



Bangkoeunphal Declaration

Developed by CSO Forum on Social Forestry in ASEAN during its 10th Meeting

With support from:



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CSO Forum Facilitator:





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Since its establishment in 2012, the [Civil Society Organizations \(CSO\) Forum on Social Forestry in ASEAN](#) has served as a platform for Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, organizations, and civil society organizations to consolidate and elevate key messages to the members of the ASEAN states through the ASEAN Working Group on Social Forestry (AWG-SF). At present, over 50 participants representing 40 organizations from eight countries in Southeast Asia are actively engaged in the forum.

*The key messages and positions developed by the CSO Forum on Social Forestry in ASEAN are named in honor of the **Bangkoeunphal Community**, reflecting their deep-rooted connection to the environment and their significant contributions to forest conservation. Located in Romtom Commune, Rovieng District, Preah Vihear Province, **Bangkoeunphal is home to the Kui people, who have long relied on natural resources for their livelihoods.** The Champen Nature Protected Area, encompassing 3,422.74 hectares of mixed forest, lies within the village and serves as a vital ecological and cultural hub. Established in 2005, this protected area is managed in collaboration with the Kui community, whose traditional practices play a central role in safeguarding the forest. Their commitment to sustainable resource use and conservation mirrors the goals of our work, making **Bangkoeunphal a fitting inspiration for our key messages.***

JUNE 2024

Humanity now faces the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. Rising temperatures and other climate impacts have seriously altered many ecosystems and species, some irreversibly. Addressing these issues requires integrated solutions, as climate change and biodiversity are deeply interconnected.

ASEAN champions a transformative approach to forest management, prioritizing sustainability to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. This vision, grounded in scientific and traditional knowledge, aims to secure a landscape-level transformation in forestry by 2025. This goal will unlock the full potential of forests to meet the social, economic, and cultural needs of present and future generations while solidifying ASEAN's commitment to sustainable development.

The Civil Society Organizations Forum on Social Forestry in ASEAN or the CSO Forum, which was pioneered in Cambodia more than a decade ago, embarked on its mission to champion the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Local Communities (IPs&LCs) on their role in environmental stewardship, acknowledging their crucial knowledge systems in halting and reversing biodiversity loss, and their significant contributions to climate change adaptation and mitigation. This platform has advocated for a whole-of-government, whole-of-society, and human rights-based approach, cultivating intergenerational knowledge exchange and collaboration among all relevant partners in the movement, ensuring meaningful participation of diverse actors in decision-making processes at local, national, regional, and global levels.

In the CSO Forum's ten-year milestone, we, the members from 31 participating organizations represented by 45 civil society organizations, community-based organizations, and Indigenous Peoples' networks, and support partners from eight (8) countries in ASEAN, have reunited in Siem Reap, Cambodia, for our 10th Annual Meeting from 25-27 June 2024 – returning to where it all began. We emphasize the need for a transformative approach, genuine inclusion, and equitable and meaningful participation of the IPs&LCs and CSOs in the local, global, regional, and national policy movement on both climate and biodiversity in discussions impacting not only our territories of life but also the well-being of our only planet.

Despite the significant progress achieved at local, national, regional, and global levels, the journey is far from over, with numerous challenges still needing to be addressed and overcome.



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To combat the exponential biodiversity loss and worsening climate crisis, it is fundamental to mainstream the implementation of the international rights framework for not only nature but also people and ensure that local solutions have sustainable impacts, empowering those who lack meaningful participation in decision-making processes, and recognizing Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs) as equally valuable as scientific knowledge.

Some of the challenges identified are as follows:

