

CHAMPIONS FOR COP30 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES LAND TENURE RECOGNITION PLEDGE

Objective

Champions are required to help **incentivize governments** to join an international effort to **deliver a global intergovernmental commitment to recognize XX hectares of Indigenous lands** in forests by 2030, aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework¹ and the Glasgow Leaders Declaration².

The Importance of Supporting Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities' Forest tenure rights

With territories covering millions of hectares of healthy and primary forests of the Earth's terrestrial surface, Indigenous Peoples and traditional rural communities contribute to global climate change mitigation, biodiversity, and inclusive and sustainable development. However, only 11% of the land they conserve is recognized as theirs³ whilst 83% is not, and the remaining 6% has limited designation. In the 49 countries that record data, it is estimated that an additional 1,375million hectares (almost the size of Antarctica) needs to be recognized. Even if only the existing legal framework were implemented, the forest tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities could increase by over 260 million ha.⁴

Deforestation rates on Indigenous lands were between 17% and 26% lower on average compared to unprotected tropical forests globally.⁵ In Africa, Indigenous lands preserved forest cover better than protected areas. In the Asia-Pacific region, spanning from India to Fiji, deforestation rates were similar on Indigenous lands and on protected areas. Both had deforestation rates that were roughly one-fifth lower than unprotected areas managed by the governments.⁶

Commitments such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in which propose to protect 30% of land by 2030, and the Glasgow Leaders Declaration with the goal to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030 cannot be achieved without preserving forest and ecosystems where Indigenous Peoples and local communities live.

Why Political Will Matters

Governments are essential in guaranteeing land tenure recognition and security, and a coalition of governments supporting each other can make the difference and take us beyond the status quo. The Forest & Climate Leaders' Partnership (FCLP), launched at COP27, is a high-ambition group of 33 governments committed to working together to drive global ambition to support the delivery of the 2030 target to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation.

Norway and Peru, plus 12 other governments, the Global Alliance for Territorial Communities and philanthropic funders launched the Platform to Support Indigenous Peoples and local communities in

¹ [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework \(cbd.int\)](https://www.cbd.int/kunming)

² [Glasgow Leaders' Declaration Dashboard - Climate Focus](https://www.glasgowleaders.org/)

³ <https://rightsandresources.org/publication/who-owns-the-worlds-land-2nd-ed/>

⁴ [Global-Findings_Final_EN.pdf \(rightsandresources.org\)](https://rightsandresources.org/publication/global-findings-final-en.pdf)

⁵ <https://theconversation.com/indigenous-lands-have-less-deforestation-than-state-managed-protected-areas-in-most-of-tropics-172812>

⁶ <https://theconversation.com/indigenous-lands-have-less-deforestation-than-state-managed-protected-areas-in-most-of-tropics-172812>

Forest Climate Action at COP28 (Dubai 2023) and have agreed to: “increase high-level political attention on IP and LC issues raised by IP and LC organizations and FCLP country members, utilizing regional and geopolitical opportunities to influence decision-making and political (including donor) agendas”. Two main activities related to one another were agreed upon for this outcome.

1. First, Platform members propose to explore the possibility to engage countries who already are working successfully on forest tenure and develop a pledge with other countries to scale up the recognition of forest tenure rights globally.
2. Second, Platform members are working to develop a new financial pledge to secure forest tenure rights in tropical forest tenure rights. This work could be linked to and support the political recognition of forest tenure rights.

The specific content of both pledges is to be discussed between members over the next 12 months and will be informed by ongoing desktop research and studies.

FCLP members consider that government commitments to scale up the recognition of forest tenure rights as a key solution to the climate and nature crisis will be a game changer on land tenure and mitigation of climate change. Some countries are already doing fantastically, but we need all countries to act with the same level of ambition to protect people, forests and climate.

Some examples of country leaders who have increased the # of hectares of recognized land before 2015 include: Kenya who increased by more than 60%; Liberia with an increase of 40.95%; Panama by 12.98%; Kyrgyzstan with 12.76%; and the Philippines with 10.29%⁷.

The Role of the Champions

The inter-government forest tenure pledge is a novel and unprecedented effort proposed by the Platform to support Indigenous Peoples and local communities in Forest Climate Action members that requires key countries' commitment and political will to set up and deliver ambition. To succeed, we need committed politicians and champions from several regions of the world who can engage tropical forest country governments to take part in the pledge. The champions might be asked to undertake the following actions:

- Through their convening power, engage forest country governments in committing to recognize and secure an X amount of ha for Indigenous Peoples and local communities forest tenure and management.
- Making public statements at high level events on climate, nature and forests throughout 2024 (COP29- Azerbaijan) and 2025 (NY Climate Week and COP30 in Brazil).
- Using social media channels to amplify the importance of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and developing agreed messaging with other champions and FCLP members.
- Take part in presenting this pledge along with other important pledges at COP30 alongside ambitious partners.

Not all champions will need to undertake all activities, and the purpose of having multiple champions will be to use each one strategically. We expect that each champion would ideally be available for 1-2 high level events and 3-5 bilateral calls or meetings through 2025.

⁷ [Who-Owns-the-Worlds-Land_Final-EN.pdf \(rightsandresources.org\)](#)