LAND RIGHTS AS A PATHWAY OUT OF THE CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY CRISSES

HOW OUR MEMBERS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The climate, biodiversity and ecosystem crises, alongside land degradation, all stem from deep-rooted structural inequalities and represent some of the most severe threats to our planet and its inhabitants.

Despite the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warning of a narrowing window of only eight years1 to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees - the current, conventional methods of addressing these crises are proving extremely inadequate. While high-profile international efforts from treaties, frameworks, regulations, to collaborations with multilateral organisations and industry partnerships are fostering a sense of urgency and calls to action, they remain highly insufficient on their own.

The climate crisis, as both a cause and a consequence of land inequality, already threatens the livelihoods of an estimated 2.5 billion people involved in smallholder agriculture, often resulting in their displacement (ILC 2021). Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and local communities (LCs) in particular are bearing a disproportionate impact of these crises, despite contributing minimally to them, and regardless of their critical contributions to conservation.

What is needed to begin to address these complex crises are profound and radical societal changes that fundamentally reconfigure power dynamics, and which prioritise IP and LC perspectives and connections to lands and territories.

ILC's 2022-2030 Strategy highlights the necessity of altering these power structures and systems governing land by building democracy from below, and places land rights at the centre of meeting the most urgent challenges of our time: avoiding catastrophic climate breakdown, building peaceful and democratic societies, sustainable and resilient local food systems, as well as overcoming growing inequality – particularly gender inequality.

With our members representing over 70 million land users in 80 countries, ILC works for and with the women, family and peasant farmers, Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, forest dwellers, hunter-gatherers, fisherfolk, and Afro-descendants taking care of our planet.

Our coalition embraces diversity, but unites under one common goal - secure land rights, responding to the needs and protecting the rights of those who live on and from the land, and more progress will follow, prioritise women, whose leadership brings the greatest change. The effective and equitable recognition, securing, and practice of land and territorial rights - what ILC refers to as people-centred land governance (PCLG)⁴ - presents an opportunity to not only act as an essential and evidence-based response to the climate crisis, but to extend impact beyond climate adaptation and mitigation by addressing historical inequalities, upholding human rights, and enhancing livelihoods.

In line with ILC's 2030 Strategy, our platforms, members, and partners are working to strengthen global commitments to land and tenure rights in climate and nature-related spaces and policy frameworks, as well as to foster capacity-building and knowledge sharing, particularly through the production and use of people's data.

The multi-stakeholder collaboration at the heart of ILC’s initiatives further amplifies the impact of our members, and enhances opportunities for preserving traditional land use practices as well as the scaling-up of sustainable practices to combat biodiversity loss, land degradation, and the myriad effects of climate change.

This report explores the existing efforts of ILC members, platforms and partners in addressing the climate and biodiversity crises, highlighting their contributions to advancing PCLG in climate and nature related policies, practices, and agendas at all levels. The report also provides an overview of ILC's Theory of Change and how our new programme on People, Climate & Nature Programme is setting out to further build on the work and achievements of our members.

The key outcomes highlighted in this report primarily stem from a cross-reading of ILC’s Contribution Analyses on National Land Policies, practices, and agendas at all levels. The report also provides an overview of ILC’s Theory of Change and how our new programme on People, Climate & Nature Programme is setting out to further build on the work and achievements of our members.

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1 In 2023, the EU’s Climate service announced that global warming exceeded 1.5C across an entire year for the first time, fueling concerns on the rate of warming and the narrowing window of opportunity for meaningful mitigation. Despite the critical need, the land rights of communities are severely undermined, with national laws acknowledging merely 10 percent of land as community-owned, with an additional 8 percent allocated for their use around the world. Even fewer lands are officially registered and titled to these communities, as numerous countries fail to recognise community land or safeguard traditional tenure systems passed down through generations.

2 In 2013, through the Antigua Declaration, ILC members committed to people-centred land governance as a means to contribute to the operationalisation of the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure - placing a particular focus on those who live in poverty and in a way that would ‘secure and equitable access to and control over land reduce poverty and contributes to identity, dignity, and inclusion.’

3 In 2023, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change announced that the climate crisis is both a cause and a consequence of land inequality, already threatening the livelihoods of an estimated 2.5 billion people involved in smallholder agriculture, often resulting in their displacement (ILC 2021). Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and local communities (LCs) in particular are bearing a disproportionate impact of these crises, despite contributing minimally to them, and regardless of their critical contributions to conservation.
KEY PROGRESS
CATALYSED BY ILC MEMBERS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PEOPLE, CLIMATE AND NATURE PROGRAMME

For over 2.5 billion people, land constitutes a fundamental element of survival, well-being, dignity, and heritage.

Land, with its various terrains and ecosystems, also plays an intrinsic role in supporting life, biodiversity, and climate stability by serving as a critical carbon sink absorbing 30% of human-generated carbon emissions produced over the past decade. Yet the widespread and escalating pressures on land - from deforestation, urbanisation, extractivism, and the expansion of industrial agriculture - are fueling the rapid conversion of land-based carbon sinks to carbon emitters. These pressures are also driving land degradation, the primary driver of terrestrial biodiversity loss, and in turn severely hinder the land’s ability to regulate the climate, sustain food production, and preserve natural resources - all while jeopardising countless livelihoods. Despite the critical importance of land and territorial rights, the topic is frequently overlooked in discourses around climate and biodiversity.

For this reason, ILC has identified the most relevant work of its members to build on further with a new programme called People, Climate & Nature, focused on three thematic pillars, namely biodiversity protection and land degradation, climate solutions, and sustainable food systems.

Activities within each thematic pillar will be carried out through and in alignment with ILC’s three strategic objectives - namely advocating for change at the national level (Strategic Objective 1) and the international level (Strategic Objective 3), while leveraging land-related data as a catalyst for change (Strategic Objective 2).

On the other hand, key outcomes and progress already catalysed by the ILC network in relation to climate and nature include, among others, the following:

PILLAR 1
LAND RIGHTS FOR BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION AND REVERSING LAND DEGRADATION

Rainforest Trust & ILC: partnership establishing over 230,000 hectares of community-protected areas in Peru and the Philippines while safeguarding over 80 threatened species

Securing over 39 million hectares of pasturelands; advancing herder community rights in Central and South Asia

Protecting lakes and lagoons through Conservation and Sustainable Use Areas in Ecuador

A Novel Forestry Law to recognise the rights and roles of forest users in Albania

Ensuring the involvement of local communities in forestry policy frameworks; simplifying management plans for community protected areas in Kosovo

Establishing community-based networks and protected areas for natural resources; ensuring CSO inputs to the Environmental and Natural Resources Code in Cambodia

Preventing legislative initiatives threatening IPs and LCs, forestry and wildlife in Peru

Ensuring gender justice in public policies in the Amazon rainforest in Ecuador

Decentralising natural resource management; halting criminalisation procedures against land rights defenders in Cameroon

Strengthening women’s and IPs’ decision-making in water management and community leadership in Peru

Appointment of ILC as an Official Observer to the Convention on Biological Diversity. ILC catalyses the integration of IP and LC land rights in the Global Biodiversity Framework’s monitoring process

