



Position Statement

We, the young African leaders gathered around the Multi-Stakeholder Youth and Land Platform in Africa (YLMPA), from March 20 to 22, 2024, in Yaoundé, Cameroon, within the framework of the regional workshop post COP 28 on the importance of youth-centered land governance in climate-related conversations,

Considering the interconnection between the issues of climate change, biodiversity loss, and desertification;

Concerned about the consequences of mining and oil exploitation on the land and environmental rights of youth, which may be exacerbated by the discovery of new deposits;

Concerned about the proliferation of wars and conflicts and their land and climate impacts;

Commending the adoption by most African States of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its related instruments;

Commending the adoption by most African States of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD), and its related instruments;

Commending the adoption by most African States of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its incidental instruments;

Aware of the importance of youth-sensitive land governance as a catalyst for many climate solutions such as green economy and nature-based solutions like agroecology, community conservation, and land restoration;

Aware that youth-sensitive land governance has the potential to promote biodiversity preservation and boost the economy through agricultural investments, in particular;

Regretting the low reference to land governance issues, especially youth-sensitive land governance, in international climate negotiations, particularly during the Conferences of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC;

Commending the consideration of land issues in negotiations related to the UNCCD, such as COP 15 where 03 out of 36 Decisions touched on land issues and land degradation for restoration purposes;

Concerned about the low awareness among many stakeholders, including African youth, of the relationship between land governance and issues of climate change, biodiversity protection, and desertification;

Regretting the limited impact of many climate projects due to the failure to consider their implications in terms of land tenure security;

Regretting the undervaluation of traditional knowledge of local and Indigenous communities, including youth, in international climate discussions;

Regretting land rights violations due to climate projects involving large-scale land acquisitions;

Regretting the promotion by African States of investments harmful to the environment and lands of local and Indigenous communities, including youth;

Eager to contribute to building an Africa where land justice, environmental justice, social justice, and intergenerational justice are guaranteed;

We commit to:

- Continuously strengthen our capacities on the nexus between land governance, climate change, and related issues;
- Systematically integrate land governance into our actions related to climate change, biodiversity protection, and desertification;
- Continuously engage decision-makers on the need to consider the relationship between climate change and youth-sensitive land governance in international climate negotiations as well as in national, sub-regional, and regional programs;
- Establish a monitoring-evaluation-learning system for youth projects related to the nexus between climate change and land governance;
- Continue advocacy in all relevant dialogue spaces;
- Consider gender and vulnerable populations in the aforementioned aspects to ensure their representation, participation, and inclusion;
- Enhance communication on our various media platforms, emphasizing the link between the raised themes.

We make the following requests:

1) To our governments

- Formulate, adopt, and implement land laws and policies favoring an efficient contribution of youth to the fight against climate change and related issues;
- Systematically integrate the issue of youth land tenure security into negotiation instruments during international climate discussions;
- Ensure respect for land rights of local and Indigenous communities, including youth, in climate projects and value their knowledge;
- Provide young leaders in climate change and youth-friendly land governance with the necessary resources for their full contribution to the fight against climate change through youth land tenure security;
- Support, involve, protect, and promote effective and active participation of young leaders in climate change and youth-friendly land governance in decision-making processes on climate and land at national, regional, and international levels.

2) To development partners

- Support youth initiatives contributing to the fight against climate change through secure youth land access;
- Strengthen technical and financial capacities initiated by youth working on climate change and youth-friendly land governance for greater and more relevant participation in negotiation sessions and intersessions;
- Establish flexible funding mechanisms for youth projects, taking into account their specificities;
- Promote transparency in the management of allocated funds.

3) To other civil society actors

Support the actions of young leaders in the fight against climate change and youth-friendly land governance, in favor of the climate change and land governance nexus;

Promote constant collaboration in the context of the fight against climate change and youth-friendly land governance, in favor of the climate change and land governance nexus.

4) To research actors

- Support the production of knowledge on the nexus between youth-friendly land governance and climate change;
- Popularize existing knowledge, including traditional knowledge.

5) To the private sector

- End projects resulting in land dispossession of local and Indigenous communities, including youth;
- Develop climate-sensitive technologies.

Done in Yaoundé, March 22, 2024

The signatory organizations

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