

Africa Regional Workshop: Standards, Principles and Modalities for supporting indigenous peoples' tenure rights and forest guardianship



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. CONTEXT

The indigenous peoples of Africa play an indispensable role in the fight against climate change. Our traditional knowledge and practices contribute to the protection of the second largest tropical forest in the world, which is essential for combating climate change, and to the conservation of biodiversity. However, the lack of recognition of our rights and adequate financial means undermine our contribution to the climate change agenda.

Africa's indigenous peoples have welcomed the Pledge, made by some donors at the 26th COP held in Glasgow, to provide US\$1.7 billion to support the advancement of the tenure rights of indigenous peoples and local communities and greater recognition and rewards for their role as stewards of forests and nature.

Indigenous peoples, however, receive a tiny fraction of funds intended for them, very often because:

- The priorities and aspirations of indigenous peoples do not guide projects and programs,
- In some African countries, indigenous peoples are not recognized as such,
- Indigenous peoples have a low capacity to comply with the complex conditions and procedures of various funding sources,
- The cultures and ways of life of indigenous peoples are often threatened by projects and programs,
- Intermediary actors maintain the guardianship of indigenous causes and claims, which they claim to better understand and defend.

2. PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS TO GUIDE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLEDGE

The Pledge could become a vehicle for transformative change for indigenous peoples in Africa. In order to achieve this result, the fundamental rights and freedoms of Indigenous peoples, as determined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, must guide the implementation of this financial commitment. These include the right of indigenous peoples to self-determined socio-economic development, participation in decision-making processes and the strengthening of their traditional representative institutions. Moreover, the needs and aspirations of indigenous peoples are inseparable from their cultures and intergenerational responsibilities. Therefore, the protection of gender, children, youth, the disabled and the elderly must guide any intervention in indigenous communities in Africa. The “aid” approach should give way to a partnership based on rights, respect and mutual trust between indigenous peoples and donors.

This Pledge is also consistent with recent efforts by some African States and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to increasingly recognize and protect the rights of indigenous peoples in Africa. The Pledge could also become the trigger for a new era of reconciliation characterized by dialogue, partnership, cooperation and mutual trust between indigenous peoples and other sustainable development actors.

3. MODALITIES FOR INCREASED SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

In recent years in Africa, the financial management capacities of some indigenous organizations have improved. Significant networks of indigenous organizations have been formed and manage funds. In addition, some African indigenous organizations are now acting as financial intermediaries for funds intended for indigenous communities and organizations.

Indigenous communities in Africa, however, have different socio-cultural and economic realities. The capacities of indigenous organizations and communities in Africa also differ from region to region. The design and implementation of interventions in the context of the Pledge should therefore take into account these disparities in capacities, including by providing more flexible and culturally appropriate procedures for indigenous peoples from different parts of Africa. The assessment of the needs and priorities of indigenous peoples should take place at the community level through inclusive consultations.

4. MAJOR PRIORITIES FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN AFRICA

- Support the legal recognition and demarcation of indigenous lands and territories;
- Support the participation of indigenous peoples in national political, legislative and institutional reforms;
- Support the implementation of laws to protect indigenous peoples' rights;
- Support the revaluation of indigenous culture, which is despised and stereotyped in many African countries. This devaluation of African cultures leads to land expropriations;
- Promote the issue of gender in indigenous communities;
- Support the generation of disaggregated data on indigenous peoples in censuses, and adoption of national policies and programs;
- Support inter-community dialogues on natural resources in order to promote cohabitation, tolerance and avoid inter-community conflicts, which often weaken indigenous communities;
- Mainstream the consideration for indigenous women in all interventions;
- Support the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' and Rights on the rights of indigenous peoples and more specifically its Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, which has led to landmark decisions in favor of land rights of indigenous peoples in Africa;
- Support databases on indigenous peoples at all levels and in various areas of national life.

5. STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP, BUILDING TRUST, PROMOTING CREDIBILITY OF THE PLEDGE AND NEXT STEPS

The Pledge has been running for over a year and runs until 2025. In order to maximize its chances of success and preserve its credibility, we representatives of indigenous peoples in Africa recommend the following:

- Disclosure of information about the allocation of funds committed under the Pledge;
- Enhance access to information and advance funds for indigenous organisations to undertake further consultations about the Pledge at national level, sub-regional and regional levels;
- Balance donor priorities with the concrete needs of indigenous peoples, and provide long-term support for indigenous peoples' own priorities;
- The rapid activation of the disbursement mechanisms of the funds concerned;
- Simplify and harmonise donor requirements to make funds more accessible and adapted to indigenous peoples' realities;
- Training, capacity-building and institutional support for indigenous organisations to comply with requirements;
- Direct allocation of funds to indigenous peoples through their networks, organisations and indigenous-led funding mechanisms at different levels. If necessary to work through non-indigenous intermediaries, these should be assessed and selected by indigenous peoples;
- The sustainability and strengthening, including new members, of the Regional Reference Group framework created to consult us, the indigenous peoples and organizations in Africa;
- A peer review mechanism between beneficiaries of funds from the Pledge should be set-up in order to allow both transparency and the exchange of experiences;
- Establish a framework for dialogue and consultation on the Pledge between indigenous peoples and donors;
- Building on the achievements of the process in Africa, including the facilitator role of REPALAC for an inclusive process in Africa;
- Support exchanges between continents (Asia, Latin America and Africa) as part of the implementation of the financial commitments;
- Take concrete actions for an indigenous-donor dialogue in September in New York and at COP 27 in Egypt.

II. CONTEXT AND ORGANISATION

1. Context

At COP26 held in Glasgow in November 2021, a group of funders pledged US\$1.7 billion to support the advancement of indigenous peoples' and local communities' forest tenure rights and greater recognition their territorial rights as a reward for their role as guardians of forests and nature.

In the implementation of their commitments to the Pledge, the donors have agreed to respect the principles of participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities in the decision-making processes. Donors have also committed to being more inclusive, paying particular attention to the interests and rights of women, young people, people with disabilities, and other generally marginalized groups.

For some indigenous leaders and funders, the Pledge also presents an opportunity to align funding mechanisms for indigenous peoples with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. To this end, the Ford Foundation, the Christensen Fund and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation have contracted Charapa Consult to lead an independent process aimed at proposing principles, standards and practical methods that can guide the implementation of financial commitments under the Pledge.

With a view to pursuing a more inclusive methodology, an Africa Reference Group has been set up for participatory coordination of the process on the continent. This Reference Group includes:

- Ms. Maimuna Umuro, Indigenous Representative from Cameroon;
- Ms. Agnes Leina, Indigenous Representative from Kenya;
- Mr. Joseph Itongwa, Indigenous Representative from the DR Congo;
- Mr. Kenneth Turyamubona, Indigenous Representative from Uganda.

2. Organisation of the meeting

The regional workshop was organized by members of the Africa Reference Group. It brought together 36 participants from 11 African countries, namely Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Gabon.

The Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (REPALEAC) hosted and organized this regional workshop with its Executive Secretariat based in Douala, Cameroon. REPALEAC benefited, among other things, from the support of GIZ for the organization of this workshop.

A team from Charapa Consult took part in this workshop as a facilitator.

3. Objectives of the meeting

The overall objective of the workshop was to identify principles, standards and modalities for external support, based on the experiences and aspirations of indigenous peoples in tropical and sub-tropical forest areas of Africa. The key messages from the workshop were presented in the form of recommendations for consideration by the donor group.

More specifically, the workshop aimed to:

- Share information on the Pledge to support the land rights and forest guardianship of indigenous peoples and local communities;
- Discuss funding priorities for indigenous peoples in tropical and sub-tropical forests in Africa;
- Exchange experiences of indigenous organizations with external funding, and identify challenges and good practices;
- Discuss a set of principles and standards for external funding, based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- Discuss preferred funding modalities as part of the Pledge to support land rights and forest stewardship of indigenous peoples and local communities.

To encourage a frank and open exchange, the workshop operated according to Chatham House rules; meaning that participants are free to use and share the general information and points raised in the workshop, but the specific identity of any speaker/participant will not be revealed. Similarly, the workshop summary report will not attribute specific opinions or recommendations to specific participants.

