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On the road to Kunming

Spotlight on Central Asia's Biodiversity Conservation

Virtual High-Profile Dialogue

24 November 2021

INTRODUCTION

Central Asia, here defined as countries of **Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**, and the central and eastern portion of Iran is often underrated as an area of significant biodiversity. Yet it is a region dominated by some of the world's largest remaining areas of steppe and desert, but also with important wetland and key mountain ecosystems vital to water requirements of people of Asia. Located at the junction of three of the world's bio-geographic realms the area has also evolved biodiversity unique to humanity. This region has experienced dramatic political changes in the last 40 years and a significant proportion of its populations remains exposed to rural poverty, relying heavily on natural resources for its subsistence and livelihood.

In 2018, the European Union (EU) commissioned the study ***Larger than Tigers: Inputs for a strategic approach to biodiversity conservation in Asia***¹ aimed at enhancing coherence and coordination of EU actions in the area of biodiversity and ecosystems in Asia. As the title of the report suggests, the conservation of biodiversity extends far beyond the survival of iconic animals such as tigers. Vanishing species are important components of complex natural ecosystems that are critical for the livelihoods of local communities and provide water and food, regulate climate, benefit the health and well-being of people, process waste products, pollinate crops, and support a growing tourism industry.

Organized on the 24th November 2021 by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** and the **Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)**, with the support of the **European Commission**, the high-profile dialogue '*On the road to Kunming - Spotlight on Central Asia's Biodiversity Conservation*' highlighted in three 45-minute sessions, examples of positive initiatives taking place across the region thanks to partnerships built between civil society organizations and governments, communities, and businesses. Participants also discussed the **ongoing and future financial opportunities** supporting investment for biodiversity conservation, and highlighted opportunities and the role of Central Asia's biodiversity in the **post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)**.

This event aimed to strengthen partnerships, build networks and provide directions to help policy-makers, donors, and other relevant stakeholders make more informed decisions when developing policies, plans and programs at national and regional level in Central Asia. It also provided a platform to raise awareness about the EU Green Deal, which aims to ensure resilience to future threats and put biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people, climate and the planet, and build regional momentum in the run-up to the **15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15)**².



¹ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/93b375bc-4769-11e8-be1d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

² www.cbd.int/cop/

SPEAKERS

Introductory High-Level Panel



Dr. Madhu Rao
Chair of the IUCN World
Commission on Protected Areas
(Moderator)



H.E. Amb. Terhi Hakala
EU Special Representative
for Central Asia



H.E. Jusipbek Kazbekov
Deputy Chairman, State
Committee on Ecology and
Environmental Protection,
Uzbekistan



H.E. Beksultan Ibraimov
Deputy Minister of Natural
Resources, Environment and
Technical Control,
Kyrgyz Republic



**H.E. Elizabeth Maruma
Mrema**
Executive Secretary,
Convention on Biological Diversity

Panel 1 – Larger than Tigers: first lessons from the field



Dr. Stephane Ostrowski
Senior Technical Advisor,
Temperate Asia, WCS
(Moderator)



Dr. Philippe Mayaux
Team leader, Biodiversity
and ecosystem services,
DG INTPA, European Commission



Ms. Aliya Ibrahimova
CEO, CAMP Alatau
Kyrgyzstan



Ms. Vera Voronova
Executive Director, Association
for the Conservation Biodiversity
of Kazakhstan



Mr. Khalil Karimov
Scientific Advisor, Association of
Nature Conservation
Organizations of Tajikistan

Panel 2 – The future for biodiversity finance in Central Asia



**Mr. Johannes Stenbaek
Madsen**
Head of Cooperation,
EU Delegation to Kazakhstan
(Moderator)



Mr. Ubaidullo Akramov
Head, National Centre
on Biodiversity and Biosafety,
Committee for Environmental
Protection of the Republic of
Tajikistan



Mr. Serdar Eyeberenov
Deputy Head, Department of
Environmental Protection and
Hydrometeorology, Ministry of
Agriculture and
Environmental Protection of
Turkmenistan



Ms. Aidai Kurmanova
Head,
Central Asia Office,
UNEP



Mr. Daniel Rothberg
Grant Director,
Critical Ecosystem Partnership
Fund

Panel 3 – CBD COP15, what's in for Central Asia's underrated biodiversity?



