues are explored, there are areas of interest for the private sector around nature-based interventions including green cities and agroforestry, noting that the Rwanda Green Fund (FONERWA) is working on a green city project to try to bring in the private sector and affect livelihood projects in Rwanda.

- **Mauritius has been the host of the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, since 2016. What role do you think the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub needs to play to advance Nature-based Solutions going forward?**

Mr. Jogeewar Seewoobaduth, A.g. Director of Environment and Officer-in-Charge, Department of Climate Change, Mauritius, noted that Mauritius was proud to host the Hub which plays a very important role in helping to mobilize resources. Mr Jogeewar shared that Mauritius being one of the **most** vulnerable countries to climate change and with a high level of endemism the Government of Mauritius has incorporated biodiversity outcomes and land degradation in its NDC. Additionally, the government is already investing in the National Environment Climate Change Fund and working on developing a blue, green sustainable bond. He noted that Mauritius looks forward to continued support from the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub through the Commonwealth National Climate Finance Adviser to Mauritius to support the country in developing bankable Nature-based projects.

Way Forward

- The Commonwealth Secretariat joins member states in calling for increased integration and targeted synergistic action across the Rio Conventions to achieve greater outcomes and maximise limited human and financial resources.
- Through the Commonwealth Climate Finance Access Hub, the Commonwealth Secretariat will continue to support member countries to access all sources of funding to implement and scale up Nature-based Solutions for targeted and synergistic action across the three Rio Conventions.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat will continue to advance the development of the Call to Action on Living Lands work stream alongside partners and member countries. The member country driven proposed Living Lands Charter will be put forward for consideration at the 2022 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM 2022) as an agreement for member countries to advance efforts on climate, land and biodiversity and integrate actions in country in line with the targets of the Rio Conventions.

ANNEX I: Agenda - A Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands: Accelerating Action against Climate Change, Desertification and Biodiversity Loss Across the 3 Rio Conventions

Timing	Item
Inaugural Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderator: Dr Ruth Kattumuri, Senior Director, Economic, Youth and Social Development Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat 	
15:00 - 15:10 (10 mins)	Welcome Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General of the Commonwealth
15:10 - 15:40 (30 mins)	Advancing Partnerships to Enhance National Development and Integrate the Rio Conventions Towards Achieving Climate, Biodiversity and Land Degradation Neutrality Targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Hon. Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji Hon Eng. Collins Nzovu, MP, Minister of Green Economy and Environment, Republic of Zambia Hon. Beatrice Anywar Atim, Minister of State for Environment, Republic of Uganda Hon. Pohamba Penomwenyo Shifeta, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Republic of Namibia
15:40 - 15:50 (10 mins)	Closing Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. David Cooper, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNCBD Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary, UNCCD (Video)
15:50 - 16:00 (10 mins)	Vote of Thanks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General of the Commonwealth

ANNEX II: Agenda - Accelerating Climate Finance for Nature Based Solutions in Support of Climate, Land and Biodiversity Targets

Timing	Item
Opening Session: Addressing Climate, Biodiversity and Land Degradation Challenges - Accelerating the Uptake of Nature-based Solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderator - Dr. Ruth Kattumuri, Senior Director, Economic Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat 	
16:45 - 17:20	Welcome and Keynote Address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC, Secretary General of the Commonwealth Opening Remarks and Country Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. James Larsen, Climate Coordinator, Deputy Secretary at Department of the Prime Minister, Australia (delivering remarks on behalf of the Prime Minister of Australia) Hon. Collins Nzovu, MP, Minister of Green Economy and Environment, Zambia Hon. Pohamba Shifeta, Minister of Environment Forestry and Tourism, Namibia Hon. Mr. Naadir Nigel Hamid Hassan, Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Trade, Seychelles
Presentation and Panel Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderator - Mr. Amine Idriss Adoum, Director, Programmes Management and Delivery, AUDA-NEPAD 	
17:20 - 17:25	Presentation: Promoting Nature-based Solutions to Climate Change as an Integral Part of Broader Adaptation and Mitigation Plans and Strategies: The Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Unnikrishnan Nair, Head of Climate Section, Commonwealth Secretariat
17:25 - 17:45	Panel Discussion: Advancing Innovative Climate Financing Instruments and Mechanisms for Nature-based Solutions to Achieve Climate, Biodiversity and Land Degradation Neutrality Targets Panel Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Archi Rastogi, Evaluation Advisor <i>ad interim</i>, Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU), Green Climate Fund (GCF) Mr. Al-Hamdou Dorsouma, A.g. Director, Climate Change and Green Growth Department, African Development Bank (AfDB) Ms. Nachilala Nkombo, Country Director, Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) - Zambia Ms. Kampeta Sayinzoga, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Development Bank of Rwanda (BRD) Mr. Jogeeswar Seewoobaduth, A.g. Director of Environment and Officer-in-Charge, Department of Climate Change, Mauritius
17:45 - 17:55	Participant Engagement and Moderated Q & A Session
17:55 - 18:00	Closing Remarks and Way Forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Ruth Kattumuri, Senior Director, Economic Youth and Sustainable Development Directorate, Commonwealth Secretariat

