

Hesiquio Benítez Díaz

Director Cooperation and Implementation on Biodiversity, CONABIO Mexico

IPBES Bureau Member

Former CITES Plants Committee Vice-chair (2010-2015)

IPBES Bureau Member, Former CBD SBSTTA Chair (2018-2023),

IUCN-CSG Vice-chair for Latin America Region (since 2010).

Dear IUCN Members,

Sebastian's experience bridging science and finance shows he understands how to make conservation research investible—while his diplomatic skills will ensure IUCN's scientific voice is heard in the corridors of power where decisions are made. In my experience as Chair of CBD's Scientific Advisory Body, IPBES Bureau member and head of the CITES Scientific Authority of Mexico, I recognize these qualities as essential for IUCN's future leadership.

For more than three decades I've witnessed how scientific evidence often fails to influence political decisions. Sebastian stands apart for his ability to navigate between rigorous science and political reality without compromising either. He transforms complex research into clear policy pathways that governments can implement, and communities can support.

Implementing the Global Biodiversity Framework requires leaders who understand that science alone doesn't change policy—it needs champions who can make it politically relevant and economically viable. Sebastian has proven this capability repeatedly:

- Translating biodiversity science into \$400M endowment fund for Global Crop Diversity;
- Converting ecological data into business metrics at Global Footprint Network;
- Making conservation science central to CBD implementation through measurable targets.

My experience has shown me the critical gap between scientific recommendations and political action. Sebastian's track record demonstrates he knows how to bridge this gap:

- Built coalitions giving scientists direct access to decision-makers
- Created mechanisms ensuring scientific evidence shapes funding priorities
- Developed metrics making biodiversity visible to the finance and business community
- Established accountability systems based on measurable scientific indicators



Sebastian's Mexican heritage and upbringing across Latin America and Africa give him deep understanding of Global South realities. He knows that science-based conservation must account for:

- Traditional knowledge systems alongside peer-reviewed research
- Economic pressures facing biodiversity-rich developing countries
- Capacity constraints in implementing scientific recommendations
- Cultural contexts shaping how science is received and applied

His multilingual abilities—including native Spanish—enable authentic engagement with Latin American conservation priorities that are central for the Union. IUCN needs Council members who strengthen the science-policy interface. I strongly encourage your support as Regional Councillor.

Sincerely,



Hesiquio Benítez Díaz