



INTERNATIONAL  
LAND CONSERVATION  
NETWORK

## NEWS FROM OUR PARTNERS

### The African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance gives voice to civil society organizations across the continent

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The African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA) is a three-year old organization, formed in February 2020, aimed at amplifying the voices of environmental Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) across Africa. Since its launch it has appeared at several major international events, including the African Protected Areas Congress (APAC) and part two of the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity (CoP15).

ACBA members are African national NGOs, CSOs, networks, community-based organizations (CBOs), youth groups, and individual experts involved in conservation and environmental activities. The Alliance's mission is to elevate these groups and create spaces and systems for local voices to influence decisions about biodiversity conservation and benefit sharing. It champions rights-based approaches, and values of transparency, accountability, empowerment, and inclusivity by helping members engage in high-level meetings, sponsoring members' attendance at these events, and encouraging monthly meetings among members to share recent activities and plan for the coming month.



*ACBA members celebrate the launch of the Alliance's strategic plan at APAC in Kigali, Rwanda. Credit: Olivia Tawarar*

One of ACBA's major accomplishments came at the Africa Protected Area Congress in Kigali, Rwanda in July 2022. The Alliance had its own pavilion at the Congress, where members hosted events, private meetings, and networking sessions. During the event, ACBA launched its 10-year strategic plan and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the African Wildlife Foundation. More than 50 ACBA

members attended the Congress, with about half receiving sponsorship from ACBA to make the trip possible.

Later in the year, ACBA members made significant contributions to COP15, held in Montreal, Canada, in December 2022. The Alliance published the journal article *Integrated Biodiversity Targets from local to global: A shared earth approach links biodiversity and people*<sup>1</sup>. Its authors argue that achieving a shared-earth approach to conservation requires a shift in both mindset and policy to recognize the interdependence of human well being and ecological health.



*ACBA members demonstrate peacefully in Canada. Credit: Olivia Tawarar*

While the Alliance has made strides, gaining visibility and contributing to an international community of practice, its first few years were not without challenges. One issue it has grappled with is that of language barriers among members. ACBA has been tackling this by providing interpretation services during meetings and publishing material in both English and French. It also centers diversity, equity, and inclusion across its membership by embracing rights-based approaches, transparency, accountability, empowerment, and inclusivity.

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<sup>1</sup> Obura, D.O., Katerere, Y., Mayet, M., Kaelo, D., Msweli, S., Mather, K., Harris, J., Louis, M., Kramer, J., Teferi, T., Samoilys, M., Lewis, L., Bennie, A., Kumah, F., Isaacs, M., Nantongo. P. 2021. Integrate biodiversity targets from local to global levels: A shared Earth approach links biodiversity and people. *Science* 373 (6556), 746-748

Currently, ACBA creates opportunities for dialogue through bi-weekly staff meetings and monthly members' meetings. The Alliance monitors the quickly evolving fields of conservation and environmental work to ensure its mission and offerings remain relevant and adapts its programs to reflect this insight.

African CSOs, NGOs, CBOs, Indigenous People and Local Communities, youth groups, and individual experts working in biodiversity rights, community resilience, policy, and advocacy are welcome to join the African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance. Interested groups or individuals who share ACBA's mission and values can learn more about its work at <https://africancba.org/cms/view/1/About>.

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