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ALLIANCE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES (IP& LCS) FOR CONSERVATION IN AFRICA

STRATEGY 2023 - 2027

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We take care of our lands. This is our land by birth. We have knowledge, that was gifted to us by our forefathers, that teaches us how to sustain our land and be sustained by it. How can someone that has never lived in our land know how to care for it? How can our people and our lands be managed by laws made by people that live outside the forest and away from the great plains? Living sustainably in our forests, in our great plains, is about relationship, about interdependence. Without the land we wouldn't be here and without us the richness of our environment would succumb to greed and power.
Laboot declaration, 2022.

Africa is one of the most biodiverse continents in the world. In July 2022, the inaugural IUCN Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) hosted by the Government of Rwanda examined the role of protected areas(1) in nature conservation, safeguarding wildlife, and in aligning protected areas with broader economic and human development goals and increasing the understanding of the crucial roles that the protected and conserved areas play in biodiversity conservation and delivering ecosystem services that underpin human welfare and livelihoods. Climate change and fast-dwindling biodiversity are the most urgent threats facing our planet today. The sharp rise in environmental catastrophes has led the global community to urgently seek new interventions to halt biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation through instruments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the target to conserve 30% of the planet by 2030, the Paris Agreement, and the COP26 & 27 climate pacts. At the core of some of these commitments are proposals to expand protected areas across the world, particularly in Africa and other areas in the Global South. It is against this background that the APAC was held.

The Congress culminated in the Kigali call to action which recognizes the need to acknowledge, respect, recognize and support the rights and identity of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP & LCs(2)) and their governance systems, and to promote fair and equitable sharing of costs and benefits associated with conservation areas. In addition, it calls for acknowledgment and redress of past and ongoing injustices experienced in the pursuit of conservation goals and the centering of African people in contemporary conservation practice. IPLCs from across Africa held a pre-congress event in Kigali and consolidated their voice throughout the Congress. An important output of this mobilization is the IPLCs Kigali declaration which emphasized the need to halt the violence of conservation in all dimensions and emphasizes the importance of secure tenure and land justice as the central pillar for the African conservation agenda. Nearly all the existing protected areas on the continent exist on land that was carved out of community land and the land they occupy is in many cases claimed by one or more communities.

IPLCs are determined to articulate new models of conservation that result in positive outcomes for both biodiversity and people. Post APAC, IPLCs in Africa set out to develop a strategy that allows them to hold governments, donor agencies, international conservation NGOs conservationists and other key stakeholders to account, while advocating for speedy implementation of the commitments made. The need for targeted mobilization is informed by the fact that other declarations that have included pro-people provisions e.g., the 2003 Durban Accord have largely remained unimplemented.

This strategy is therefore anchored on four interlocking priority areas: establishment and operationalization of a Pan-African IPLC body, advocacy, campaigns and strategic engagement, putting people at the centre of conservation, and promoting inclusive governance and mobilizing the economic value of conserved areas for IPLCs. In a nutshell, IPLCs are interested in a conservation practice that embraces principles of justice, respect, love, collaboration, reconciliation, peace, respect of all knowledge systems and models of conservation, landscape-wide and waterscape-wide conservation that takes into consideration the human dimensions, including their livelihood systems, a conservation ethos that does not criminalize their livelihood systems, and a conservation philosophy that is anchored on land3 justice.

1. Protected areas is a contested term in IPLCs spaces because of its history of oppression. Some of the fundamental questions asked are - who is protecting what and from whom? If wildlife is being protected in community-owned territories, then it is assumed that the enemies of wildlife are communities who share landscapes with these very species and who bear the burden of conservation. This strategy fully acknowledges this complexity and supports this critique but the term 'protected areas' will be used in the text for ease understanding and to help articulate the concerns of IPLCs around protected areas.

2. This document recognizes the distinct differences between these two groups (including their histories of struggle for self-determination) in Africa but this will be written as IPLCs hereafter for ease of readability.

3. In this strategy land and landscape are used to include both terrestrial and water-based ecosystems. In many African indigenous environmental philosophies land is conceptualized as an all encompassing with all its different elements. In addition, all the water-based and terrestrial ecosystems are interconnected.

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Strategy

This Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs)strategy has arisen out of several engagements of IPLCs including the recent participation of IPLCs in the first Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) in Kigali (Rwanda) in July 2022.This was followed up by two meetings in Nairobi in December 2022 and March 2023; over 30 countries have been represented in these meetings. The Strategy seeks to harness and unify IPLCs'voice in Africa and to prioritize their engagement in all policy arenas relevant to their land and land-based resources, territories and conservation. This strategy is centered on visibility, equity, representation, and meaningful participation in decision making bodies that have the potential to impact IPLCs collective and individual rights.

The IPLCs that participated and engaged with APAC identified priority actions to ensure people-centred conservation that is just, equitable and fair and that deepens the involvement and meaningful participation of IPLCs under the Congress theme of "For People and Nature". While Congress participants broadly committed to act with urgency to address the biodiversity, climate change and health crises through the Kigali Call to Action, IPLCs on their part made commitments and demands through an IPLC Kigali Declaration that built on a number of sub-regional declarations: the Nairobi , Victoria Falls, Ouagadougou, Goma and Laboot that were endorsed prior to the Congress.

The IPLC Kigali Declaration contains four priority areas: Commitments by IPLCs; Call to governments; Conservation Organization; Research, Media and Academia. The strategy is intended to ensure the commitments and demands made through the Declaration and the Kigali Call to Action are implemented. It is also seeking to help IPLCs initiate follow up programs, scale up existing activities and leverage new opportunities for greater impact. In addition, it outlines the key challenges IPLCs are facing in conservation of biodiversity and identifies opportunities and priority actions which can alleviate these challenges. The strategy is intended to guide programmatic planning and implementation, and to enhance synergy among IPLCs on the continent. The ultimate goal of the strategy is to ensure implementation of the Kigali Call to Action and IPLC Kigali Declaration and meaningful engagement of IPLCs in the conservation of biodiversity through improved management of conserved areas in the face of increasing pressures.

Strategy Development and Management Process

The Strategy was developed through a consultative process. This included analysis of the Kigali Call to Action and relevant IPLCs regional declarations, a series of interactions, post-APAC Nairobi convenings that took place in December 2022 & March 2023 and consultations with other IPLC organizations. The strategy thus reflects a shared vision of IPLCs captured through discussions and consultations of IPLCs across the continent. This strategy has been shared with IPLCs and key partners for input and revision.