This report is not a transcript of what participants said, but captures some of their key ideas. This report was produced on the basis of notes taken in particular by Anne Samante and Diel Moshire.

III. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Unique contribution of indigenous peoples to the preservation of tropical forests in Africa

Africa has the second largest tropical forest in the world, after the Amazon. African tropical and sub-tropical forests mainly include those of the Congo Basin, whose importance for the fight against climate change is well established.

African tropical and sub-tropical forests are also ancestral lands for several indigenous peoples, whose ways of life and cultural identities strongly depend on them. Africa has indeed a diversity of indigenous peoples, who live in different ecosystems of the continent. The indigenous peoples of the African tropical and sub-tropical forests are said to have lived in symbiosis with these forests.

The contribution of indigenous peoples to the protection and preservation of African tropical forests is recognized by several regional and sub-regional institutions dealing with forests in Africa, notably the Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC) and Conférence sur les Denses and Humid Forest Ecosystems of Central Africa (CEFDHAC).

2. Building on and reinforcing existing advances on indigenous peoples' rights in Africa

In Africa, the indigenous peoples' rights movement is growing, with several indigenous organisations established in recent decades. Important networks of organizations of indigenous peoples or organizations working on indigenous peoples' rights issues have also been created in Africa. These include the Network of Indigenous and Local Populations for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (REPALEAC) and IPACC

(Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee) in tropical and sub-tropical areas. Some African countries have even included indigenous representatives in public institutions, including parliaments and law enforcement agencies.

The Pledge should build on these advances and promote greater recognition and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples in Africa. Taking this regional context into account is crucial. The Pledge should not be implemented as if nothing has been done so far on the rights of indigenous peoples in Africa.

IV. CONTENT OF THE DISCUSSIONS

1. PRINCIPLES FOR THE SUPPORT TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN AFRICA

a. A partnership rooted in rights and mutual respect

The Pledge should be guided by the principle of partnership rooted in rights and mutual respect between indigenous peoples, donors and States. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, widely supported by African countries at the time of its adoption, recognizes indigenous peoples as rights holders. In order to implement the standards of this Declaration, initiatives under the Pledge should lead to new interaction and dialogues between States, donors, non-state actors and indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples must be considered as rightsholders and equal, respected and useful partners.

One of the fundamental rights recognized for indigenous peoples in the Declaration is self-determination with regards to their socio-economic development. It is about letting indigenous peoples preside over their destinies and decide for themselves. A change of perception within African public administrations would facilitate a new partnership between indigenous peoples and African States for sectoral reforms in order to align laws, national policies and regulations with the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples..

Indeed, several African States as well as civil servants and public institutions are not yet at the level of understanding, internalizing and accepting these rights of indigenous peoples enshrined in the Declaration. Initiatives under the Pledge should serve as a tool to sensitize African public officials and institutions on the rights of indigenous peoples.

b. Building on ongoing efforts in Africa and strengthening the protection of community leaders and defenders of the rights of indigenous peoples.

Initiatives under the Pledge should support ongoing efforts for the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples in Africa. Although timid and slow, initiatives are underway in several African countries to recognize and protect the rights of indigenous peoples in accordance with the Declaration. Long before COP 26, Africa has seen states that have adopted specific laws and policies on the rights of indigenous peoples.

However, these efforts remain fragile, limited and require support in order to serve as examples for more African countries. Initiatives under the Pledge should not walk away from, ignore or stand in the way of these efforts and advances. Donors should use their influence to boost, promote and elevate these initiatives. This would include, for example,

supporting programs and measures to implement existing pro-indigenous peoples laws and policies; to support the development of national policies for indigenous peoples; and to build the capacities of indigenous peoples to lead and defend these national advances.

Initiatives under the Pledge should also strengthen the participation of indigenous peoples in meetings of regional mechanisms in charge of the rights of indigenous peoples, in this case the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Donors should also refrain from taking actions or supporting programs that could limit the development of these advances on the rights of indigenous peoples in Africa.