ANNEX III: Events' Photos



High-level speakers at the side event, “A Commonwealth Call to Action on Living Lands: Accelerating Action against Climate Change, Desertification and Biodiversity Loss Across the 3 Rio Conventions” on November 3rd.



(L-R) Hon Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda; Rt Hon Patricia Scotland, Secretary General of the Commonwealth; Hon Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji; and Hon Eng. Collins Nzovu MP, Minister of Green Economy and Environment of Zambia.



High-level speakers and panel discussants at the Official Blue Zone Side Event on 5 November 2021

ANNEX IV: Media Coverage

The Commonwealth Secretariat Official and High-level COP26 Side Events on Living Lands, namely *A Commonwealth Call for Action on Living Lands: Accelerating Action against Climate Change, Desertification and Biodiversity Loss Across the 3 Rio Conventions* on 3 November and *Accelerating Climate Finance for Nature Based Solutions in Support of Climate, Land and Biodiversity Targets* on 5 November were covered by several media outlets. Some this coverage during and post-COP26 is listed below:

- Lusaka Times (Zambia): [Zambia : Zambia commits to climate change resolutions \(lusakatimes.com\)](https://www.lusakatimes.com/2022/11/03/zambia-commits-to-climate-change-resolutions/)
- The Mast (Zambia): [Zambia taking biodiversity conservation seriously - HH - The Mast Online](https://www.themast.co.zm/news/zambia-taking-biodiversity-conservation-seriously-11-03-2022/)
- All Africa [Namibia Embraces Call for Action On Living Lands - allAfrica.com](https://allafrica.com/stories/202211030001.html)
- Top Africa News: [High hopes for Commonwealth joint action on climate, biodiversity and land - TOP AFRICA NEWS](https://www.topafricaneews.com/news/high-hopes-for-commonwealth-joint-action-on-climate-biodiversity-and-land-11-03-2022/)
- Fiji Broadcasting Corporation: [Fiji reaffirms its commitment to the Commonwealth family - FBC News](https://www.fbcnews.com.fj/news/fiji-reaffirms-its-commitment-to-the-commonwealth-family-11-03-2022/)
- Pasifika Environews: [Resilient food systems and sustainable land use needed to support livelihoods in Commonwealth countries \(pasifika.news\)](https://www.pasifika.news/en/2022/11/03/resilient-food-systems-and-sustainable-land-use-needed-to-support-livelihoods-in-commonwealth-countries/)
- Caricom Today (Caribbean): [High hopes for Commonwealth joint action on climate, biodiversity and land - CARICOM Today](https://www.caricomtoday.com/news/high-hopes-for-commonwealth-joint-action-on-climate-biodiversity-and-land-11-03-2022/)
- Scoop New Zealand: [High Hopes For Commonwealth Joint Action On Climate, Biodiversity And Land | Scoop News](https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/2211/03/22110301.htm)
- Stabroek News (Guyana) online: [A call to action on living lands - Stabroek News](https://www.stabroeknews.com/guyana/news/a-call-to-action-on-living-lands-11-03-2022/)
- Jamaica Observer: [Commonwealth SG issues call for action on living lands \(jamaicaobserver.com\)](https://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/commonwealth-sg-issues-call-for-action-on-living-lands-11-03-2022/)
- Caribbean regional news wire CMC (CanaNews): [CARIBBEAN-ENVIRONMENT-Commonwealth SG issues call for action on living lands \(cananewsonline.com\)](https://www.cananewsonline.com/news/commonwealth-sg-issues-call-for-action-on-living-lands-11-03-2022/)
- IPS News: [A Call to Action on Living Lands - Business \(ipsnews.net\)](https://www.ipsnews.net/2022/11/03/a-call-to-action-on-living-lands-business/)
- Commonwealth website: [Blog: A Call to Action on Living Lands | The Commonwealth](https://www.commonwealthsecretariat.org/en/news-and-events/blog/a-call-to-action-on-living-lands)

