



Dead Sea Declaration 2022 - Adopted at the Global Land Forum on 26th May 2022

LAND RIGHTS AS A PATHWAY OUT OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS

We, Members of the International Land Coalition (ILC), gathered at the Dead Sea, Jordan, from the 23rd to 26th of May 2022 for the Global Land Forum (GLF). We were generously hosted by the **Government of Jordan-Ministry of Agriculture** and **SEEDS** in partnership with the **European Union (EU)**, and under the patronage of **His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn al Hussein**.

We represent more than 301 organisations from 81 countries.

PREAMBLE

We are meeting in person for the first time since the COVID 19 pandemic ripped through our countries and communities carrying with it a severe threat to the land rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and leading to land grabs and evictions. The pandemic has showcased our negative relationship with the environment which has caused zoonotic diseases to spread. During the pandemic, we also witnessed solidarity and peoples' resilience on small scale and family farming, who fed local communities throughout the pandemic.

Embracing the diversity within our movement, we are driven by our mission to ensure that people get their power back, as we work for people-centred land governance. At the core of our coalition are peoples' organisations that represent the people who live on and from the land: women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, family farmers and peasants, forest dwellers, hunter-gatherers, fisher folks, Afro-descendants, urban dwellers, Dalits, local communities and other groups, including refugees and internally and climate displaced people¹.

A decade after the adoption of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure on Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGTs), we reiterate their importance in defining global consensus on good land governance. However, we witness a flagrant and continuing gap between aspiration and reality, with the evidence telling us that most countries are failing to implement the provisions of these guidelines. The same applies to many other international frameworks related to land governance. We urge state parties to the VGGTs and the other relevant stakeholders to respect and implement their provisions, regardless of pandemics and other unforeseen circumstances.



We condemn the increasing killings, criminalisation, harassment, and discrimination of land and environment Defenders (LED) since we met in Bandung in 2018 and the ongoing violence of land conflicts, land grabbing, forced eviction and displacements.

Land rights are human rights. Equitable land rights are the key to inclusive development, flourishing and healthy societies, and a sustainable planet. They are central to the most urgent challenge of our time: avoiding catastrophic climate breakdown. Equitable land rights are the foundation of peaceful and democratic societies, sustainable and resilient local food systems for food producers of all categories, and overcoming growing inequality – particularly gender inequality. At present, much of the world's land is controlled, managed and used by a few in ways that are not at the service of the vast majority of people, or the planet. This situation is unjust and unsustainable.

The pivotal role that secure land rights can play in addressing the climate and biodiversity crises has long been ignored despite the nexus between growing land inequality and climate change and its impact on land rights and food security. However, we note the positive steps taken at the UNCCD COP 15 to strengthen CSO participation in the meetings and processes of the Convention and at COP26, particularly the commitment to fund and support the role played by Indigenous Peoples and local communities in sustainable land and natural resource management, which is key to mitigation measures. We also expect ongoing Global Biodiversity Framework negotiations to recognise the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

ARTICLES

OUR FIGHT AGAINST THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Article 1: Land rights are a critical pathway to counter the climate crisis. Addressing this crisis is a central motivation for our work for people centred-land governance. We know the magnitude of our task, and we commit ourselves to the urgent work of changing the systems that are wreaking havoc on our planet and its people.

Article 2: With this spirit, we are committed to work together to ensure that women, men, communities and youth in all settings who live on the land get their power back. We respect the stewardship role they play on behalf of all humanity, and we recognise their rights to decide on, benefit from, and manage their lands and natural resources. We respect Indigenous Peoples' crucial role and valuable contributions, their Cosmo vision, knowledge, and ways of life in combating the climate crisis, fostering biodiversity conservation, and forest management. In line with this, we recognize Indigenous Peoples' right to Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and thus we shall accelerate Indigenous Peoples' full, effective, and meaningful participation in ILC's activities and processes at all levels.

Article 3: To this end we will facilitate National Land Coalitions and regional initiatives to bring allies together in support of people's organisations that pave the way for locally-led initiatives, inclusive, evidence-based policies, people's data for accountability and planning and resource allocation for people-centred development.