The strategy takes into account the rapid and ongoing change in each context. It will be a living document and will continue to evolve and be updated as new information, dynamics, opportunities and threats emerge to ensure effective adaptive management on the ground and to remain relevant and forward-looking.

Structure of the Strategy

This Strategy is divided into six sections: Introduction, Congress overview, IPLC priority areas, opportunities, strategic engagement framework, and risk analysis.

2. AFRICAN PROTECTED AREAS CONGRESS (APAC)

Overview of the Congress

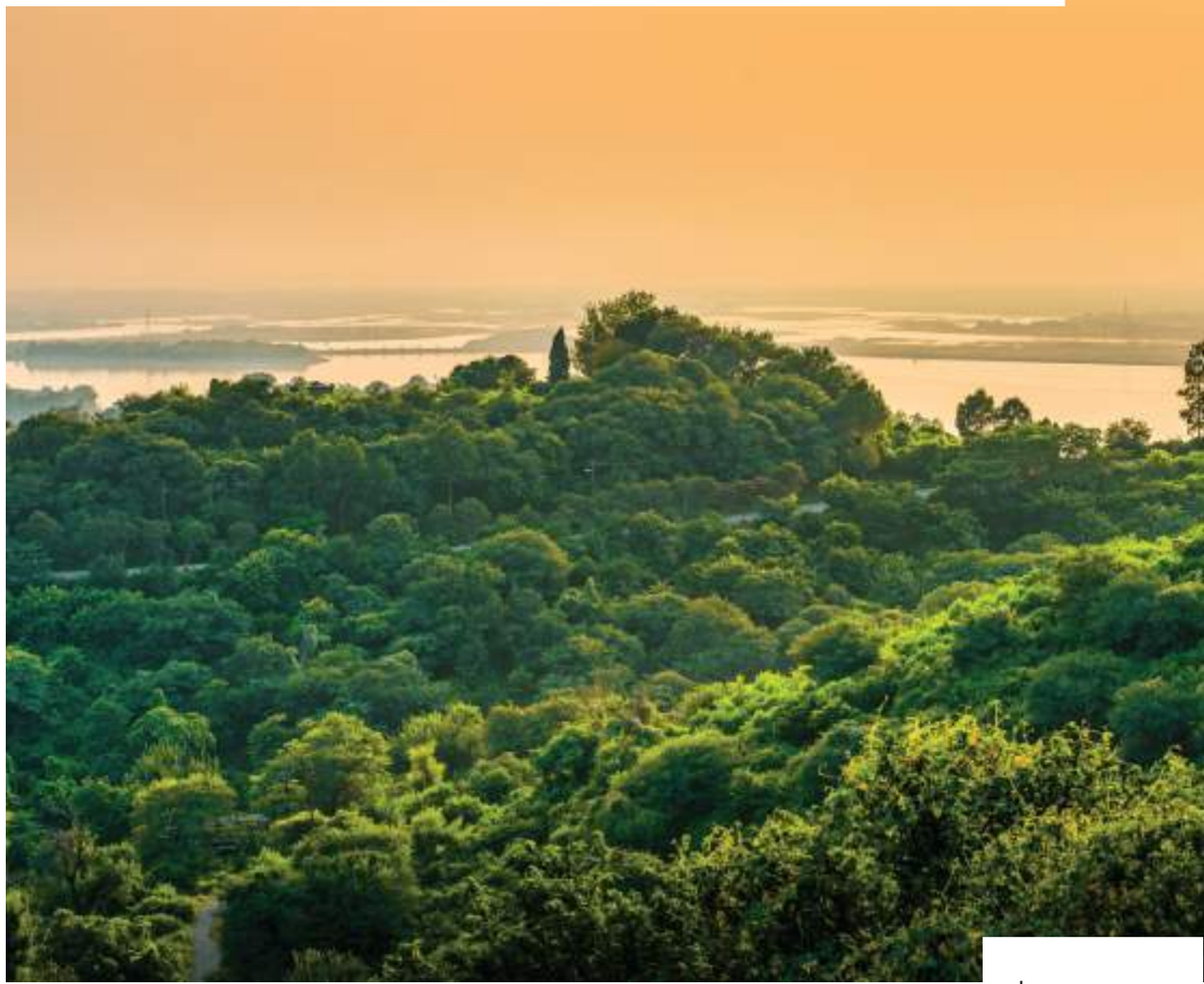
Africa is home to 1.2 billion people and one of the most biodiverse continents on earth. Given the twin global crises of climate change and loss of biodiversity, the need for the continent's development agenda, Africa is entering an exciting but challenging phase in history. With more people beginning to share the continent and all the precious resources on which the continent depends, megatrends are putting Africans at the centre of determining how people should relate to conserved areas and natural systems that underpin the continent's economic prosperity and well-being.

It is against this background that African Protected Areas Congress (APAC) the first ever continent-wide communion of the African people, citizens, leaders, governments and interest groups was held in Kigali-Rwanda from the 18th to the 23rd of July 2022. Hosted by the Government of Rwanda and convened by the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), the Congress had over 2,400 participants in person and approximately 5,000 who joined online from across the African continent and beyond, representing governments, African regional bodies, NGOs, national and international experts and organizations, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, youth, academia, the judiciary, and the private sector. This speaks to the great interest in the conservation of biodiversity on the continent.

The APAC convening was a critical acknowledgement that conservation can never be sustainable without being centred on people, especially IPLCs who are custodians of the land and territories where conservation initiatives are concentrated. The goal of the Congress as articulated by IUCN was to place African 'protected' and conserved areas within the broader goals of economic development and human well-being and increasing the understanding of the crucial roles that the 'protected' and conserved areas play in biodiversity conservation and delivering ecosystem services that underpin human welfare and livelihoods. The Congress focused on three key themes (Protected & Conserved Areas, People, and Biodiversity) with the following main objectives:

1. Make a strong case from African leadership and commitment to implement a development vision prioritizing nature and societal aspirations for sustainable and resilient outcomes.
2. Agree on practical actions to promote the value and role of 'Protected and Conserved Areas (P&CAs) to enhance resilience support sustainable development, human wefare and well-being.
3. Agree on underlying drivers of biodiversity loss and seek commitment from African and developed country governments to comprehensively address these.
4. Agree on practical measures to recognize, elevate and uphold the rights, responsibilities and roles of IPLCs and young people in conserving nature;
5. Agree on practical measures to enhance effective governance and management of P&CAs;
6. Agree on key messages and effective platforms to advocate for prioritization of P&CAs on the agendas of governments, society, local communities, private sector and partners as part of the post-pandemic nature-positive recovery efforts; and
7. Launch effective Pan African Networks, partnerships and cooperation mechanisms to support the effective management of P&CAs, including cooperation agreements, a director's forum and a conservation trust.