ILC leads the implementation of the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration’s Challenge 5.1 on Communities and Land Tenure

Appointment of ILC as the coordinator of the SDG Land Momentum Group; LANDex data for Shadow Reports
PILLAR 2
CLIMATE SOLUTIONS THAT RECOGNISE AND RESPECT LAND RIGHTS
- Supporting Indigenous struggles against extractivism in Jujuy, Argentina
- Supporting the Ogiek people’s resistance to evictions under the guise of conservation in Kenya
- Fighting Maasai evictions in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania
- Strengthening efforts for the adoption of a Climate Change Bill in South Africa

PILLAR 3
LAND RIGHTS AS A FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS
- Establishing Forest Pasture Management Plans, an Agroforestry Concept & a SDG monitoring platform with ILC members in Kyrgyzstan
- Formulating a robust Legal Framework on Family Farming and a Multi-actor Agrarian Roundtable in Peru
- Feeding the UNDFF Global Action Plan, Regional Action Plans, and National Action Plans in the Philippines, Kyrgyzstan, and Peru through ILC member contributions
- Adoption of a Sustainable Agricultural Policy highlighting small-scale producers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Securing legal protection for smallholder farmers and communities facing land grabs in Malawi
ILC’s 2030 Strategy comprises three strategic objectives that guide work to secure land rights for and with people, namely through support to
1. National Land Coalitions,
2. the generation and use of people’s data for accountability; and
3. regional and global advocacy to influence governments, traditional authorities and corporations in realising people-centred land governance.

Guided by a systems change approach, work towards the strategic objectives is planned alongside and in support of one another. These tie into the work under each pillar of the PCN programme - namely through advocacy for change on the national (SO1) and international levels (SO3), while using land related data as a strategic impetus for change (SO2).

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1**

**NATIONAL LAND COALITIONS ADVANCE PEOPLE-CENTRED LAND GOVERNANCE**

National Land Coalitions (NLCs) encompass multi-stakeholder processes set in motion by ILC members to promote people-centred land governance.

Led by national actors, NLCs unite various land stakeholders, including People’s Organisations (POs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), local communities, intergovernmental organisations, research centres, government entities, among others in order to find strategies and lasting solutions to land governance. To date, ILC has supported the formulation and strengthening of NLCs in 30 countries, where they play a key role in accelerating the recognition, defence and protection of land rights, and are further complemented by joint efforts with ILC’s regional and global thematic platforms (SO3).

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4 ILC uses the term of People’s Organisations for constituency-based organisations that directly represent and are accountable to people depending upon land — such as farmers, peasants, women, Indigenous Peoples, agricultural workers, fishers, the landless, pastoralists, forest users, and other associations of rural people, including community-based organisations. For Indigenous Peoples, who are holders of collective rights as Peoples, ILC fully supports the rights to self-determination and self-governance.
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

PEOPLE’S DATA IS PRODUCED AND USED TO HOLD GOVERNMENTS AND BUSINESSES ACCOUNTABLE

ILC facilitates the collection, management, and use of data on land rights - especially by People’s Organisations - in order to raise awareness of structural inequalities and to build collective advocacy.

ILC members receive support to produce and utilise this data to promote transparency, demand accountability, and monitor progress towards sustainable development across all levels.

As part of the new PCN Programme, ILC’s data initiatives will work for the recognition of land rights as central to accountability frameworks on climate, biodiversity and land degradation, among other relevant themes. A key data-initiative in this context is ILC’s Global Land Governance Index (LANDex), built in consultation with ILC members and partners, relying on 33 indicators and employing diverse data sources. This global monitoring tool puts people at the centre of land data, ensuring that their voices, perspectives and contexts are visible, while democratising land monitoring processes. A central objective of LANDex is to overcome data fragmentation, amplifying existing indicators and methodologies in a manner that complements official datasets, often by working closely with national statistics offices and global data custodians, especially on the SDGs. As of March 2024, LANDex data has been generated in 31 countries, with full datasets available in 26 countries.

Currently, ILC is working to broaden the scope of climate-related data collected through LANDex to highlight the relevance of land tenure to the three Rio Conventions related to climate, biodiversity, land degradation and desertification. In this context, ILC will facilitate member-led monitoring of progress towards Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), as well as the extent to which land - particularly the land tenure of Indigenous Peoples and local communities - are accounted for in National Action Plans (NAPs) and to what degree IP and LC land tenure, women’s land rights, and threats against land and environmental defenders are addressed in National Biodiversity Action Plans (NBSAPs).

Other notable ILC member-led and supported data work include the LandMark and Land Matrix data Initiatives. LandMark serves as an online open access platform to promote transparency and accountability in large-scale land acquisitions, while Land Matrix - the Global Platform of Indigenous and Community Lands - serves as the first online platform providing maps and other critical information on lands collectively held and used by Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3
REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ADVOCACY BUILDS POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE-CENTRED LAND GOVERNANCE

ILC’s member-led thematic regional and global platforms work to advocate for people-centred land governance, amplify the voices of ILC members (particularly those of women and youth), and to foster enabling environments and political commitment to ILC’s priority areas for PCLG as outlined through our 10 commitments that guide the work of the Coalition and its members.

As part of efforts to amplify the voices of our members, ILC supports People’s Organisations (POs) to lead global and regional partnerships calling for the recognition of land as a human right, while challenging predominant narratives, and facilitating peer-to-peer learning. Work under this Strategic Objective moreover places emphasis on building capacities in support of PO leadership, alongside ILC’s network pledges of gender justice and defending land defenders.

In relation to the People, Climate and Nature Programme, relevant ILC-member led thematic advocacy platforms include:
» Locally-managed Ecosystems
» Pastoralists
» Defending Human, Land and Environmental Rights Defenders
» Indigenous Peoples and Community Land Rights
» Family Farming
» Women’s Land Rights
» Youth

These member-led platforms will be further supported by ILC to enable their engagement in climate and nature-related international frameworks and strategic advocacy forums as part of work under Pillar 1 (CBD, UNCCD, UNPFII), Pillar 2 (UNFCCC, UNPFII), and Pillar 3 (UNFCCC, CFS) of the PCN programme.

Moreover, the work of the ILC member-led Alliance for Land, Indigenous and Environmental Defenders (ALLIED, formerly the Defend the Defenders Coalition) Platform incorporates a strong focus on data, particularly regarding land and environmental defenders, in order to feed advocacy to demand greater accountability from government and businesses against lethal and non-lethal violence, intimidation and criminalisation.
**PILLAR 1**

**LAND RIGHTS FOR BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION AND REVERSING LAND DEGRADATION**

Pillar 1 of the People, Climate & Nature Programme will emphasise promoting land rights as a crucial cornerstone for protecting carbon sinks, reversing land degradation, and supporting community-based conservation and restoration.

Work under this pillar will stress the importance of land rights against top-down conservation or restoration initiatives that may undermine land rights, prevent traditional land use practices, or trigger land evictions. As such, it will also encompass work to promote the recognition of the crucial role of Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, and local communities in safeguarding biodiversity hotspots and ecosystems.

