



COMMUNIQUE⁺⁺

“We are nature & Nature is us”

2023 COMMUNITY CONSERVATION CONGRESS

MECURE HOTEL | WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA
25TH -27TH OCTOBER 2023

www.aica-africa.org

Preamble

Realize the importance of collective efforts and consorted need to act together to change the course and the trajectory of IPLCs contribution to conservation of Biodiversity in the African continent.

The First Africa Indigenous People & Local Communities Conservation Congress, organized under the theme “**We are nature & nature is us**”, convened between 25th and 27th of October 2023, brought together Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) from the five regions of Africa to discuss, debate, and offer ideas on how to implement the Africa Protected Areas Congress (APAC) Kigali Call to Action and the Kigali IPLC Declaration. Thus, the Conferees:

Appreciate H.E. Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, APAC Patron (Former Prime Minister of Ethiopia)

for accepting to officially open the Community Conservation Congress and commending the Interim leadership of the Alliance of the Indigenous People and local communities for Conservation in Africa (AICA) for organizing the Community

Conservation Congress (CCC);

We equally appreciate the following dignitaries who also graced us with their presence: The Deputy Minister of Environment Forestry and Tourism Hon. Heather Sibungo of Namibia, Hon. Royal IUILoloo-Deputy Minister for Gender, Poverty Alleviation and Marginalized Communities, Dr. Endrias Geta-Ethiopia's State Minister for Irrigation and Low Lands.

Thank and congratulate Community Leaders Network of Southern Africa (CLN), REPLEAC, IMPACT-Kenya, Rights & Resources Initiative (RRI) and contributing partners – Christensen Fund, Packard Foundation, Niatero, GIZ, Conservation International (CI), Arcus Foundation, Rainforest Trust, Global Green Grants Fund and Miserior for their successful coordination support and funding for the organization of this CCC.

**Appreciate the efforts of Congress Regional Focal Points;**

Mr. Belkacem Lounes- North Africa, Mr. Peter Ossei-Wusu and Ms. Saoudata Walet- West Africa, Ms. Maimuna Umaro & Mr. Diel Mochire-Central Africa, Mr. Lekipa Saitabau and Mr. Tezera Getahun East and Horn of Africa and Ms. Maxi Louis and Mr. Malidadi Langa- Southern Africa, Ms. Fiesta Warinwa and Dr. Kendi Borona-Facilitator RRI-Africa in overseeing the deliberations of the CCC, and facilitating various preparatory meetings of the CCC;

Recognize and appreciate the participation and contributions of all our partners who supported and participated in the CCC.

Recognize the importance of a clear vision, strategic thinking to implement the IPLC-Kigali Declaration and the Kigali Call to Action through the outcomes of CCC;

Recognize the importance of instituting a robust governance structure that will promote inclusivity, legitimacy, transparency, accountability of AICA in decision-making and support the rights and identity of customary governance authorities and resource holders.

Assert that the 1st CCC was a timely opportunity to discuss the key priorities areas of the Post-APAC IPLCs Implementation strategy.

Realize the importance of collective efforts and consorted need to act together to change the course and the trajectory of IPLCs contribution to conservation of Biodiversity in the African continent. Validate and commit to the resolutions and recommendations of the 1st CCC, conducted from the 25th to the 27th of October 2023;

Joint Commitments & Affirmations

The Alliance will put ordinary IPLCs at the center of the conservation agenda at all levels and advocate for the discontinuation of failed models.

Therefore, we commit and affirm our position to the following:

1. Kigali Call to Action, APAC IPLC Declaration

- ▶ Leadership of AICA will mobilize and partner with its supporters to conduct regional and national consultative meetings that raise awareness about the need for the Alliance as the only and collective voice of Africa's IPLCs, a suitable governance structure and institutional form, and the Post-APAC IPLC Strategy as a road map to the implementation of the IPLC-Declaration and Kigali Call to Action.
- ▶ AICA will strive to unify IPLCs conservation voices on key issues from all the five regions of Africa and support sub-regional platforms and networks to make connections that advance the IPLCs conservation agenda including

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'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.

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

Laboot Declaration



advocating for a dedicated & sustainable IPLC funding mechanism that will channel funding directly to grassroots IPLC Organizations.