Post APAC, IPLCs in Africa set out to develop a strategy that allows them to hold governments, conservationists and other key stakeholders to account, while advocating for speedy implementation of the commitments made. While this mobilization has emerged out of APAC, IPLCs aim to engage on all conservation-related convenings and to consolidate their voice at a pan-African and global level. At the second IPLCs meeting in Nairobi in March 2023 new pan-African Alliance for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP & LCs) for conservation in Africa was created. This body will be crucial in giving representation and legitimacy of Africa's IPLCs in regional and international forums while also networking with similar IPLC bodies in Asia, Latin America, and other continents.



3. IPLCS PRIORITY AREAS

Key priority actions

The key priority areas emanate from the Kigali call to Action and the declaration by IPLCs at the APAC. They reflect urgent areas of intervention by IPLCs. They also reflect the aspiration of IPLCs as a key constituent in the conservation of biodiversity and reinforce the need to fundamentally re-think conservation models at all levels, beginning with securing land and territorial rights and respecting community-conserved areas. The IPLCs strategic priorities are outlined below. .

Priority Area 1: Establishment and operationalization of Pan-African IPLC body

IPLCs in Africa set out to create an independent, IPLC-led and centred pan- African body to harness and amplify the collective voice of Africa's IPLCs. IPLCs in Africa agreed to form an IPLC Pan-African body to share concerns, actions, programmes and promote cross-learning among states and to follow up on the implementation of the Kigali call to action and the IPLCs regional declarations. The IPLCs' pan African body will be anchored in national and sub-regional networks of IPLCs and will coordinate all IPLCs engagements at the continental and international levels. This body was created during the March 2023 in Nairobi and an interim steering committee put in place to formulate the governance instruments to guide the work of the Alliance.

Priority Area 2: Advocacy, Campaigns and Strategic engagement

It is an indisputable fact that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities play a crucial conservation role. However, most conservation initiatives have adopted strategies that prioritise the inviolable integrity of 'protected' areas at the expense of IPLCs who have been consistently marginalised. The 2003 Durban Accord paradigm [4] recognizes the importance of just and inclusive conservation successes of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and calls for incorporation of their rights, values, aspirations and support for community conservation areas [5] . Unlocking this potential requires not only including IPLC voices in conservation but also recognizing that they have the right to decide how to manage their natural resources and land- as well as when, how and if to involve others. As IPLCs seek to correct narratives on IPLCs and conservation through documenting lived experiences of IPLCs in conserving nature; documenting of traditional/indigenous conservation knowledge and practices while mapping out organizations/institutions working on conservation in IPLC territories in Africa. This will allow IPLC's to proactively engage to ensure inclusive and just conservation is actually realised and not just promised. In addition, IPLCs favour conservation approaches that align with their livelihood systems and broader self-determination goals.

4. At the World Parks Congress held in Durban in 2003, some 5,000 assembled conservationists announced their adoption of a 'new paradigm' for protected areas, which would respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. The accord expressed concern at the lack of recognition, protection and respect given to these efforts. It urged commitment to involve indigenous peoples in establishing and managing protected areas and participate in decision making on a fair and equitable basis in full respect of their human and social rights.IPLCs around protected areas.

Priority Area 3. Putting People at the Centre of Conservation

Across the continent, IPLCs are stewards of natural resources, yet continue to face the negative impacts of conservation initiatives by third parties, which often are based on the concept of protecting natural resources and biological diversity, while excluding IPLCs within their discourse. This exclusion has exacerbated violence; militarization and human rights abuses, poaching, cattle rustling; natural resource conflicts in relation to access to water, pasture and land tenure; proliferation of small arms; gender inequality; political corruption and marginalisation of IPLCs in terms of access to services. In acknowledging that conservation models that exclude people have failed worldwide, the Alliance will work to put ordinary IPLCs at the centre of the conservation agenda at all levels.

IPLCs will endeavor to challenge the neo-colonial fortress conservation model [6] and advocate for full ownership and tenure rights for community conserved areas, and strong co-management schemes for PAs surrounded by IPLC communities; advocate for Human-Wildlife Conflict(HWC) mitigation measures including compensation; calling on African governments to take back control of the conservation narrative –policy and funding, including re-indigenizing funding; empowering IPLCs as equal partners in conservation with entitlements to rights and obligations; and challenging militarisation of conservation and human rights abuses.

Priority Area 4. Promoting Inclusive governance and Mobilizing the Economic Value of conserved areas for IPLCs

IPLCs have been the custodians of wildlife and ecosystems for centuries. However, this has too often been downplayed by governments, private corporations, and big international conservation NGOs that continuously force IPLCs off their land. This has resulted to a scenario where IPLCs are neither involved with the management of parks and other conserved areas, nor having access to the resources they previously relied on. Despite this, positive relations between biodiversity and IPLCs' livelihoods have existed over the long term, and a picture of a harmonious co-existence has emerged in many areas, despite growing challenges (ILRI 2006).

Throughout the APAC Congress, there was a recognition of the need to acknowledge, respect, recognise and support the rights and identity of customary governance authorities and resource holders, including women, youth and vulnerable people, and the systems and customary laws they use to sustain resources, and to promote legitimacy, transparency and accountability in decision-making. Additionally, there was a recognition of the need for fair and equitable sharing of costs and benefits accruing from protected and conserved areas. Inclusive governance must also include effective grievance redress mechanisms, and meaningful, effective, inter-generational and gender-responsive participation of IPLCs in all processes that relate to their lands and land-based resources.

5. Community conservation areas encompass the following but not limited to areas that have been defined as ICCA's, sacred sites and groves, ritual sites, community reserved areas, and any other conceptualizations of areas set aside for conservation as theorized by different communities. The Alliance will lead in the articulation of different models of conservation in Africa.