At the global level, this work will entail advocacy for the recognition of land rights and the role of ILC’s constituencies in the context of various legal frameworks and advocacy forums - such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the SDG Agenda, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP), and the UN Convention on Combating Desertification (UNCCD), as well as through ILC’s partnership with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

At the national level, numerous ILC members and partners engaged in National Land Coalitions, Global/Regional platforms or strategic alliances are already engaged in initiatives aimed at conserving and restoring biodiversity, addressing land degradation, and safeguarding carbon sinks, among other approaches.

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7. At the UN COPs, ILC has worked to highlight the critical role of IPs and LCs as key actors in climate mitigation and adaptation. At COP28, ILC supported the participation of 39 ILC members to participate in side events, and utilise these platforms to emphasise the significance of land tenure rights in combating the climate crisis. Such engagements have elevated their voices and facilitated the strengthening of their networks. Moreover, ILC engages in consultations with its members prior to these events in order to craft coherent messages and policy recommendations to be promoted through digital campaigns for the recognition of land rights and the provision of political and financial support.

8. ILC is leading the implementation of UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration’s Challenge 5.1 on communities, which seeks to restore and secure land and resource rights to Indigenous Peoples and local communities and recognise them as stewards of ecosystem restoration.

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The successes of these initiatives have been a result of close collaboration with local communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, forest-dwellers, fisher-folks, and small-scale producers.

Key achievements to date include the following:

**RAINFOREST TRUST FUND AND ILC: PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROTECTED AREAS IN PERU AND THE PHILIPPINES**

“The Rainforest Trust Fund’s collaboration with the ILC forms a powerful alliance that resonates with the urgency of our time. Together, we work hand in hand to safeguard not only biodiversity but also the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities worldwide. These communities and individuals are the guardians of Earth’s greatest treasures, for within the delicate balance of nature lies the future of our planet and the very essence of our shared existence. Simply put, by destroying biodiversity, we also undermine our own societies.”

- James Lewis, Vice President of Conservation for the Rainforest Trust

In 2023, the International Land Coalition formed a strategic alliance with the Rainforest Trust Fund (RTF) focused on community-led conservation efforts to confront climate change and biodiversity loss. The various projects under the partnership seek to support and strengthen community conservation, while targeting vital biodiversity areas.

The first phase of the collaboration is focused on establishing over 230,000 hectares of protected areas by local communities in the Peruvian Amazon and in the Philippines, while bolstering the conservation of at least 80 threatened species.

Through a robust learning component, the partnership also serves to promote a comprehensive approach to conservation, advance peer-to-peer learning, stimulate policy dialogues, enhance data production, implement gender-sensitive approaches, and expand networking opportunities.

In Peru, the partnership includes two projects with ILC members CONAP and IBC. With CONAP, work is focused on the conservation of IP territories in the Ucayali, Amazonas and Junin regions by closing gaps in the titling and management of 605,570 acres. Specifically, the project sets out to ensure the land tenure of IPs; to promote and strengthen the management of the territory through productive enterprises to boost the Indigenous economy and food security through nature-based practices; as well as to promote the creation of private conservation areas (PCAs) in IP territories in coordination with the National Service of Protected Areas (SERVAP).
In Central Asia, the platform unites 15 national organisations and six government bodies from Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. At the national level, CAPA members have influenced the development and ratification of rangeland policies in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan, as well as the enactment and revision of pasture legislations across the countries it operates in.

Collectively, these efforts have played a key role in securing community land rights for over 80,000 pastoralist and herder households, alongside contractual agreements for more than 39 million hectares of pasturelands in the region by 2021.

At the local level, CAPA members in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan employ an approach known as Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) to foster conservation and biodiversity through community engagement. In Kyrgyzstan, this has contributed to legal reforms enhancing pastureland management, as well as the set-up of Pasture Committees nationwide. In Mongolia, relevant achievements include the enactment of multiple laws to prevent land degradation and promote sustainable grazing practices—such as the Livestock Tax Law of 2021. Moreover, both CAPA and SAPA platforms engage in and promote agroforestry as a means to support the cultivation of crops and/or livestock breeding with tree and shrub planting.

In South Asia, the SAPA platform connects 45 organisations and three governmental bodies across Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and India to strengthen advocacy for the development of rangeland policies.

Notable achievements in the region include the securing of over 7,600 acres of rangelands for pastoralist use in India, as well as the formulation of a Pastoralist Women’s Alliance (Maldhari Mahila Ayog) to document the traditional roles of women pastoralists at the community level, alongside the set-up of 34 self-help groups for pastoralist women in Afghanistan.

At the global level, work with key partners, particularly with the Mongolian government, contributed to the designation of 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), officially endorsed by FAO’s Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in October 2020.

Read the more about the Pastoralist platforms in Asia in our Contribution analysis on Rangelands in Asia (2021), as well as in the Good Practice on Community-based Natural Resource Management in Kyrgyzstan.
A NOVEL FORESTRY LAW TO RECOGNISE THE RIGHTS AND ROLES OF FOREST USERS IN ALBANIA

In Albania, the National Land Coalition, also known as the Coordination and Consultative Committee (CCC), has worked to improve the legal framework around forestry in the country since 2013. A recent focus of the platform has been the formulation of recommendations to bylaws for the implementation of the national Forestry law approved in 2020 - a milestone that the platform actively advocated for numerous years. The Forestry Law is particularly significant for its recognition of the traditional rights of forest community users, as well as their property rights, including their annual firewood needs.

As part of relevant advocacy efforts, the NLC formulated evidence-based models to illustrate the effective stewardship of local communities in protecting and conserving forests; a study by ILC/NLC members National Federation of Communal Forests and Pastures of Albania (NFCFPA) illustrated that forest renewal is in fact up to 2-3 times higher when the forest is administered by farmers and local forest users as compared to when they are incorporated in common areas or administered by local governments.

These models were shared with relevant stakeholders and decision-makers to inform lobbying on forest protection and conservation and to advocate for the legitimate recognition of communities as forest stewards.

In 2022-2023, thanks in part to the sustained and evidence-based advocacy efforts of the NLC/CCC, the Albanian Council of Ministers approved several decisions and directives to supplement the 2020 Forestry Law and its secure effective implementation - encompassing aspects such as forest inspection, tariff regulations for forest and non-wood forest products, as well as harvesting procedures. To this end, relevant NLC advocacy actions included grassroots education and sensitisation, active collaboration with local stakeholders, negotiations with decision-makers, and the sharing of sustainable forest management models and best practices from local communities. Currently, the platform is working to bring the concerns of forest communities to the Ministry of Environment regarding the implications of a ministerial decision (2022) to increase Albania’s network of protected areas to cover 21% of the total land area.

