

**Don't kill the bee!**

**Legal insights to combat the biodiversity crisis**

VIII Tarragona International Environmental Law Colloquium (TIEC)

1-2 June 2023

[www.tiecolloquium.com](http://www.tiecolloquium.com)



**POSTER PRESENTATION**

**Utilizing the Traditional Knowledge and Customary Law of Nigeria's Indigenous communities in Biodiversity Conservation Strategies**

**Ebunoluwa Popoola and Lateefat Adeola Bellos**

**(Bingham University)**

Historically, African indigenous perceptions of nature were largely rooted in biocentric and ecocentric ethos. This was reflected in the treatment and, sometimes, near reverence accorded the environment by indigenous communities in the pre-colonial era. The advent of colonialism with its focus on the exploitation and expropriation of raw materials resulted in a shift to the anthropocentric, thus colonial and post-colonial environmental legislation was centred on the interest of humans. This trend has continued to this day resulting in less than adequate protection for the environment and massive loss of biodiversity. Economic goals are prioritized over environmental needs and there is poor national implementation or non-implementation of regional and international instruments on biodiversity ratified by Nigeria. The major source of environmental law for Nigeria remains anthropocentric colonial-style legislation that does not resonate with the traditional belief systems held by rural communities, who are crucial stakeholders in biodiversity conservation strategies. Nigeria operates a plural legal system in which customary law is statutorily and judicially recognised as a source of law. The focus of this poster is to show how traditional knowledge and indigenous conservation systems can be incorporated into modern biodiversity conservation strategies. The doctrinal approach of research is adopted to make a case for indigenous customary law and traditional knowledge to be utilised in biodiversity conservation. Re-imagining biodiversity conservation through traditional knowledge would lead to outcomes that are biocentric and ecocentric.