Despite these few advances, defenders of the rights of indigenous peoples continue to face major challenges and threats in several African countries. Some of these rights defenders and community leaders are arrested, detained or even killed. Initiatives under the Pledge should strengthen the protection of these defenders of the rights of indigenous peoples as well as these community leaders who are constantly under threat. To do this, Pledge donors should, among other things, invest in dialogues between States and other actors with indigenous peoples and support emergency mechanisms aimed at protecting these indigenous activists at risk. Particular attention should be paid to defenders of the rights of indigenous peoples, especially those who operate in conflict zones. The latter are more vulnerable.

c. A long-term vision and approach that takes into account intergenerational responsibilities of indigenous peoples

The intergenerational responsibility of indigenous peoples is one of the particularities of the standards enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This norm views indigenous societies as inclusive of future generations. Article 25 of the Declaration states that *“Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their special spiritual ties with the lands, territories, waters and coastal sea areas and other resources which they have or traditionally occupy and use, and to assume their responsibilities in this regard towards future generations.”*

This principle of the Declaration requires a long-term vision of initiatives under the Pledge. This would mean preserving and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples to lands, spaces and resources not only for the living but also for future generations. This requirement of the Declaration requires the Pledge donors to invest in the long-term and be a vehicle for transformative change aimed at eradicating the structural and institutional discrimination suffered by indigenous peoples.

2. PREFERRED MODALITIES BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN AFRICA

a. Direct funding to our communities and organisations in Africa

In Africa, indigenous communities and organizations are often considered as not having the capacity to manage and absorb significant funds. Funding is often underpinned by long and complex procedures that exceed the operational capacities of many indigenous organizations. Consequently, intermediary organizations intervene and play the role of sponsors through which funds destined for indigenous peoples must pass. Thus, funds initially planned for indigenous peoples pass through several actors, who each in turn

withdraw a portion for their administration costs. At the end of the day, very little of the initial amount reaches the indigenous communities.

This paradigm should change with the Pledge. If not, the situation of indigenous peoples and communities will not change at the grassroots level. There should be mechanisms to ensure direct and easier access of indigenous peoples to funds committed under the Pledge. They have the capacity and aspire to take care of themselves.

b. Remove intermediaries and if necessary have African indigenous intermediaries

The practice of intermediaries through which funds must pass to reach indigenous organizations and communities has become the rule. This practice has two major disadvantages. On the one hand, it significantly reduces the final amount that reaches local indigenous communities or organizations. And on the other hand, this practice of intermediation undermines the right to self-determination enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which aims to revalorize the indigenous people and put them back at the center of decisions that concern them. Article 18 of the Declaration states that "*Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.*"

The practice of financial intermediaries should be reviewed in accordance with the provisions and aspirations contained in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous peoples should be directly involved in the decision-making process and the disbursement of funds committed under the Pledge. In the event that an intermediary proves to be essential on an exceptional basis, it would be preferable for this intermediary to be an African indigenous organization. In recent years, in fact, some African indigenous organizations have acquired significant capacities, including as financial intermediaries. An example is the indigenous organization MPIDO of Kenya, which has acted as a financial intermediary for multilateral funds. Several of our regional organizations, in particular REPALEAC and IPACC, have also acquired capacities in the management of large funds and can today play the role of intermediaries, if necessary.

c. We propose the creation of an indigenous solidarity fund for Africa

We, indigenous peoples and organizations in Africa, propose the establishment of an Indigenous Solidarity Fund for Africa. This would be a regional financial mechanism to receive funds, including those committed under the Pledge, with a view to redistributing them to indigenous communities and organizations in different parts of the continent. This mechanism would be led by a regional (continental) Steering Committee; it would have sub-regional branches or even national branches, taking into account the cultural diversity and varying capacities of indigenous peoples and communities in Africa.

Our regional organizations, such as REPALEAC and IPACC, would play a decisive role in the establishment and institutional architecture of the said Fund or financial mechanism, which is intended to be inclusive, transparent and based on the values of indigenous peoples in Africa. Indeed, structures like REPALEAC have achieved a high level of capacity, as illustrated by its recent strategic plan that it developed itself.

d. Strengthen partnership, build trust and promote credibility of the Pledge

The Pledge has been running for over a year and runs until 2025. In order to maximize its chances of success and preserve its credibility, we representatives of the indigenous peoples of Africa recommend the following:

