



11th OPPENHEIMER RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Highlights from the 11th Oppenheimer Research Conference held in Midrand, Gauteng, 5-7 October 2022

About the conference: This annual conference focuses on biodiversity and environment related research in Southern Africa. It covers a broad spectrum of topics from pure scientific research to climate change to policy.

Key note addresses and plenaries were delivered by sector leaders. **Minister Barbara Creecy (DFPE)** stressed the importance of evidence-based (research) decision making as stated in Objective 6.3 of the draft White Paper on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biodiversity and the need for private conservation stewardship to reach 30x30 targets. Unlocking the biodiversity economy was also stressed.

Dr. Luthando Dziba (SANParks CEO) highlighted the link between human wellbeing and ecosystem health, that a quarter of all global species are threatened and that living landscapes within communities are important (living in harmony with nature).

Prof. Tim Clutton-Brock (Cambridge) showed how long-term population studies of genetics and breeding systems in mammals provide insights on species evolution and adaptation.

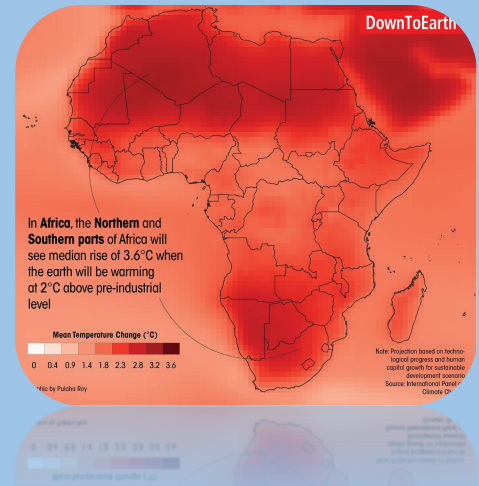


The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** was signed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit by 150 countries, including South Africa. The 15th Conference of Parties will



be held in Canada in December 2022 to discuss a new Global Biodiversity Framework to combat climate change and associated biodiversity and ecosystem loss. A new conceptual **30x30 target** is proposed, which involves protecting 30% of the planet's land and oceans by 2030 through protected areas and other effective conservation measures.

Africa, and notably southern Africa's average surface temperature is expected to rise at almost double the rate of the global average.



Key institutional issues of the day

- Presentations and expert panel discussion indicated that Africa must have its own voice on the climate change debate and biodiversity management, and must not be dictated to by the Global North (the main polluters).
- Innovative green financing must be sought (for example carbon markets, green bonds and fintech).
- Policy and legislation must be harmonized and cooperation strengthened.

Key research areas and questions arising from the conference

- Long-term monitoring to understand ecosystems.
- Climate change impacts on species and habitats.
- Quantifying biodiversity economy potential and unlocking potential.
- Aquatic ecosystem health and improving management.
- Optimal management of conservation areas and connectivity.



YouTube link to selected conference presentations <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1RA2p0ZaYU>