



“Africa and China are home to numerous Indigenous communities, therefore their efforts in conservation must always be considered. They are not obstacles to nature, rather, they are true ambassadors for conservation. It is important to note that they have a strong relationship with nature and play their role.” The African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA) and the China Civil Society Alliance for Biodiversity Conservation (CSABC) held the second dialogue in an ongoing series on the 31st May 2021 from 10:00 to 12:00 EAT. The dialogue shed light on African and Chinese perspectives on: *The Role of Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) in Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs)*.

The buy-in of communities living with biodiversity is fundamental in empowering IPLCs through land sovereignty and for example benefits global efforts to expand conservation. Therefore, there’s a call for spaces and systems which are inclusive of local actors, equitably reflect their ambitions for conservation, and generate benefits for IPLCs and nature.

This dialogue aims to share lessons learned and best practices on how Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs) by Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) can contribute to the global goals of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The outcomes of the dialogue were to create a common understanding of the importance of conservation in areas under the control of IPLCs, to appreciate how community empowerment enhances the potential for OECMs in support of sustainable livelihoods and to highlight how conservation approaches outside protected areas deliver biodiversity gains.

“To achieve our goals for conservation, people do need to be involved whether they live in urban or rural spaces. To see change, happen, everyone must be involved,” said Fred Kwame Kumah, the dialogue’s moderator during his opening remarks. David Obura from CORDIO East Africa pointed out that, “In ACBA we have really been thinking about how to move the agenda forward to promote conservation in our context.

We consider where African people and biodiversity fit in the Global Biodiversity Framework and the upcoming Conference of the Parties in Kunming (CoP15) as we meet the needs of a largely rural and growing population that really depends on nature and needs to thrive alongside nature.”

Mr Xiaogeng Liu drew from his experiences working at Laohegou since 2011, where putting an end to poaching became one of their primary goals. Over the years, they formed a team of rangers, and supported the surrounding communities to establish community protected areas. Their core team of rangers used to be poachers before, with only one out of the eight not having been arrested for hunting. Now, with the support of Taohuayuan, they have become protectors. Laohegou has become a model for social welfare protection and at present, six additional social welfare protection areas have been established across the country.

“IPLCs have been working together globally and regionally beyond mobilizing at the national level to get their perspectives heard on the Convention on Biodiversity and in many other forums. One of the unique qualities of African IPLCs is that they have been working quite closely with their governments. We’ve been working closely on issues like sustainable use, and access and benefit sharing and the specific role of IPLCs within the Nagoya Protocol. IPLCs have also been making the case for the recognition of the central role that their traditional knowledge systems in conservation successes.” said Lucy Mullenkei Executive Director for Indigenous Information Network.

Yunzhu Chen from the Global Environmental Institute stated, “In our work with Myanmar, local communities play a crucial role. We begin with a conversation. The projects and their funding must be vetted by the communities, who also take up a major role in managing and operating projects in their area. Without their buy-in, we cannot achieve our conservation actions. Therefore, we ensure that only community members actively involved are the recipients of the benefits. We have seen that when we phase out of the projects, communities keep the work going, because they own and have grown to value what conservation delivers for them.”

Fred Kwame Kumah concluded the webinar by elaborating that more effort is needed across the board to ensure that IPLCs are empowered, with the upholding of community rights, and greater support for the role they historically and currently play in protecting biodiversity. He added that, we need to keep in mind the implications of development for indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs) and the habitats and biodiversity they are custodians of.