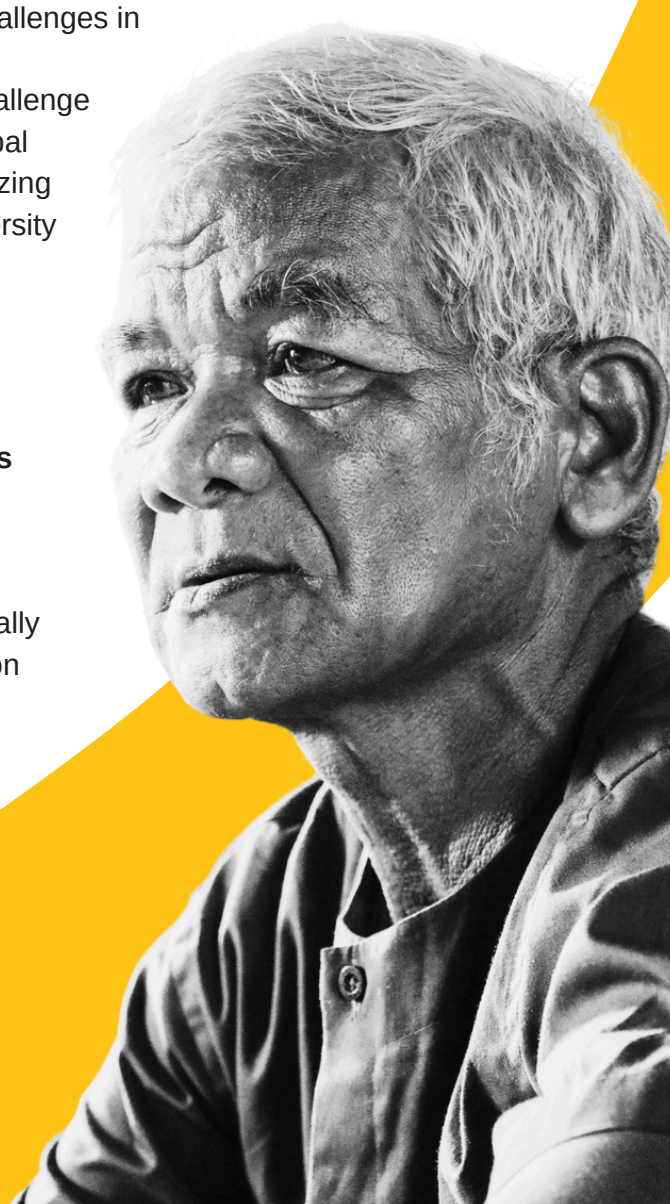
On Funding mechanisms accessibility for both climate and biodiversity action - The absence of direct access to adequate and predictable funding mechanisms, which are essential for Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPs&LCs) to support on-the-ground actions, remains a significant issue. Additionally, the insufficient emphasis on tenure security undermines the effectiveness of climate solutions and community-based conservation efforts.

On Governance Capacity of IPs&LCs and CSOs in delivering efforts successfully to achieve the KMGBF - IPs&LCs recognize the vital role their ancestral territories, including lands, waters, and other resources, play in sustaining their communities. However, the lack of respect for Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices (IKSPs), including innovation and technology, as scientific knowledge, adds to the challenges in securing land, territory, and resources tenure rights and implementing sustainable, long-term strategies. The challenge lies in effectively translating the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) into action, emphasizing the need for robust links between local to global biodiversity governance through the Action Agenda Platform at the national level. Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into policies and technical frameworks entails honoring and safeguarding community aspirations and visions.

On the Disconnection between Global Commitments on Climate and Biodiversity with National Progress and Local Efforts - There is a persistent and recurring issue of inadequate meaningful participation from diverse actors in the implementation of internationally binding policies, such as the COP21 Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) at the national level. This hinders our potential to drive transformative change in shaping and implementing global climate and biodiversity goals.



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Indigenous Peoples, and Local Communities (IPs&LCs) lack engagement in the drafting, updating, and revision of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), and those with intersecting identities are not effectively recognized as knowledge-holders, rights-holders, and partners in the implementation, revision, and monitoring of these policies.

On Integrating Indigenous and Traditional Territories into the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) - There is an absence of government recognition and inclusion of Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs) in biodiversity reporting, not only in facilitating Target 3 of KM-GBF which states that by 2030, at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, coastal, and marine areas, particularly those critical for biodiversity and ecosystem functions, are adequately conserved and sustainably managed, but also the lack of recognition and inclusion of land rights of IPs&LCs as a whole. According to the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), Asia's community land ownership stands at the lowest of any region at about 0.8%. Progress on recognizing the lands designated and owned by Indigenous Peoples, and Local Communities in ASEAN countries has been slow. It does not represent the true extent of their customary territory.

Safe Spaces for Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) to deliver meaningful contributions to national progress and Global Commitments - Although the KM-GBF strongly mentions full protection of Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs) (Target 22), the reality experienced by IPs&LCs tells a different story. In the [2023 report by Global Witness](#), the Philippines has been the most dangerous country for land and environment activists in all of Asia for ten consecutive years. Eleven (11) environmental defenders were killed in 2022 alone. The report also revealed once more that Indigenous communities globally experience a disproportionate number of deadly assaults, accounting for over a third (34%) of global fatalities in 2022, despite comprising approximately 5% of the world's population. This issue may be exacerbated by the commitment to triple renewable energy (RE) capacity during the UNFCCC COP28 in Dubai, potentially leading to heightened instances of land-grabbing on ancestral waters and lands. IPs, time and again, have



