

5th Regional Conference of the
**Africa Land
Institutions Network
for Community Rights
(ALIN)**

Freetown, Sierra Leone
October 14-16, 2025



Fifth Regional Conference of

National Land Institutions on Securing Community Land Rights in Africa

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FREETOWN DECLARATION

We, the participants of the **5th Regional Conference of National Land Institutions Network for Community Rights (ALIN)**, held from October 14 to 16, 2025, in Freetown, Sierra Leone, hosted by the Government of Sierra Leone through the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Country Planning of Sierra Leone, and co-organized by the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) and the Sierra Leone Land Alliance (SLLA).

Representing **National Land Institutions** from the following 16 African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Togo.

Welcome with great appreciation the participation of new member countries, Gabon and The Gambia, and encourage the inclusion of other African countries in the next ALIN Conference in 2027. We also welcome the participation of Regional Economic Communities such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

We acknowledge with satisfaction the **significant progress achieved since the 4th ALIN Conference in Arusha, Tanzania, in 2023**, in advancing the recognition and protection of community land rights across Africa. However, we note that **substantial challenges persist** in translating policy and legal commitments into tangible results on the ground. These include limited institutional and financial capacity, inadequate coordination across government agencies, and insufficient progress in the implementation of human rights-based land reforms.

We recognize that **secure community land tenure rights** are essential in achieving **poverty reduction, food security, gender equality and inclusion, peace and stability, climate resilience, and in promoting responsible investments in Africa**. They are also indispensable for realizing the **2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, the **African Union Agenda 2063**, and the **30x30 global biodiversity and climate commitments**.

We further recognize the **diversity of national historical, political, and socio-cultural contexts** across Africa and the need for **context-specific yet harmonized approaches** to strengthen the legal and practical recognition of community land and resource rights.

We reaffirm our **shared commitment to advancing inclusive, transparent, and accountable land governance** that upholds the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women as rightful stewards and decision-makers over land and natural resources. We also reaffirm our **resolve to strengthen sustained collaboration** and

coordination among African governments, regional institutions, traditional leaders, development partners, private sector actors, and civil society organizations to advance secure community land tenure as a foundation for equitable, inclusive, and sustainable development.

In this spirit, and building upon the shared vision of a prosperous Africa where communities enjoy secure land rights, **we declare and recommend the following:**

1. **Promote women's and youth leadership and strengthen their decision-making authority** in land governance and administration at all levels, ensuring that women hold at least 30% representation, particularly within national land institutions and policy-making processes.
2. **Decentralize land administration** to bring governance structures closer to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and ensure accessible, transparent, and accountable service delivery.
3. **Increase national-level investments** in the implementation of national land reforms and institutional frameworks through budgetary inclusion and adequate involvement of the private sector.
4. **Strengthen the ALIN network's governance and country ownership** by appointing two co-chairs, one from an Anglophone and one from a Francophone country, and convening regular coordination and learning sessions to enhance active participation and leadership by member countries.
5. **Encourage ALIN member countries to take positive actions for the reduction of challenges and coordinate regional preparations on pastoralism**, especially for the 2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, and **ensure active participation** at the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Mongolia.
6. **Enhance inter-agency and academic institutions' collaboration, coordination, and regional learning** to promote the coherence and harmonization of land-related laws and policies through coordinated initiatives and exchange of best practices.
7. **Elevate the role of regional and continental organizations**, including the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the African Land Policy Centre (ALPC), to support the implementation of ALIN's recommendations and integrate them into regional and continental frameworks.
8. **Engage traditional leaders and customary institutions** as key partners in preventing and resolving land-related conflicts and strengthening community-based land governance systems, including the elimination of land grabbing as a protective measure.
9. **Align civic engagement and community participation** with national laws and policies to reinforce accountability, coherence, and local ownership of land governance processes.

We, the participants, adopt this **Freetown Declaration on Securing Community Land Rights in Africa** as a collective expression of our shared commitment to advancing equitable, inclusive, and sustainable land governance across the continent.

Adopted in Freetown, Sierra Leone, on October 16, 2025.

Signed, the Participants