



Strategic Plan: 2023–2027

(ABRIDGED VERSION)

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

Laboot Declaration

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?

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 us the land we wouldn't be here and without us the richness of our environment would succumb to greed and power.

Laboot Declaration, 2022

Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Local Communities (LCs) are interested in conservation practices that embrace universal principles of justice, collaboration, reconciliation, peace, and respect for all knowledge systems and models of conservation – both landscape-wide and waterscape-wide – that take into consideration human perspectives, including their livelihood systems. They call for a conservation ethos that does not criminalize their livelihood systems, and a philosophy that is anchored on land justice.

The IP and LC Alliance for Conservation in Africa
Strategy 2023-2027

Executive Summary

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.

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 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 (IPLCs) 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



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output of this mobilization is the IPLCs Kigali declaration which emphasized the need to halt the violence of conservation in all dimensions and underlines the importance of secure tenure and land justice as the central pillar for the African conservation agenda. Nearly all existing protected areas on the continent are situated on land that was carved out of community land and the land they occupy is in many cases claimed by one or more communities. It is important to underscore that the IPLC Kigali Declaration was informed by a number of sub-regional declarations: the Nairobi, Victoria Falls, Ouagadougou, Goma and Laboot that were endorsed prior to the Congress.

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.

The strategy is 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 addition, it outlines the key challenges IPLCs are facing in conservation of biodiversity and identifies opportunities and priority actions which can alleviate these challenges. 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 land justice.



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(IPLCs) and their governance systems, and to promote fair and equitable sharing of costs and benefits associated with conservation areas.

Challenges

The IPLCs' Alliance has outlined five key challenges IPLCs are facing in the conservation of biodiversity within protected areas and dwellings.

In addition to global challenges, the following are some of the challenges that IPLCs grapple with on the continent-insecure land and territorial rights, exclusionary conservation practices, increased land degradation and impact of climate change, inaccessibility of conservation funding, and human-wildlife conflict. These inform and drive the need for an organised Pan- African IPLC body that will crystallize a unified voice in demanding speedy implementation of commitments to address these, and many other challenges and inequities.

- ✓ Insecure Land & Territorial Rights
- ✓ Exclusionary Conservation Practices
- ✓ Climate Change
- ✓ Conservation Funding
- ✓ Human-Wildlife Conflict

17%



The current network of protected areas is estimated to cover 17 percent of the continent's land mass.

Five decades of research illustrate that communities effectively conserve forests, ecosystems, and biodiversity through collective ownership, governance strategies, and traditional ecological knowledge. As a result, they present a viable alternative to exclusionary conservation practices.

Priority Areas

The IPLCs' Alliance has outlined four interlocking strategic priorities that will guide interventions to address the challenges outlined above.



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

IPLCs in Africa have set out to create an independent, IPLC-led and centred pan- African body to harness and amplify the collective voice of Africa's IPLCs. This has crystallized into the Alliance of IPLCs for conservation in Africa (hereafter, Alliance). The Alliance is anchored in national and sub-regional networks of IPLCs and aims to coordinate all IPLCs engagements at the continental and international levels. An interim steering committee is in place to formulate the governance instruments to guide the work of the Alliance.



Priority Area 2: Advocacy, Campaigns and Strategic engagement

The Alliance aims to unlock, deepen, and showcase the engagement of IPLCs in conservation by documenting the 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.

Priority Areas



Priority Area 3. Putting People at the Centre of Conservation

Exclusionary conservation practices have contributed to violence; militarization and human rights abuses, poaching, cattle rustling; natural resource conflict; proliferation of small arms; gender inequality; political corruption and marginalisation of IPLCs. 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 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 militarization of conservation and human rights abuses.



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

Throughout the APAC Congress, there was a recognition of the need to acknowledge, respect, recognize 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 resource.

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