6. Fortress conservation is anchored on the belief that to protect biodiversity, humans must be removed from the landscape and specific areas set aside for exclusive conservation. This ideology was introduced to Africa during the colonial period and has been entrenched in the post-colonial period. It is on this model that national parks, forest reserves, game control areas, marine parks, and wildlife management areas are anchored. The model has effectively dislocated communities from their landscapes and contributed to deep dehumanization of African peoples at the alter of conservation.

Challenges

Insecure land and territorial rights- Across the continent, IPLCs continue to struggle to secure legal recognition of their land, territories of life, resources and waters, their legal and cultural identity, and other human rights. Insecure tenure technically renders IPLCs squatters of their own ancestral lands and also dis-incentivises investments in land care and afforestation. The irony is that outsiders (investors and others) have been able to access and legally appropriate this land. Lack of tenure security has exposed IPLCs to violent land appropriation and brutal displacement to pave way for conservation and international tourism. Another dimension here is that these policies are heavily influenced by donors who perpetuate the exclusionary fortress conservation model to the detriment of IPLCs. Thus, conservation policies tend to reflect the interests of donors more than those of IPLCs.In many cases in Africa, the struggle for independence was anchored on return of stolen land and self-determination. IPLCs across Africa are effectively locked in a struggle for independence and a quest to reassert their humanity. The field of conservation is one of the most explicit and brutal battle fields for this struggle.

IPLCs protect 80% of the world's biodiversity, yet only 6% of protected areas registered across Africa are under the ownership or governance of IPLCs. The majority of Protected Areas are state owned and managed, and increasingly privately-owned. In areas where communities have functional conservation systems, these are not recognized because they do not fit in the frame of conservation as it is currently conceptualized.

Conservation polices across the continent continue to exclude Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and often do not recognize their critical contributions as key conservation actors. In some cases, policies may include language that is oriented to IPLCs' rights but these are often not actualized through implementation.

Categorization of "Protected Areas" The concept and application of the IUCN categorization of "Protected Areas" conflicts with the Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities philosophy of conservation anchored on the relationship between people, land, and nature. In many cases, the IUCN categorization of protected areas has shifted national and global attention and resources in favour of care for nature only; with a focus on wildlife conservation in "protected areas". This has resulted in numerous models of conservation, presented as Conservancies, and Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs)that often lack transparency and which pose a threat to conservation in Africa. Some scholars and research agencies have outlined the limits of these models and questions remain as to whether they are tenable to achieve biodiversity conservation. Often such conservation models lack transparency, and meaningful and inclusive participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities at all levels.

Increased land degradation and impacts of climate hazards; Climate change disproportionately affects Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, weakening their resilience and adaptation capacities. In many cases, IPLCs have to bear the burden of climate mitigation actions and efforts implemented by governments in the form of eviction to pave way for green energy and other projects without their Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC). Land degradation and declining soil fertility depress agriculture productivity which in turn threaten the livelihood security of IPLCs.

Inaccessibility of Finances - Financial mechanisms are largely inaccessible and present barriers to most IPLC organizations and are often characterized by lack of transparency and accountability. International conservation agencies continue to dominate the funding space, yet their activities hardly align with the needs and realities at impact level.

Human-wildlife conflict- Many of Africa's protected areas are not fenced. Wildlife roams in and out of parks and other conservation areas into community land. This results to loss of life and property, destruction of livelihoods, and a general atmosphere of fear at the community level. This coupled with the heavy militarization, human rights violations by conservation agencies, and fetishization of wildlife have destituted communities and antagonized them with wildlife and severed the social cultural and philosophical relationships that communities had with wildlife in many cases.

These are among the challenges that IPLCs in the continent grapple with amidst other global challenges. These inform and drive the need for an organised Pan- African IPLC body that will crystalize a unified voice in demanding speedy implementation of commitments to address these, and many other challenges and inequities.

> ***IPLCs protect 80% of the world's biodiversity, yet only 6% of protected areas registered across Africa are under the ownership or governance of IPLCs.***

4. OPPORTUNITIES

Conservation Opportunities

Climate change and fast-dwindling biodiversity are the most urgent threats facing our planet today. The sharp rise in environmental catastrophes has led the global community to urgently seek new avenues to halt biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation through instruments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the target to conserve 30% of the planet by 2030, the Paris Agreement, and the COP26 & 27 climate pacts. Unsurprisingly, at the core of these commitments are proposals to expand protected areas across the world, particularly in Africa: one of the world's biodiversity capital and host to about one-fifth of all known species of mammals, birds, and plants. It is estimated that between 1.65 billion to 1.87 billion people in Africa live in important biodiversity conservation areas, of which 363 million inhabit existing protected areas.

All the existing protected areas on the continent exist on land that was carved out of community land and the land they occupy is claimed by one or more communities. Over 56 % of people living in important biodiversity conservation areas are in low-and middle-income countries. Thus, the burden of conserving biodiversity falls on the rural poor. In addition, the high concentrations of biodiversity are found in these countries make them a target for new conservation initiatives; any expansion of protected areas will inevitably have direct impacts on these communities.

Currently, terrestrial protected areas are estimated to cover more than 14 % of Africa's land area , while marine protected areas cover 12.36%. Much of this land overlaps with areas claimed by IPLCs, which has led to widespread conflict and contestation for land and resources.In addition, wildlife populations freely roam in and out of designated conservation areas into community-held lands, leading to wildlife-human conflict. While much has been said about the importance of Indigenous and Local Communities' role in conservation interventions since Benefits Beyond Boundaries , the 2003 IUCN World Parks Congress held in Durban, a lot remains to be done to entrench a truly human rights-based approach in the quest for biodiversity conservation on the continent. And this cannot happen without giving up the traditional protected area approach which continues to bring harm to many local and Indigenous communities and exclude them from benefiting from the natural resources that sustain them.

A recent study by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) found that in comparison to Asia and Latin America, Africa has the largest portion of unrecognized community lands: 505 million hectares, or 49.9% of the land area in the 14 African countries studied in the report. This presents an important opportunity to advance customary and collective rights across the continent. Research shows that legally recognized community lands have lower emissions, store more carbon, and have significantly lower deforestation rates than lands owned by other actors. Community-led land and conservation management structures also cost vastly less to establish and maintain than those in conventional, state-run protected areas.

On the other hand, insecure, contested, and unjust land and forest tenure undermines efforts to protect, sustainably manage, and restore ecosystems essential to Africa's realization of climate, conservation, and sustainable development goals. Any new conservation endeavours need to be based on pursuing respectful partnerships as opposed to conflict with local communities, by addressing historical injustices, and by dedicating critical resources to support and fund community-led conservation interventions. The traditional protected area approach handed down by Africa's colonial rulers has shown its limits and has no place in protecting our continent's natural resources going forward.

