Rights of Communities in the Rio Conventions

Assessing the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, pastoralists, and community women in the UN's Climate, Biodiversity, and Desertification Conventions (UNFCC, UNCBD, and UNCCD)

Under the three Rio Conventions, established during the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, each party to the UN's climate, biodiversity, and desertification conventions writes its own plans to implement commitments. This factsheet assesses the targets and reports on action plans of 35 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America for each Convention, and the extent to which they incorporate communities' land rights and their role as implementing partners in climate, biodiversity and land actions. Our resources for this assessment were the countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), UNCCD Action Plans, Drought Plans, and Voluntary LDN Targets.



Do countries name the communities who live on and use the land, and are their commitments backed by action?

1 Community land ownership is linked to stronger commitments, particularly in biodiversity plans.

25 of the 35 countries have laws that recognize communities' rights to hold full ownership of their land. This means they can use and manage it indefinitely and keep outsiders out. These countries are more likely to name Indigenous Peoples in their commitments, including by creating specific programs, budgets, or government portfolios as Rio Convention actions.

- Under the UNFCCC, 10 of the 35 countries have made a specific commitment to Indigenous Peoples. Four of these 10 do not recognize ownership.
- Under the CBD, 16 countries have specific commitments, while three do not recognize Indigenous ownership. Four of the total 35 signatories to the CBD did not provide updated country reports or NBSAPs.
- Under the UNCCD, 10 of the 35 countries name Indigenous Peoples, but only three follow up with specific commitments. Only two countries without community statutory ownership rights mention Indigenous Peoples, and none provide any type of commitments. Five countries have not provided any updated reports, action plans, or targets under the UNCCD.

2 Local communities are named widely in all three conventions.

- 26 countries have made a commitment to local communities under the CBD and the UNFCCC. Only one country under the UNFCC and four under the CBD do not mention local communities at all. The remaining countries mention, but do not provide supporting commitments. to local communities.
- Under the UNCCD, 20 countries provide either general or measurable commitments. Five countries only name local communities without any commitments, and five do not mention them at all.







3 Afro-descendant Peoples are the least mentioned across the Rio Conventions, and rarely backed with measurable commitments.

- Across 11 Latin American countries, eight make a commitment to Afro-descendant Peoples in their climate plans, with just one providing measurable commitments. Five do so in their biodiversity plans, with three providing measurable commitments. Just two countries include them in their UNCCD plans, with one providing measurable commitments.
- Measurable commitments are found in Colombia's climate and biodiversity plans, Brazil and Mexico's biodiversity plans, and Guatemala's drought plan.

4 Community women are recognized under UNFCCC and CBD, but a wide gap remains in UNCCD plans

- Across the Rio conventions, countries are more likely to talk about gender in general than about women within Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples and local communities. Under the UNFCCC, 32 countries make either general or specific commitment broadly on gender, and 20 have commitments on women within communities.
- Under the CBD, 30 countries included general or specific gender commitments, while 19 countries included community women commitments.
- Under the UNCCD, 17 countries make a gender commitment, but only six name women within communities and without any supporting measurable commitments.

5 No country backs its commitments to pastoralists with a measurable commitment

Plans under the UNCCD lag significantly behind despite the International Year on Rangelands and Pastoralism. Across 21 countries where pastoralist Peoples live, 14 do not mention pastoralists at all in their plans. This includes Kenya and Senegal, both of which have large herding populations. Seven countries name pastoralists in some way, but only two provide a commitment. No country provides a measurable mechanism or program for pastoralists.

- Part of the gap comes from the UNCCD reporting form. It asks countries about grazing and livestock management as a land practice, not about the people who herd livestock.

6 Some countries carry their commitments through all three conventions, while others drop them in their UNCCD plans

- Brazil, Cambodia, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela name both Indigenous Peoples and local communities with a commitment in all three conventions. Brazil, Guatemala, and Venezuela go further and attach measurable commitments to Indigenous Peoples in their UNCCD action and/or drought plans.
- Congo Republic, Gabon, Kenya, Indonesia, Nepal, and Ecuador make specific commitments to Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples and/or local communities under their biodiversity plans, but do not mention either group under the UNCCD.

Calls to action

1

Land tenure must be a permanent agenda item across all Rio Conventions and their COPs, including the rights of community women as tangible commitments.

2

Strengthen harmonization of land commitments across the Rio Conventions, guaranteeing land tenure as a pre-condition to any climate, biodiversity and land degradation action or target.

3

The rights of all communities, Indigenous Peoples, and Afro-descendant Peoples must be recognized across the Rio conventions, their accompanying mechanisms and the domestic implementing plans.

