

Report

Participation at the 57 GEF Council meeting: Civil Society Consultation meeting

Combatting illegal wildlife trade: a civil society perspective

December 15th – 19th 2019

Simson Uri Khob (SRT, Namibia)

Francis Nkoitoi (KWCA, Kenya)

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Introduction

As part of the 57 GEF council meeting which happened from the 16th to 19th December 2019 in Washington DC, a consultation with civil society was scheduled for the 16th December 2019, to discuss a single theme on “Combatting illegal wildlife trade: a civil society perspective”. The consultation involved CSO from all the continents, including more participants from Eastern and Southern Africa. Through IUCN Eastern-Southern Africa, funds were secured to ensure participation of the following representatives: Simson Uri Khob, from SRT in Namibia, Francis Nkoitoi, from Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association in Kenya, and José Monteiro from CBNRM Network in Mozambique.

Objectives

The participation of Community based organization during the CSO consultation meeting was to deliver the communities voice to the GEF council members, about experiences in how communities and community based organization are coping and solving issues related to wildlife poaching, wildlife conflicts and other natural resources managements issues, and reinforcing the message that can ensure that communities are considered as key actors in GEF financed projects and activities.

Preparatory meeting

A preparatory meeting was held on the 15th December, at One Washington Circle Hotel. The preparatory meeting was guided by the GEF CSO Network, and it was an opportunity to meet with other CSO practitioners from southern and eastern Africa, and from around the world. The preparatory meeting was useful as it introduced all of the participants about GEF, its structure, pillars of interventions and functioning. As for the objective of the CSO consultation meeting, the preparatory meeting included the following activities:

- Description of the GCEF CSO Network structure and functioning;
- A review about the main topic of the consultation “Combatting illegal wildlife trade: a civil society perspective, and procedures for interventions during the consultation;

- Support to the GEF CSO Network in reviewing the various GEF council agenda documents, for comments during the GEF council meeting

CSO Consultation meeting

The CSO consultation meeting included three sessions, as described in the agenda in annex 1. The session for which the Southern Africa CSO practitioners were invited was the “Combatting illegal wildlife trade: a civil society perspective, which was also divided into two parts, (i) the first, moderated by Mujon Baghai, and with 4 panelists, including colleagues from Southern Africa, Maxi Louis, from NACSO in Namibia, and John Kamanga, from SORALO in Kenya, and (ii) the second part, moderated by Elisson Wright, with 4 panelists, including colleagues from Southern Africa, Rodgers Lubilo, from the Zambia CBNRM Association.

As the messages for these sessions were crafted in Kenya, the colleagues in panels addressed clearly the community voice, highlighting the need for respecting community rights, building effective governance systems, improving land use planning, empowering communities' capacity and ensuring that costs and benefits from wildlife are fairly shared, particularly for rural communities as they are the main dependent and suffering the consequences from poaching and wildlife conflicts. As the debate was open to the audience, these aspects were also complemented by other southern and eastern Africa practitioners.

Side meetings

Participation at the GEF meeting was also useful to blend in, and foster opportunities to improve support to conservation and rural communities back in Africa. The African team had an opportunity to meet the following people

- Yoko Watanabe (GEF) to learn and discuss opportunities related to GEF small grants in supporting rural communities and institutions in Africa.
- Kristine Painemilla, Minnie Degawan and Luis Barquin (Conservation International), to learn, understand and discuss possibilities related to the upcoming inclusive conservation project that is expected to be financed by GEF;

- Júlio Ferreira (GEF Council Member representative from Southern Africa), to learn about the representative work and collaboration with country level representatives, including with the Southern Africa GEF CSO representative, which was not present due to illness. As Mr. Júlio supports the participation of CSO in these meetings, it was recommended that more interaction with GEF CSO representative for southern Africa, be established;
- Lalit Mohan, to learn about the possibilities to integrated in the GEF CSO Network as members. It was recommended to fill in the forms to join the network, as the first step.



Figure 1. Moments during the preparatory meeting



Figure 2. Moments during the meeting with GEF council member, Júlio Ferreira