

Fourth Regional Conference of
**National Land Institutions on Securing Community Land
Rights in Africa**

Arusha, Tanzania | September 12-14, 2023

FINAL DECLARATION

This declaration is made by Participants at the 4th Regional Conference of National Land Institutions on Securing Community Land Rights in Africa, held September 12-14, 2023 in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, hosted by the Tanzania Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlement Developments, and co-organized by Rights and Resource Initiative (RRI); Tanzania Land Alliance (TALA); and Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG).

We represent African National Land institutions from 11 countries: Benin; Burkina Faso; Democratic Republic of Congo; Cote d'Ivoire; Ethiopia; Kenya; Liberia; Malawi; Madagascar; Sierra Leone; and Tanzania.

We hereby note the progress made since the last conference held in Togo in 2021:

Recognizing that community land rights are critical to poverty reduction, food security, peace, and security in Africa, and for the overall attainment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the 30x30 climate change and conservation goals.

Realizing the fundamental role of local communities and their cultural heritage in forest and biodiversity preservation.

Taking into consideration the wide diversity of our national historical, political, social, and cultural contexts, as well as the differences of national legislative and regulatory frameworks pertaining to community land rights and Indigenous Peoples.

Noting with satisfaction the significant progress achieved by many African countries in promoting and recognizing community land rights since the 3rd ALIN Conference in Togo.

Acknowledging the persisting challenges surrounding the implementation of positive land and policy reforms.

Reaffirming our adherence to the African Union (AU)'s Agenda on land and our commitment to contribute to the implementation of the AU Declaration on land; especially

the call of African heads of state and governments to convene periodic regional platforms to facilitate experience sharing, lessons learnt and dissemination of best practices in support of land governance in Africa.

Further reaffirming our adherence to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, the Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; the solemn Declaration on Gender equality in Africa; as well as key African regional instruments adopted by AU regional Economic Communities including ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and COMESA.

Acknowledging the need to build synergies in the implementation of African and global commitments, including the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of National Food Security (VGGT), The international Human Rights Charter, the UN The Declaration on the Rights of Peasants, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

In the light of the above, we hereby recommend:

1. Promote and strengthen actions to recognize and secure community land rights, including women and youth within these communities.
2. Develop Indicators on recognition, securitization and strengthening of community land rights at national level in Africa.
3. Systematically gather relevant data on the status of community land rights in support of efficient advocacy, policies development.
4. Establish and operationalize an observatory on the status of community land rights in the continent.
5. Strengthen collaboration between governments and universities and research institutions, and the development of training initiatives on community land rights;
6. Provide adequate financial and technical resources to progressive policy reforms and implementation.
7. Engage traditional leaders and related institutions in the prevention and settlement of conflicts related to community land rights.
8. Encourage coordination and collaboration between land governance actors through multi-actor platforms.
9. Advocate for effective decentralization of land management.
10. Pay particular attention to the nexus of land and climate adaptation, and weave in climate adaptation in national land governance frameworks.
11. Strengthen coordination of institutions at the country level to mainstream community land rights in national development plans and policies.

This declaration was adopted in Arusha, Tanzania on September 15, 2023.