RIGHTS AND RESOURCES INITIATIVE

Rio Conventions Scorecard – 35 countries

	COUNTRY	UNFCCC NDC (latest submission, with NDC 3.0 if available)							CBD NBSAP and national targets aligned to the Kunming-Montreal GBF							UNCCD National LDN targets / voluntary targets and drought plans							
		Indigenous Peoples	Local communities	Afro-descendant Peoples	Women in these groups	Women & gender (general)	Financial mechanisms	Rights-based approach	Indigenous Peoples	Local communities	Afro-descendant Peoples	Women in these groups	Women & gender (general)	Financial mechanisms	Rights-based approach	Indigenous Peoples	Local communities	Afro-descendant Peoples	Pastoralists	Women in these groups	Women & gender (general)	Financial mechanisms	Rights-based approach
AFRICA	Cameroon	3	2	n/a	3	3	3	2	3	3	n/a	1	3	3	3	0	2	n/a	2	0	2	2	1
	Congo, Republic of the	3	3	n/a	2	3	3	2	3	3	n/a	2	3	3	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Republic of the Congo	3	3	n/a	2	3	3	3	3	3	n/a	3	3	3	3	0	2	n/a	0	0	0	1	0
	Gabon	1	3	n/a	1	3	3	2	3	3	n/a	3	3	2	3	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	0
	Ghana	1	2	n/a	2	3	0	0	3	3	n/a	3	3	3	3	1	3	n/a	1	2	3	3	0
	Kenya	2	2	n/a	1	2	2	1	3	3	n/a	1	3	3	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Liberia	1	3	n/a	3	3	3	3	1	3	n/a	3	3	3	3	0	2	n/a	1	0	0	1	0
	Madagascar	2	3	n/a	3	3	3	3	2	3	n/a	2	3	3	3	0	3	n/a	0	0	2	0	0
	Mali	0	3	n/a	1	3	0	1	2	3	n/a	3	3	3	3	0	2	n/a	1	2	2	3	1
	Mozambique	0	1	n/a	0	2	0	1	0	2	n/a	0	2	2	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Senegal	0	2	n/a	0	2	2	0	2	2	n/a	0	3	2	2	0	3	n/a	0	0	1	0	0
	Tanzania	0	2	n/a	0	2	2	0	0	2	n/a	1	2	1	1	2	2	n/a	2	1	2	2	0
	Zambia	2	3	n/a	1	2	2	0	2	3	n/a	2	3	3	3	0	3	n/a	0	2	2	0	2
ASIA-PACIFIC	Cambodia	3	3	n/a	3	3	3	3	3	3	n/a	3	3	3	3	2	2	n/a	0	2	2	0	0
	China	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	1	1	n/a	0	2	0	0	0	1	n/a	0	1	2	0	1
	India	1	1	n/a	1	1	0	0	2	2	n/a	2	3	2	2	0	3	n/a	0	1	2	3	0
	Indonesia	2	2	n/a	1	2	1	2	3	3	n/a	2	3	2	2	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	0	0
	Lao PDR	0	3	n/a	2	3	1	1	2	2	n/a	1	2	2	1	0	2	n/a	0	0	1	0	2
	Myanmar	3	3	n/a	2	2	3	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Nepal	2	3	n/a	3	3	2	2	3	3	n/a	2	2	2	3	0	0	n/a	0	0	2	1	0
	Papua New Guinea	2	3	n/a	2	3	3	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	1	n/a	1	1	1	3	1
	Philippines	1	1	n/a	0	1	1	1	3	3	n/a	1	3	3	2	2	2	n/a	0	0	1	1	1
	Thailand	1	1	n/a	0	2	0	0	2	3	n/a	1	2	2	2	0	3	n/a	0	0	2	1	0
	Vietnam	1	2	n/a	0	2	2	0	2	2	n/a	0	1	2	1	0	0	n/a	0	0	0	2	0
LATIN AMERICA	Bolivia	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	2	2	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	1
	Brazil	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	1	3	3
	Colombia	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	0	1	3	3	1
	Ecuador	3	3	2	3	3	1	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Guatemala	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	0	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	0	2	2	1	2
	Guyana	3	3	0	3	3	3	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0
	Mexico	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	0	1	0	2	2	1
	Nicaragua	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Panama	3	3	2	1	3	2	3	3	3	2	1	3	3	3	2	3	2	0	1	3	3	3
	Peru	3	2	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	1	3	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Venezuela	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	3	2	3	3	0	1	2	3	3	3
	Countries assessed (score 0–3)	35	35	11	35	35	35	35	31	31	9	31	31	31	31	30	30	10	30	30	30	30	30

Scoring
Applies to every indicator

0 No reference
The group/topic is not mentioned anywhere in the document.

1 Passing mention
Mentioned generically (e.g. in preamble or principles) with no commitment, action or target attached.

2 Specific commitment
Named commitment, measure or action explicitly involving the group/topic, but not measurable or resourced.

3 Operational
Specific, measurable target, indicator, budget line or dedicated mechanism for the group/topic.

Highlights

n/a Country has not provided updated report, plan or targets

n/a Update to strategy under development

n/a Not applicable