

Brazzaville Declaration

Our Commitment to Peoples, our Territories, Planet, and Partnership:

A Unified Path to COP30 and beyond

We, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities from the world's largest and most vital tropical forest basins and ecosystems of the Africa, Asia, Mesoamerica and South America have gathered with our women, youth, partners and allies for the First Global Congress of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (The Congress) from the Forest Basins in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.

We express our gratitude to the Republic of Congo for its unwavering support for making this historic gathering possible. We extend our appreciation to President of the Republic of Congo His Excellency Denis Sassou Nguesso for his leadership and hospitality. We thank Madam Rosalie Matondo (Minister of Forest Economy and sustainable) and Mr. Aime Ange Wilfrid Bininga (Minister of Justice, Keeper of the Seal, of Human Rights And the Promotion of Indigenous Peoples) for their generous assistance and commitment for hosting this critical convening. We acknowledge the Republic of Congo of its recognition of Indigenous Peoples within their national framework.

For centuries, we have cared for and sustained the Earth's most vital ecosystems. We protect forests, rivers, grasslands, mangroves, oceans and all other ecosystems. Our ways of life are rooted in respect, reciprocity, and harmony with nature. Today, science confirms what our people have always known: we are the most effective stewards of biodiversity and the natural systems that regulate our climate. However, despite growing global recognition of our contributions, we continue to face mounting threats to our lives and our rights and territories, from mining to harmful agribusiness expansion. These are not isolated, individual attacks, they are attacks on indigenous territories, entire communities and all of humanity.

At a moment when global cooperation is under pressure and the climate and nature crises are deepening, we stand together here in unity, solidarity and with deep purpose. More than three hundred (300) Indigenous Peoples and local community representatives met here in Brazzaville and convened UN and government representatives and partners to dialogue about our priorities and demands. Our collaboration in this Congress across continents, traditions, and generations is a powerful reminder that strength lies in collective action. We are ready to continue leveraging the depth of our systems of traditional knowledge, and our spirit of cooperation to set a common path towards a just, livable and equitable future.

As we look toward COP30 and beyond, we offer a shared vision for a future in harmony with nature—a vision where our contributions are recognized, our rights upheld, and our leadership embraced. At COP30 we call for a concrete legacy on land recognition, land protection and land rights. We believe

that by working together, grounded in respect and partnership, the world can overcome the challenges we face and regenerate our planet. The answer is us!

To realize this vision, we affirm the following shared demands and call on governments, the international community and decision-makers to:

- 1. Recognize, protect, and secure our Land Rights and Tenure.** Securing our land and resource rights is fundamental to our environmental stewardship, sustainable livelihoods, and cultural survival. Recognizing our lands and territories is not only a matter of justice and law—it is a necessary to addressing the world's climate, biodiversity, and development challenges. Recognition and protection of our lands and territories must also be part of climate mitigation policy. When our rights are respected, nature and everyone and everything thrives.
- 2. Protect our Lands, Territories and Leaders: Stop Killing and Criminalization.** We are on the frontlines of Mother Earth and climate action. Ensuring the lives, safety and well-being of our Indigenous Peoples and community leaders, and preventing the rollback of land rights are essential to protecting biodiversity, advancing human rights, and achieving the goals of global commitments to combat climate change including the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- 3. Respect our Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC).** Safeguard Indigenous Peoples' rights for full and effective participation in decisions that affect our life and ecosystems, through respecting our rights to Free, Prior and Informed Consent. This builds trust, ensures transparency, and strengthens outcomes for people and the planet alike. Governments should make FPIC an universal and legally binding principle and a precondition of approval to any activities that may impact our lives.
- 4. Respect our Traditional Knowledge, Science, Practice and Innovations.** Our knowledge systems are built on generations of living in harmony with nature. They offer invaluable insights into climate adaptation, resilience, and sustainability. Recognizing and integrating our knowledge alongside other sciences strengthens the world's capacity to respond to the environmental crisis.
- 5. Access to Direct Finance including climate and biodiversity finance.** We are ready for direct finance. We now have our own global, regional, national and subnational finance mechanisms. All other finance mechanisms should be restructured and reimagined in partnership with us, to reflect our realities, uphold our agency, and support our priorities. We are demanding a new global IP's & LCs financing pledge at COP 30 to ensure our continued existence in our territories. It is time for new, direct and ambitious financing commitments.

