

**20th August 2026**

Battsetseg Batmunkh, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mongolia  
UNCCD COP17 President

Hambardzum Matevosyan,  
Minister of Environment, Armenia  
UNCBD COP17 President

Murat Kurum  
Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, Türkiye  
UNFCCC COP31 President

Chris Bowen  
Minister of Environment, Australia  
UNFCCC COP31 President of Negotiations

**Cc:** Yasmine Fouad, Simon Stiell, Astrid Schomaker (Rio Convention Executive Secretaries)

**RE:** Multilateralism, Rio Convention synergies, gender equality, Indigenous Peoples and civil society engagement

*“The UN Charter is a promise to the world - that humanity can choose cooperation over chaos; law over lawlessness; dignity over domination; and hope over fear.”*

*- Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General*

At the 1st plenary meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), held on August 17, 2026, the Russian Federation objected to the inclusion of COP agenda item 3 on the Future Strategic Framework, and the United States of America objected to item 4 on Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies (synergies), item 5 on Policy frameworks and thematic issues: gender, and item 8(a) on the engagement of civil society, including a “Terms of Reference for the Indigenous Peoples Caucus.” The Presidency deferred consideration of these agenda items “to a later date, pending consultation.” Setting aside these agenda items is unprecedented, and is a direct and dire challenge to the consensus-based UNCCD process.

We call on the COP17 Mongolian Presidency to ensure the reintroduction to the agenda of the items on gender, civil society engagement including Terms of Reference for Indigenous Peoples Caucus, synergies, and the Future Strategic Framework as crucial and timely issues for Parties’ collective consideration, and to reiterate their unequivocal support for previous COP decisions and agreed language, as well as their full respect for the text of the Convention. This is crucial to prevent unilateral disruption of multilateral processes, which has impacts beyond the context of

COP17, extending to other processes and setting a deeply troubling precedent. We call on the Australian Presidency and Türkiye as the host country for UNFCCC COP31, as well as Armenia as the COP17 UNCBD Presidency to protect the value of multilateralism in the context of the two other Rio Convention COPs taking place in the next few months.

Multilateralism has been an essential foundation for global solidarity and cooperation, peace and security, and progress on realizing human rights over the last eight decades. Parties to multilateral agendas and conventions, including the UNCCD are equal keepers of the commitment to and benefits of multilateralism. Multilateralism is now under serious threat. Parties' deliberate efforts to interfere with multilateral processes are unacceptable in the face of the interrelated crises of climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity loss.

For the last decade, there have been deliberate efforts by the Secretariats of the three Rio Conventions to strengthen work across the Conventions, given the complementarity of their goals and the lived realities of Indigenous Peoples, pastoralists, local communities, smallholder farmers, and women and youth within these communities in all their diversity. The work of the Joint Liaison Group, the G20 Global Land Initiative, and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) are all examples of these multilateral efforts.

Parties to the UNCCD benefit from the interconnectedness of the Rio Conventions and other multilateral processes. Rio Convention synergies enable greater effectiveness of implementation and complementarity of efforts with scarce resources, better access to financing, and reduce reporting burdens. Parties' effective role in these processes are derived from the robust support and participation of civil society and Indigenous Peoples, whose efforts are essential in translating decisions and policies into tangible action on the ground, thereby enabling meaningful progress toward achieving shared global agendas. Robust participation of all these groups in Rio Convention processes is inseparable from effective implementation and maintaining democratic decision-making.

UNCCD Parties have established agreed language on gender through decisions spanning the last three COPs, and numerous UNCCD actors have contributed to developing guidance on strong integration of gender into the implementation of the Convention, in furtherance of Article 22 of the Convention. This consensus must stand. Gender equality is foundational to effective land degradation neutrality (LDN) efforts.

Parties' support for multilateralism is more essential now than ever amidst the polycrises that impact all countries. We urge the Presidencies to take these concrete actions to protect Rio Convention processes and to reclaim multilateralism and the spirit of consensus.