Areas for engagement

Gap/Opportunity	Scope for involvement
Securing community/communal land rights for IPLCs (the full bundle of rights)	■ Advocating for legislation that recognizes community land rights, implementation of legislation, consolidating community governance. ■ Training of more IPLC lawyers and other professionals. ■ Advocating for full implementation of existing pro-people policies and legislation.
Addressing Historical Land Injustices (HLIs)	■ Documentation of HLIs, communicating these HLIs, pursuing restitution for these injustices within national, regional, and global rights bodies. ■ Advocating for robust and effective grievance redress mechanisms for addressing past and present IPLCs grievances.
Supporting community-led conservation models	■ Documentation/articulation of community-led conservation, illustrating how it interlinks with biodiversity conservation and community livelihoods. ■ Building the governance and management capacity of IPLC organisations so they can effectively play their roles and responsibilities. ■ Establishment of indigenous academies at the grassroot level to build the new generation of indigenous leaders.
Forging respectful relationships with communities around already existing protected areas	■ Make efforts towards reconciliation with communities, design partnerships that engage communities as equal intellectual partners in conservation and shareholders in conservation outcomes. ■ Implement effective co-management models that are based sound principles of shared governance.

5. STRATEGIC - FRAMEWORK

IPLCs Vision for AP&CAs (African Protected & Conserved Areas)

We are heartbroken and outraged by the violent land appropriation and brutal displacement of communities all over Africa in the name of conservation and tourism development. How can governments that are supposed to protect their people, instead be killing their people? We reject such appropriation and assert our inalienable right to own, govern, care for, and use our lands,resources, and waters. There is persistent silence by international conservation organizations, donors, and partners; few actively condemn violations of human rights and the rights of IPLCs. ***IPLC declaration, Kigali, Rwanda.***

'Conservation' is a foreign idea altogether. It has no meaning to us. We live by our environment, and our environment - our forests and animals, live by us. ***Ogiek elder, Kenya.***

IPLCs are interested in a conservation that is grounded in justice, respect, love, collaboration, reconciliation, peace, respect of all knowledge systems and models of conservation. In addition, they are committed to landscape-wide conservation that takes into consideration the human dimensions, including their livelihood systems, a conservation that does not criminalize their livelihood systems, and a conservation that is anchored on land justice. In Africa, communities are often cast as the enemies of conservation enterprise. Despite this, communities have continued to share their landscapes with wildlife and to bear the burden of human-wildlife conflicts.

IPLCs would like to see respect for the diversity of conservation practices on the continent. Areas with high cultural diversity often overlap with areas of incidences of high biodiversity. The African continent is one of the most biologically diverse continents on earth. The fact that high concentrations of wildlife are still found on the continent while they have largely been eliminated from other continents is an indicator of the tolerance that African peoples have for wildlife. African people have deep cultural connections with their landscape and the associated wildlife. Wildlife features in African folk tales, naming systems, dance, song, totems, governance systems, etc. The practice of exclusionary colonial conservation has largely severed some of these positive relationships. IPLCs are committed to re-igniting and rebuilding relationships with the land and biodiversity.

In addition, IPLCs aim to work on recognition and reinforcement of their governance and management capacity, by drawing upon best traditional practices and the best of modern requirements for inclusive decision making; establishing measures to limit elite capture, and corruption, while ensuring that those that we designate to lead and act on our behalf do so with full accountability to community members. Finally, IPLCs want to see conservation that is led by Africans who understand the complexity of landscapes and the communities that inhabit them.

Essentially, IPLCs are interested in the decolonization of conservation thought and practice on the continent. IPLCs are committed to ending the cruelty of conservation on the continent.

We call for the end of the colonial curse and the fulfillment of the de-colonial promise. ***Laboot Declaration.***

5.1 Priority Areas

Priority 1. Establishment and operationalization of Pan-African IPLC body	**Time-line**
1.! Lay a foundation to set up a strong Pan African IPLC body through strengthening regional IPLC bodies. The Pan African body will prioritize engagement with IPLCs on the continent,including agreeing on the host institution, funding for preliminary activities, and consolidating the institutional framework.	Short term & Medium[7]
2.! Identify other regional and sub-regional IPLC bodies with links to national and local IPLCs	Short term & Medium
3.! Develop a strategy for advocacy and lobbying focusing on creating a unified platform and voice for IPLCs that will spearhead advocacy and lobbying various key stakeholders on pertinent past, emerging and prevailing conservation issues affecting IPLCs.	Short term & Medium
4.! Convene dialogues between IPLC networks and governments to lobby for the implementation of this strategy & other recommendations in the IPLC Kigali Declaration and Kigali Call to Action.	Short term & Medium
Priority Area 2: Advocacy, Campaigns and Strategic engagement	**Timeframe**
1. Conduct a continental survey to understand what regional IPLC bodies are doing, understand their priorities and identify their challenges with 'protected' and conservation areas to affirm the IPLCs demands.	Short term/medium
2. Map out relevant actors and institutions for engagement- of a broader constituency in the implementation of the IPLC-APAC strategy.	Short term
3. Advocate for support and recognition of customary land rights by African governments and for implementation of existing customary land laws and FPIC.	Medium
4.Roll out a Campaign against militarization of conservation and gross human rights violation in conserved areas.	Medium

5. Mobilize resources for developing a coherent advocacy message on IPLCs and conservation to be used at national, regional, continental and, where possible, global level.	Medium term
6. Facilitate the sub-regional IPLC bodies to engage with Regional Economic Community (RECs) and other relevant regional actors to building momentum around IPLCs issue in the conservation ecosystem.	Medium term
7. Convene an IPLCs community-led conservation congress and invite other actors.	Long term
8. Convene dialogues with African Protected Areas Directors group (APAD) to discuss the development of mechanisms to hear IPLCs voices and explore workable solutions to IPLCs grievances.	Medium Term
9. Reach out to the African Union and IPLC organizations in Asia, Latin America, North America, Australia and New Zealand.	Medium term
Priority Area 3. Putting People at the Centre of Conservation	**Timeframe**
1. Identify all areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services that are neither protected nor conserved and develop conservation plans and programmes and ensure ecological representativeness in the conservation of the areas, while ensuring any proposed targets are not achieved at the expense of IPLCs.	Short term
2. Develop funding strategy to facilitate centering IPLCs in all relevant conservation discussions and implementation of the conservation plans and programs.	Short term to medium term
3. Recognition of ICCAs and other community conserved areas in contribution to the 30x30 agenda.	Long term
4. Policy reforms that promote secure tenure, and access rights to resources.	Long term
5. Policy reforms against militarization of conservation.	Medium term
6. HWC mitigation measures including establishment of a HWC Compensation Trust Fund.	Long term
7. Policy reforms that unlock the economic value of biodiversity (wildlife economy) for the benefit of IPLCs.	Long term