- ▶ AICA will work towards identification and documentation of unrecognized community conserved areas and ensure that African voices strengthen the call for recognition of these areas as part of Africa's contribution to the 30x30 Global Biodiversity Framework. It will forestall the need for creating new protected areas that would risk yet another round of displacement and dispossession.
- ▶ In acknowledging that conservation models that exclude people have failed worldwide, the Alliance will put ordinary IPLCs at the center of the conservation agenda at all levels and advocate for the discontinuation of failed models. The Alliance will collaborate with established International conservation institutions like the International Union for Conservation (IUCN), CITES and many others to collaboratively design and create new IPLC natural governance models that could be considered as a category of IPLC community conservation that fully integrates the IPLCs into these international conservation bodies.

50%-80%

A recent study conducted by RRI and produced in collaboration with the Campaign for Nature shows that between 1.65 and 1.87 billion IPLCs live in the world's important biodiversity conservation areas.

Globally, the overlap between protected areas and the lands of IPLCs is estimated at 50-80 %. It has also been estimated that up to 136 million people were displaced in formally protecting half of the area currently protected (8.5 million km²).



2. Human-Wildlife Interactions/Grievance redress mechanisms

- ▶ Conduct robust advocacy with wildlife agencies of African governments on the need for compensation for Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) and, putting in place functional grievance redress and conflict resolution mechanisms founded on the reputed guidance on FPIC (Free Prior and Informed Consent) and Cancun safeguards for inclusive conservation.
- ▶ Recognize that communities living in proximity with wildlife pay disproportionately high costs in HWC and therefore call on adequate compensation and ensuring conservation is beneficial to communities that coexist with wildlife through proper and appropriate benefits sharing mechanisms.
- ▶ Protect corridors, grazing lands and settlement areas through inclusive and participatory land use planning. Promote the use of local & indigenous knowledge, strategies and methods that can be adapted to conflict resolution approaches that mitigate human wildlife conflict and address compensation within the challenging framework of poor governance.



3. IPLC contributions to Community-led conservation approaches, knowledge systems and conservation initiatives in Africa's regions

- ▶ In line with the strategic directions of the APAC-IPLCs Implementation Strategy and the IPLC Kigali Declaration – and based on the recommendations of the CCC's participants, the Congress resolves to engage actively in biodiversity conservation, and to do more to protect the remaining biodiversity hotspots on the continent while being inclusive.
- ▶ Encourage 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.
- ▶ Provide key interventions to various international and global conventions (such as COP28) to disseminate the outcomes of CCC, and contribute Africa's IPLCs experiential approaches and knowledge systems in conservation.



4. IPLCs understanding of International Global Conventions

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AICA 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.



5. Insecure IPLC land tenure/ Conservation & Community Livelihood

- ▶ Advocate for legislations that recognize community land rights, implementation of legislation, consolidating community governance and full implementation of existing pro-people land policies and legislation.
- ▶ Promote the training of more advocacy officers of indigenous organizations, community leaders in the field, lawyers and professionals, who will work with IPLC networks to create awareness among IPLCs on land rights, strengthen networks at the regional level to have a voice and advocate for reforms in land laws that will include respecting the rights of IPLCs
- ▶ Promote the creation and building of networks to support the unlocking of potential opportunities for resources and development especially in central Africa while strengthening existing networks in West Africa to better understand the concept of IPLCs and ensuring their effective participation in AICA.









6. Dialogue between Protected Areas Authorities and IPLCs on living in peace with protected areas & engaging jointly in legislative reforms

- ▶ Conduct sincere, honest and constructive dialogues with governments in addressing historical injustices and dedicating critical resources to support and fund community-led conservation interventions.
- ▶ Strengthen partnerships and coordination and promote co-management of protected areas between government agencies & IPLCs and any new conservation endeavors be based on respectful partnerships and not in conflict with local communities.
- ▶ Examine & use where appropriate existing mechanisms that ensure International Conservation Non-Governmental Organizations work towards supporting and growing national and regional IPLC organizations in respectful and transparent partnerships other than seeking to replace them or maintain the status quo.