Mr. Patrick Wegerdt
Coordinator, European
Neighbourhood Region, DG
ENV, European Commission
(Moderator)



Mr. Yerkulan Duisekeev
Head of the Department of
Specially Protected Areas,
Ministry of Ecology, Geology and
Natural Resources of Kazakhstan



Ms. Clara Nobbe
Head of the Terrestrial
Species Team, Convention on
Migratory Species



Ms. Laura Malikova
Youth4Nature, Young
Environmental Leader from
Kazakhstan



Mr. Valts Vilnītis
Team Leader, EU – CA Water,
Environment and Climate Change
Cooperation

Concluding Remarks



H.E. Amb. Charlotte Adriaen
Head of Delegation,
EU Delegation to Uzbekistan



Ms. Sylvie Motard
Deputy Director,
Europe Office, UNEP

INTRODUCTORY HIGH-LEVEL PANEL

Moderator

Dr. Madhu Rao, the Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, opened the conference and introduced the first distinguished speakers.

H.E. Ambassador Terhi Hakala, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, stated that the EU has long recognized the important links between human development and the natural environment. In 2018, the EU commissioned the critical report '*Larger than Tigers – Inputs for a Strategic Approach to Biodiversity Conservation in Asia*'. This initiative was developed to ensure better coherence and coordination across EU actions in the area of biodiversity and ecosystems in Asia. Ambassador Hakala stressed that international partnerships and transboundary conservation are especially important in Central Asia due to the large scale of ecosystems and wildlife movements in the region. She stressed that Central Asian ecosystems are particularly at threat, hence the necessity to highlight the importance of Central Asia's biodiversity in the post-2020 biodiversity framework discussions. Ambassador Hakala concluded by highlighting the EU Green Deal, the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, and its commitment to ensure resilience to future threats and to put biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people, climate and the planet. In September 2021, the President of the European Commission, H.E. von der Leyen, announced the EU will double its external funding for biodiversity as a sign of leadership.

H.E. Dr. Jusipbek Kazbekov, the Deputy Chairman of the State Committee for Ecology and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan, highlighted their commitment to biodiversity. The Aral Sea is now regarded as a zone of ecological innovations and technologies

as in a special resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly, which was proposed by the President, H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Uzbekistan has also committed to increasing the total protected areas coverage up to 13% by 2028, as outlined in the NBSAP and the '*Biodiversity conservation strategy for 2019-2028*'. Other achievements include the Lower Amudarya State Biosphere Reserve designated in UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme and active engagement with the Central Asian Desert Initiative (CADI) and the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI). Uzbekistan initiated the development of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) amongst the region's snow leopard range countries, signed at UNFCCC CoP26 for transboundary cooperation in research and addressing illegal wildlife trade through community-based conservation in the West Tien Shan and Pamir-Alay. Also, Uzbekistan recently became IUCN's member state committing to nature-based solutions. Dr. Kazbekov said enhancing transboundary cooperation in protected areas in the region is crucial for improving the effectiveness and for strengthening the regional conservation activities for globally significant biodiversity sites, which are important for migratory wildlife.

