Election of the Chairs of the IUCN Commissions

1. At its 98th Meeting in February 2020, the IUCN Council approved the draft Mandates 2020–2024 of the six IUCN Commissions to be submitted to Congress for adoption. Cf. Congress document CGR-2020-3.3/1.

2. At its 98th Meeting in February 2020, the IUCN Council decided to nominate the following candidates for election as Chairs of the Commissions:

   - **Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)**
     Angela ANDRADE, Colombia

   - **Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)**
     Sean SOUTHEY, Canada / South Africa

   - **Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)**
     Kristen WALKER PAINEMILLA, USA

   - **Species Survival Commission (SSC)**
     Jon Paul RODRÍGUEZ, Venezuela

   - **World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL)**
     Christina VOIGT, Germany

   - **World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)**
     Olivier CHASSOT, Costa Rica
     Madhu RAO, India / United Kingdom

   The candidates have declared their willingness to serve if elected.

3. For consideration by the World Conservation Congress, the biographical information on the candidates is attached hereafter. More information can be viewed on the Congress website.
Biographical information on candidates proposed as Chairs of IUCN Commissions

Angela ANDRADE, Colombia

Current employment and/or position/title:
Conservation International, Colombia – Environmental Policy Director

Experience in fields of concern to IUCN:

An anthropologist specialised in Geographic Landscape Analysis and Land Assessment, M.Sc. in Landscape Ecology. She has more than 25 years of professional experience in ecosystem management, from research to ecological surveys, land-use planning and environmental policies. Her contributions have focused on Latin America, where she has worked in academia, the Colombian government and sectors of civil society. She has been an international consultant on issues related to the application of the ecosystem approach, conservation corridors, ecological restoration, climate change and ecosystem-based adaptation. Within Conservation International Colombia, she focused on leading climate change adaptation programmes and on supporting global policy on biodiversity and climate change, as well as environmental policies. She currently chairs CEM, a position she has held since 2016. Previously, she served as Deputy Chair (2008–2016) and Vice-Chair for South America. She is a member of WCPA and EAGL of the Green List in Colombia. During these years, she has contributed to: representing CEM and IUCN in international forums, especially on biodiversity and climate change; promoting ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as Nature-based Solutions and the implementation of the Red List of Ecosystems in Colombia. She also chaired the IUCN Council's Climate Change Task Force.

Particular qualifications to be a Commission Chair:

The experience, knowledge and capacity that Angela has demonstrated in both her professional practice and her contributions and commitment to CEM over the past 16 years, especially during the period 2016–2020, ensure the necessary leadership to implement the actions required in the development and fulfilment of CEM's mandate during the next period. Her knowledge and experience allow her to continue leading priority activities identified by the commission, including ecosystem risk assessment, nature-based solutions, ecological restoration, governance and culture. Moreover, Angela’s training in social and environmental sciences allows her to promote integrally the principles of the ecosystem approach and the building of bridges of knowledge and the management of socio-ecological systems. Angela’s commitment to the CEM and IUCN is a fundamental element that allows the CEM to consolidate the promotion of the ecosystem management approach and practices, based on scientific knowledge, culture and experience, to other interest groups and sectors, in order to ensure that the response to the major global challenges is integral, comprehensive, participatory and effective.
Sean SOUTHEY, Canada/South Africa

Current employment and/or position/title:
Social and Behaviour Change Communications – Global Consultant

Experience in fields of concern to IUCN:
Sean Southey has over 30 years of experience in the international development and communications field. With a multi-sectorial background, Sean started his career with 5 years in the Canadian Ministry of Environment, followed by 12 years working with United Nations Development Programme’s (UNDP) environment team – where he founded and ran the Equator Initiative for 8 years. His NGO experience was enriched through work with ICLEI (Secretary General), Rare (Vice-President) and 10 years as President of IUCN NGO Member PCI Media. Over the last 10 years, he grew the PCI Media portfolio from 5 countries in Latin America to programmes that now span over 65 countries, led the development of over 80 campaigns impacting over 100 countries, won over 100 awards for impactful campaigns; and reached literally billions of people with life and planet saving information. Sean has extensive experience speaking around the world on the importance of communications and regularly runs creative design, capacity building and strategy workshops.

