

REDLAC 2024

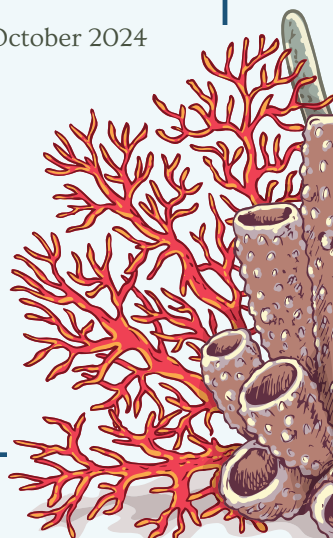
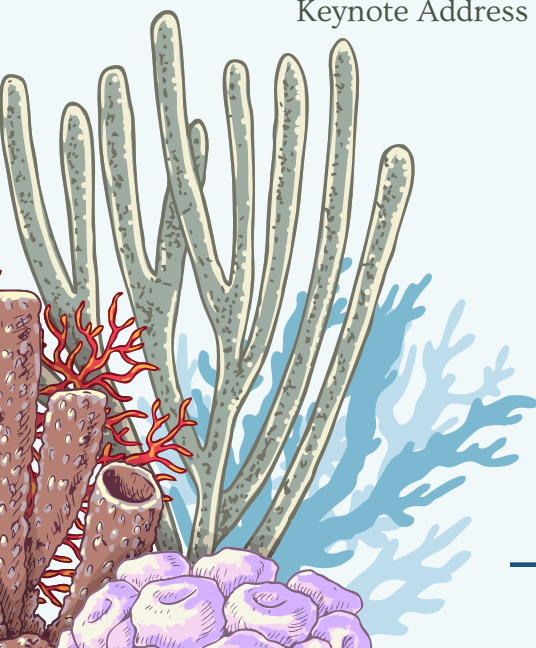
SAINT LUCIA

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FOUNDATION

The Path to 2030: Advancing Global Conservation Targets in National and Caribbean Regional Contexts

Professor Dale Webber
Keynote Address 2024 RedLAC Congress

October 2024



OUR MISSION



The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) was established as the realization of a bold vision to create reliable, long-term funding for conservation and sustainable development in the Caribbean region. Currently, the CBF is a regional umbrella environmental fund that uses a flexible structure to facilitate innovative solutions and consolidate regional conservation impacts. Through its three primary programs (Conservation Finance, Climate Change and Nature-based Economies), the CBF provides continuous funding for conservation and sustainable development in 14 countries within the Caribbean region.



RedLAC is a network of Latin American and Caribbean Environmental Funds dedicated to promoting the interrelationships of Environmental Funds in the LAC region through capacity-building and knowledge management initiatives that favor the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development in the region. RedLAC's environmental funds are leaders in the development of financial mechanisms that generate measurable impacts at local, regional, and global levels. Established in 1999, the organization has 34 members from 20 countries in the region



Incorporated in 2016, the Saint Lucia National Conservation Fund was designed to accommodate a diverse range of funding flows that will catalyse and support the conservation, restoration, and effective management of Saint Lucia's biodiversity and natural resources.

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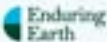
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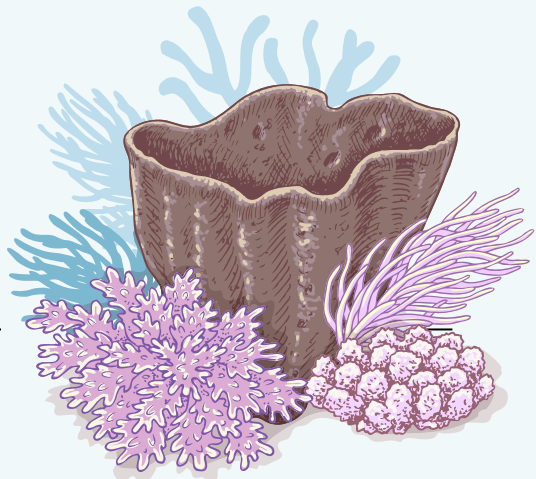


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THE PATH TO 2030: ADVANCING GLOBAL CONSERVATION TARGETS IN NATIONAL AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL CONTEXTS

First let me acknowledge the organizers of this year's congress.

The event is organized by the Saint Lucia National Conservation Fund SLUNCF, with the support of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) and in coordination with the Fondo de Inversión Ambiental de El Salvador (FIAES), which holds the presidency of RedLAC 2022-2025. My congratulations on a well organized Congress.

