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RESOURCES

BRASILIA DECLARATION ON COLLECTIVE LIVELIHOODS



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LIVELIHOODS**

We, representatives of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, Local and Traditional Communities, associated organizations and networks, and supporting allies gathered in Brasília, Brazil, on the occasion of the 2026 Global Summit on Collective Livelihoods and Conservation, affirm the urgent need to transform current development, conservation, and financing models, recognizing collective livelihoods and community economies as central pillars for addressing the climate, ecological, and social crises.

For generations, we have been the primary stewards of the world's essential forests, lands, and waters, drawing on ancestral knowledge, traditional ways of life, and deep respect for nature. While the world increasingly acknowledges that upholding our rights and leadership is crucial for addressing the intertwined challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable development, we continue to face systemic barriers that threaten our livelihoods and the very ecosystems we protect.

Building on international commitments and conventions recognizing the originary rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples and Local and Traditional Communities, and women and youth within these groups, we envision a future where community self-determination and the pursuit of rights-based approaches become the foundation of all landscape-level interventions, investments, and initiatives. We see a future where community rights to effective, meaningful, equal and inclusive participation in all matters relating to land, resource, freshwater and coastal, and ecosystem service management, use, and governance are upheld, recognized and protected by all state and non-state actors; a future where all land and resource use decisions align with community laws, institutions, values and beliefs; a future that supports inclusive and dignified working conditions, cultural diversity, traditional knowledge systems; a future that prioritizes social-ecological resilience, sustainability and equity for all.

We organize ourselves as a Collective Livelihoods and Economies Network and open the door to other groups that can join us to work together and scale up our commitment and demands to the world, including finance institutions, donors, governments and trade systems.

Recognition and Protection of Territories

We call on the international community, regional mechanisms, and all states to accelerate formal recognition of traditional collective territories as vital to climate stability, biodiversity conservation, food sovereignty, and sustainable development. Legal recognition must be accompanied by targeted policies protecting territorial defenders and upholding the collective and individual rights of community women and isolated indigenous people or of recent contact.

Governments and multilateral institutions must adopt and enforce binding frameworks to address violence, criminalization of traditional practices, land grabs, environmental crimes, and all other threats to our peoples, lands, and territories. We reaffirm our rights to govern our lands, forests, savannahs, and fisheries; uphold food sovereignty; and live in harmony with nature, guided by ancestral knowledge and cultural values. Full legislative recognition of our governance systems and collective rights over land, water, forests, seeds, and natural resources is essential to achieving these goals.

Sustainable Economies and Financing

A new international financial architecture is urgently needed — one that recognizes the policy and fiscal autonomy of nation-states to establish robust social and environmental safeguards, while upholding the collective ownership, self-determination, and governance rights of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and Local and Traditional Communities over their lands, territories, freshwater, coastal areas, and associated ecosystem services.

All investments, funding initiatives, and associated revenue and benefit-sharing arrangements must treat rightsholders and territorial authorities as distinct political and economic actors — not mere beneficiaries — with the authority to define their own development, conservation, and well-being priorities. Financial flows must be direct, flexible, accessible, proportional, and long-term, routed through community governance institutions that structurally include women and reduce bureaucratic obstacles and intermediaries. Dedicated support for women and youth must be guaranteed.

We call on states, climate funds, biodiversity mechanisms, development banks, philanthropies, and market-based initiatives to ensure equitable, gender-responsive financing from all climate finance, carbon offset schemes, REDD+, and conservation mechanisms affecting community territories — with transparent revenue-sharing and minimum direct flows to community institutions as binding conditions for project approval.

Investments in the socio-bioeconomy and ecosystem services valuation must strengthen indigenous and traditional value chains rooted in cultural belonging, solidarity, and sustainability. They must respect communities' self-determination and collective governance, ensuring control over knowledge, food systems, biocultural heritage, and production models, supported by just and accessible certification for commercialization and funding.

Inclusive Governance and Active Participation

We call for the formal recognition of community rights, ownership, and decision-making authority in all engagements with governments, funders, researchers, and the private sector — ensuring that decisions regarding territories, economies, and conservation are guided by the self-determined priorities of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and Local and Traditional Communities.

Decision-making spaces, funding mechanisms, and educational systems must recognize and incorporate our traditional languages, values, and knowledge. All national governments and international institutions must respect communities' rights to maintain, control, protect, and develop their cultural heritage, ecological knowledge, customary governance institutions, and associated intellectual property — including biocultural protocols, customary laws, and practices unique to each community.

We advocate for fair compensation for community work and products rooted in ancestral knowledge, recognizing communities as rightsholders and economic actors in value-added processes. Market and certification systems must be reformed to expand access to community products. Given the limitations of free-market models, we call for multilateral, bilateral, and regional trade commitments that support public policies protecting community livelihood systems as socio-biodiverse, culturally rooted, and socially inclusive alternatives.

Strategic Integration in Global Agendas

Community economies and livelihoods must be recognized as strategic components of climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development agendas — including processes under the UNFCCC, CBD, UNCCD, national climate and biodiversity action plans, and global commitments on restoration, forests, and food systems. We welcome regional initiatives — including PAS Afro-descendant and the efforts of Brazil and Colombia — dedicated to closing historical gaps in territorial recognition and environmental governance.

Empowering Leadership and Knowledge

Direct, meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and Local and Traditional Communities in multilateral negotiations must be expanded beyond token representation to include real capacity to shape agendas and exercise control over decisions affecting territories, livelihoods, and collective futures. Full, transparent, and culturally

appropriate information — grounded in Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) — is essential to effective self-determination.

We call for strengthened customary territorial governance, enhanced protection for territorial and environmental defenders, and support for community-based monitoring and conservation systems as foundations of territorial control, knowledge transmission, and resilience. South-South cooperation and knowledge exchange among territories are key to building collective adaptation capacity.

Women, youth, and community leaders must be formally recognized as central actors in territorial economies, with equal access to tenure, decision-making, and direct funding. Governments, civil society, and funders must collaboratively create meaningful opportunities that stem youth exodus and sustain intergenerational knowledge and biocultural relationships anchoring communities to their territories.

A Call to Action

We invite governments, multilateral organizations, financial institutions, philanthropic actors, civil society, social movements, and the private sector to commit to concrete, measurable, profound and long-term actions that strengthen collective livelihoods and community economies as the enduring foundation of a just ecological transition. This Declaration stands as a global call for collective action to build a future grounded in rights, territories, solidarity, diversity, and justice. It also represents a call to transform the power relations that have historically marginalized Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and Local and Traditional Communities from decisions concerning their territories and futures. This requires the full recognition of self-determination, community governance systems, and the territorial leadership of communities.

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