With respectful regards,

The undersigned supporting organizations and individuals

### **Signatories**

International Indigenous Peoples' Caucus on CCD (IIPFCCD)

ACADHOSHA (Action des Chrétiens Activistes des Droits de l'Homme à Shabunda)  
Action Jeunesse pour le Développement (AJED-Congo)  
Action Paysanne Contre la Faim  
Action Paysanne Contre la Faim  
Action Paysanne Contre la Faim  
Action pour le Progrès et le Bien être Sociale  
Actions Chrétiennes pour l'Enfance  
ADSEC MALI  
African Women Leaders Network Ghana Chapter  
AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION NETWORK- FEMNET  
African Youth Development Action Project Inc.  
AFRICAN YOUTH INTEGRATED FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (AYISD)  
Afrique Esperance & Développement NGO  
Agaariin Kharuul NGO  
AGEC  
Ahmed Abdullahi Ali  
Aid Life Learn Environment  
Akina Mama wa Afrika  
Alliance for Pastoralists and Indigenous Peoples  
Almidan association for development and Human Rights  
Amis de l'Afrique Francophone- Benin (AMAF-BENIN)  
Aniedi Inyang foundation-ANIF  
APOC  
Arusha Women Legal Aid and Human Rights Organization ((AWLAHURIO)  
Asia-Pacific Network for Accessibility  
Asian Farmers Association for Sustainable Rural Development  
Asociación ciudadana por los derechos humanos  
Asociación de Cabildos Indígenas de la Zona Norte  
Asociación Por Tí Mujer  
Association du Developpement et de la promotion de Droits de l'Homme  
Association pour la Conservation et la Protection des Écosystèmes des Lacs et l'Agriculture Durable  
Association WELFARE  
Bangalow Koalas Inc.  
Bangalow Koalas Inc.  
Bangladesh Youth Development Alliance  
Banka Earth Foundation  
Baringo Indigenous Peoples' Organization  
Barokupot Ganochetona Foundation-BGF  
Barranquilla+20 - Women for Climate Justice  
Bayay Sibuyanon Inc.  
Beacon Youth Initiative  
Biruh Tiwelede Le-Ethiopia  
Black Sea Women's Club  
Both ENDS  
Buhera Residents Network Trust  
Building Bridges Hub  
Bureau d'Etudes Scientifiques et Techniques (BEST asbl)

Campaign for survival in dignity (CSD)  
Care For Environment  
CARI  
CARI CENTRE D'ACTION REALISATIONS INTERNATIONALES  
Caritas nepal  
Casa Río Lab  
CAWTAR  
CAWTAR  
CAWTAR  
Center for Clean and Green Governance (CCGG asbl)  
Center for International Environmental Law  
Center for International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights  
Center for Public Private Partnerships  
Centre for Citizen Science  
Centre for Environment, Human Rights & Development Forum - CEHRDF  
CEPT University  
Climate Action Network - Uganda  
Coalition des Volontaires pour la Paix et le Développement, CVPD-DRC  
Coalition des Volontaires pour la Paix et le Développement, CVPD-RDC  
Coalition of Action 4 Soil Health (CA4SH)  
Collectif des ONG Œuvrant dans le secteur de Mines Environnement et Électricité  
Comminland  
Community Alliance for Global Justice  
Community Development Center  
Comunicacion y Educacion Ambiental SC  
Conectando Derechos  
Conseil Régional des Organisations Non Gouvernementales de Développement  
Cuiracuas del resguardo Buenavista  
DASTAK Foundation  
Debra Harte branding and design  
Dhrubotara Youth Development Foundation (DYDF)  
Diverse Voices and Action (DIVA) for Equality  
Dream Hunt  
Drynet Network  
Duclima Institute  
Ecoserve Development Foundation  
Education as a Vaccine  
EMATP SARL  
Emotional Intelligence and Life Skills Training Team (Gte) Ltd  
Enable the Disabled Action (EDA)  
Enda Colombia  
Engajamundo  
Environment and Climate Change Amelioration Initiative (ECCA)  
Equality Bahamas  
Equitable Budgets for women and children initiatives (EBUWACI)  
Equity Watch Initiative  
Ethiopian Youth Biodiversity Network