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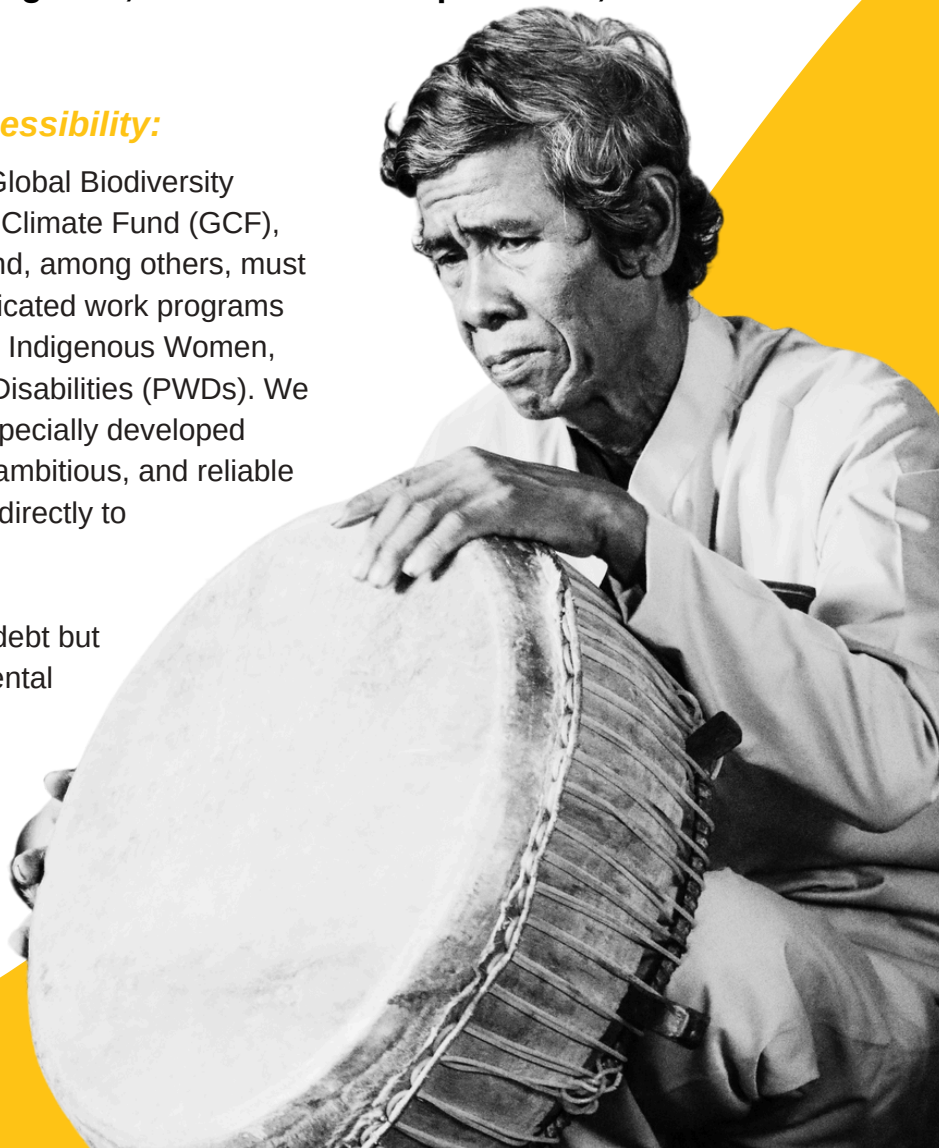
experienced the negative impacts of renewable energy on their land, territories, and resources. There is an urgent need for not only the conservation sector but also the private sectors which are one of the key sectors in renewable energy (RE) projects, to have transformation by having zero tolerance for human rights violations. There is insufficient attention given to these human rights abuses; given the current global political climate, this issue must be integral to all discussions.

Thus, during its 10th annual meeting, we discussed, agreed, and put together the following positions on the areas of (1) funding mechanisms accessibility, (2) governance capacity of IPs&LCs and CSOs in delivering efforts successfully on integrating Indigenous knowledge and action in biodiversity governance, (3) the disconnect between global commitments on climate and biodiversity with national progress and local efforts, (4) integrating Indigenous traditional territories into the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF), and (5) safe spaces for EHRDs to deliver meaningful contributions to national progress and global commitments.

We, the members from participating organizations, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, and Indigenous Peoples' networks, present at the 10th CSO Forum on Social Forestry, strongly urge governments, regional, and international platforms, and institutions to:

For funding mechanisms accessibility:

- Finance Mechanisms under the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), and Loss and Damage (L&D) Fund, among others, must have dedicated facilities with dedicated work programs for Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous Women, Youth, elders, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). We demand and call on countries, especially developed countries, to provide accessible, ambitious, and reliable finance from their public sources directly to Indigenous Peoples. Climate and biodiversity finance must not be mobilized in the form of loans or debt but rather as part of social-environmental accountability and historical responsibility.