Read more in our Contribution Analysis on NLC Albania (2019)

PROTECTING LAKES AND LAGOONS THROUGH CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE AREAS IN ECUADOR

In Ecuador, the ILC member-led National Land Coalition works to safeguard the land and territorial rights of Indigenous Peoples and peasant communities, as well as to advance sustainable land management and conservation. Notable outcomes catalysed by NLC members and key allies - such as the Network of Lands, Territories, and Communities - include the establishment of the Mojanda Conservation and Sustainable Use Area (ACUS) in 2019, as well as the Mojanda Water Protection Area (APHM) in 2021. Situated in the Andes, the Mojanda-Cajas Lake Complex, encompassing lagoons and peatlands, are under severe threat from anthropogenic activities, marked by unregulated tourism and the expansion of agriculture, particularly by the floriculture industry.

In addition to preserving the local lake complex and its surroundings, the notable progress catalysed by the NLC and its partners has helped ensure water availability for nearly 200,000 people in the region.

At the local level, NLC members also influenced the local government in Pedro Moncayo to recognise the importance of ecosystem management. These efforts received wide coverage and visibility among local communities, which in turn contributed to greater participation in the management of public policies and advocacy for the defence of the territory and rights vindications.

Read more on ILC’s work in Ecuador in our Contribution Analysis on the NLC Ecuador (2022) and the Good Practice on Protecting Territories for Conservation and Climate Resilience.
ENSURING THE INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN FORESTRY POLICY FRAMEWORKS; SIMPLIFYING MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR COMMUNITY PROTECTED AREAS IN KOSOVO

In Kosovo, the National Land Coalition has worked to improve the legal framework and management of forestry since its formulation in 2020. ILC members in Kosovo are among the key actors in the national forestry sector, and their efforts are increasingly recognised by various national stakeholders. Notably, in 2021, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development designated ILC member NAPFO (National Association of Private Forest Owners) as the representative of all families owning forestry or fragmented forestry land, including those within protected areas. This appointment has facilitated the involvement of forest owners and local communities in key policy frameworks, such as the development of the 2030 National Forestry Strategy and the 2023 Forestry Law, that notably incorporate the interests of local forest owners and communities in utilising forestry resources through joint management agreements under which they are empowered to manage degraded state forest areas, while also utilising them for firewood needs. In addition, NLC members influenced the securing of the first budget allocation dedicated to the private forestry sector, encompassing over 10,000 families owning forestry or fragmented forestry land as beneficiaries.

At the local level, the NLC facilitated the formulation of 100 simplified community management plans in the Bjeshket e Nemuna national parks in 2022. By promoting cooperation between local authorities and communities and ensuring efficient communication of property rights in protected areas, the NLC played an instrumental role in further integrating these management plans into the legislative framework, particularly by lobbying parliamentary groups. Likewise, the NLC’s work to endorse joint forest management across 11 municipalities has significantly enhanced family forest owners’ participation in policymaking across the country.

Complementing these legal and policy advancements, the NLC, in partnership with the Kosovo Forest Agency and the Institute of Forestry, moreover embarks on annual afforestation projects. These initiatives not only support the interests of private forest owners, but also play a crucial role in addressing land erosion, thereby contributing to the ecological restoration of neglected and deteriorated forest areas in Kosovo.

Read more in ILC’s Good Practice on NAPFO’s Joint Forest Management Initiatives.

ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY-BASED NETWORKS AND PROTECTED AREAS FOR NATURAL RESOURCES; ENSURING CSO INPUTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL AND NATURAL RESOURCES CODE IN CAMBODIA

In August 2022, provincial authorities in Cambodia endorsed the creation of a Community-based Natural Resource Networks (CFI) and Community Protected Areas (CPAs) to enhance the governance of natural resources and their safeguarding, as well as a means to grant local communities with land tenure rights. In this context, ILC/NLC Cambodia members and partners - namely the NGO Forum, ActionAid Cambodia, and their provincial partners - assisted 13 communities to effectively organise dialogues, trainings, and workshops on land and natural resource management, as well as on land dispute resolution mechanisms.

These efforts paved the way for the recognition of three Community Protected Areas in the Bueng Per wildlife sanctuary - covering an area of 5,005 hectares and benefitting 525 families, including 1,572 women - in addition to a formal agreement on 16 community forestry (CF) sites spanning 13,245 hectares for 6,135 families. Likewise, in the Ratanakiri and Stung Treng provinces, NLC platform members assisted Indigenous Peoples to gain official recognition of a further four Community Forestry sites, three Community Protected Areas, as well as two Community Forest Management Plans (CFMP). As part of these processes, local and community leaders have come to recognise the benefits of establishing provincial community networks, and committed to their strengthening.

Further key progress catalysed through the sustained advocacy of NLC Cambodia members include the integration of CSO inputs into an amendment to the Protected Area Law as per the final draft of its Environmental and Natural Resources (ENR) Code, approved by the Senate in June 2023. The ENR, which had been in formulation by the Government since 2015, consolidates and harmonises legal provisions related to the environment and natural resources - encompassing the Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resource Management 1996, the Protected Area Law 2008, and the Law on Biosecurity 2008. Key efforts by NLC members to catalyse these changes included the organisation of consultative workshops to gather insights to a report submitted to the Inter-Ministerial Working Group. As a result, the Code now incorporates CSO inputs on both the Protected Area Law, and as per the regulations under the code. The inclusion of these recommendations is pivotal for the health of the local ecosystems, as the Code encourages sub-national governments overseeing protected and forested areas to champion forest conservation and spearhead ecosystem restoration efforts.
ENSURING GENDER JUSTICE IN PUBLIC POLICIES IN THE AMAZON RAINFOREST IN ECUADOR

In Ecuador, ILC member Luna Creciente worked to support the passing of a Reform Law for the Integral Planning of the Special Amazonian Territorial District, approved in March 2023. The Law, established in 2018, aimed to regulate the planning of the Ecuadorian Amazon, focusing on sustainable development, human rights, and environmental conservation based on Sumak Kawsay (Good Living) - an Indigenous principle promoting living in harmony with nature. Specifically, the law allowed for a retributive percentage of oil exploitation in the region, ensuring justice for the provincial, municipal, and Parochial Decentralised Autonomous Governments which carry out community-level development works. However, due to its limited effectiveness and regulatory deficiencies, a reform proposal was introduced to emphasise integral development, the rights of uncontacted Indigenous Peoples, and ancestral languages.

Luna Creciente, alongside the National Coalition of Women of Ecuador and the Amazonian Women’s Network, jointly advocated for its approval by conducting local-level political training schools, developing proposals, and participating in key forums, including the Amazonian Dialogues and the Amazonian Summit of Presidents.

At the local level, Luna Creciente and the ILC member-led regional campaign “Securing Indigenous Territories to Protect Life,” are working to enhance the understanding of the Reform Law among 10 local governments in the Sucumbíos and Morona Santiago provinces. Luna Creciente also supports community initiatives for women’s organisations, including agro-ecological projects to help promote awareness of the functions of local governments, as well as avenues for rights assertions. This work has in turn strengthened strategic alliances and networks- such as the Amazonian Women’s Network and the National Coalition of Women. Today, Luna Creciente and the ILC initiatives continue to support the implementation of the reform and ensure compliance with the proposed Fiscal Pact.

