

## **Ecological science in action: An international and intergovernmental perspective**

Salvatore Aricò, UNESCO and International Science Council

The session “Natural Capital, Ecosystem Services and Environmental Accounting” of the 2022 Annual Congress of the Italian Society of Ecology, and the Congress as a whole, provide an opportunity to take a step back and look at the theme of the session through a historical lens: what is the origin of terms such as “natural capital” that we tend to give for granted nowadays but that were not existing until a few years ago? What is the scientific evidence underpinning their adoption by policymakers and how some of these concepts and terms, such as in the case of the term “ecosystem services”, may have raised a sparkling debate involving multiple stakeholders beyond the scientific community? How the science of biodiversity and the environment impinge on major economic forces at work? What is the societal responsibility of the community of ecologists at large in this regard? This presentation will attempt to answer these and other similar questions from the experience of ecological theory in action, using examples of what has worked – or not – at the international and intergovernmental level while applying the findings of scientific research related to ecosystems and their services and benefits, in the broader context of the sustainable development agenda.