Exploring Womanhood Foundation  
Family Farm Defenders  
FARN  
Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal (FECOFUN)  
Femmes Autochtones pour le Développement et l'Environnement (FADE)  
Femmes Pour la Citoyenneté et le Développement AFPCD  
Fire Circle To End ALL Forms of Abuse  
Fondo Emerger  
Forliveable  
Forum des femmes Autochtones du Cameroun-FFAC  
Foundation Sowing Agroecology  
FSC Indigenous Foundation  
Fundación CAUCE: Cultura Ambiental - Causa Ecologista  
Fundación Inalafquen  
Gbolekekro Women Empowerment and Development Organization (GWEDO)  
Gee Foundation for Social Justice and Development  
GEF - SGP Indonesia  
GenEgalitéECCAS  
General Authority for Land Administration, Geodesy and Cartography  
German Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture (DITSL)  
German Institute of Tropical and Subtropical Agriculture  
Girls Congress  
Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice  
Global Environmental and Climate Conservation Initiative  
Global Forest Coalition (GFC)  
Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights  
Global Justice Ecology Project  
Gopabandhu Seva Parisad  
Grace Charitable & Rehabilitation Organisation  
Gram Bharati Samiti  
Green Arc Tanzania  
Green Orbit Standard System NGO  
Grupo Intercultural Almaciga  
GWL Voices  
GYBN, Nepal Chapter  
Habitat Defenders Africa  
Habitat for Humanity Ethiopia  
Health Access Initiative (HAI)  
Health Environment and Climate Action Foundation, HECAF360  
Housing and Land Rights Network - Habitat International Coalition  
Huairou Commission (grassroots Women Movement)  
Human Environmental Association for Development-HEAD  
Human Rights and Forest Brain Africa  
Human rights and youth justice initiative  
Human rights coalition  
Humanitarian Development Organization - HDO  
ICCA Consortium

ICCA Consortium  
ICO "Environment - People - Law"  
Il Circolo  
IMPACT Kenya  
IMPACT-APAC  
Indalo Eswatini  
Independent Researcher  
Indigenous Environmental Network  
Indigenous Peoples Rights International (IPRI)  
Initiative Bonne Gouvernance des Ressources Naturelles au Kivu  
Initiatives des Femmes en Situations Difficiles pour le Développement Durable et Intégré: IFESIDDI  
INRAT  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ICTA-UAB)  
International Land Coalition  
International Land Coalition Secretariat  
International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)  
International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)  
Jumuiya women fund  
KEBETKACHE Women Development and Resource Centre  
Koko Global Foundation  
L'Associació pels Drets Sexuals i Reproductius  
La Ruta del Clima  
Land For Future  
Land for Future  
Land Rights Now  
Lands of the Future Initiative  
Landscapes and Nature Community Collective Initiative  
Lanka Organic Agriculture Movement  
Lentamente Società Cooperativa Agricola  
Lesotho Youth Climate Network (LYCN)  
Liberia Rural Women Organization for Climate Actions  
Liberia Rural Women Organization for Climate Actions  
Liberia Rural Women Organization for Climate Actions  
LIFE Education Sustainability Equality  
Living Laudato Si' Philippines  
MAISHA NA MAZINGIRA asbl  
Mama Aleta Fund  
Manawari Southeast Asia  
Manushiya Sanwardana Padanama  
Marine Ecosystems protected Areas (MEPA) Trust  
MBRDO  
Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Mongolian Environmental Civil Council  
MOTHER CARE 4 HOPE OUTREACH (MOCAHO)  
Mount Allison University

Museu das Águas Brasília  
MWANAMKE FUND  
Nagorik Uddyog  
Namati  
Nath Sanskriti Seva Sansthan  
National Alliance for Women's Land Rights  
National Civil Society Council of Liberia  
National Dong Hwa University  
National Environmental Youth Council of Mongolia  
National Ethnic Unity Foundation  
Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory  
NATURELCD  
Network of Young Africans Bringing Innovative Projects to the COPs on Climate, Biodiversity, and Desertification for Social Justice and Gender. (RAJAPI-COP AFRICA)  
NGO "ForestCom"  
NGO Plato  
Non-Timber Forest Products Exchange Programme Asia  
North American Climate, Conservation and Environment(NACCE)  
NTFP-EP Asia  
O.CREEDS LTD.  
Observatoire Africain des Droits de l'Homme, de l'Environnement et des Ressources Naturelles (OADHERN-RDC)  
OHCHR  
OLOIP  
One World One Family Foundation Malawi  
ONG AVIP TOGO (Association Vie Précieuse)  
ONG ENFANTS DU FUTUR  
ONG SARINKZ  
Organisation des Femmes pour le Développement Durable (OFDD)  
Oxfam  
Oyu Tolgoi Watch  
Pastoralist Goals Foundation  
Pastoralist Initiative Development Aid(PIDA)  
Pastoralist Youth Alliance of Africa  
Pastoralists Alliance for Resilience and Adaptation Across Nations (PARAAN)  
Pastoramérica & National University of Salta  
Prakriti Resources Centre  
PROTTYASHI  
Ram Dayal Vaishnav  
RASIPÉ ONG  
Reaccion Climática  
RECODEF Sénégal  
REFEDE MALI  
Regional center for Development. Cooperation - RCIDC.  
Resilient40  
Resource Conflict Institute  
Resource Conservation Initiative