I am so thrilled to be speaking at the first RedLAC congress in the Eastern Caribbean. This year's "30 x 30x30" theme holds profound significance for the Caribbean region, with our unique ecosystems and vulnerable coastlines. A recent article by the GEF argued that the discussion needs to shift from Small Island States to Large Ocean States....I believe it was Big Ocean States so we could say BOS and not LOS.

Of course in my primary day job, as Professor at the UWI, I prepare young leaders to understand and develop the ocean. I have attended 2 meetings of RedLAC (in Columbia and Dominican Republic and finds these gathering of you leaders to be extremely valuable as we manage our environments. Today you leaders have traveled far and wide but your work like mine has been mainly for this Caribbean Sea that surrounds us right now.

Since we have a number of guests to the region, allow me to paint a picture of the Caribbean:

From Bahamas and Turks in the north, Cuba and my homeland of Jamaica in the middle, east to Hispaniola and Puerto Rico, then the arched Archipelago south through the Easter Caribbean - where we are in St Lucia and to Trinidad and Tobago in the south - just 11 KM (7 miles) from Venezuela's coast.

Using the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund's definition we are 30 nations and territories stretching across almost 4 million square kilometers of ocean. Each country has its own culture and traditions - some unique but many shared- like Reggae, Jonkanoo, Crop Over and Carnival.

And then there is our beauty - in all forms - our people, our land and YES our biodiversity. You are in the heart of it here in Saint Lucia. To quote CEPF again - The Caribbean "is one of the world's greatest centers of endemic biodiversity due to the region's geography and climate, and is one of the ...Earth's most biologically rich yet threatened areas". And then just like the people, our semi-tropical climate attracts migratory species by air and in our waters.

The "30x30" initiative, aimed at protecting 30% of the planet's land and oceans by 2030, is a crucial global effort to combat biodiversity loss, mitigate climate change, and promote sustainable development. However, achieving these ambitious conservation goals requires more than just setting targets; it demands effective collaboration, inclusive strategies and careful consideration of various social, economic, environmental, and, for us in the Caribbean, historical and cultural factors.

With unique ecosystems and vulnerable coastal communities "30 x 30" for the Caribbean region holds profound significance. The addition of the third "30"—a focus on achieving these goals within the next 30 months—underscores the urgency of action and the need for accelerated progress.

Over the next few minutes I wish to explore some strategies for advancing 30x30 within national and Caribbean regional contexts, highlighting the challenges and opportunities unique to the region and outlining actionable steps to ensure the successful achievement of these targets by 2030.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE ISSUES

No discussion on the 30 x 30 initiative, in my opinion, can start without it being contextualized against the summary of the adopted Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

An ambitious plan for Caribbean nations to protect 30% of land and sea by 2030. This roadmap outlines key steps from 2025 to 2030 to achieve conservation goals.

The GBF, adopted during the United Nations Biodiversity Conference in December 2022, is a landmark agreement aimed at addressing the biodiversity crisis by setting clear targets and guidelines for global conservation efforts. The framework is a successor to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which expired in 2020, and provides a roadmap for the international community to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and achieve full recovery by 2050.

We know the content and the timelines well but is this doable? It is most definitely ambitious and we all know the term "what got us here, will not get us there" so if you ask me, what we are here to discuss is what can we realistically fix and do better by 2030 - what have we found that works and how can we make sure that it is equitably distributed across the planet - and of course what can RedLAC and its partners here with us do in playing their part.



SIX STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING 30 x 30 IN THE CARIBBEAN

- ☐ Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Networks
- ☐ Forest Conservation and Restoration
- ☐ Coral Reef Protection and Restoration
- ☐ Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks
- ☐ Education, Awareness, and Capacity Building
- ☐ Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

KEY CONSIDERATION FOR ADVANCING 30 x 30 IN THE CARIBBEAN

1. Ecosystem Diversity and Regional Priorities:

The Caribbean's ecological diversity requires tailored approaches to conservation. Strategies must address the specific needs of different ecosystems, from coral reefs to rainforests, while also considering regional priorities such as climate resilience, disaster risk reduction, and food security.

2. Climate Change Adaptation:

As one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change, the Caribbean must integrate climate adaptation into its 30x30 strategies. This includes protecting natural buffers like mangroves and coral reefs, which can mitigate the impacts of sea-level rise and storms, and ensuring that conservation efforts are designed to withstand changing environmental conditions.

3. Community Engagement and Traditional Knowledge:

The success of 30x30 in the Caribbean depends on the active participation of local communities (including Indigenous peoples) who have stewarded these lands and waters for generations. Incorporating traditional knowledge and

community-based management practices is essential for sustainable and culturally appropriate conservation outcomes.