PREVENTING LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES THREATENING IPS AND LCS, FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE IN PERU

In Peru, NLC members contributed to the prevention of legislative proposals that could have severely jeopardised the rights of Indigenous Peoples, forestry, and wildlife. These initiatives, spearheaded by the Congress of the Republic, encompassed an amendment to revise the regulations of the Forestry and Wildlife Law (No. 29763), along with two bills seeking to amend the Law (03912/2022-CR, 04587/2022-CR). Additionally, an amendment was proposed to the Law for the Protection of Isolated and Initial Contact Indigenous Peoples (Ley PIACI, No. 28736) to alter the procedures for establishing Indigenous Reserves. Collectively, these legislative efforts posed a significant threat to the rights of IPs and LCS, as well as to biodiversity, as they would have allowed for the granting of property titles and possession certificates without the requisite evaluation processes.

Through collaborative efforts with partners and stakeholders, ILC/NLC members in Peru made substantial contributions to thwarting these initiatives in 2022-2023, from conducting thorough analyses, to orchestrating advocacy campaigns targeting the Congressional Committees and the plenary of the Congress. Moreover, in 2019, their efforts also contributed to the approval of a Ministerial Resolution (059-2019-JUS) that established a protocol to guarantee the protection of human rights defenders and those working with land and environmental issues.
Through a partnership with the LandRights Now! Campaign, the platform and its partners actively advocate for the rights of land and environmental defenders. Together with key partners, a statement on the criminalisation of land rights defenders was released that influenced the Ministry of Justice and the Cameroonian Human Rights Commission to halt criminalisation procedures against 12 land rights defenders, and further supported community mobilisations.

Read more in our Contribution Analysis on NLC Cameroon (2021)

**STRENGTHENING WOMEN’S AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ PARTICIPATION IN WATER MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP IN PERU**

In Peru, the National Land Coalition has been actively engaged in promoting women’s land rights and their inclusion in decision-making processes and spaces.

Since its formulation in 2013, the platform has influenced important developments regarding the role of Indigenous women in water management - including the approval of an Executive Resolution (424-2022) on the Regional Agenda for Quechua, Aymara, and Uros Indigenous Women by the Government of Puno. As a means to guarantee responsible land governance, the resolution seeks to address corruption, patriarchal culture, discrimination, and unequal participation in water management. Additionally, the Regional Government of Puno enacted an Ordinance (020-2022), recognising rural women as key actors in water conservation, and emphasising the need for their involvement in decision-making processes regarding its management.

These initiatives are set to be carried out with an intercultural gender approach, and to serve as a means to challenge the long-standing association of water management exclusively with men in the country.

At the national level, through the advocacy efforts of its members and partners, the platform also influenced the passing of an amendment ensuring a minimum representation of 30% women in community leadership structures as part of the Law of Peasant Communities (Article 19, 2019) - further enhancing women’s participation in communal organisations and decision-making processes.

Read more in our Contribution Analysis on NLC Peru (2021)

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10 Unfortunately, the government revoked this decision in 2023.
ILC LEADS IMPLEMENTATION OF UN DECADE FOR ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION’S CHALLENGE 5.1 ON COMMUNITIES

ILC is a key partner of the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, serving as the lead organisation for the implementation of Challenge 5.1 of the Decade’s 2030 Action Plan, to “Restore and secure land and resource rights to Indigenous Peoples and Local communities and recognize them as stewards of ecosystem restoration,” since 2022. Recognising that land rights remain an underexplored dimension in the restoration space, ILC is working to elevate the profile of land rights within the broader restoration movement—such as through side events focused on land rights at key forums and conferences, including the Global Landscape Forum, the World Conference on Ecosystem Restoration, as well as at the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD COPs.

As part of releasing this role, ILC’s member-led pastoralist alliances in Asia have integrated engagement with the UN Decade in their individual work plans with an emphasis on the contributions of women and youth seeking to further elevate the representation of land rights issues and pertinent constituencies within the context of ecosystem restoration.
Appoint ILC as the Coordinator of the SDG Land Momentum Group on Land Reporting and Landex Data for SDG Shadow Reports

Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), five specifically highlight the importance of land in safeguarding humanity’s future, with three of those goals directly advocating for the protection of land rights for both women and men. Within this framework, ILC assumes a pivotal role in coordinating the SDG Land Momentum Group (LMG) to enhance the monitoring and reporting of land-related targets associated with the SDGs — particularly targets 1.4.2, 5.a.1-2, 15.3, and 16.10.

In this context, ILC’s data efforts have served to highlight the gaps in land target reporting by State Parties, and to formulate parallel reports by ILC members and other CSOs in ten LAC countries using a methodology developed by the SDG LMG.11 By partnering with organisations such as Oxfam, Landesa, IWGIA, Transparency International, and UN entities — ILC has fostered dialogues to enhance state motivation on land reform and its linkages with the SDGs — including through efforts at the 2023 SDG High-level Political Forum (HLPF), where the 2022 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) were launched to underscore the inadequacy of reporting by State Parties on land targets. The collaboration and inputs from ILC members, solicited through the LMG, also contributed to the 2023 SDG Political Declaration.

On the other hand, Landex data has been utilised by ILC members in Argentina, Bolivia, Cameroon, Guatemala, Nepal, Nicaragua, and Senegal to feed SDG Shadow Reports on land-related indicators, specifically SDG 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land). These processes have fostered collaboration among national-level actors, including governments,12 while informing key actors at the international level, such as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), FAO, IFAD and the World Bank, among others. These efforts also contributed to the establishment of joint working groups and plans at the national level — such as in Nepal, where government actors invited ILC members to participate in an SDG Working Group in response to their SDG Shadow Report; and in the Philippines, where ILC members were invited to join an inter-agency working group on SDG data following a data presentation stemming from the IFAD-supported LandMonitor project.

From the report “A crucial gap: the limits to official data on attacks against defenders and why it’s concerning”

Similarly, in 2022, the ILC-supported Alliance for Indigenous and Environmental Defenders (ALLIED) platform — a global alliance of civil society organisations working to support, advocate for and collect data on defenders — was asked by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the custodian of SDG 16.10.1, to develop a definition of land and environmental defenders that could serve to distinguish LED out of all the HR defendenders attacked, which accounts for an estimated half of all attacks — and to emphasise the importance of disaggregating data.

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11 The SDG LMG developed a methodology to assist interested CSOs to develop parallel reports on the key land indicators, to supplement government reporting which often does not include progress on the land targets. While being a baseline for security of tenure in these countries, these reports provided the basic foundation to advocate for land reforms in these countries. Ten countries in LAC, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru prepared parallel reports using the LMG methodology with some also utilising LANDEX data.

12 In Argentina, ILC members submitted further data as a proxy for women’s land rights indicator SDG 5.a.2 for consideration in the state-led Voluntary National Report (VNR).