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- Advocate for integrating loss and damage (L&D) as the third pillar of climate action, ensuring it is grants-based, prioritizes gender equality, disability rights, and social inclusion (GEDSI), is substantial, and adheres to the polluter pays principle. Governments must ensure that the L&D Fund has its own Indigenous Peoples Policy, an Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, and Indigenous Peoples representatives in its decision-making body. Additionally, human rights principles and standards must be central to the fund's mechanisms and operations. Non-economic loss and damage experienced by Indigenous Peoples must also be included and defined by Indigenous Peoples themselves.
- Explore innovative methods to meet global biodiversity goals, including emphasizing the contributions of IPs&LCs and CSOs, fostering local actions through co-creation, and forging new financing partnerships vital for on-the-ground action and conservation efforts.

For Governance capacity of IPs&LCs and CSOs in delivering efforts successfully on integrating Indigenous knowledge and action in biodiversity governance:

- Strengthening collaboration among science, policy, and society is crucial for developing an evidence-based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for GBF implementation.
- Providing a comprehensive approach to biodiversity conservation calls for engagement across all sectors of government and society.
- It is imperative to recognize and uphold the human and land tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples, including Women, Youth, elders, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), as essential solutions to biodiversity loss. Above all, we must renew and strengthen trust in the stewardship of Indigenous Peoples, including Women, and Youth, who are at the forefront of protecting 80% of the planet's biodiversity.



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For the Disconnect between Global Commitments on Climate and Biodiversity with National Progress and Local Efforts:

- Ensure the full, effective, and equitable engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples (IPs) with Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), ensuring the protection of IPs against manipulation by those in positions of authority.
- Ensure the full, effective, and equitable engagement and participation of IPs&LCs and CSOs, including relevant rights-holders in the drafting, updating, and revision of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and National Biodiversity Strategies Action Plans (NBSAPs).
- Ensure the full, effective, and equitable engagement and participation of Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in planning, implementing, monitoring, and reporting on biodiversity and climate change, including generating disaggregated data at all stages.

Integrating Indigenous and Traditional Territories into the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF):

- Reform conservation law and policy frameworks and revise strategic plans by recognizing Indigenous Peoples' territories as a third pathway, distinct from protected areas (PAs) and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs)
- Demand the government, conservation organizations, and pertinent actors to ensure the inclusion of Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs) in the designing, implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the KM-GBF Target 3. This inclusion must be carried out equitably and meaningfully, involving Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, youth, women, elders, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).



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- Ensure the explicit recognition and inclusion of Indigenous and Traditional Territories (ITTs) in biodiversity reporting frameworks, aligning with the KM-GBF's Target 3 to conserve and sustainably manage 30% of critical terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems by 2030.
- The government must prioritize including target 3 in their revised NBSAPs. The revised NBSAPs should not in any way facilitate the dilution of the safeguards mentioned in the KM-GBF.
- Recognize customary law and institutions in the protection, sustainable use, and restoration of natural resources within territories of life.

For Safe Spaces for EHRDs to deliver meaningful contributions to national progress and global commitments.

- The urgent need for global attention and the integration of human rights for Environmental and Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs), including Indigenous Peoples, Women, Youth, elders, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), and those with intersecting identities, demands immediate action. All discussions and policies related to biodiversity conservation and climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, with emphasis on renewable energy (RE) development, particularly in the context of the UNFCCC COP28 and beyond, must explicitly address their heightened vulnerability to human rights violations amidst increasing RE capacity and potential land grabbing threats.
- The government must prioritize integrating Target 22 as a cross-cutting theme in all targets in their revised NBSAPs. The revised NBSAPs should not in any way facilitate the dilution of the safeguards mentioned in the KM-GBF.
- Transitioning away from fossil fuels must be done in a just, effective, and equitable manner. No energy projects should happen without Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).



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The CSO Forum affirms to continue to do more, discuss more, and collaborate with governments and key stakeholders in keeping the productive interface to advance social forestry and customary tenure recognition to contribute to climate action, community-based conservation, and sustainable development goals.

We hold ourselves accountable not just to future generations but also to our current community, including our elders and ancestors as wisdom keepers in the decisions and actions we take today.

Our knowledge, practices, roles, and contributions are essential for the prosperity of ASEAN's natural resources. Disparities persist between global commitments and tangible local efforts, but this CSO Forum stands as a testament to the transformative potential of collective action—toward a future where no one is left behind.

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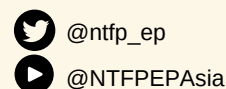
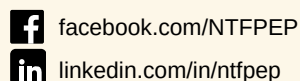


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Map of Main Areas, Bangkew Phol village, Kampong Cham province, Kampong Cham district, Preah Vihear

