

The First Forum of
*Indigenous and Local Community Women
in Central Africa and the Congo Basin*

Strengthening and promoting the engagement of Indigenous and local community women in climate resilience and biodiversity conservation.

May 8–12, 2023
Brazzaville, Republic of Congo



Indigenous woman, DRC. Credit: REPALEAC

Context

The Congo Basin's ecosystem in Central Africa is the world's second lung after the Amazon rainforest. The forests are home to extraordinary biodiversity of crucial importance to global climate. Indigenous and local community women play a vital role in the management and protection of these lands, forests, and other natural ecosystems that store biodiversity, sequester carbon, sustain local livelihoods, and safeguard their cultures and traditional knowledge.

In order to value their often-ignored contributions to nature conservation and climate resilience—and above all to fight against widespread injustices against women and girls—REPALEAC and Indigenous women leaders have partnered with the Rights and Resources Initiative to host this 4-day forum in Brazzaville.

Objectives

To strengthen and promote the engagement of Indigenous and local community women in biodiversity conservation and climate resilience in Central Africa, and to establish a sustainable support mechanism for them.

✔ Share

Share the status of rights, experiences, and initiatives of Indigenous and local community women in biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

✔ Facilitate

Facilitate discussions and reflections concerning Indigenous women's development agendas and build their leadership capacity.

✔ Exchange

Exchange and adopt an advocacy document on Indigenous women's rights as they relate to land security, access to finance, and natural resource governance in accordance with the 2022 Call to Action and the Women in Global South Alliance.

✔ Take Action

Discuss the establishment of a subregional fund for Indigenous and local women in Central Africa for their conservation and climate resilience efforts. One day of the forum will consist of a dialogue between Indigenous and local women and donors.

Methodological Approach

The forum will be the culmination of a series of consultations in the eight countries where REPALEAC works:

At the community level (pre-forum): Each country will organize community consultations to gather Indigenous women's priorities at the community level. These consultations will ensure maximum participation by Indigenous women via interviews, group discussions, and direct observations. Local councils will be consulted to ensure participation from Indigenous Peoples in general and women in particular. Community consultations will identify women-led initiatives.

At national level (pre-forum): After consultations at the community level, a national workshop will be organized to compile collected priorities into one document. Indigenous women's representatives from the local level will be invited to participate in national workshop. At this workshop:

- ✔ Each national coordinator will select 5 representatives for the regional forum taking place in Brazzaville
- ✔ RRI will hire and support a consultant who will oversee the overall process leading up to the national workshop
- ✔ The consultant will support national coordination to conduct community consultations as well as consolidation workshops and will facilitate the regional forum's discussions



Indigenous woman, DRC. Credit: REPALEAC

Participants

- » Local and Indigenous women delegates representing core structures with field operational experience
- » Delegates and leaders from national Indigenous women's organizations
- » Donor representatives from foundations, philanthropies, etc.
- » Ministers and prominent political actors working in Africa on environmental, conservation, land management, and social affairs issues
- » Members and Indigenous women's representatives from the RRI Coalition and the Global Alliance for Territorial Communities



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