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FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL POLICY ECONOMY **SOCIAL** SAMIHAFIA FILES SPORT CULTURE AFRICA INTERNATIONAL VIDEOS

NEWS IN BRIEF



PRIMATOLOGY

An international congress on lemurs organized by Jonah Ratsimbazafy

September 21, 2025 The editorial staff

Jonah Ratsimbazafy

This event helped to catalyze conservation initiatives and propel Madagascar onto the international scientific stage.

Malagasy primatologist [Jonah Ratsimbazafy](#), president of the [International Primatological Society](#) (2020) and [a member of TWAS](#) since 2021, is a passionate advocate for the protection and conservation of lemurs. His efforts have helped to increase Madagascar's role in global primatology.

By organizing the [30th Congress of the International Primatological Society](#) (IPSC) from July 20 to 25, he helped to catalyze conservation initiatives and propel Madagascar onto the international scientific stage.

“Lemurs are more than just beautiful animals. They are essential to Madagascar’s forests. They disperse seeds and maintain the balance of entire ecosystems. If lemurs disappear, the forests will decline, biodiversity will collapse, and even human communities will suffer,” said Ratsimbazafy.

Of the participants, 759 delegates attended in person, while 133 joined virtually. It is worth noting that 32% of them came from Africa, 18% from Asia, and 9% from Central and South America, demonstrating the initiative's global inclusiveness.

In recognition of his exceptional contribution to lemur conservation, he received, at the congress, the Margot Marsh Foundation Award for Biodiversity and a special distinction from the Malagasy Ministry of the Environment for his services to the nation.

Ratsimbazafy obtained his doctorate in 2002 from the State University of New York, USA, and his habilitation (2011) from the University of Antananarivo. He is currently a lecturer at [the University of Antananarivo](#).

He is also co-vice-chair of the Madagascar chapter of the Primate Specialist Group of the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and director of the Houston Zoo. Throughout his career, he has received numerous awards, including the Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship (1998), the Galante Prize (2002) from the International Primatological Society, and Disney's Hero Conservation Award (2015). In 2019, he was named an honorary life member by the Council of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation. In 2023, he received the Seacology Award, an international environmental prize, for his more than three decades of dedication to the conservation of lemurs and their habitat in Madagascar.

“Madagascar was the ideal setting to host the 30th IPSC, as it is home to 112 lemur species, representing 20% of the world’s non-human primates. All are endemic to the world’s fourth-largest island, making it a unique environment that deserves to be valued and protected. And to protect it, we must raise awareness of its existence,” added Ratsimbazafy. “Saving the lemurs means saving the heart of Madagascar.”