To fulfil these demands we call upon:

Governments:

1. We urge governments to ratify and implement Human Rights standards and instruments relevant for Indigenous Peoples including CERD, ILO 169 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
2. We urge governments to fulfil their commitment to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) including the General Recommendation

No. 39 on the rights of Indigenous women and girls, by advancing and facilitating Indigenous Peoples and women's rights to lands, territories and resources as well as inclusion in the governance of these areas and their rights to benefit from them, by advancing and facilitating Indigenous Peoples and community women's equal rights to lands, territories and resources, including women's equal participation and inclusion in the governance of these areas and their rights to benefit from them.

3. Governments: (point 2) We urge governments to fulfil their commitment to Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) , including General Recommendation No. 39 on the rights of Indigenous women and girls, by advancing and facilitating Indigenous Peoples and community women's equal rights to lands, territories and resources, including women's equal participation and inclusion in the governance of these areas and their rights to benefit from them.
4. We demand all climate actions must include the effective protection of the territories of Indigenous Peoples in Isolation and Initial Contact (PIACI), due to their immense importance and extreme vulnerability.
5. We urge governments to urgently speed up actions to end deforestation and forest degradation by 2030, in accordance with the Glasgow Declaration on Forests and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM GBF), while respecting and promoting IPs and LCs rights. Furthermore, all governments should fully implement the KM GBF and its overarching target to halt and reverse the loss of nature by 2030. Specifically, recognition of Indigenous Peoples and local communities' lands and nature governance should receive special attention by countries as an indispensable strategy to reach target 3 - (the 30 by 30 target). It is also critical that governments initiate comprehensive reforms to reduce and repurpose harmful subsidies and other financial incentives that drive the destruction of nature and our ancestral lands, as agreed in the KM GBF.
6. We urge governments to explicitly acknowledge and prioritize the legal recognition and protection of Indigenous Peoples and traditional territories in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Biodiversity Plans (NBSAPs) to safeguard biodiversity, end deforestation and forest degradation and secure progress towards sustainable development.
7. We call on Governments and allies to support production of global data/map on the state of forests, ecosystems and land rights of Indigenous Peoples.
8. We urge governments to initiate and enact a global convention to protect Environmental Human Rights Defenders, including Indigenous Peoples and local community leaders.
9. We urge governments to take urgent action to address the corruption and impunity that drive threats, criminalization, and violence against Indigenous peoples, and mitigate the risk of rollback of rights, while supporting Indigenous communities' collective protection measures.
10. We urge governments to stop fossil fuels, mining and other destructive activities in Indigenous Peoples and local communities' lands and territories.

11. We support and draw from the spirit of the Geneva Declaration and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) initiative, which call for fundamental transformation in how knowledge is respected, protected, and shared globally, to decolonize existing knowledge and power structures, and center us in global decision-making. We urge WIPO as international knowledge governance to recognize our rights as knowledge holders and custodians of biodiversity as the current system of intellectual property often excludes our traditional knowledge and science or exploits it without our consent.
12. Indigenous Peoples in Asia make up at least 70% of the world's Indigenous Peoples, we inhabit most diverse ecosystems of mountains, forests, coasts, and small islands, yet, we face serious challenges to our lands, territories and resources. Also, Indigenous Peoples in Asia suffer as the most militarized region. Therefore, we urge Asian Governments to recognize our rights, protect our life and land rights As Indigenous Peoples. We call to immediately stop all forms of criminalization and violence against Indigenous Peoples and our leaders.
13. Indigenous Peoples of Asia invite the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples to conduct Asia country visits and subsequent reports
14. We urge governments of the Congo Basin to:
 - Immediately protect the customarily-controlled lands of Indigenous Peoples and local communities by simplifying land titling procedures, integrating Indigenous lands into national land-use plans, legally recognizing all Indigenous territories, reforming land laws and enforcing existing laws that support Indigenous Peoples' rights.
 - Establish a monitoring committee to track and ensure compliance with land rights commitments, with full, active and effective participation IPs and LCs to guarantee transparency, accountability, and alignment with our priorities.
 - Recognize Indigenous Peoples and local communities conserve areas (ICCAs) in national law and in NBSAP.
15. We urge governments of Mesoamerica to:
 - Expedite 22 million hectares under IPs and LCs control and increase direct territorial investment to 30% by 2027. Over 51 million hectares across in the Mesoamerican region require titling, recovery, or strengthened territorial control by IPs and LCs.
 - Immediately end the persecution, criminalization and violence against leaders who defend our rights, forest and ecosystem in Mesoamerica.
16. We urge Latin American countries to urgently ratify the Escazu Agreement. This agreement must not remain a symbolic gesture, it must be implemented with mechanisms that guarantee the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in its governance structures.
17. We urge the Brazilian Government to:

- Demarcate the 70 indigenous lands that are currently in the declaratory phase until COP 30.
- Remove invaders from all demarcated and legally registered territories.
- Show concrete progress in the titling of traditional territories.
- Urgently overturn Law 14.701/2023, which poses serious threats to constitutional guarantees, including by reinforcing the 'Marco Temporal' thesis. This law undermines the rights of Indigenous Peoples and must be repealed, and must be aligned with the Conciliation Chamber Promoted by the Federal Supreme Court.

1. We urge the Indonesian Government to immediately adopt the Indigenous Peoples Law, stop criminalization, land grabbing and transmigration in our ancestral land.
2. We request that His Excellency President of the Republic of Congo to host a high-level dialogue with forest basin countries during the COP30 on Championing Protection and Collaboration with Indigenous Peoples. This should be organized in collaboration with members of GATC with support from our strategic allies and donors.
3. We urge Governments to announce an unprecedented, concrete and ambitious pledge on the recognition and protection of Indigenous Peoples and local communities lands at COP30. This must include a clear implementation plan including timeline and targets.

Financing Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities:

4. The Women's Movement of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities urges allies, donors, and governments to prioritize the full and effective participation of Indigenous and local community women in climate and biodiversity solutions, respecting our experience and ancestral knowledge as leaders in creating a just and livable future.
5. As the future generation of leaders, the Youth Movement is the energy of the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities and we demand for greater inclusion of youth from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities into decision-making, with direct finance access that can strengthen our capacities and support our mobilization.
6. We demand the source of funds for climate financing must respect IPs and LCs rights. Financing must not stem from activities that involve exploitation or rights violations. Funds directed to governments must not support projects associated with land grabbing and human rights violations including: harmful infrastructure, fossil fuel extraction, just transition, big scale plantation, mining, agribusiness, logging on Indigenous Peoples and local communities' lands.
7. We demand a system to track and monitor funding to facilitate transparency, accountability of the funding. A specific indicator shall be included on direct funding for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
8. We demand that all finance mechanisms as well as public, private and philanthropic donors for climate, biodiversity, and environmental protection include us in their governance and decision-making structures. A minimum allocation of 40% of direct finance shall go directly for

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. Direct access means financing us through our own representative organizations and mechanism, not

through intermediaries or shrinking chains of non-local actors. Direct funding should not be confused with public policy investments by governments.

9. We demand that all finance mechanisms as well as public, private and philanthropic donors support direct access with capacity strengthening strategies of IPs and LCs Organization and existing funding mechanisms to manage direct funding.

10. We welcome and support a new IPs and LCs Forest Tenure Pledge and call for it to include all ecosystems within tropical forest countries and have a 40% direct funding target to IPs and LCs organizations and funds. We strongly encourage donors not yet part of the IPs and LCs Forest Tenure Pledge to commit to this pledge.

11. We observe the development of the Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF) as a new and large-scale funding mechanism to incentivize the protection of tropical forests. We welcome the TFFF invitation to engage and co-design for the provision of at least 20% of funding goes directly to IPs and LCs.

We stand together today in Brazzaville committed to fostering a future in which humanity lives in balance with nature. We call for full and effective participation in decision making that affects our lives, lands, governance, cultures, and communities. We seek partnerships of equals, rooted in respect, where solutions are co-created under conditions of dignity and equality and there is an equitable distribution of benefits.

We, Indigenous Peoples and local communities are not only stakeholders; we are rights holders, knowledge holders, and key partners in building a sustainable and just future for all. Our solutions are unique, valid, and irreplaceable to all Life on Earth. This First Congress is a historic milestone of strengthening our unity and we commit to meet again in a second Global Congress to strengthen the common ground that holds us together for our planet and for our peoples.

This declaration is our collective offering to the world: a commitment to work together—across geographies, sectors, and generations—to safeguard our Mother Earth for all. We are galvanized in our actions, but we are running out of time and to change everything, we need everyone now! We call on our brothers and sisters, women, youth and elders from Indigenous Peoples, local communities, Afro-descendent Peoples, our allies, our partners and all governments to join us now. The answer is us, all of us!

Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, 30 May 2025



Global Alliance of Territorial Communities/GATC