H.E. Beksultan Ibraimov, the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, Environment and Technical Control, Kyrgyz Republic, stressed that transboundary cooperation is a key factor in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. It provides for the adoption of urgent joint status to protect the environment with a focus on transboundary cooperation and interaction in the field of biodiversity conservation in high mountain ecosystems. The Kyrgyz Republic works together with neighboring countries as well as international agreements including CBD and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and funding mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The Kyrgyz Republic initiated and hosted the Global Forum on Snow Leopard Conservation in 2013 and 2017, which

allowed snow leopard Range States, together with international partners, to coordinate measures to conserve the species. H.E. Ibraimov also highlighted that at COP26 the Kyrgyz Republic's President, H.E. Sadyr Japarov, proposed to create under the United Nations a special fund for the implementation of programs for the adaptation to climate change with an emphasis on conserving glaciers and biodiversity, increasing preparedness for natural disasters, social and economic support of mountain communities, especially for women and children

H.E. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, the Executive Secretary of the CBD, highlighted that conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is of utmost concern to human well-being and that the region's active engagement in CBD processes will continue to be crucial in the implementation of the post-2020 GBF. The region's various ecosystems are important from grassland to glacier mountains, including the mountain biodiversity hotspot where 25% of crop wild relatives are endemic. Ms. Mrema congratulated the region's achievements including Uzbekistan's efforts in increasing the protected areas coverage by 36% and Kazakhstan's and other countries updating their data and reporting. The success of Aichi Biodiversity Target 11 has created momentum for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for GBF's first draft containing 30% of protected and conserved areas in terrestrial and marine ecosystems, which is crucial to conserve nature, culture, and society including traditional knowledge. The GBF will serve as an overarching framework among all countries, stakeholders, organisations and related conventions including Indigenous Peoples, local communities, youth and women. The GBF needs more synergies with other global conventions that inform national and regional policies and actions for the cooperative implementation across the region, for instance, joint regional initiatives under CMS and CITES.

PANEL 1 – LARGER THAN TIGERS: FIRST LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

Moderator

Dr. Stephane Ostrowski, the Senior Technical Advisor for the WCS Temperate Asia region, introduced the first panel titled '*Larger than Tigers: first lessons from the field*'. He underlined the importance of the grass-roots knowledge shared by the invited CSOs of Central Asia on implementing biodiversity conservation with communities, the government, and the private sector. Their feed-back and experiences are essential to inform and guide future conservation interventions. He also emphasized commonalities shared by biodiversity in Central Asia and Europe, two adjacent regions that are close in their species composition, have connected ecosystems and share biogeographical spaces. Biodiversity in these regions is therefore interconnected, what affects biodiversity in Central Asia also affects biodiversity in Europe, and vice versa. Common interests call for common actions.

Dr. Philippe Mayaux, the Team Leader for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services at DG INTPA of the European Commission, presented the EU report '*Larger than Tigers: Inputs for a strategic approach to biodiversity conservation in Asia*'. As its title suggests, the conservation of biodiversity extends far beyond the survival of iconic animals such as tigers. Vanishing species are important components of complex natural ecosystems that provide water and food, benefit the health and well-being of people, regulate climate, process waste products, pollinate crops, and support a growing tourism industry. Some of these services can only be replaced at a significant cost, while others are simply irreplaceable.

The '*Larger than Tigers*' study identifies the principal threats to biodiversity in Central Asia and the most appropriate responses from the EU, while proposing a coherent strategic approach that outlines a suite of interventions that will enable EU and key partners to engage in biodiversity conservation. The Central Asia report specifically focuses on the grasslands, arid steppes, and mountains of the region. The three strategic approaches outlined in the report are protecting larger areas, landscape-level conservation with communities and civil societies, and promoting a greener economy.

Ms. Aliya Ibrahimova, the Chief Executive Officer of CAMP Alatau in Kyrgyzstan, presented the CAMP Alatau Public Foundation, which collaborates closely with local communities for an integrated management of natural resources (NRM) and biodiversity conservation. To formalize the cooperation and to raise a sense of ownership of the communities CAMP Alatau usually develops an agreement or MoU with the involved stakeholders: local self-governing bodies and institutions responsible for natural resources management as pasture committees, forest management units, and community-based reserves, among others. The engagement models of communities may vary, but strong involvement and joint actions are central to any intervention. Sustainability modules, developed for each field of CAMP Alatau, are used as entry points and capacity building tools to set trust, establish connections and get an overview of the current NRM situation in pilot areas. Ms. Ibrahimova explained that challenges during project implementation can include low motivation and reluctance to change conventional practices which is over-passed through material support for public NRM facilities or equipment for biodiversity monitoring. High turnover in the local institutions is addressed through digitalization and institutionalization approaches. In the future CAMP Alatau will continue testing biodiversity conservation models and mechanisms for their sustainability through bottom-up approaches, said Ms. Ibrahimova.