RISEUP for the Ocean  
Rivers without Boundaries Coalition  
Rural Empowerment and Climate Technology Initiative  
Rural infrastructure & Human Resources Development Organization (RIHRDO)  
Rural Women Assembly  
RURAL WOMEN ENERGY SECURITY (RUWES) INITIATIVE NIGERIA  
Rural Women Energy Security (RUWES) Nigeria  
Safe Futures International  
Samarthyam Centre for Universal Accessibility  
Save the mother and children of central Tanzania  
SCODA DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATION  
Shibuye Community Health Workers  
Sinatsisa Lubombo Women and girls Empowerment organization  
Sindhvani Tahreek  
SNV Netherlands Development Organisation  
Social Women and Resilience Organization  
Society for Women and Youths Affairs (SWAYA)  
Somali Aid organisation  
Soroptimist  
South Asian Youth for SDGs (SAYS)  
SouthSouthNorth  
Stand for Her Land  
Sukaar Welfare Organization  
Surevi Impact  
SWI  
Tanzania women for self initiatives  
Tata institute of social sciences  
Technical University of Munich  
Tendet Foundation  
Tewa  
The African women's network for Community management of Forests - REFACOF  
The Esteemed Hub Organization  
The Ignite Foundation  
The Ignite Foundation  
The Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago  
The OKU Rights Matter Project  
TMG Think Tank for Sustainability  
TRIPPINZ CARE INC  
TRWA  
Twala Tenebo women  
Twice As Good (TAG) Trust  
U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance  
UCOBAC  
UEC "Green Wave"  
Ukrainian Hydrometeorological Institute  
UNCCD CSO PANEL  
UNCCD Youth Caucus

UNDP  
Universitas Sebelas Maret  
University of Sussex  
Vacances Vertes  
Van Gujjar Tribal Yuva Sangathan  
ViSA Africa  
Vision for Sustainability and Climate Adaptation in Africa (ViSA Africa)  
Vision GRAM-International  
Viva Life & Nature Conservative Initiative  
VIVA LIFE & NATURE CONSERVATIVE INITIATIVE  
Voluntary Organization for Vulnerable Community Development (VOVCOD)  
VToujours  
Vulnerable Peoples Development Organization  
Wagayway Equality, Inc. (WE)  
Wamip  
War on Want  
WATOTO AFRICA INITIATIVE  
We Lead Peace Initiative  
We Woman Lanka Network  
We.Cro  
WECF  
WGWLO  
WiLDAF/FeDDAF-Bénin  
Wilderness Australia  
Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia  
WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform  
WOCAN  
Women Action Towards Economic Development (WATED)  
Women and Land in Zimbabwe  
Women and Modern World Social Charitable Center – CWMW  
Women Concerns Center  
Women Empowered-Benin  
Women Empowerment for Generations  
Women Environmental Programme  
Women Environmental Programme WEP  
Women Human Rights Defenders Hub  
Women in Action on Mining in Asia  
Women in Law and Development in Africa-Afrique de l'Ouest (WiLDAF-AO)  
Women Leader Foundation  
Women Rights and Resources Network (WRRN)  
Women Working Group (WWG)  
Women's Earth and Climate Action Network  
Women's Environment and Development Organization  
Women4Biodiversity  
World Animal Protection  
World Bridge Initiatives  
World Friends for Africa Burkina Faso

World's Youth for Climate Justice  
WSCC of Mongolia  
Yachaq Warmi - Mujeres en STEM  
Young Professionals For Agricultural Development YPARD  
YOUNGO  
Youth Action For Climate Change Organization  
Youth Action for climate change organization  
Youth Negotiators Academy (YNA)  
Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW)  
Zero Waste Society  
Zimbabwe Youth Biodiversity Network  
منظمه الفاو النساء رعويا ت