Particular qualifications to be a Commission Chair:
In 2016, Sean was elected as Chair for the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC). In this role, he has worked tirelessly to enhance IUCN’s use of creative communications for social change. This has included a lead role in designing and implementing #NatureForAll, helping drive a plan to realise IUCN’s commitment to working more closely and effectively with youth, and helping grow and support the work of the CEC and its over 1,600 members. As a resourceful communications expert, Sean is deeply committed to community empowerment and to the use of creative broadcast and social media to facilitate powerful social and behavioural change. From the Caribbean to the Pacific Islands, from Latin America to Asia and Africa, Sean has led campaigns for social good, with a unique focus on building the capacity of local partners around the world to use creative communications, behaviour change strategies and storytelling to effect powerful social change. With a broad range of behaviour change experiences, from Entertainment-Education series dramas, to cooking shows, to social marketing and online campaigns, Sean is a tireless advocate of the transformative power of storytelling and creative use of communications to shift social norms and bring about positive behaviour change.

Kristen WALKER PAINEMILLA, USA

Current employment and/or position/title:
Center for Communities and Conservation at Conservation International – Senior Vice President

Experience in fields of concern to IUCN:
Kristen is the Senior Vice-President for the Center for Communities and Conservation at Conservation International, an IUCN Member. In this role, she provides critical leadership on a range of social and international policies and practice related to indigenous peoples and local communities, gender, human rights-based approaches, social safeguards, as well as engagement with the peace and development community. Throughout her 25-year career, Kristen has advocated effectively and globally to improve the engagement of indigenous
peoples and local communities in conservation through a human rights-based approach and a focus on people-centred conservation.

Since 2016, Kristen has powerfully committed herself to the Union in her elected role of Chair of the Commission on Environment, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) for IUCN. Under her tenure, the Commission has supported the Union’s Members, supported the all the Commissions, advanced our work with IPO members, engaged in research around well-being and conservation, peace and migration and governance and expanded commission membership. Through Kristen’s leadership, CEESP partnered with the Community Conservation Research Network to host the 2018 Conference on Communities, Conservation and Livelihoods which brought academia together with practitioners and indigenous peoples to advance the evidence-based work of the CEESP. For more information on her work with CEESP visit [link]. Kristen holds a degree in Latin American Studies and Anthropology from George Washington University. She was a Cotlow Scholar in 1996, a Fulbright Scholar in 1997–1998 and is a Senior Fellow with the Environmental Leadership Program. She serves on several boards, including the Equator Initiative, the Bushmeat Crisis Task Force and the Chol-Chol Foundation.

**Particular qualifications to be a Commission Chair:**

Kristen has been passionately engaged with IUCN for over 20 years. In 2010, Kristen joined CEESP and was nominated in 2011 to co-chair the Specialist Group on Indigenous Peoples, Customary and Environmental Laws, and Human Rights (SPICEH). Throughout her tenure in CEESP, Kristen has liaised with the Commission, Secretariat and Members to advocate for critical issues such as rights based-approaches, conflict resolution, participation, customary law, and indigenous membership to IUCN. Kristen’s contributions to CEESP have helped create foundational new tools to support the Union, such as the Whakatane Mechanism, IUCN’s Knowledge Basket, and People in Nature. At the Mesoamerican, Latin American and Sydney Parks Congress, she designed and co-led indigenous workshops with indigenous partners Sotzil, IPACC, NAILSMA and UNU, and organised preparatory meetings for indigenous participants at the World Parks Congress (WPC). Throughout her 21-year tenure at Conservation International (CI), she has worked with various parts of IUCN from the SSC to the WCPA. In 2016, Kristen was elected as Chair of CEESP and member of the IUCN Council. In 2001, Kristen helped set up the joint CI-IUCN Biodiversity Assessment Unit. Kristen is a founding member of the Conservation Initiative on Human Rights (CIHR) and a member of the Green List Committee. She has been heavily engaged in CI’s engagement in WPCs in Durban (’03) and Sydney (’14) and co-led CI’s delegation to the World Conservation Congresses in Bangkok (2004), Barcelona (2008), Jeju (2012) and Hawaii (2016).

**Jon Paul RODRÍGUEZ, Venezuela**

**Current employment and/or position/title:**
Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Investigation (Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas – IVIC) – Professor; PROVITA – President

**Experience in fields of concern to IUCN:**

I often describe myself as a conservation biologist interested in influencing public policy, without being a politician. I work on understanding patterns in the spatial distribution of threatened species and ecosystems, as well as the underlying causes of these patterns, and the development of policy guidelines for biodiversity conservation. My professional career has always combined working with PROVITA (a Venezuelan NGO and IUCN Member that I co-founded), being an ecology professor at IVIC, and actively engaging with IUCN. During
my final year as an undergraduate student, I began working on the Red Book of Venezuelan Fauna (with Franklin Rojas-Suárez). A few years later, I was one of the promoters of the adaptation of Red List Categories and Criteria to Ecosystems, leading to the publication of the Red Book of Venezuelan Terrestrial Ecosystems, and the initiation of a process for establishment of the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems at the global level. Through my work with national Red Lists of species, I was invited to join the National Red List Working Group of IUCN, then became Deputy Chair of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and in 2016 was elected Commission Chair. All my research (>200 publications) and students (2 postdocs, 13 graduate, 8 undergraduate) have focused on conservation themes, crossing disciplinary and institutional lines. I believe that the best biodiversity conservation policies are based on scientific evidence, and have devoted my professional life to achieving this goal.