Ms. Vera Voronova, the Executive Director of the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK), presented the experience of ACBK at engaging with the Government of Kazakhstan to achieve biodiversity conservation. Having a dedicated Ministry is essential to build a national policy. The government structure has changed in relation to biodiversity conservation in 2019 when the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Nature Resources was established. This allowed raising the profile of the environmental and biodiversity agenda, which is a clear improvement. The new Ministry is enacting presidential guidelines on inclusiveness and public consultations. It hosts the Public Ecological Council, which is active in social media and organizes regular meetings with the public and NGOs. ACBK has also a strong efficient collaboration with other relevant agencies to whom it provides technical support and practical training with a focus on illegal wildlife trade and the planning of mitigation measures for mammals' migration within linear infrastructure developments. Ms. Voronova stressed that a main challenge is the regular restructuring in Ministries which undermines working relationships and progress, and delays technical capacity build-up. Kazakhstan has not yet developed any strategic document to replace the National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan beyond 2014. This creates significant difficulties in both defining priorities and in advocating for new initiatives and projects. To fill this gap The Green Kazakhstan initiative has recently been approved.

Mr. Khalil Karimov, the Scientific Advisor of the Association of Nature Conservation Organizations of Tajikistan (ANCOT), presented the conservation approach of ANCOT, which is to create and foster functional and fair business relationships between local communities and the private sector in support of sustainable use of natural resources and conservation of biodiversity. In the current Tajik context of rural poverty, scant financial and technical resources, it appears essential to develop affordable

mechanisms of biodiversity conservation which benefit local people and work without the continuous support of external donors. To achieve these goals the valuation of natural resources appears as an effective mechanism to initiate landscape-scale conservation projects in Tajikistan. ANCOT helps people in remote areas to build their own organizations, strengthen their capacities and mentor their engagement with niche markets (hunting and ecotourism), so that they could generate revenues and preserve their environment and way of life. This effort has so far achieved success in preserving valuable wildlife and landscapes through sustainable hunting and tourism. According to Mr. Karimov, many advocates of nature preservation in Central Asia do not see the long-term conservation process behind this valuation approach, and regard the benefits retrieved from the sustainable use of natural resources with suspicion, and sustainable hunting as unethical.

PANEL 2 – THE FUTURE FOR BIODIVERSITY FINANCE IN CENTRAL ASIA

Moderator

Mr. Johannes Stenbaek Madsen, the Head of Cooperation of the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan, introduced the second panel titled *‘The future for biodiversity finance in Central Asia’*. He emphasized that there are three important aspects to biodiversity: an ethical, cultural heritage aspect, a public health aspect, and an economic aspect.

Dr. Ubaidullo Akramov, the Head of the National Centre on Biodiversity and Biosafety under the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan,

highlighted efforts of restoring biodiversity in Tajikistan between 2018 and 2021 for the snow leopard, the Marco Polo sheep, the markhor, the Bukhara deer, the Siberian ibex, the bar-headed goose, and the brown bear. Tajikistan is a mountainous country that has the ability to preserve mountain landscapes and their resources where it is possible to preserve biodiversity. The Committee for Environmental Protection has developed 3 state programs for the purpose of conserving natural biodiversity and biosecurity, as well as a new Strategy for Biodiversity and Biosecurity. Dr. Akramov, however, stressed the need for new approaches and financial support for the implementation of this program and strategies and the implementation of ecosystem services, as well as a mechanism for a regulated system of biodiversity in mountainous places.