7. In this strategy, short term is expected to cover between 1-2 years, medium 3-4 years, and long-term, 5+ years.

Priority Area 4. Promoting Inclusive governance and Mobilizing the Economic Value of conserved areas for IPLCs	Timeframe
1. Document and disseminate genuine IPLC best practices regarding inclusive workable community governance models.	Medium to long term
2. Publicize IPLCs best practices of inclusive workable community governance models.	Medium to long term
3. Engage in meaningful dialogues on community-led management and self-governance of natural resources and participate in the review of existing conservation policies, laws and frameworks governing Protected Areas to secure IPLCs tenure rights and full access to their food, medicines and other natural resources provided for and by Protected and Conserved Areas.	Medium to long-term
4. Create a framework for indigenous knowledge on climate change through the establishment of tools and the creation of a platform of discussion and sharing of best practices between indigenous knowledge experts and climate.	Medium to long term
5. Review and critique different mechanisms for sustainable use of wildlife, forests and other natural resources.	Medium to long term
6. Campaign for the involvement of IPLCs as shareholders in the establishment of new Protected Areas while pushing for access to justice to resolve historical injustice related to conservation through compensation, reparations, restitution for the loss of land, waters, territories and livelihoods	Medium to long term
7. Build governance and management capacity of IPLCs organisations in community conserved areas	Medium to long term
8. Advocate for funding models that channel resources to the point of impact/local level.	Medium to long term
9. Advocate for participation of IPLCs in all NRM governance institutions	Medium term

5.2 Key Activities for 2023

1.Drafting and developing the instruments of governance for the Alliance. This is of primary importance and urgent as it sets the pace the IPLCs agenda on conservation.
2. Launch of the IPLCs Pan -African body after approval by members.
3. Develop an abridged version of the strategy for fundraising purposes.
4. Strategic campaigns- crystallize the Kigali call to action & IPLC declaration into **10 asks of IPLCs** present to governments, conservation organizations, regional bodies and other actors.
5. Communication strategy - Create a website and populate it with all the declarations, the IPLCs strategy, and other relevant material, create a platform to mobilize members, produce a simple brochure that can be shared by members, articulate the history of the movement in a compelling manner, create social media platforms and strategically share information.
6. Build up membership for the Pan-African IPLC body.

5.3 Outcomes and Targets

Outcomes By 2027

1. Pan African IPLC body established and operationalised with a framework guiding its engagement in the implementation of the strategy.
2. IPLCs are acknowledged, respected and engaged in all conservation matters on the continent.
3. Representatives of the Pan-African IPLC body in each of the regions of Africa are effective, visible and influencing policy and conservation actions at the national, sub-regional, regional and international levels.
4. Strategy for advocacy and lobbying focusing on creating a unified platform and voice for IPLCs developed and used to lobby various key stakeholders on past, emerging and prevailing pertinent conservation issues affecting IPLCs.
5. IPLCs visibility across the regions and in successive APACs and are engaged with outcomes of global processes such as World Parks Congress (WPC), WCC, CBD and UNFCCC COPs and other Africa-specific events developed.
6. A minimum of four sub-priorities fully implemented generating adequate information that can be shared at different national, regional and global conferences and the second APAC.
7. The IPLC pan African body convenes its 1st continental IPLC and conserved areas Congress.
8. IPLC organizations have effective engagement with conservation organizations, governments and Private Sector entities in the implementation of priority actions.

Targets by 2027

Priority 1: Establishment and operationalization of Pan-African IPLC body

Target(s)

1. IPLC Pan African body is endorsed by IPLCs and has a constitution and guidelines to guide its operation.
2. IPLC Pan African body has an active database of membership comprising of regional networks that have constituents at national and local levels.
3. The IPLCs' engagement strategy is endorsed by a broad diversity of IPLCs across Africa and becomes a document to guide its engagements.
4. Annual convening of IPLCs through the Pan African IPLC body to advocate for the implementation of the strategy & other recommendations in the IPLC Kigali Declaration.

Priority 2: Advocacy, Campaigns and Strategic engagement

Target(s)

1. Continental survey of IPLC priorities and challenges with conserved and 'protected' areas done and launched to guide advocacy and lobbying efforts.
2. Relevant actors and institutions mapped are engaged in a quest to support implementation of Kigali call to Action, IPLCs Kigali declaration and other relevant commitments.
3. At least 60% of African governments enact laws to secure Customary land rights and entrench FPIC.
4. Militarization of conservation and gross human rights violations in conserved areas are reduced.
5. African Protected Areas Directors group (APAD) develop mechanisms to hear and respect IPLCs' voices and explore workable solutions to IPLCs' grievances as a result of their engagement and dialogue with IPLCs.
6. 1st ever IPLCs' Congress of Conserved Areas is held.

Priority 3: Putting people at the Centre of conservation

Target(s)

1. Resources to centre IPLCs as an authority in the global conservation agenda are secured.
2. Research on successful models of meaningful engagement of IPLCs in conservation are documented and popularized through targeted and robust communication.
3. IPLCs are represented in all land and conservation policy arenas at the continental and regional level.

Priority 4: Promoting inclusive governance and Mobilizing the economic value of conserved areas for IPLCs

Target(s)

1. Genuine inclusive workable community governance models of conservation are demonstrated, documented and disseminated.
2. Existing conservation policies, laws and frameworks governing Protected Areas to secure IPLCs tenure rights are reviewed with inputs from IPLCs giving full access to their food, medicines and other natural resources provided for and by Protected and Conserved Areas.
3. Critics of different mechanisms for sustainable use of wildlife, forests and other natural resources are documented to deepen discourse on the diversity of conservation practices on the continent.
4. AICA to provide strategic guidance and facilitate IPLCs voices and choices to be directly and effectively included in the processes of establishing new protected areas
5. Alliance of IPLC to provide to facilitate IPLCs voices and choices to be directly and effectively included in the processes of establishing new state owned/managed "protected areas".