7. The role, participation & engagement of women & youth in conservation

- ▶ Emphasize Indigenous knowledge among women and youth through sharing knowledge with future generations for continuity and encourage both groups to participate in development of policies at the local, regional and international levels including discussions on Climate Change.
- ▶ Work very closely with African governments and conservation actors in ensuring capacity-building programs for conservation are provided specially for pastoral women including investing in indigenous leadership.
- ▶ Promote inclusive participation of Indigenous women & youth in conservation efforts to advance their active participation in natural resource management that contributes to ecosystems management and realization for intergenerational champions that create value to the youths and women through advocacy programs at all levels.

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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.



8. Governance structure/Regional group networks

- ▶ Promote organizational development by establishing, strengthening and operationalizing regional networks to create awareness about AICA and grow membership base and ensure regional and country-level engagement in all of Africa's sub-regions.
- ▶ Establish a Secretariat for the Alliance to support regional networks with chapters and coordinators to champion implementation of the Kigali APAC IPLC strategy and the congress recommendations including voicing Human Rights abuses and violations in the name of conservation.
- ▶ Include the AICA'S vision in regional initiatives through existing regional networks so as to amplify visibility at the regional level and within the regional economic blocs and influence decisions that impact IPLCs at the African Union level.
- ▶ Ensure there is a unified IPLC voice and common position on issues of continental interests during meetings of Conference of Parties e.g. UN-





FCCC COP28, influencing and validating financing mechanisms that go to indigenous peoples and Local Communities directly.

- ▶ Develop AICA strategic plan from the grassroots including trans-boundary conservation issues to enable members of AICA all work towards the same goals.

9. Coordination and Partnership to Support Community Conservation

- ▶ Establish mechanisms to engage with donors and partners of IPLCs to support the implementation of the congress outcomes and AICA implementation strategy for Kigali IPLC declaration and Kigali Call to Action.
- ▶ Ensure donors and partners prioritize human rights and the differentiated rights of indigenous peoples, local communities and women.
- ▶ Partner with conservation organizations to seek & explore funding opportunities, co-create and co-design proposals to improve communities led conservation in the regions.



Generally:

AICA and its partners & supporters will articulate a mechanism or mechanisms to have updated evidence to inform present and future conversations on conservation.

We commit to setting out 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 IPLCs territories in Africa and proactively engage them to ensure inclusive and just conservation is a reality. In acknowledging that conservation models that exclude people have failed worldwide, we will work to center ordinary IPLCs in Africa in the conservation agenda through the leadership of AICA, and to clearly call out the failed models towards their discontinuation.

The inclusion will happen at the continental level through the leadership of the regional networks of the five regions of Africa as well as the constituent members of the regional

networks. This will enable the leadership of AICA to continue guiding IPLCs and conservation on the continent. As part of this resolution, the AICA and its partners & supporters will articulate a mechanism or mechanisms to have updated evidence to inform present and future conversations on conservation. In addition, this continental Community Conservation Congress will continue to be held once every three years with the next one taking place in the Central Africa region.

This thus, becomes our engagement forum to the various IUCN congresses and other international conferences. We resolve to leverage on the experience and expertise of our members as an essential part of our *modus operandi* and ensure that what we as an Alliance do and how we do it will benefit from the best practice within the five regions of our continent and beyond. This includes working and learning



from other IPLCs alliances from other parts of the world and ally partners. We resolve to put in place a mechanism that will enable AICA to implement the outcomes of this congress in the right sequence, at national and regional level as we build and strengthen partnerships with other like-minded IPLC coalitions. AICA will leverage on existing linkages and connections across the five regions to ensure ownership and commitment and enable us to put in place the right resources to support our continuous conservation efforts.

We resolve to turn the challenges of AICA in the course of implementing the outcomes of congress into an opportunity to transform the understanding and implementation of community led conservation on the continent.

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Signed:

Mr. Malidadi Langa
Chairman – Alliance of Indigenous People & Local Communities for Conservation in Africa (AICA)

Dr. Belkacem Lounes
Regional Focal Point for North Africa

Ms. Saoudata Walet
Regional Focal Point for West Africa

Mr. Peter Ossei-Wusu
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Ms. Maimuna Umaro
Regional Focal Point for Southern Africa

Mr. Diel Mochire
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Mr. Lekipa Saitabau
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