African Indigenous Peoples' Call to Action: Address Global Challenges Through Our Traditional Stewardship

We, Indigenous Peoples from 40] Indigenous Peoples Organizations and support organizations across six countries in Africa have convened in Kenya to discuss how we can collectively address some of the world's most pressing challenges, Including climate change, biodiversity loss, self -determined development, land rights, and human rights. Our gathering is a testament to our commitment to the well-being of our planet and future generations.

Science has long proven that Indigenous Peoples have practiced sustainable development long before it was ever recognized by the United Nations. For thousands of years, we have been the stewards and protectors of our lands and territories, ensuring the balance and health of the ecosystems that we depend on. Our traditional knowledge and practices are crucial in the global fight against environmental degradation and social injustices.

On Indigenous Peoples Day 9th August 2024, we call on governments and private donors to acknowledge the critical role that Indigenous Peoples play in solving some of the world's most pressing issues. We commend the efforts of the Forest Tenure Funders Group for championing the Pledge to support Forest Tenure Rights and Forest Guardianship, which has brought the importance of land tenure and the role of Indigenous Peoples and other communities to the global stage. We recognize that this Pledge has now exceeded $2 billion, a significant milestone. However, with the Pledge set to conclude in 2025, it is imperative to reflect on its impact and future. There is still much work to be done.

We urge the global community to recognize that forests are interconnected with other vital ecosystems such as drylands, grasslands, mangroves, and boreal forests. In our Indigenous languages, "forests" hold diverse meanings, reflecting our deep connection to all ecosystems. It is essential to define forests in the broadest sense, acknowledging their multifaceted significance.

We call for a new Pledge that is rooted in the communities who have lived in harmony with these ecosystems for millennia. This Pledge must recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples and other communities as a priority, empowering us to protect our lands and territories. We urge that, whenever possible, funds be allocated directly to us so that we can continue our vital work in preserving our lands and our heritage.

We, Indigenous Peoples across Africa, stand ready to collaborate with the global community to shape the Pledge that we envision—a Pledge that honors our traditional knowledge & cultures, supports our rights, and ensures the health of our planet for future generations.