6. RISK ANALYSIS

Risk	Description
Land Tenure	IPLCs continue to struggle to secure legal recognition of their customary lands, territories of life, resources and waters; their legal and cultural identity, and other human rights. Their rights to sustainable resource use are sometimes threatened by external parties. Macro level corruption is not something over which IPLCs have influence and control over. **Mitigation**: Continue to advocate for implementation of customary tenure laws where they exist, and advocate for passage of new legal mechanisms where they do not exist.
Political Instability	The political instability in some African countries is a driver of many of the issues hampering IPLCs from advocating for solutions to some of their key issues touching on land tenure, for example. The countries may face continued instability if long term political solutions are not found by existing governments. This is not something IPLCs have influence over; however, IPLCs will assess the political stability as it pertains to any of their concerns. Political instability in some countries has led to political isolation and sanctions, which poses a risk to the implementation of this strategy. **Mitigation**: Continuous monitoring of the political landscape and agility in designing strategies for engagement in states and between states.
Lack of Political Will	Political will, especially from governments and conservation agencies and institutions, is critical in operationalizing this strategy. The IPLCs umbrella body will assess political will in some countries and support IPLCs' groups in the different regions in implementing the strategy and design mechanisms to generate political will. **Mitigation**: Consolidate grassroots mobilization to the level where IPLCs can influence political processes, including elections.
Lack of recognition of IPLCs' contributions to conservation	Conservation polices continue to exclude Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, and often do not recognize their contributions as key conservation actors. As a result, IPLCs are unable to access financial/funding support from national governments and other donors for their efforts and contributions. **Mitigation**: Advocate for the review, implementation and formulation of better conservation policies that respect IPLCs-led conservation. Clearly, articulate the contributions of IPLCs to conservation and demand space at the table.
Inclusion of IPLCs' views and recommendations during the formulation of Climate Change Legislations	Increased land degradation and impacts of climate hazards disproportionately affect IPLCs, weakening their resilience and adaptation capacities. IPLCs have to bear the burden of climate change as well as mitigation actions and efforts implemented by governments in the form of evictions to pave way for green energy and other projects without their FPIC. **Mitigation**: Amplify the voices of African IPLCs at climate COPs and the CBD.
Division/disagreements within the Pan-African IPLC body itself	Movement building is not an easy task; there are many moving parts and convergent interests and approaches to work. The IPLC body needs to anticipate any divisions may scuttle the work and vision of the movement and address these conclusively. **Mitigation**: The Pan African IPLC body will ensure representation of all groups across the continent's geographical, language divide with clear and consistent communication on what work is being undertake and by who. The IPLC body will embody financial transparency within the network.

7. GLOBAL PROCESSES AND IPLCs

7.1 The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework aims to "ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity." This target has been of concern to IPLCs because of the violent history of establishment of protected areas on the continent.

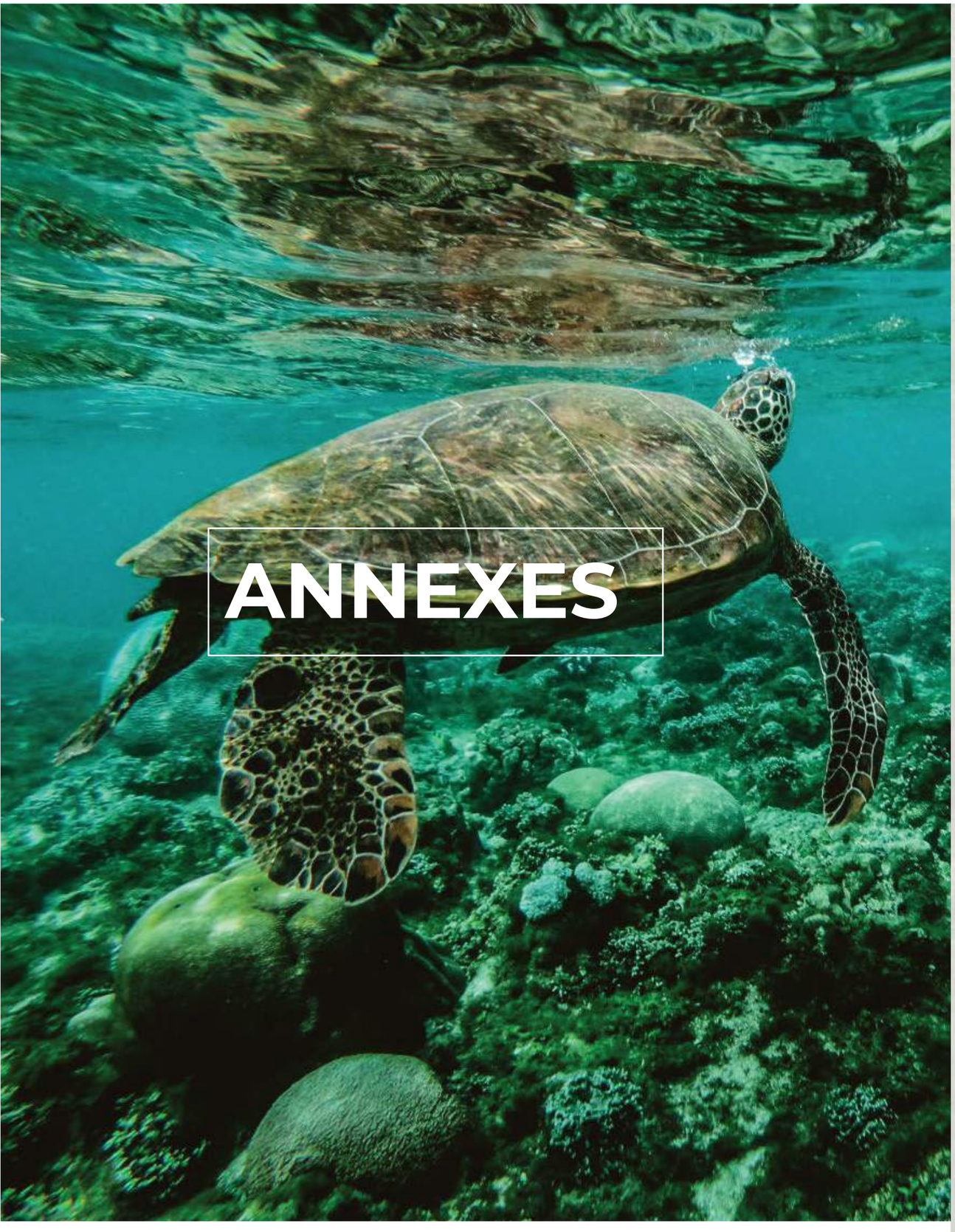
It is imperative that the IPLC Pan-African body engages with the CBD to ensure that it remains focused to its commitments that include several measures to ensure the respect of IPLCs in conservation, including in the establishment of new conservation areas to achieve the above target. Some of the key highlights of the new CBD framework include; ensuring that the utilization of genetic and non-genetic resources and of traditional knowledge are shared equitably with IPLCs, protecting and encouraging customary sustainable use of biodiversity by IPLCs, enhancing the role of collective actions, including by IPLCs in community-based natural resource management , respect and recognition of traditional knowledge systems and FPIC, and , justice for IPLC by respecting their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, and ensuring the full protection of environmental human rights defenders.