Article 4: We will amplify the voice and agency of people's organisations and build political commitment at the global and regional level to secure land rights and counter other interconnected challenges like the achievement of SDGs and the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic. We recognise the UN Decade of Family Farming and UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration as tools for

transformation, as well as the important role of family farmers in transforming food systems to be more sustainable, just and resilient, contributing to mitigating the effects of the climate crisis. We will push for the effective implementation of these frameworks and others, including but not limited to UNDRIP and UNDROP at national, regional and global levels, within a rights-based framework.

Article 5: Recognising that the climate crisis is mainly caused by large-scale industrial agriculture for fuel and extractive industries and mega energy projects, we refute piecemeal and non-consultative false solutions to the climate crisis under the guise of nature-based solutions or net-zero commitments, which do not contribute to reducing emissions and further contribute to land grabbing. FPIC should be an integral part of all climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

Article 6: We urge all State-Parties and other stakeholders engaging in the upcoming COP 27, to especially recognise the importance of secure land rights of women, men, communities and youth in all settings, in climate change mitigation and adaptation measures; to recognise common land and natural resources models as a tool for sustainable and equitable land management; to recognise the need to bring those the most affected by the climate crisis to the table; to take initiative to devise a decentralised, transparent and accountable mechanism to disburse the finances committed at the COP 26 for projects demanded by the most affected allowing these funds to reach vulnerable communities; recognise a dedicated space for the youth in COP 27 and make decisions to invest in youth-owned technology-driven climate actions; and pronounce the role played by land and environmental defenders in reversing the climate crisis.

We expect the same from all other relevant global processes.

We warmly welcome the COP 27 Presidency's invitation made during the GLF MENA ministerial discussion and extended to ILC, IFAD, the UK COP 26 and all represented delegations to support the inclusion of land tenure and sustainable food systems among the priorities to be discussed at Sharm-El-Cheikh during COP 27 in November 2022.

Article 7: We recognise the declaration announcing that the year 2026 will be the international year of rangelands and pastoralists. We commit to creating awareness about the year and use this as momentum to accelerate our work on the land rights of pastoralists to sustain their life, culture and dignity.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOUTH

Article 8: We welcome the first ILC Global Land Forum Youth. We endorse the youth declaration, "Defining a Future with Secure Land Rights for Youth", adopted at the Global Land Forum Youth on 22nd May 2022, which emphasised having youth representation on the ILC council.

WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS & GENDER JUSTICE

Article 9: Our transformative aspirations as a Coalition apply above all to our commitment to making women's land rights a reality worldwide. We reiterate our commitment to continue working for gender justice across all our actions and programs. Our efforts to actively contribute to a gender transformative approach in the land sector is of particular value to the work of our members and our partnerships, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

ILC AND THE MENA REGION

Article 10: We express our deep appreciation to the government and our members in Jordan for having accepted to host, for the first time, a Global Land Forum in the Middle East, a region with immense pressure on land. We note many challenges in the region; the highest income inequality in the world, acute land degradation and desertification, conflicts, youth unemployment, and increasing migration, internal displacement and marginalisation. These challenges are further worsened by the climate crisis. We believe that land rights are fundamental to meeting all of these challenges, and any project or land use change should follow FPIC principles to avoid any harm to local communities. Among others, this includes creation of nature reserves on customary land. We admire the spirit of solidarity that moves our host, Jordan, as an anchor of peace and stability in the region, a country whose population is comprised of the largest proportion of refugees of any country in the world.

Article 11: We congratulate Jordan for the launch of the region's first National Land Coalition. We express our solidarity as ILC with the many organisations working in the region to protect civic freedoms, and to those human rights defenders facing violence and persecution for their brave work.

Article 12: We particularly extend our support to the struggles of our members and the people of the Occupied Territories of Palestine for justice, peace, dignity and protection from dispossession, annexation and ecological destruction as a result of the occupation. We offer our platform as a space to connect, mobilise and influence across the region for more peaceful, equitable, just and sustainable societies particularly for the people of Palestine.

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