4. Regional Cooperation and Shared Resources:

The interconnected nature of Caribbean ecosystems requires strong regional cooperation. Transboundary conservation initiatives, shared resources, and collaborative policies will be crucial for achieving 30x30 across the region. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and other regional bodies can play a pivotal role in coordinating these efforts.

5. Sustainable Financing and Economic Diversification:

Achieving 30x30 will require significant financial investment. The Caribbean must explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as blue bonds, payments for ecosystem services, and public-private partnerships, to fund conservation efforts. Additionally, diversifying economies through sustainable tourism, agroforestry and fisheries management can reduce dependence on environmentally destructive practices.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING THE 30X30 GOAL IN THE CARIBBEAN

1. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Networks:

Expand and strengthen networks of MPAs across the Caribbean, focusing on ecologically significant areas that provide critical habitats for marine species, support fisheries, and protect coastlines. Effective management and enforcement of MPAs are essential to ensure their long-term success.

2. Forest Conservation and Restoration:

Implement forest conservation and restoration projects that protect the region's remaining forests, restore degraded lands, and promote reforestation. These efforts should prioritize areas with high biodiversity and potential for carbon sequestration.

3. Coral Reef Protection and Restoration:

Protect coral reefs through measures such as reducing pollution, regulating fishing practices, and restoring damaged reefs. Coral reefs are vital to the Caribbean's marine biodiversity and coastal protection, making their conservation a top priority.

4. Strengthening Legal and Policy Frameworks:

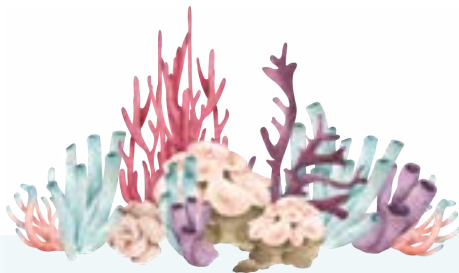
Update and enforce national and regional legal frameworks to support 30x30 targets. This includes establishing clear land and marine use policies, protecting Indigenous rights, and integrating conservation into development planning.

5. Education, Awareness, and Capacity Building:

Raise public awareness about the importance of 30x30 and build the capacity of local communities, government agencies, and NGOs to implement and manage conservation projects. Education campaigns, training programs and stakeholder engagement are critical for fostering a conservation culture in the Caribbean.

6. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting:

Establish robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress toward 30x30 targets. Regular reporting at national and regional levels will ensure accountability and allow for modifications where necessary.



ROAD MAP STARTING IN 2025

I am aware that various things are happening in different countries. My presentation of this roadmap is in the context of all of us in the Caribbean working in unison on a rather ambitious target.

2025: Baseline Assessments (12 months)

1. Establish National and Regional Task Forces:

By Q2 2025: Create national task forces in each country, including representatives from governments, NGOs, indigenous groups, academia, and the private sector. A regional task force under the auspices of CARICOM or the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC) could be set up to oversee and coordinate efforts. Key Action: Align these bodies with global efforts such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and UNEP's conservation frameworks.

2. Baseline Biodiversity Assessment:

By Q4 2025: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing protected areas. This includes mapping biodiversity hotspots (coral reefs, mangroves, forests), critical ecosystems, and the current percentage of protected terrestrial and marine areas. Collaborate with Global Partners: Leverage tools such as GIS and remote sensing to assess land use and marine habitats. Work with organizations like UNESCO and IUCN to identify underrepresented areas in conservation frameworks

3. Strengthen Legal Frameworks

Throughout 2025: Governments should review and revise existing environmental protection laws to incorporate 30x30x30 targets. This may involve creating new national parks, marine protected areas (MPAs), and terrestrial reserves.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

By Q4 2025: Start public consultations with local communities, indigenous peoples, and private sector stakeholders (especially in tourism and fisheries). This ensures that protection plans are socially inclusive and economically feasible.





2025: Baseline Assessments (12 months)

1

Q2 2025

Establish national and regional task forces, aligning with global conservation efforts.

2

Q4 2025

Conduct comprehensive biodiversity assessment of protected areas using GIS and remote sensing.

3

Public consultations with local communities, indigenous peoples & private sector.

4

Throughout 2025

Review and revise environmental protection laws to incorporate 30x30x30 targets.