Mr. Serdar Eyeberenov, the Deputy Head of the Department of Environmental Protection and Hydrometeorology of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, emphasized that biodiversity conservation is one of the priorities of Turkmenistan and discussed what can be done to help ensure that biodiversity finance is prioritized throughout Central Asia. Mr. Eyeberenov stressed that to conserve biodiversity it is important to incorporate biodiversity considerations in every plan, roadmap, and initiative, which is a prerequisite before proceeding to the financial part of it. In the majority of countries, there is a lack of financial support for biodiversity. He highlighted the need to use innovative approaches for biodiversity finance, without relying solely on the State budget. As an example, he proposed involving the private sector to a greater extent, which could be useful in the development of the tourism sector and a meaningful source of financial support for biodiversity. Mr. Eyeberenov concluded that without preserving the environment, biodiversity, and natural resources we will never be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ms. Aidai Kurmanova, the Head of the UNEP Central Asia Office, stressed that environmental changes driven by climate change are disturbing natural habitats and species. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events are putting increased pressure on habitats and species, many of which are already threatened by other human activities. Yet thriving biodiversity and healthy ecosystems have the capacity to help reduce the impacts of climate change. Ms. Kurmanova explained that protecting or restoring ecosystems can thus be an effective way to increase their resilience to climate change and by extension also the resilience of the people who depend on the ecosystem services provided. The zoonotic disease COVID-19 has highlighted the close links between human, animal and environmental health, and has shown that human well-being and health largely depend on animal and environmental health. She concluded that recent UNEP reports on preventing the next pandemic have clearly outlined that we need to strengthen the environmental dimensions to prevent future crises like the one we are facing today.

Mr. Daniel Rothberg, a Grant Director at the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) highlighted key success stories of the CEPF, a joint program of the French Development Agency (AFD), Conservation International, European Union, Global Environment Facility, Government of Japan, and World Bank. These donors have allocated USD 8 million for grants to civil society organizations in the Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot for the period of November 2019 through October 2024. To date, CEPF has made 40 grants for a total of USD 3.2 million. Key success stories thus far are around geographically and technically complementary small grants, typically around USD 20,000, in Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), geographies whose improved management is necessary for the conservation of globally threatened species. Thus far, the lesson learned for local civil society, CEPF grantees, is that improved management of a KBA does not

necessarily mean creating a protected area or restricting local access. The lesson learned for the donors is that CEPF grantees are often inexperienced and need time and mentoring to become skilled contract managers.

PANEL 3 – CBD COP15, WHAT'S IN FOR CENTRAL ASIA'S UNDERRATED BIODIVERSITY?

Moderator

Mr. Patrick Wegerdt, the Coordinator for the European Neighbourhood Region at DG Environment of the European Commission, introduced the third panel titled '*CBD COP15, what's in for Central Asia's underrated biodiversity?*'. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is currently developing a new strategic framework, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), to be adopted at the COP15. The first part of COP 15 took place in a virtual format in October 2021 with the second part due to take place in Kunming, China, in April and May 2022. Mr. Wegerdt stated that the Framework is intended to be a 'Paris-style agreement' on biodiversity with measurable goals and targets and stronger mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and reviewing implementation. The current draft includes a target to protect 30% of land and 30% of global seas. The agreement should underline the close interdependence between climate change and biodiversity, with the issue of adequate financing also a key element.

Mr. Yerkulan Duisekeev, the Head of the Department of Specially Protected Areas of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan, highlighted the importance of increasing protected areas, which is critical for sustainable development. Mr.

Duisekeev stressed that in terms of sharing responsibilities for the preservation of biodiversity there is a need to strengthen international cooperation in fora such as the Convention on Biological Diversity. He also emphasized the importance of protecting endangered wildlife species both for their biological and cultural values. To conclude, Mr. Duisekeev stressed the challenges of an agricultural and industrial country such as Kazakhstan and the need to improve the industrial capacity, including waste management, while at the same time preserving nature.

