

Presentation of Key Findings of the Africa Community Conservation Report

Advancing Rights-Based and Community-Led Conservation in Africa

Wednesday, October 21, 2026

1:45pm – 3:15pm

Venue: Main Stage at COP 17 Green Zone

Rights and Resources Initiative
rightsandresources.org





Opening Remarks

**Alain Frechette, Director,
Rights, Climate &
Conservation, RRI**



Keynote Presentation

**Nicky Kingunia,
Ministry of Environment,
Democratic Republic of
Congo**



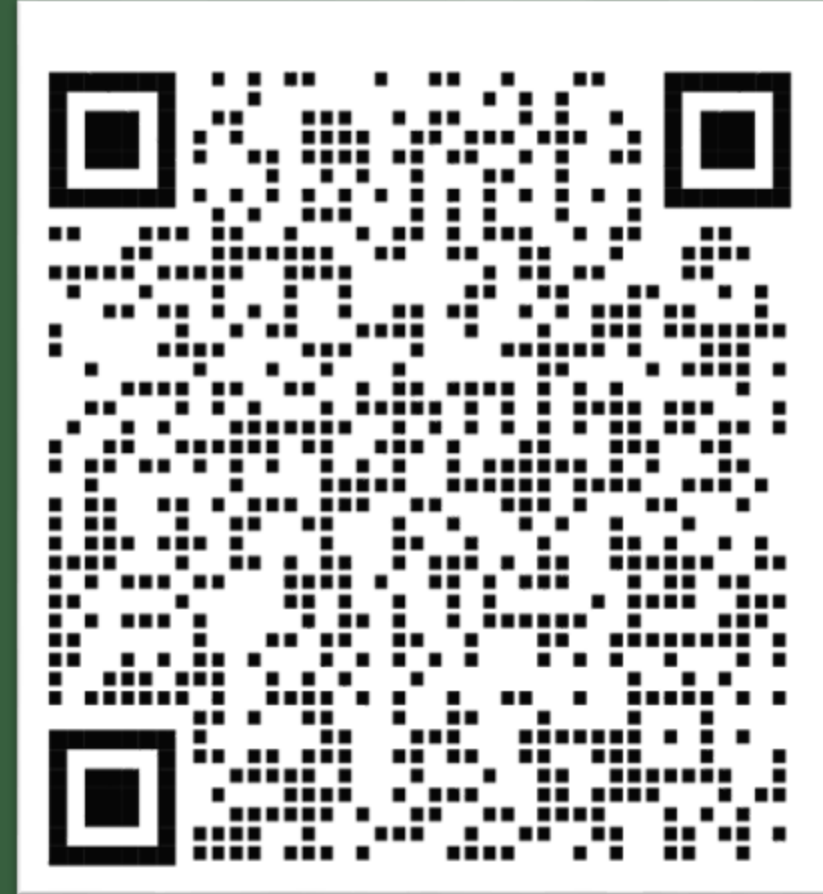
Report Findings & Recommendations

**Patrick Kipalu,
Director of Africa
Program, RRI**

QR Code to Download Report



English



Français

Overview of the Africa Conservation Report



Review and Assess

Examine experiences with community conservation across Africa to understand what is working and where gaps remain.

Understand Scale and Significance

Evaluate the current reach, strengths, and limitations of community-led conservation initiatives continent-wide.

Distil Lessons for Success

Identify and document the elements that drive successful, lasting community conservation outcomes.

Key Challenges

The Core Problem

Despite communities being on the **frontlines of conservation** across Africa, **systemic barriers** continue to undermine their rights, recognition, and fair share of benefits.

Limited Legal Recognition

Community land and resource tenure rights lack formal legal recognition in most African jurisdictions.

Government Reluctance

African governments remain reluctant to relinquish control of valuable natural resources to local communities.

Insufficient Benefits

Local communities do not sufficiently realize the benefits of conservation, despite their significant contributions.

Methodology and Scope

Phase I

Literature
reviews and
case studies

Expert Review

Peer
validation and
feedback

Phase II+

Additional
research and
updates

Scope

Formal and informal community conservation initiatives across **4 regions, 27 case studies, and 23 countries.**