- Disclosure of information on the allocation of funds committed under the Pledge;
- Improve access to information and advance funds for indigenous organizations to undertake further consultations on the Pledge at the national, sub-regional and regional levels;
- Rapid activation of the mechanisms for the disbursement of the funds concerned,
- Sustainability and strengthening, including new members, of the Regional Reference Group framework created to consult us, the indigenous peoples and organizations in Africa;
- Establishment of a peer review mechanism between beneficiaries of funds from the Pledge, in order to allow both transparency and the exchange of experience;
- Establishment of a framework for dialogue and consultation on the Pledge between indigenous people and donors;
- Build on the achievements of the process in Africa, including the facilitating role by REPALEAC for a more inclusive process in Africa;
- Support exchanges between continents (Asia, Latin America and Africa) as part of the implementation of the Pledge;
- Take concrete actions for an indigenous-donor dialogue in September in New York and at COP 27 in Egypt.

3. OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN AFRICA

a. Identification of priorities guided by indigenous peoples themselves and their ways of life

Indigenous peoples living in Africa have long been seen as not knowing what is good for themselves. Other people and institutions believe they know the aspirations, needs and priorities of indigenous peoples better than themselves. This way of thinking has its origins in racist and discriminatory doctrines that considered or continue to consider indigenous peoples as inferior and incapable of supporting themselves. Unfortunately, these old conceptions of infantilization of indigenous peoples continue to underlie many actions, programs and projects involving thousands of indigenous peoples in Africa. This is in flagrant violation of the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which states that: “ *indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different and to be respected as such*” (preamble).

Today, several indigenous organizations in Africa have acquired operational capacities enabling them to raise the concerns and aspirations of indigenous peoples and communities to decision-making centers. Some have successfully conducted regional and national

advocacy leading to significant results. The identification of priorities under the Pledge should be based on these new capacities of indigenous communities and organizations in Africa. This would imply including indigenous representatives and institutions in the decision-making processes to determine the priorities under the Pledge. Initiatives under the Pledge must develop on the basis of a partnership based on the aspirations of indigenous peoples.

The implementation of the principles of participation and consultation of indigenous peoples with a view to identifying the priorities under the Pledge should also take into account the question of gender, the participation of young people, the elderly and those living with disabilities.

Furthermore, the definition or identification of priorities under the Pledge should be guided by the objective of promoting, preserving and developing the ways of life of the different indigenous peoples living in Africa. It would be a question of having not a project-based approach but medium and long-term objectives with the view to making these indigenous peoples' livelihoods more viable and resilient, including in the face of climate change.

b. Funds truly accessible to indigenous peoples

Several funds supposedly dedicated to indigenous peoples are not accessible to them because of the complexity of the procedures and sometimes their inadequacy to the lifestyles of the targeted indigenous peoples. Commitments under the Pledge are not immune to this risk.

In order to be more accessible to indigenous peoples, donors to the Pledge should:

- Invest in strengthening the institutional and organizational capacities of indigenous organizations and structures, especially at the community level;
- Simplify the selection or admission process for proposals;
- Adapt the models of calls for proposals to the lifestyles of the targeted indigenous peoples;
- Exclude accessibility criteria that could allow States or other actors to block the access of indigenous peoples to the funds. Several calls for proposals include, for example, the condition of being legally recognized. Such a condition may offer a State the possibility of blocking the access of an indigenous organization to a fund.

c. Make the transparency, accountability and flexibility of procedures compatible with indigenous peoples' ways of life

Indigenous peoples in Africa would like the procedures and rules governing the operationalisation of commitments under the Pledge to be flexible but at the same time serve for accountability and transparency.

Flexibility would require operational procedures that take into account the ways of life of indigenous peoples in different ecosystems in Africa. For an indigenous community that practices transhumance, for example, the deadlines and places of the proposal could differ according to the seasons. Flexibility could also include new means of reporting, including videos, photos, audio or even community stories. In addition, indigenous peoples should be

allowed to develop or propose their own implementation rules and monitoring tools adapted to their contexts.

