Cultural Landscapes and Biodiversity: A Living Heritage Worth Protecting

Side event — Armenia Pavilion · CBD COP17 Yerevan · Saturday 24 October 2026 · 16:00–18:00

Organised by: Council of Europe Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176) — Secretariat

PROGRAMME

16:00	**Opening remarks** Rafael Benítez, Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment — Council of Europe

16:05–16:20	**Keynote address** Dr Musonda Mumba, Secretary General — Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar)

16:20	**Panel introduction** Moderated by Caroline Martin, Secretary, Council of Europe Landscape Convention

PANEL QUESTIONS

16:22–16:27	**Nune Petrosyan** — *National representative to the Council of Europe Landscape Convention* Armenia
Question	*Could you share one or two examples of how traditional land-use practices have shaped Armenia's landscapes and contributed to maintaining biodiversity — and what this tells us about the importance of local knowledge in landscape governance?*

16:27–16:32	**Mohamed Ali Dridi** — *Deputy Director of Natural Ecosystems (GIHAS and MAB Coordinator)* Ministry of Environment of Tunisia
Question	*Plant genetic resources are the living memory of traditional landscapes. What is at stake for plant diversity when these landscapes change or when traditional practices disappear — and how can gene banks and living landscapes work together to preserve what remains?*

16:32–16:37	**Clinton Omusula** — *Land tenure and geospatial specialist, Land Tenure Unit* FAO — Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Question	*Local communities maintain biodiversity through their everyday management of landscapes — but only when they have secure access to the land. Could you illustrate what insecure land tenure means in practice for biodiversity — and how land-use planning can better recognise the traditional practices that sustain it?*

16:37–16:42	**Antonio Antequera** — *Vice-President* Council of Europe Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176)
Question	*The Council of Europe Landscape Convention promotes an integrated approach — landscape protection, management and planning together. What does this look like in practice for countries trying to address biodiversity loss while safeguarding cultural identity and traditional practices — and what does the Convention offer beyond Europe?*

JOINT DISCUSSION

17:00–17:20	**Panel exchange — all four panellists** *You each come from a different institution. Where do you see the greatest opportunities to work together more effectively — and what concrete joint action could help countries integrate biodiversity, traditional knowledge and community participation into landscape governance?*

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR & CLOSING

17:20–17:30	Panel synthesis — Caroline Martin
17:30–17:50	Questions from the floor
17:50–18:00	Closing remarks — Rafael Benítez

The Council of Europe Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176) is open to Council of Europe member states and, since 2021, to non-member states. It is the only international treaty devoted exclusively to the landscape as a shared living environment. — https://www.coe.int/landscape