7.2 The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

As highlighted earlier in this document, IPLCs are bearing the burden of a changing climate despite their minimal contribution to carbon emissions. IPLCs are combating devastating droughts, floods, loss of biodiversity, forest fires, and many more. This is the definition of injustice. This IPLC strategy is anchored on principles of environmental justice at all levels, including on climate change. While the Sharm el Sheikh Implementation Plan that emerged out COP27 mentions Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in a few instances, it really fails in fundamentally recognizing the disproportionate impact of climate change impacts on these communities and very weak in incorporating rights in the text. The creation of the loss and damage fund was seen as a breakthrough but it does not explicitly mention Indigenous Peoples in the text of the decision that established the fund. As articulated by the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change,

The urgency and hopes we heard from World Leaders and Parties in Week One has quickly been overshadowed by false solutions which do not reduce emissions at source -including a reliance on carbon markets, 'Net Zero" frameworks, and 'nature-based solutions'- that delay real reductions, replicate new forms of climate colonialism, and fall short of 1.5 [°C, which is the goal of the Paris Agreement calling for countries to take concerted climate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit global warming.

Climate change remains an arena of struggle for IPLCs in Africa and the IPLC body will formulate strategies to engage with this matter at different levels to ensure that their voices are heard and that any commitments made are followed by concrete implementable actions.



ANNEXES

i. Interim Steering Committee

1. Southern Africa
Nominated the CLN - Malidadi Langa interim chair

2. Central Africa
Nominated Repaleac as the regulating organization – Maimuna (to be confirmed)

3. Eastern Africa
Nominated 2 interim organizations; Ujamaa Community Resource Team (Tanzania) &
The alternate – Pastoralist Forum of Ethiopia

4. Western Africa
Nominated - Forest watch Ghana

5. North Africa
Nominated – Amazigh People Organization

Roles to be performed within 6 months

1. Develop constitution, functions, operational guidelines, working plan
2. Outline a fundraising strategy
3. Ensure documentation is well done & formulate a communication strategy
4. To operationalize the body and coordinate activities
5. Finalize the strategy and outline guidelines for implementation

ii.Mapping out the network

The following are some of the exiting networks that can form the foundation of the Pan-African body.

1. REPALEAC
2. CLN
3. Pastoralist Forum of Ethiopia
4. Eastern And Southern Africa Pastoralist Network
5. AYBN
6. PINGOS
7. HUGAFO
8. PARAN
9. IWO – hosted by the II
10. IPNSCCC (33 members)
11. ACBA - African CSCs Biodiversity Alliance (80 members
12. IPACC – The Indigenous Peoples of Africa Co-ordinating Committee (135 reps from 21 countries)
13. TRF – Tanzania Resource Forum
14. Forest watch of Ghana
15. ABN - African Biodiversity Network
16. CFCN - Community Forest Conservation Network

17. PACJA - Pan African Climate Justice Alliance
18. ICCA Consortium

iii. Other parties that the Alliance can engage with

1. African Wildlife Foundation
2. Rights and Resources Initiatives
3. International Land Coalition
4. IUCN

iv.Technical reference group

The technical support group will offer support to the Alliance and contribute to the implementation of the overall strategy.

1. RRI - Kendi Borona
2. NAMATI - Eileen Mwagae
3. Satau – Botswana
4. Natural Justice – Lawyers network on issues of conservation
5. Dr. Hassan Roba – TCF
6. Dr. Liz Wily
7. Global Green Grants Funds
8. Global Forest Coalition – Congo
9. Forest People's Programs

Endnotes

Kigali Call to Action - https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/apac-kigali-call-to-action-final_0.pdf

IPLCs declaration -https://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/default/files/documents/The%20IPLCs%20Kigali%20Declaration%20to%20APAC2022_English%20Final.pdf

Nairobi declaration - https://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/default/files/documents/Nairobi%20Declaration.pdf

People to people declaration at Laboot - https://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/default/files/documents/Declaration%20of%20Laboot%20-%20East%20Africa%20Assemblies%202022.pdf

Green grab by Bricolage : The institutional workings of community conservancies in kenya -https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328422334_Green_Grab_by_Bricolage_-_The_Institutional_Workings_of_Community_Conservancies_in_Kenya

Stealth game : Community conservancies devastate northern Kenya - https://www.oaklandinstitute.org/stealth-game-community-conservancies-devastate-northern-kenya

Designed for accumulation by dispossession: An analysis of Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas through the case of Burunge -https://conbio.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/csp2.360

Rights-based conservation : the path to preserving the earths biodiversity -https://rightsandresources.org/publication/rights-based-conservation/

Terrestrial and inland waters protected areas - https://www.protectedplanet.net/region/AF

Benefits beyond boundaries - http://sdg.iisd.org/news/fifth-world-parks-congress-benefits-beyond-boundaries/

Estimated area of land and territories of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendants where their rights are not recognized https://rightsandresources.org/publication/estimate-of-the-area-of-land-and-territories-of-indigenous-peoples-local-communities-and-afro-descendants-where-their-rights-have-not-been-recognized/

COP 15: Final text of Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework -https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-final-text-kunming-montreal-gbf-221222

Sharm el Sheikh Implementation Plan - https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/cop27_auv_2_cover%20decision.pdf

https://images.app.goo.gl/hiQrBSV4nNtMVTok9

https://images.app.goo.gl/gr7qqdyvYkhSREPD7

(www.freepik.com)