Accountability would be twofold. On the one hand, indigenous organizations or communities receiving the funds would be accountable to the donors through simplified and flexible procedures. On the other hand, the recipient of the funds should be accountable to the members of their communities, taking particular account of the role of elders within indigenous communities and intergenerational accountability. In Africa, we also suggest a peer review mechanism. It would be for a beneficiary to be regularly evaluated by African sister organizations that have also benefited from funds committed under the Pledge. This would build a community of Pledge beneficiaries who support and strengthen each other.

Transparency would require all recipients of funds to share information on objectives, target communities and management mechanisms. A regional overview would also allow all Pledge beneficiaries to be informed about each other's activities. The Regional (African) Steering Committee would serve as a liaison mechanism to facilitate such exchange of information. In addition, transparency would include exchange visits between Pledge beneficiaries in order to learn from each other, develop good practices and consolidate the movement of indigenous peoples in Africa.

4. SPECIFIC DOMAINS FOR SUPPORT BY THE PLEDGE IN AFRICA

The Pledge aims to strengthen the capacities of indigenous peoples as guardians of tropical and sub-tropical forests. In order to achieve this goal, Pledge donors need to invest in key areas that can catalyze changes in negative paradigms that prevent indigenous peoples from playing a leading role in protecting forests and other national resources.

For indigenous peoples in Africa, Pledge donors should particularly invest in the legal recognition of indigenous peoples, the protection of defenders of the rights of indigenous peoples, especially in conflict zones, and the African regional mechanism for the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

a. Legal recognition of indigenous peoples' rights in Africa

Africa is at the beginning of a process of legal recognition of indigenous peoples, with a few African countries having adopted specific laws or policies for indigenous peoples. The legal recognition of indigenous peoples enables them to become leading national actors and to take their destinies into their own hands. This legal reform project should be a priority for initiatives supported under the Pledge.

The legal recognition of indigenous peoples by a country in Africa is often the culmination of a laborious process that goes through several stages aimed at reassuring other social actors, who often do not understand the merits of special protection for indigenous peoples. It is sometimes a matter of going through inter-community dialogues, or even awareness sessions for public and customary authorities as well as State actors. Pledge donors should invest in such processes of legal recognition, including in the preparatory phases of inter-community dialogues and the sensitization of authorities to the rights of indigenous peoples.

b. Protection of defenders of the rights of indigenous peoples, especially those in conflict-affected areas

Several indigenous representatives and leaders face threats in Africa. Others are often arbitrarily arrested, detained and sometimes killed for daring to defend the rights of their communities as indigenous peoples. Violence, including physical violence, against indigenous communities is more frequent when the latter demand respect for their rights in the face of extractive industries, land grabbing, allocation of forest concessions to operators and the expansion of protected areas.

Indigenous peoples living in conflict zones are particularly affected by these acts of violence, including by state actors. Sometimes, indigenous representatives or leaders are accused of being accomplices of armed groups or even of being enemies of the State.

Pledge donors should provide means to strengthen the protection of these defenders of the rights of indigenous peoples and more particularly those living in conflict zones. A regional protection mechanism should be put in place; awareness campaigns for national authorities should be initiated; provide local indigenous organizations with the means to assist those displaced by conflict; support indigenous organizations to develop conflict prevention programs and support the implementation of Resolutions 1325 and 2250 of the United Nations Security Council on the participation of women and youth in peace building processes.

c. Support the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of indigenous peoples in Africa and the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in other relevant regional and international mechanisms.

In recent years, Africa has made progress on the issue of recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, through its working group on the rights of indigenous peoples, has particularly contributed to these advances, particularly through its 2005 report which clarified the meaning of the term "indigenous peoples" in Africa.

Since then, some African countries have adopted specific laws or policies for indigenous peoples in their territories. These include the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Furthermore, the Central African Republic has, as the first African country, ratified ILO Convention 169. Recently the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights rendered major judgments in favor of the indigenous Ogiek people, to whom it recognized land rights on their ancestral lands.

However, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights is increasingly limited in its work on the rights of indigenous peoples, due to a decreasing financial support from African States. There is indeed a growing number of African countries that do not wish to see the Commission continue to work on the rights of indigenous peoples.

Pledge donors should support the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on indigenous peoples. They should also support the participation of indigenous representatives and leaders in meetings of the Commission as well as all other regional and international bodies dealing with the rights of indigenous peoples.