13 Several national governments have been engaged through Landex, including those in Kenya, Nepal, Argentina, Jordan, and Liberia. For example, the NLC in Liberia utilised Landex data to work with the government which culminated in the endorsement of the Country Assessment Report by the Liberian Land Authority (LLA).
**PILLAR 2**

**CLIMATE SOLUTIONS THAT RECOGNISE AND RESPECT LAND RIGHTS**

As efforts to mitigate and adapt to global heating gain momentum, a multitude of solutions have emerged to facilitate a shift toward net-zero economies. Consequently, carbon and nature markets, along with various climate financing mechanisms, have emerged as novel drivers of conflicts related to land use. These encompass issues ranging from the allocation of carbon credits for REDD+ projects that fail to address the root causes of carbon emissions and often displace local communities, to the promotion of large-scale land-use changes and resource extraction under the guise of the green energy transition, among others.

In this context, **Pillar 2 of the PCN Programme will emphasise defending land rights in the context of climate solutions, namely through advocacy engagements in climate and human rights frameworks and spaces to highlight the urgent need for the recognition of land rights as a basis for mitigation solutions. To feed these efforts, ILC will also utilise its data work, namely through the LANDex, Land Matrix and LandMark data initiatives**, as well as the ALLIED Platform.

At the **global level**, key spaces for engagement include the UNFCCC and its negotiations on Art. 614, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues; regional platforms and frameworks for environmental and land rights defenders, such as the Escuazú Agreement; high profile climate events, such as the New York, Africa, Asia or London Climate Weeks; as well as meetings of international development banks funding the energy transition and/or climate finance.

At the **national level**, work under Pillar 2 seeks to enhance the advocacy efforts of ILC members, particularly in instances where their rights are compromised. This commitment entails:

- **Assisting National Land Coalitions** in engaging with governmental bodies to ensure the integration of the agendas of Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, and local communities into national climate policy planning.

- **Providing support to members** whose rights are jeopardised, amplifying their visibility through global campaigns such as Land Rights Now!, and expanding partnerships with like-minded organisations.

- **Facilitating capacity development** and peer-to-peer learning initiatives focused on just energy transitions, community-led carbon financing, and other nature-based solutions.

14 Article 6 of the Paris Agreement recognizes that some Parties choose to pursue voluntary cooperation in the implementation of their nationally determined contributions to allow for higher ambition in their mitigation and adaptation actions and to promote sustainable development and environmental integrity. (UNFCCC.)

**Key progress catalysed by ILC members in this context include the following:**

**SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS STRUGGLES AGAINST EXTRACTIVISM IN JUJUY, ARGENTINA**

In June 2023, Indigenous and peasant communities in Jujuy, Argentina, mobilised to demand the annulment of a provincial constitutional reform facilitating extractive mining activities. Approved without free, prior, and informed consultation (FPIC), the reform specifically concerns lithium mining, a crucial mineral for the “green” energy transition. These lithium reserves, often located in Indigenous territories, have sparked numerous disputes and conflicts among the locals opposed to the reform. In response to the social mobilisations, a brutal and disproportionate repression by government forces resulted in hundreds of injuries.

Yet despite this severe repression, a group known as the **Tercer Malón de la Paz** - made up of some 400 communities from the Collas, Atacamas, Oclayos, and Guarani peoples, as well as members of the ILC’s National Land Coalition in Argentina, brought their protest to the steps of the Courts of Justice through a peaceful march to the capital. Upon reaching Buenos Aires, the representatives camped in front of the Courts, seeking to meet with the Supreme Court to present their demands. Though they were only able to submit a petition, these important efforts garnered support from various organisations, including members of NLC Argentina, and the regional campaign “Securing Indigenous Territories to Protect Life,” spearheaded by ILC’s Working Group on Indigenous Peoples in LAC. After four months of camping and a change in the national government, the Malón returned to Jujuy to continue advocating for the annulment of the reform, the formation of a Federation of Indigenous Peoples and Communities, and the implementation of the Indigenous community property law.

In addition to supporting the Jujuy land defenders, the NLC Argentina platform is working to influence the public agenda on the energy transition and to highlight its effects on local communities facing extractivism. To this end, NLC members supported the participation of two community members from Jujuy in the 2023 NY Climate Week.
In Kenya, the Ogiek Indigenous People have been enduring barriers in pursuit of access to their ancestral lands within the Mau forest dating back to colonial-era land seizures in the 1930s, irregular land allocations during the 1990s, as well the expansion of industrial agriculture in the past decades. In recent years, the Ogiek struggle has moreover intersected with conservation and environmental policies, including carbon credit programmes. Despite alleged aims to preserve the forest’s ecological integrity, these initiatives are fueling the marginalisation of the Ogiek from their rightful place within the landscape they have stewarded for generations—and forcing many to become conservation refugees.

The Ogiek People’s Development Programme (OPDP), a member of the ILC and the lead organisation of ILC’s Regional Platform on Indigenous Peoples in Africa, works to promote the formulation and adoption of favourable policies and laws that enhance the livelihoods of the Ogiek and to advocate for the equitable allocation of national resources, including land. Over the span of nearly two decades, OPDP has diligently documented offences and presented evidence to the national justice system that ultimately afforded them no protection, and held their case for 17 years at the High Court of Kenya. After exhausting all local redress mechanisms, the Ogiek brought their case against the Government of Kenya to the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACPHR) in 2012.

In a major breakthrough, the ACPHR ruled in favour of the Ogiek in May 2017, finding the Kenyan government guilty of violating their rights to property, natural resources, and recognising the Ogiek as a distinct indigenous community while affirming their unique identity and heritage.

The case attracted attention from the international community, and helped to hold the government to a higher standard of accountability—enabling the Ogiek to begin to address their rights violations. During the process, the Ogiek Peoples’ Development Program also documented community by-laws, maps, and protocols for the management of communal lands, utilising this information to engage the government in seeking legal ownership of their land.

Moreover, together with the Regional Land and Territory Defenders Platform, a documentary entitled Lithium: What Lies Behind the Reform was produced by ILC/NLC member Plurales, with support from the GAGGA Alliance and the Environmental Defenders Program. Seeking to expose human rights violations in the name of energy transition, the documentary reconstructs the violent repression and the unconstitutional reform. Further advocacy materials produced by the NLC and partners, including the local and Indigenous organisations Red Chacha Warmi and Women Defenders of the Natural Habitat—include a research paper entitled Between the global north and south, the pillaging of common goods and energy transition: The case of Lithium in Jujuy (2024). The research aims to generate key information for influencing local and national agendas, and raise awareness of socio-territorial conflicts.

By shedding light on the struggles of communities resisting extractive industries, the collaboration between ILC members and supporting organisations stands as a poignant example of grassroots activism challenging the narrative of unchecked resource exploitation in the name of climate action.
PILLAR 2

General, received on his behalf by the Senior Administrator. OPDP also actively collaborates with the implementation of the decisions of the African Commission and African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. OPDP delivered a statement at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in March 2023 calling on the Kenyan government to hasten the implementation process.

