FORMAT

This conference will comprise mainly interactive sessions taking place over four days. The tentative agenda is as follows:

	19 May 2015 *UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE CHAIN*	20 May 2015 *HELP AT HAND*	21 May 2015 *TURNING THEORY INTO ACTION*	22 May 2015 *A WAY FORWARD*
AM	Opening ceremony & welcome address	Success stories: Building effective information systems	Group work: Constructing a vision	Celebrating the International Day of Biological Diversity
				Group work: Reporting back & coalescing the Plan of Action
	Setting the scene	Tools, resources & learning networks	Group work: Formulating goals, objectives, & priority actions	Group work: Articulating a resolution on African biodiversity data
PM	Group work: Unpacking the biodiversity data-science-policy value chain	Field excursion	Group work: Conceptualising projects	Summary of proceedings & next steps
	Barriers & solutions		Field excursion	Closing ceremony
	Poster-viewing		Official conference dinner	Press conference

EXHIBITION HALL

Throughout the conference, an exhibition hall adjacent to the plenary room, will display posters depicting various projects and case studies concerning the generation and practical application of biodiversity data for sustainable development. Participants can apply to bring and display their own posters.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ATTEND?

To register your interest in this conference or submit an inquiry, please email Mr Russell Galt (r.galt@sanbi.org.za).

AFRICA RISING: MOBILISING BIODIVERSITY DATA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

19-22 May 2015 | Cape Town, South Africa

SANBI
Biodiversity for Life
South African National Biodiversity Institute

GBIF

UNEP

WCMC

JRS Biodiversity Foundation

USAID | SOUTHERN AFRICA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
RESILIM : Resilience in the Limpopo River Basin Program

ABOUT

The conference, Africa Rising: Mobilising Biodiversity Data for Sustainable Development, will take place from 19 to 22 May 2015 at Kirstenbosch National Botanic Garden in Cape Town, South Africa. It is being organised by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) in partnership with the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), United Nations Environment Programme – World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), and the USAID Resilience in the Limpopo Basin Programme (RESILIM). It is funded by the European Union (EU) and the JRS Biodiversity Foundation. The conference has the following objectives:

1. Increase regional understanding of the opportunities and solutions that biodiversity data presents for sustainable development in Africa;

2. Draw attention to relevant tools, resources and learning networks for building effective biodiversity information systems in Africa; and

3. Articulate a 'Plan of Action' for mobilising and mainstreaming Africa's policy-relevant biodiversity data.

The event builds upon the JRS-funded project, *Mobilizing Africa's Biodiversity Data*, which entails developing a strategy for capturing, digitizing and publishing Africa's policy-relevant biodiversity data whilst strengthening regional capacity and collaboration in biodiversity informatics.

A special highlight of the conference will be the official launch and first regional meeting of Biodiversity Information for Development, a €3.9m EU-funded project focused on enhancing capacity and mobilising biodiversity data in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

The conference will bring together a range of stakeholders who operate along the data-science-policy value chain or have a special interest in unlocking biodiversity data for sustainable development. These will include data managers, scientists, researchers, and policymakers from Africa and beyond, as well as civil society, international organizations and private foundations.

VENUE: The conference will take place in the lively City of Cape Town, South Africa, or more specifically, in the majestic Kirstenbosch National Botanic Garden on the slopes of Table Mountain which has been voted as one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

Biodiversity plays a critical role in sustainable development, as was recognized in the Rio+20 outcome document, "The Future we want". Biodiversity – the variety of life on Earth – generates and mediates flows of vital ecosystem services upon which the security and wellbeing of current and future generations depend. This is especially so in Africa, where the benefits of biodiversity are as indispensable to key economic sectors (e.g. forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, health and energy) as they are to people, especially vulnerable groups like the poor, women and indigenous peoples. Hence, the conservation and restoration of biodiversity present a range of solutions for sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Africa.

Access to relevant, reliable biodiversity data is essential for effective policymaking. Economic policymakers require data on traded biological products like timber, food and medicine; agricultural policymakers require data on pollinators, crop diversity, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs); water policymakers require data on biological indicators and invasive alien species; and health policymakers require data on pathogens and disease vectors.

Insufficient biodiversity data severely constrains policymaking. The process by which species records are captured, digitized and published – to become globally discoverable, freely accessible and easily consumable – is known as biodiversity data mobilization. Although millions of records have been mobilized in recent years, there are still substantial gaps in the knowledge base that stifle effective policymaking.

Mobilizing Africa's biodiversity data will help African policymakers to formulate more effective, evidence-based policies in pursuit of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The conference will address several key questions: Which types of biodiversity data are most essential for sustainable development in Africa? How can the biodiversity data-science-policy value chain be streamlined to ensure that scientists, researchers and policymakers have access to relevant, reliable biodiversity data? What initial steps can African governments take to improve biodiversity data management at the national level? How should donors prioritize their investments to build effective biodiversity information architecture in Africa?