Regions Covered

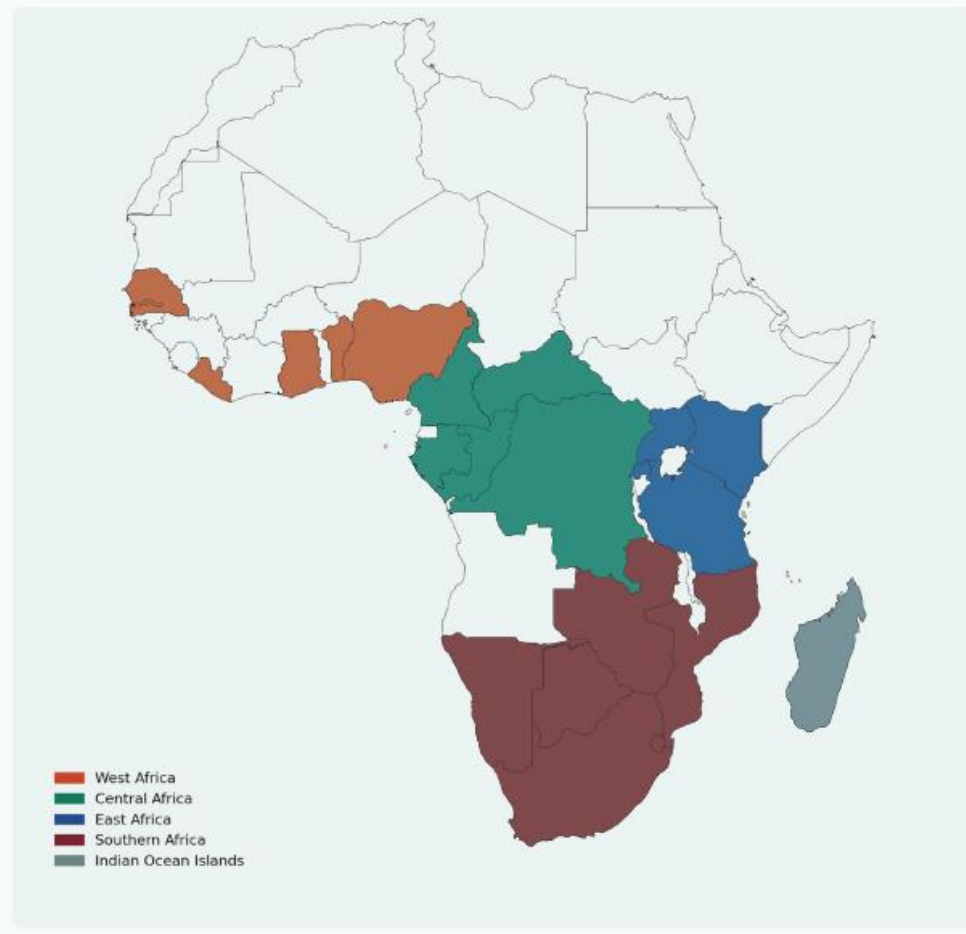
West and Central Africa, Southern Africa, and East and Horn of Africa.

Timeline

Phase I (2022–2023): literature reviews, case studies, expert reviews.
Additional research conducted in 2026.

Case Study Countries

Map 1. List of 23 Countries Assessed in this Study



The report draws on 27 case studies across 23 African countries, spanning all major sub-regions of the continent to capture the diversity of community conservation approaches.

Types of Conservation Models Analyzed

Joint Management

Government, local and religious leaders collaborating for the protection of sacred sites.

Community-Led Conservation

Full community ownership and management of natural resources and conservation areas.

NGO-Supported Conservation

Community-based conservation initiatives supported and facilitated by non-governmental organizations.

Co-Management

Shared governance between State, private sector, and community actors for protected areas.

Marine Areas (LMMAs)

Locally Managed Marine Areas governed by coastal communities to sustain marine biodiversity.

Designation of a totem species by communities

Members of clans or families will not eat, kill or trap totemic animals.

Traditional Indigenous Qero Regime

Practiced in Ethiopia for 400+ years.

Community - State

Co-ownership between the community and the state.

CAMPFIRE model

Local districts and communities.

Key Findings

1. *The Scale of Community Conservation*

Namibia

20%

Area of national land established under the national Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) program.

Tanzania

7%

Of national land area under gazetted Wildlife Management Areas, securing community conservation at scale.

DRC

4.5M

Hectares secured by 227 community forests across the Congo Basin rainforest — one of the world's most critical ecosystems.

Ghana

80+

Community Resource Management Areas buffering state protected areas across the country.

Key Findings

2. The Benefits of Community Conservation

Environmental

Customary laws and community regulations actively maintain conservation practices and protect natural resources across generations.

Economic and Social

In Kenya alone, conservancies host **142 ecotourism facilities** with impact reaching over **700,000 households**.

Governance

Community tenure rights security is strengthened alongside more robust, locally accountable governance structures.

Key Findings

3. Elements of Successful Community Conservation

Secure Collective Rights

Tenure security enables long-term sustainable livelihoods and responsible resource management by communities.

Empowered Governance

Inclusive, community-led governance with full and meaningful participation of women and youth at all levels.

Sustainable Livelihoods

Communities must equitably benefit from conservation initiatives and receive the **"lion's share"** of revenues generated.

Key Recommendations and Call to Action

Conclusion

African nations must prioritize rights-based, community-led initiatives as the most effective and equitable mechanism for scaling area-based conservation in line with international and national commitments.

Call to Action

- ✓ Call for legislative and policy reforms to prevent and resolve these conflicts between protected areas and the rights of IPs and LCs.
- ✓ Call for mainstreaming human-wildlife conflict prevention + mitigation in national conservation policies, robust grievance/redress mechanisms, and sustainable financing for damage compensation.

01 Strengthen 30x30 Implementation with strong community conservation elements

02 Develop Inclusive NBSAPs with full participation of communities

03 Integrate community support in financing

04 Adopt a human rights-based approach in all conservation policy and practice

05 Prioritize Full, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and communities' traditional knowledge, values, and practices



Panel Discussion

Panel Discussion: Community Conservation in Practice



Alain Frechette
Director, Rights,
Climate and
Conservation;
Rights and Resources
Institute (RRI)



Joseph Itongwa
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Audience Reflections and Questions



Closing Remarks



Thank you! Merci ! Asanteni

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