However, in a recent development, the Kenyan government began unlawfully displacing the Ogiek from their ancestral territories in the Mau Forest to capitalise on carbon offsetting initiatives. According to Ogiek representatives, since November 2023, hundreds have been evicted, with reports of armed forest rangers demolishing homes and property. While the government maintains that these actions are aimed at environmental protection, negotiations between the government and carbon offsetting firms, such as a reported agreement with Dubai-based Blue Carbon, have raised suspicions that these evictions are linked to the generation of carbon credits—a process that involves compensating for emissions by preserving forests that absorb carbon dioxide. These unfolding realities are highlighting the tensions between conservation efforts and the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. In response to the developing situation, the ACPHR, through their country rapporteur, initiated an urgent appeal to the Republic calling for the cessation of the evictions in November.

In this context, OPDP is continuing its work with key partners to demand the implementation of the decisions of the African Commission and African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights. OPDP also actively collaborates with a diverse array of partners to enhance community capacities, enabling community members in Dodoma to present their case. At the local level, ILC members and partners from the National Land Coalition in Tanzania have been on the front lines of advocating for the rights of Maasai pastoralists against a backdrop of forced evictions and human rights violations under the guise of conservation. For generations, the Maasai have coexisted with the abundant wildlife inhabiting Tanzania’s Ngorongoro and Serengeti regions and played a crucial role in preserving the natural environment. Maasai lands are also found in the renowned Ngorongoro Conservation Area and UNESCO World Heritage Site, which experiences the passing of some 600,000 tourists on a yearly basis. Against this backdrop, the Maasai are facing growing adversities as their ancestral land stands on the brink of expropriation while their traditional means of sustenance face eradication by the hands of the government.

In response to criticisms of the condition of the World Heritage Site and a relevant inquiry by UNESCO, the government of Tanzania has devised a land use model and resettlement strategy that is infringing upon the rights of local communities by expanding the restricted areas where the Maasai are prohibited from grazing their cattle, cultivating crops, or establishing settlements. At the same time, the government has been working to pave the way for trophy hunting, and increase the number of tourists to five million by 2025 through a plan to change the legal status of the Conservation Area.

In June 2022, a government-sanctioned eviction to displace 150,000 Maasai led to the arrest, unlawful detention and severe mistreatment of Maasai leaders and community members. In response, ILC launched a media campaign calling for the immediate halting of the evictions - including a press release, an urgent petition, an open letter addressed to the President. Despite public support for the Maasai cause being strong, in October 2022, the Regional East African Court of Justice ruled in favour of the government’s decision, representing a significant setback for Indigenous land and territorial rights. Yet a month later, The Guardian reported that charges against the Maasai involved in the protests were dropped, citing the press release issued by ILC’s campaign. As a result, 24 community leaders were released from custody.

At the local level, ILC members and partners from the National Land Coalition in Tanzania have played a pivotal role in organising community resistance and facilitating discussions with lawmakers regarding the evictions, the likes of which also occurred in 2009, 2013, and 2017. Community members were supported in delivering a statement to the media, and a delegation of elders and community representatives, led by the NLC members PINGOS Forum, UCRT, and PWC - met with parliament members in Dodoma to present their case.
STRENGTHENING EFFORTS FOR THE ADOPTION OF A CLIMATE CHANGE BILL IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Climate Change Bill, introduced in the South African Parliament in February 2022, acknowledges the urgent threat of climate change and the need for a coordinated and progressive response. Specifically, the Bill aims to provide for the effective management of climate impacts, to ensure a just transition to a low carbon economy and society, as well as to contribute to the stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations. Moreover, it seeks to give effect to South Africa’s climate change commitments and obligations, and to protect and preserve the planet for present and future generations. After extensive public consultation (with some 13,200 written submissions received by Parliament) - and approval from the National Assembly, the Bill is currently under consideration by the National Council of Provinces for concurrence.

ILC/NLC members in South Africa played a key role in getting the Parliament to proceed with the relevant public hearings, and by broadening cross-sectoral collaboration with various CSOs, further strengthened efforts to expedite the bill, as well as to rectify its shortcomings. Efforts included the organisation of a Policy Messaging Workshop focused on small-scale farmers and climate change adaptation in October 2022. Within this framework, CSOs in the land, agriculture, and climate change sectors, including the NLC, highlighted the profound effects of climate change on local, national, and regional agriculture and land governance systems. Moreover, NLC members worked extensively to raise awareness of the bill, and to provide guidance on procedures for submissions to Parliament, facilitating both the written and oral submissions.

At the time, the NCAA withdrew the eviction orders and instead initiated a dialogue with community members, NLC platform members, and other relevant stakeholders to seek alternative solutions for addressing the challenges within the Conservation Area. However, in January 2024, the Tanzanian government announced that the legal status of the Conservation Area would indeed be altered to effectively ban all human habitation in the area. This detrimental move is expected to fuel the forced displacement of around 100,000 people - mainly Maasai - by setting out to relocate some 20,000 as early as March 2024. In response to these developments, ILC’s national constituents are working to support local mobilisation efforts as well as victims facing arrests or threats of eviction through court channels, while conducting dialogues with key government stakeholders overseeing land and natural resources - such as the Ministries of Lands, Housing and Human Settlement Development, Livestock and Fisheries Development, Natural Resources and Tourism, as well as the President’s Office, Local Government and Regional Administrations, among others. Furthermore, members are dedicated to crafting an alternative conservation model that departs from fortress conservation approaches and which instead showcases Indigenous practices of biodiversity conservation that allow for coexistence among wildlife, flora, and local communities within Tanzania’s expansive rangelands.

Read more on our Contribution Analysis on NLC South Africa (2022)

16 Efforts included the organisation of a Policy Messaging Workshop focused on small-scale farmers and climate change adaptation in October 2022. Within this framework, CSOs in the land, agriculture, and climate change sectors, including the NLC, highlighted the profound effects of climate change on local, national, and regional agriculture and land governance systems.
**PILLAR 3**

**LAND RIGHTS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**

Pillar 3 of the PCN Programme will emphasise the securing of land rights for sustainable food systems. This approach focuses on the land tenure of key constituencies - including smallholder farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists and other local communities - as fundamental to food system transformation, sustainable land management and fighting climate change.

At the global level, work under Pillar 3 will support these constituencies to become critical allies in transforming food systems, while strengthening the recognition of their contributions to adapting to climate change and promoting ecosystem resilience. Advocacy engagements linked to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Decade of Family Farming (UNDFF), among other strategic frameworks and forums will be strengthened to ensure that their voices are heard. At the national level, ILC will also work to support National Land Coalitions to engage in national climate policy processes - such as those implementing NDCs or NAPs and on issues related to food systems - as well as to ensure that National Pathways consider land tenure in their policy commitments.

**Key progress catalysed by ILC members in this context include the following:**

**ESTABLISHING FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS, AN AGROFORESTRY CONCEPT AND A SDG MONITORING PLATFORM WITH ILC MEMBERS IN KYRGYZSTAN**

In Kyrgyzstan, members of the ILC/NLC have been instrumental in shaping national sustainable development goals, agroforestry practices, and cattle management strategies within state forests, particularly in the context of climate change challenges.

A key outcome catalysed by NLC members included the formulation of the country’s inaugural management plan for pasture management on the State Forest Fund through a collaborative effort with forest unit staff, pasture committees, and local government entities. The management plan, which also seeks to enhance cross-sector cooperation to conserve forest resources and mitigate conflicts between forest and pasture users, was endorsed during the general assembly of the local rural council in 2021.

