

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES & LOCAL COMMUNITIES' CONSERVATION CONGRESS

The first Community-led Conservation Congress on the African Continent

OCTOBER 25–27, 2023
WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

“WE ARE NATURE AND NATURE IS US.”

Alliance for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities for Conservation in Africa (AICA)

Learn more on Rightsandresources.org | <https://aica-africa.org>



King Nahale, Namibia. Photo by NACSO/WWF

Context

Africa is home to one quarter of the planet's biodiversity and has a network of protected areas covering 17% of its land mass—including national parks, game reserves and forest reserves—and this number promises to increase. More than 20 African countries have already committed to increasing the number of protected areas to at least 30 percent by 2030.

Many of these current and potential protected and conservation areas overlap with the territories of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPs & LCs) who have historically protected these ecosystems through innovative governance strategies, collective ownership, and ancestral ecological knowledge since time immemorial. However, some of these communities have been criminalized and expelled from their territories, undermining their livelihoods and knowledge systems.

To articulate a rights-based, people-centered conservation strategy in Africa and truly value Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' often-ignored contributions to nature conservation and climate, The Alliance for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities for Conservation in Africa (AICA) and Rights and Resources Initiative will co-host a 3-day Conservation Congress in Windhoek, Namibia.

Shaping Africa's Resource Policies

The congress aims to prioritize the engagement of Africa's IPs & LCs in policy arenas relevant to their land, territories and conservation. It focuses on four interlocking priority areas:

- » Establishing and operationalizing a Pan-African IPs & LCs body
- » Advocating for communities rights and representation
- » Putting people at the center of conservation efforts
- » Promoting inclusive governance and the economic value of conserved areas.

Thematic areas

Community-led conservation approaches and knowledge systems

Human-wildlife interactions and strategies to mitigate conflict with wildlife

Indigenous Peoples and local communities and African conservation and climate processes

Land tenure, conservation, and community livelihoods

Grievance redress mechanisms, including past and ongoing rights violations

Living in peace with protected areas, legislative reforms, and how to achieve the 30x30 climate and biodiversity goals.



Sierra Leone. Photo by Annie Spratt for RRI

Participants

The congress brings together various stakeholders from Grassroots Communities, Indigenous Peoples Organizations, Development Partners, Conservation NGOs/CSOs, African Governments and other important actors in conservation of nature in Africa.

How did the idea of this congress come up?

The seed for **the first-ever Community-led Conservation Congress** was planted at the African Protected Areas Congress (APAC) held in Kigali, Rwanda, in July 2022. In Kigali, IPs & LCs—including women and youth—from 53 African countries and over 20 countries outside Africa created **the Kigali Call to Action**, which recognizes the need to acknowledge, respect, and support their rights, identities, and governance systems.

During APAC, IPs and LCs also issued a **Declaration** in which the idea of creating *The Alliance for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities for Conservation in Africa* was born. The AICA is conceived as a platform to share concerns, actions, programs and cross-learning in the region, and to follow up on the commitments made in Kigali. One of the key activities planned by the Alliance is to convene the first indigenous peoples and local communities-led conservation congress on the continent, in which AICA will build its road map for the next five years.



Kenya. Photo by IMPACT

