

PRESS RELEASE

Local Communities Launch Global Forum at COP30 and Call for Political Recognition in the UNFCCC

Belém (Brazil), November 2025 — For the first time in the history of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), leaders from local communities across **Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean** gathered in Belém to launch a permanent and autonomous political space: the **Global Forum of Local Communities on Climate Change (GFLCCC)**.

The Forum embodies years of territorial mobilization, international collaboration and collective self-organization. Community-based organizations and traditional leaders arrived at COP30 with a unified message: **Local Communities are political rights-holders, guardians of territories of life, and essential actors for climate solutions anchored in traditional knowledge, sustainable livelihoods and collective territorial governance.**

A historical and legitimate process of self-organization

The GFLCCC results from a global consultation process held throughout 2024–2025 and intensified during the first days of COP30. Participating organizations approved common **principles, self-identification criteria and governance arrangements**, giving rise to the new **International Caucus of Local Communities** — a plural, autonomous, gender-balanced and government-independent political mechanism.

The approved **self-identification criteria for Local Communities** include:

- **Collective territorial ties**, including peoples with territorial mobility (pastoralists, nomadic, other mobile communities and transhumant groups);
- **Self-governance and community-based decision-making**;
- **Ancestry, collective memory, local knowledge and intergenerational knowledge transmission**;
- **Livelihood systems that conserve biodiversity and sustain ecosystems**;
- **A distinct identity with customary practices not dependent on formal State recognition.**

A **Global Political Coordination (2025–2027)** was elected, representing:

Nigeria and Cameroon (Africa), Nepal and Indonesia (Asia), Mexico and Brazil (Latin America and the Caribbean).

Political recognition: an urgent request

Although Local Communities play a decisive role in protecting biodiversity, strengthening climate resilience, and innovating adaptation strategies, **the UNFCCC has yet to ensure their formal representation** — despite the mandate from COP24 (2018) to create three seats for Local Communities in the Local Communities and Indigenous People Platform Facilitative Working Group (LCIPP FWG).

Samuel Caetano, geraizeiro leader from Brazil, stated:

“There is no moral, political or technical justification for the current exclusion. The time for promises is over. Now is the time for institutional coherence and courage.”

Gustavo Sánchez, from Red Moca (Mexico), emphasized:

“We come to the COP with organizational maturity. We ask Parties to recognize this effort and ensure direct participation.”

Demands formally submitted to the COP30 Presidency and the UNFCCC Secretariat

The Forum delivered an official letter to the COP30 President, Ambassador André Corrêa do Lago, and to the UNFCCC Secretariat, outlining five core demands:

1. **Formal recognition of the Global Forum as the legitimate interlocutor of Local Communities within the UNFCCC.**
2. **Creation of official channels of direct communication** between the Forum/Caucus, the COP Presidency, the UNFCCC Secretariat and the LCIPP.
3. **Immediate inclusion of the Forum** in the mandated dialogue under Decision 14/CP.29 on Local Community participation.
4. **Activation of the three seats for Local Communities in the LCIPP FWG**, with representatives nominated exclusively by the Forum/Caucus through self-nomination process.
5. **Support to guarantee effective participation of regions of the Global South**, overcoming financial, linguistic and mobility barriers.

The demands were reinforced in a strategic meeting with **the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Dr. Albert K. Barume**, who acknowledged the initiative's legitimacy and political relevance.

A milestone for climate justice and the democratization of global governance

The launch of the Global Forum represents a **historic milestone** for climate diplomacy. Local Communities — who are among the most affected by climate impacts yet systematically excluded from decision-making — now stand united to claim their voices, rights, and contributions within the UNFCCC.

Guilherme Eidt, from ISPN, emphasized:

“The strength of this new Caucus lies in its autonomy. Only a self-defined space can ensure real legitimacy and representation.”

The GFLCCC aims to consolidate a formal **Local Communities constituency**, strengthen direct access to climate finance, and guarantee full and effective participation in global climate governance.

About the Global Forum of Local Communities

The Forum brings together organizations such as REFACOF, FECOFUN, Rede Cerrado, Utz Che', Red Mocaf, Green Foundation Nepal, Women Rights and Resource Network (WRRN), among many others.

ISPN and international partners provide technical support to the process.

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