2026: Monitoring and Evaluation (12 months)

1. Improve legislation for Protected areas

By Q2 2026: Ensure laws are passed to support the expansion of protected areas, and build a legislative framework for managing these areas, including enforcement mechanisms and penalties for violations

2. Monitoring and Data Collection

Throughout 2026: Implement monitoring systems for tracking biodiversity, ecosystem health, and enforcement of protection laws. Use satellite data and community-based surveillance to ensure compliance in MPAs and terrestrial reserves.

3. Collaborate with Research Institutions

Leverage Caribbean universities and international institutions to conduct biodiversity research and climate resilience studies within protected areas. Here, I will do the shameless plug for the UWI to lead in this regard.

4. Regular Monitoring

The framework emphasizes the importance of transparent monitoring and reporting, with a strong focus on data collection and sharing.



2026: Monitoring & Evaluation (24 months)

- 1 **Legislation**
 Pass laws supporting protected area expansion and management by Q2 2026.
- 2 **Monitoring Systems**
 Implement biodiversity tracking and enforcement systems throughout 2026.
- 3 **Research Collaboration**
 Partner with Caribbean universities for biodiversity and climate resilience studies.

2027: Implementation and Expansion

January – June: Designation of New Protected Areas(6 months)

By Q2 2027, each country should have legally designated 15% of terrestrial and marine areas as protected zones.

1. Priority Areas

Focus on critical ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangrove forests, and biodiversity-rich tropical forests. The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) and global conservation organizations like WWF may be able to provide technical and financial support.

2. National Biodiversity Strategies

Countries are required to update their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) in line with the GBF.

3. Financial Mechanisms

Mobilize at least \$200 billion per year from public and private sources for biodiversity-related initiatives, including international financial flows to developing countries.

30 MONTHS COMPLETE

(July – December: Blue Economy (6 Months)

1. Marine and Coastal Protections

By Q2 2027: Ensure that all major coral reef systems in the Caribbean are part of an MPA. Special focus should be given to The Bahamas, Belize, and Barbados, which have vast marine ecosystems.

2. Regional Collaboration on Fisheries

By Q4 2027: Partner with organizations like CRFM (Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism) to ensure sustainable fisheries management within protected marine zones.



2028: Scaling and Capacity Building (12 Months)

1. Training and Capacity Building

Throughout 2028: Invest in training for park rangers, conservation officers, and local NGOs in environmental monitoring, enforcement, and ecotourism management. Partner with international organizations such as the The Nature Conservancy, CEPF/CANARI and IUCN for capacity-building programs.

Local Community Empowerment: Develop community-based conservation programs where local populations help manage and benefit from protected areas, focusing on sustainable livelihoods such as eco-tourism and small-scale fisheries.

2. Expand to 25% Protected Areas

By Q4 2028: Each Caribbean country should have 25% of their terrestrial and marine ecosystems under some form of protection.

Key Focus: Expand protections to underrepresented ecosystems such as high-altitude tropical forests and pelagic zones (open ocean).

2029: Towards 30x30 (12 Months)

1. Adaptive Management and Climate Resilience

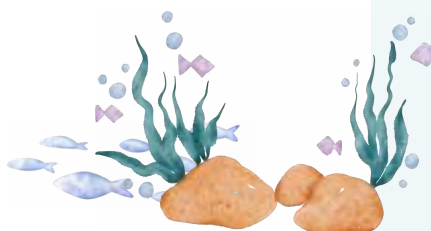
Throughout 2029: Implement adaptive management strategies that allow for flexible approaches to protected area management, based on scientific data and changing climate impacts. This may include expanding boundaries of MPAs to account for sea level rise and shifting ecosystems

2. Achieve 30% protection

Ensure Long-term Sustainability: Secure funding through partnerships with international conservation funds, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and through carbon offset programs that monetize ecosystem services provided by protected areas (e.g., carbon sequestration in mangroves and forests). By Q4 2029, all Caribbean countries should have designated at least 30% of their terrestrial and marine areas as protected zones, with effective management systems in place.

3. Integrate with Global Conservation Efforts

Continue to align with global efforts like the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). The Rio Trio formed at UNGA last week.



2028: Scaling and Capacity Building (18 months)

Training Programs

Invest in training for park rangers, conservation officers, and local NGOs.

Community Empowerment

Develop community-based conservation programs focusing on sustainable livelihoods.

Expanded Protection

By Q4, Achieve 25% protection of terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

2029: Towards 30x30 (30 months)

1

Adaptive Management

Implement flexible strategies based on scientific data and climate impacts.

2

30% Protection

Designate 30% of terrestrial and marine areas as protected zones.