**Particular qualifications to be a Commission Chair:**

I have thoroughly enjoyed Chairing the IUCN Species Survival Commission during the last four years. I feel proud of the >9,400 experts in our network of 161 specialist groups, task forces, Red List authorities and conservation committees. They are at the forefront of science, conservation and reversing the decline of biodiversity worldwide. My Deputy Chair, Domitilla Raimondo, and the rest of the 19 people on our Chair’s Office team, as well as our Steering Committee and the colleagues at the IUCN Secretariat, inspire, advice, teach and remind me every day what it takes to save species from extinction. Our 32 partner organisations believe in what we do, and provide key support to keep us going. In other words, together we have all built the infrastructure and catalysed the resources to continue advancing our vision of “a just world that values and conserves nature through positive action to reduce the loss of diversity of life on earth.” If elected for another quadrennium, I would:

1) strengthen alliances with current and future partners, to increase support to the SSC network in assessment, planning and action;
2) engage the SSC network in implementing the knowledge products mobilised by IUCN at local, national and regional levels, in collaboration with IUCN Members, Secretariat and others actors, to support conservation action and recovery of biodiversity;
3) increase diversity (e.g. geographical, disciplinary, institutional, gender) in both the leadership and the membership of the Commission.

**Christina VOIGT, Germany**

**Current employment and/or position/title:**
University of Oslo, Department of Public and International Law, Norway – Professor

**Experience in fields of concern to IUCN:**

Dr Christina Voigt is a renowned expert in international environmental law. She has a PhD in Law and is professor at the University of Oslo. She is passionate about and has dedicated her career to legal issues of forest protection, nature and biodiversity conservation, climate change, environmental multilateralism, and sustainability. Over the last 20 years, Professor Voigt has taught and published widely on these topics. In 2009, she was awarded the inaugural Environmental Scholarship Prize (Junior) of the IUCN Academy of Environmental Law for the intellectual influence and international significance of her work and for the enhancement of collaboration among persons from different institutions and regions. For more than 15 years, Professor Voigt has been an active member of the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL). Since 2017, she has been the Chair of its Climate Change Specialist Group. She is also a member of the IUCN Climate Change Task Force. She chaired the organising committee of the 14th Annual Colloquium (2016) of the
IUCN Academy of Environmental Law in Oslo and co-edited its proceedings Courts and the Environment (EEP, 2018). For the last 10 years, she also worked as the principal legal adviser for the Government of Norway in the UN climate negotiations, inter alia, as Norway’s lead negotiator on the protection of forests in developing countries (REDD+). Currently, she supports Norway in the negotiations of the post-2020 framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity. For more information, please see: www.christinavoigt.net.

Particular qualifications to be a Commission Chair:

I have served IUCN for many years in various contexts and understand the Union, its structure and objectives very well. Through my work for the IUCN WCEL, the Climate Change Task Force and the Academy of Environmental Law, I have built a large network within the Union, complemented by my global network worldwide through my academic and governmental work. I think that my wide-ranging expertise in the field of environmental law, as well as my large networks will be very beneficial to the WCEL. They will help to increase its member base and thereby spread environmental law knowledge to all regions, and support the WCEL to function as the leading global network of environmental lawyers. Through my work as project coordinator at the Excellence Center at the University of Oslo as well as for the Norwegian Ministry for the Environment, I have broad experience in project management, planning, administration and implementation, as well as fund raising and financing. I am focused, dedicated, diplomatic, engaged and I like to work with people with different backgrounds and opinions. My hope is to support, through the advancement of the environmental rule of law by the WCEL, the role of the Union in bringing about the urgently necessary transformation towards an environmentally sustainable world.

Olivier CHASSOT, Costa Rica

Current employment and/or position/title:
Latin American School for Protected Areas (ELAP), University for International Cooperation (UCI), Costa Rica – Professor.

