Yerevan Conservation Symposium 2026
Conservation Governance Beyond State Protected Areas
Yerevan, Armenia
17–18 October 2026

YEREVAN CALL TO ACTION

Over 150 participants from around the world contributed to the Yerevan Conservation Symposium 2026 to accelerate delivery of Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework through diversified governance. The Symposium was convened by the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC) in partnership with the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Armenia, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Commission on Protected Areas, and the ICCA Consortium, with the significant in-kind and financial support of many other organizations and individuals. The Symposium commenced with a dedication ceremony emphasizing peace, prosperity, conscience, engagement, connectivity, harmony and intention. The Symposium recognised that:

- Diverse conservation stewards and governance authorities enrich the conservation of nature through long-standing approaches, embodying their world views, cultures, traditions, territories of life, and livelihoods, and that achieving ambitious global, regional and national goals for conservation depends greatly on these sustained efforts, while these remain insufficiently recognized, supported and reported.

- These diverse efforts may be recognized by national governments as protected or conserved areas, but there remain gaps in identification and appropriate rights-compatible recognition and support for many areas that are not governed by states or state agencies.

- Mutual trust and reciprocity are essential to move towards complementary and cooperative partnerships for action, where the rights, roles and responsibilities are held in balance, and where all actors are accorded equal respect and status for their respective roles. There is also a need for cooperation on mutual and shared needs, including for monitoring and reporting to achieve efficiency and avoid duplication.

- Achieving biodiversity and socio-economic goals requires the sustainable governance and management of wider terrestrial, freshwater and marine landscapes and seascapes, through the full engagement of productive, economic and development sectors and the integration of protected and conserved area considerations into sectoral policies and practices, both to support biodiversity conservation beyond protected and conserved area boundaries and to prevent adverse impacts to them.

- Scaling up accessible, predictable and sustained financial and other resources is needed to ensure that all areas essential for the conservation of nature and associated cultural values, regardless of who conserves them, are recognised, supported and defended to maintain conservation outcomes in the long term, for the benefit of the whole of society, and as the basis of harmony and peaceful cooperation at all levels.

The Symposium provided a rich and vibrant platform to reframe the narrative towards more inclusive and action-oriented programme facilitating the recognition and appropriate support of diverse governance approaches. As the Symposium drew to a close, it concluded with a **Call to Action**, to be carried forward to relevant forums including through the CBD COP Presidency and all other relevant actors to accelerate implementation towards Target 3 by 2030, and specifically to remove barriers towards the full inclusive

identification, recognition and support of the diverse stewards of nature, who in cooperation with state-governed approaches are essential to the achievement of nature conservation in the long-term.

The Symposium therefore calls for:

- Greater inclusion, collaboration and unity among the diverse governance authorities for nature, including respect and support for the traditional stewards of nature, drawing on their ancient wisdom, knowledge systems and customary laws, working with contemporary authorities and emerging champions, moving all from observers to actors, and enriching the opportunities for effective and collective action;

- National enabling legislative and policy frameworks to be adapted or established to close the recognition gap, and to provide for multiple pathways, partnerships and relationships towards recognition and reporting, with the consent of the full diversity of conservation stewards as the legitimate authorities of the areas they govern, with appropriate practical support that does not undermine their tenure, existing rights or self-determination, including in situations of overlapping governance.

- Productive, economic and development sectors to fully integrate protected and conserved area concerns into their policies, strategies and practices, recognizing the contribution of nature to the sustainability of enterprises, and the contribution of businesses to biodiversity conservation, while avoiding activities that result in negative impacts on protected and conserved areas of particular importance for biodiversity conservation in the wider landscapes and seascapes.

- Strengthening the effectiveness and resilience of protected and conserved areas and their diverse stewards to cope with the increasing scale, frequency and intensity of threats of degradation, exploitation, displacement or conflict through consistent, persistent collaboration, and to ensure they maintain the biodiversity, social and cultural values in the long term.

- Access to appropriately scaled up resourcing and direct financing that aligns with, complements and compensates long-standing voluntary conservation action in the context of real needs identified and tailored at local levels to support and sustain the legitimate and accountable governance, effective management and integrity of protected and conserved areas governed by conservation stewards beyond state actors.

Finally, it challenges governments, civil society organisations, private enterprise, development agencies, international organisations, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and funders to take the initiative to assert the essential role of diverse and especially shared governance at system scale through mutual support and recognition, appropriate safeguards, institutional and financial incentives, and responsiveness as a strategic necessity, and to translate this recognition into concrete policy, legal, financial, monitoring and implementation measures that accelerate equitable and effective delivery of Target 3 by 2030 and beyond.