3

Global Integration

Align with UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and Sustainable Development Goals. SDG13, 14 & 15

2030: Review and Expand

- 1 Comprehensive Review**
Assess effectiveness of protected areas and ecosystem health.
- 2 Strategy Adjustment**
Adapt protection strategies based on new conservation science and climate predictions.
- 3 Post-2030 Vision**
Plan for further expansion and deeper conservation actions.

2030: Review and Expand (30 months)

End of 2030: Conduct a comprehensive review of protected areas to assess their effectiveness, management, and ecosystem health. Adjust protection strategies as necessary, considering new conservation science and regional climate predictions.

Post-2030 Vision: Plan for further expansion of protected areas and deeper conservation actions, including rewilding initiatives, climate resilience corridors, and restoration of degraded ecosystems.

This road map is all well laid out - in theory. Using Jamaica as an example - the new fisheries policy took over a decade to be passed and one protected area that I checked told me their designation took 5 years. I think that brings us back here - to the role and value of sharing knowledge and best practices but more so working together as government, private sector, civil society and the focus of our discussions - Conservation Trust Funds (CTFs).

The work and research on CTFs has demonstrated our value in providing sustainable financing for biodiversity conservation. CTFs manage funding flows with a capillary approach to ensure appropriate levels of funds can be absorbed and meaningfully applied to reduce threats and enhance conservation and restoration efforts. By partnering with governments to provide sustainable long-term financing solutions to respond to biodiversity, climate, sustainable development, and environmental challenges, CTFs have demonstrated their role in expediting the implementation of global conventions.

Among SIDS, the Micronesia Conservation Trust, Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust, the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund and Sustainable Finance Architecture have been pivotal catalysts on the ground for translating global conservation to local action. The CBF has already begun key discussions to share our lessons from creating 12 SIDS CTFs in 10 years to foster similar CTFs for other islands.

I therefore urge the consideration of the role of Conservation Trust Funds in SIDS as financial partners that work independent but aligned with the government to meet global and national biodiversity and climate goals by attracting donor funding with both programmatic expertise and administrative/fiscal space to provide key national support. Particularly, I hope others see the role of the GEF and the GBFF in building on this experience to scale more locally successful solutions. Please be assured of the continued support and partnership of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund on the journey.





CONCLUSION

By following this roadmap, Caribbean nations can take meaningful steps towards achieving the 30x30x30 conservation goals, preserving biodiversity, and enhancing climate resilience.

The "30x30x30" pathway offers a unique opportunity for the Caribbean to lead in global conservation efforts while addressing the region's specific environmental and socio-economic challenges. By advancing 30x30 through inclusive, climate-resilient and regionally coordinated strategies, the Caribbean can safeguard its natural heritage, enhance resilience to climate change, and promote sustainable development for future generations. The next 30 months are critical—accelerated action is needed to set the Caribbean on a successful path to achieving 30x30 by 2030.

Lets get this 30x30x30 done.

Thank you



Professor Dale Webber

Director - Centre For Marine Sciences At The University Of The West Indies

Professor Webber has had a distinguished career in Coastal Ecology and Environmental Management and a strong and consistent record of teaching, graduate supervision, administration and research excellence which spans 35 years of service with The UWI.



Professor Webber also has an excellent record of public service and has served as Chairman of Jamaica's Climate Change Advisory Board since 2015 and recently represented the GOJ at COP28 in Dubai. He has served as Chairman, Environmental Foundation of Jamaica (EFJ) Board of Directors for 15 years and has been Convener of the CAPE Environmental Sciences Panel for the Caribbean Examination Council and Chairman of CL Environmental Company. In October 2018, Professor Webber was presented the Order of Distinction in the rank of Commander (CD) by His Excellency, the Governor General of Jamaica, the Most Honorable Sir Patrick Allen, recognized for his outstanding contribution to environmental conservation.

Professor Dale Webber was appointed to the position of Director of the Centre for Marine Sciences at the University of the West Indies (UWI) effective August 1, 2023 having served as Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the UWI Mona Campus, 2018 to 2023 and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Graduate Studies and Research between 2015 and 2018.

As an academic and a researcher, Professor Webber has produced seven book chapters and forty publications in peer-reviewed journals. He has supervised 21 MSc, 27 MPhil and 15 PhD (total of 63) graduate students to successful completion across a range of interests, from water quality and coastal ecology to oceanography, ecosystem modelling and the effectiveness of multilateral environmental agreements in environmental management.

Dale is married to UWI Marine Ecologist Professor Mona Webber and they have two daughters, Marissa and Deanna who have both completed higher degrees in Environmental Engineering and Oceanography respectively at Universities in the USA.

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