Ms. Clara Nobbe, the Head of the Terrestrial Species Team at the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), stressed that partnerships are essential for furthering the conservation of migratory species. This has been recognized by CMS Parties on several occasions, such as the partnership with UNEP, Central Asian Governments, scientific and conservation organizations under a IKI-funded project to enhance the conservation of flagship migratory mammal species of Central Asia through climate informed management and decision-making as well as the establishment of a multi-stakeholder working group under the CMS Scientific Council on linear infrastructure. With regard to the integration of CBD's objectives with climate change, she highlighted that the CMS Working Group on the Post-2020 GBF recommends that the size, placement, and connectivity of protected areas need to account for shifts and contractions of habitats and species distributions in the face of climate change in Target 8, while the prevention of future pandemics should be better accounted for in Target 5 so that any harvesting, trade and use of wild species is regulated at environmentally sustainable levels and is safe for both target and non-target species.

Ms. Laura Malikova, a representative of Youth4Nature and a Young Environmental Leader from Kazakhstan, expressed her hopes for the CBD COP15 in Kunming. She highlighted the importance of integrating biodiversity considerations into construction and city planning processes. Ms. Malikova further emphasized the importance of establishing clear focal points within key ministries for reporting biodiversity-related concerns, which will be important for NGOs and youth organizations. She hopes that the CBD COP15 will be more than just statements and declarations, and that tangible actions will be agreed on and specific mechanisms to address biodiversity conservation will be put in place. Her message to the world leaders in the run up to the CBD COP15 is ensuring that youth is at the table of negotiations.

Mr. Valts Vilnītis, the Team Leader of the EU – Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation, stressed that Central Asia's countries traditionally focus their biodiversity related policies and legislation on area-based conservation and protection of endangered species, which are addressed by the national environmental authorities. However, other biodiversity related issues such as invasive alien species, human health, genetic resources, and ecosystem services are addressed separately, usually by other governmental structures. He, therefore, emphasized the necessity of mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors and the need for increased joint efforts by ministries dealing with economy, finance, health, transport, and environment. Partnerships with the EU can successfully catalyze regional efforts and provide support for increasing ecosystem-based approaches to ensure benefits across economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

H.E. Amb. Charlotte Adriaen, the Head of the EU Delegation to Uzbekistan, stated that it is time we treat the biodiversity crisis with the same urgency as the climate crisis. Both threaten our very survival and solving one is impossible without the other. Nature is suffering, oceans and forests are in bad shape. Ambassador Adriaen stressed the need to take urgent action to stop biodiversity loss and restore nature. As presented during the panels, Central Asia is a key region for global biodiversity conservation as a result of its location at the junction of Asia and Europe and complex topography and geomorphology. The EU is committed to lead by example on environmental preservation and sustainable use of natural resources not only within its borders, but also outside. Through the European Green Deal, the EU stands ready to cooperate with Central Asia countries to halt biodiversity loss. The EU works to support the adoption of the Post-2020 GBF that would ensure that by 2050 all of the world's ecosystems are restored, resilient, and adequately protected, said Ambassador Adriaen.

Ms. Sylvie Motard, the Deputy Director of the UNEP Europe Office, provided concluding remarks. She reiterated that Central Asia has a significant biodiversity value and deserves greater recognition and support at all levels: global, regional and national. At the same time, biodiversity threats are numerous and largely linked to anthropogenic pressures and climate change impacts. Conservation and restoration initiatives must incorporate climate change considerations into conservation and work closely with civil society and local communities to foster ecosystem-based adaptation. Aligning the Post-2020 GBF with other UN Conventions, including the Paris Agreement and the outcomes of COP26, is one of the key discussion points in the upcoming COP15 negotiations and due consideration should be given to propose solutions including nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches. Ms. Motard also highlighted the necessity to continue mobilizing significant funding in an innovative way for biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use in Central Asia. She concluded by stressing the importance to educate ourselves, and to be able to connect with, learn from, and act with nature.

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*Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this report are those
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