These strides in promoting sustainable development, along with other advocacy endeavours undertaken by ILC/NLC members in Kyrgyzstan, have garnered official recognition from state entities. In January 2023, the Council for Sustainable Development announced the establishment of a monitoring framework to track progress of the national sustainable development goals with an emphasis on climate change- and notably incorporated representatives from NLC Kyrgyzstan in the process and framework.

Furthermore, the NLC actively participated in the formulation of new policies and plans as part of its ongoing advocacy efforts. Notable among these initiatives is the comprehensive *National Agroforestry Plan 2022-2050*, designed to breathe new life into underutilised, barren, and poorly managed agricultural lands. The plan aims to promote economic resilience through the creation of green jobs, develop digital infrastructure, and ensure food sustainability in the face of climatic shifts. Developed with input from a diverse array of experts, including NLC/ILC members and agroforestry stakeholders, the plan awaits official endorsement after being submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture in December 2021.

Similarly, NLC members played a pivotal role in the *drafting of a national Law on Forest Use* to safeguard the rights and interests of forest users while enhancing the marketability of forest products. The draft law was presented to the State Forestry Agency in 2022.
FEEDING THE UNFF GLOBAL ACTION PLAN, REGIONAL PLANS, AND NATIONAL ACTION PLANS IN THE PHILIPPINES, PERU AND KYRGYZSTAN THROUGH ILC MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

In the Philippines, members of the NLC platform were highly involved in the formulation and approval of the National Action Plan 2019-2028 (PAP4FF) that notably incorporates an overt mention to land governance. The platform’s partnerships with key actors- including the Department of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), among others, allowed for a wider integration of CSO inputs to the action plan approved in 2021.

Similarly, the work of the ILC member-led Family Farming (FF) platforms in Asia and LAC, along with their members and partners, likewise contributed to the formulation and approval of the National Action Plans in Peru (2019) and Kyrgyzstan (2022). Support to current NAP drafting processes is being carried out by ILC members and platforms in Argentina and Togo, as well as by ILC/FF LAC platform member COPROFAM in Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

At the global level, ILC members contributed to the formulation and approval of the UNFF's Global Action Plan in 2019, whereas at the regional level, ILC/FF platforms played an active role in the elaboration of two sub-regional Action Plans, namely in the Near East and North Africa (NENA) region, and in South Asia, with its regional body, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

FORMULATING A ROBUST LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON FAMILY FARMING AND A MULTI-ACTOR AGRARIAN ROUNDTABLE IN PERU

In Peru, sustained advocacy work by members of the regional Family Farming and National Land Coalition platforms contributed to the establishment of a robust legal framework for family farming in the country.

These endeavours encompassed support to the formulation and ratification of the Law for the Promotion and Development of Family Farming (No. 30355), as well as the National Action Plan for the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDFF, 2019), including support to its implementation through a territorial approach. Notably, NLC members and partners also catalysed the establishment of a Multi-actor Dialogue Roundtable on the Agrarian Sector- which sought to address the needs of over three million agricultural producers- as well as the set-up of a Multisectoral Commission for the Promotion and Development of Family Farming. Notably, in response to requests from women's organisations, Indigenous groups, and non-governmental organisations affiliated with the NLC- two Directorates were established, namely for the Promotion of Women Agrarian Producers, as well as for the Development of Peasant, Native, and Social Management Communities.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the NLC moreover supported the publishing of a law (31071) and its regulations that mandate state programs to allocate a minimum of 30% of budgets to procure food from family farming operations. In 2018, the NLC also successfully influenced the approval of a Regional Ordinance (N°002–2018) in Ucayali to recognise the formalisation of lands overlapped by permanent production forests as a matter of regional public interest- benefiting over 150,000 farmers in the region.

17 These directorates were set up through a Regulation on the Organisation and Functions of the Ministry of Agrarian Development and Irrigation (MEDAGRI DS 080-2021).
In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), members of the NLC platform worked to support the formulation and adoption of the Sustainable Agricultural Policy (PAD) through sustained advocacy culminating in its adoption by the Council of Ministers in February 2023.

Despite its pivotal role in supporting the livelihoods of the majority of the population, agriculture has languished in the shadows of governmental neglect, with policies often privileging the interests of the agro-industrial complex. This partiality not only disregards the well-being of local communities, but also fosters threats such as state-sanctioned land seizures and entrenched economic disparities. As such, the PAD represents a landmark policy by setting out to ensure food and nutritional security, help adapt to climate change, preserve forests and peatlands, as well as to promote access to land for vulnerable populations, small-scale producers and family farmers.

The National Land Coalition in DRC contributed to the development and adoption of the policy by engaging with the Ministry of Agriculture and collaborating with international partners, namely IFAD, to ensure that land access and food security were central to the relevant policy discussions, and that they underscore the importance of small-scale agriculture in the national economy. Additionally, the NLC's partnership with the National Committee for the Promotion of Family Farming helped to elevate advocacy efforts, making a compelling case for the support of family farming within the policy framework.

In Malawi, a key focus of the NLC platform is its work with traditional authorities to address land grabbing and to challenge harmful customs.

Since its formulation in 2013, NLC members played a significant role in the formulation and adoption of the 2016 Customary Land Act that seeks to provide legal protection for smallholder farmers, while recognising the role of traditional chiefs. In this context, the NLC conducted an awareness campaign with local media to expose corrupt village chiefs selling community land to private investors, which in turn prompted a major investigation into land grabs initiated by the President of Malawi. In the wake of a proliferation of large-scale investments, NLC members also called on the government, policy-makers, and members of parliament to expedite the enactment of the new land laws to mitigate the plight of smallholder farmers - a process which ultimately led to the passing of four key land laws in 2016 seeking to safeguard the tenure rights of smallholder farmers.

In July 2022, an amendment act was passed to prohibit the sale or purchase of customary land as a means to further safeguarding it from commercial exploitation. This legislative milestone was influenced by the NLC platform that organised National Dialogues to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGTs). These dialogues served a dual purpose- namely, to raise awareness among communities about their land rights, as well as to dispel misconceptions around the implementation of land laws as a form of government-led large-scale land acquisition. Additionally, members of the NLC platform played a crucial role in sensitising key stakeholders, including traditional leaders, estate agents, and members of community development committees across three traditional land management areas by equipping them with tools to navigate the legal framework.

A further key focus of the work of NLC Malawi is to provide pro-bono legal aid to communities facing land grabs. Such support has enabled community members in Chikwawa to successfully sue a land investor for dispossession, while in the Nkhotakota district, community members successfully confronted the Traditional Authority regarding the land grabbing facilitated by their village Chief. In the Ntcheu district, the NLC likewise assisted 200 households to obtain a restraining order that prevented the sale of land by their traditional leader- while in the Dwangwa district, legal assistance was moreover provided to 270 farmers whose land had been grabbed for sugar-cane cultivation.

Read more in our Contribution Analysis on NLC Malawi (2020)