Experience in fields of concern to IUCN:

Olivier Chassot (PhD) has developed an extensive knowledge in conservation and sustainable development over two decades. His areas of expertise include biodiversity, landscape and seascape ecosystems and connectivity conservation, transboundary conservation, protected areas and World Heritage, wildlife, and governance. Olivier has a wide experience in designing, fundraising and implementing conservation biology programmes, project planning, monitoring and evaluation, leadership of inter-institutional alliances at the national, bi-national, regional and international level, as well as in the creation of protected areas. As both a multiple IUCN Commission member, and as part of different IUCN Member organisations, Olivier understands well IUCN’s multiple levels and perspectives. While he hopes to be able to contribute to IUCN, he believes that a cultural sensibility is paramount to the interaction with partners in different regions. In this regard, Olivier has been able to develop a strong cultural competence by working and travelling to 70 countries, a process that has allowed him to engage respectfully and effectively with people from different cultures, languages, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors.

Particular qualifications to be a Commission Chair:

Olivier Chassot has previously served on the Steering Committee of the World Commission on Protected Areas as Deputy Vice-Chair and Co Vice-Chair for Connectivity Conservation (2009–2016). Currently he serves as Vice-Chair for Mesoamerica at the Transboundary
Specialist Group, and as Deputy Vice-Chair of the Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group, which has allowed him to better grasp the complexity of IUCN’s dynamic constituency and governance. Olivier was also a Governor of the Society for Conservation Biology (2015–2017). Tasks and duties as a Board member of high-impact global organisations and as Executive Director and/or CEO of several national and regional organisations in Latin America, with a cumulative experience of 30 years, has prepared him well to become an efficient Commission Chair and, as such, to contribute actively to the IUCN Council. Olivier has established and cultivated many national and regional networks with hundreds of researchers, policy makers and environmental leaders from different nations. Olivier has authored or co-authored 134 publications, organised or co-organised more than 100 national, regional or global events, and presented over 180 papers at international conferences and workshops. Olivier is a passionate conservation practitioner compromised with high standards of excellence, and a team player able to build strong intercultural relationships. Olivier is fluent in French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, with a limited working proficiency in German and Indonesian, and is currently learning Mandarin and Arabic. Please visit [https://www.olivierchassot.net](https://www.olivierchassot.net) for more information.

**Madhu RAO, India / United Kingdom**

**Current employment and/or position/title:**
Wildlife Conservation Society – Senior Advisor

**Experience in fields of concern to IUCN:**

Madhu is a long-term member of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), with deep experience in protected area management and species conservation. She supports field programmes at priority sites across Asia, implementing protected area creation and management, human-wildlife conflict, species monitoring, and policy action. She co-led the development of the Asian Species Action Partnership, an IUCN SSC initiative ([www.speciesonthebrink.org](http://www.speciesonthebrink.org)) that catalyses action to promote recovery of Southeast Asia’s Critically Endangered species. She has engaged with international policy platforms such as CITES and CBD and in regional policy processes like the ASEAN Working Group on Nature Conservation and Biodiversity. Madhu has supported capacity development strategies for protected area management with Southeast Asian government agencies and institutions. Her PhD from Duke University focused on the cascading impacts of ecosystem disruption on biodiversity in the Lago Guri islands in Venezuela. She has published extensively on protected area effectiveness and governance, community-based conservation, wildlife trafficking and conservation prioritisation in both academic and NGO literature. Recently, she co-led the development of a Professional Master’s Programme in Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainability aimed at building Asian conservation leadership at the National University of Singapore.

**Particular qualifications to be a Commission Chair:**

Madhu is a skilled conservation practitioner with over 20 years field experience across South and Southeast Asia. She is committed to enabling conservation impact at scale, with involvement ranging from field implementation to regional and global policy development. Experienced with developing and operationalising multi-stakeholder conservation alliances working across institutions, often in complex political situations, she believes in maintaining a positive and transparent work environment that facilitates collaboration even when there are divergent positions. Diplomacy and consensus-building skills have been critically important in helping convene diverse groups and creating the potential for new ideas and initiatives to
emerge. With relevant experience in personnel, financial and organisational management, she has the ability to delegate effectively, and to empower and motivate teams toward desired outcomes. Her deep knowledge and experience with conservation challenges and solutions are valuable assets for mobilising the Commission's expertise to achieve conservation impact. Strongly purpose-driven, she is able to work across disciplinary and core expertise boundaries to engage and influence policies and action by functionally diverse organisations. She has lived and worked in both emerging economies and developed nations with accumulated experience in resource mobilisation, programme strategy development and implementation. If elected, she would devote 100% of her time to WCPA.