



acba
African CSOs
Biodiversity Alliance



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www.africancba.org



+254726712969



@info@africancba.org



THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

Despite limited resources, 2023 proved to be a transformative year for the African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA), with the Alliance achieving several important milestones. ACBA not only participated in various high-profile side events but also played an important role in ensuring that African voices were represented in key decision-making processes. The Secretariat's commitment to engaging its members was critical to a sustained momentum, while ACBA's visibility and brand has grown significantly, evident from both the high engagement on critical issues for biodiversity and climate change at events and our expanding reach on social media.

One of the most momentous achievements in 2023 was ACBA's legal registration as a formalized network in November. This important milestone comes at a critical juncture, enabling ACBA to strengthen its brand, explore opportunities for accreditation with key organizations, start to establish financial and accounting systems that are necessary for fund raising and start exploring direct funding for the network.

In 2023, ACBA also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the African Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG), a partnership that enhances ACBA's presence in the policy arena. Recognizing the persistent challenge of limited funding, ACBA worked collaboratively with the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) to submit several funding proposals including exploring possible funding from USAID. ACBA also supported a consortium of members led by the Kenya Youth Biodiversity Network (KYBN) to submit a funding proposal to the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) inaugural "Inclusive GEF Assembly Challenge Programme," designed to channel essential funds directly to local organizations, bolstering grassroots efforts. The outcome was that Kenya Youth Biodiversity Network (KYBN)-led consortium was one of 23 applicants to be awarded a USD 100,000.00 grant to support on-going work. Another ACBA member, Environmental Foundation for Africa (EFA), was also successful.

This year also marked the launch of the ACBA Capacity Needs Assessment, a comprehensive effort supported by AWF and ABCG. We anticipate completing the full report by 2024, laying the foundation for strategic growth and enhanced impact in the years to come.

MEMBERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS WORKING GROUP

1. Membership



Total number of ACBA members

As of December 2023, ACBA has **75 members** across **22 countries** in Africa, comprising **58 organizational members** and **18 individual experts**

Distribution of ACBA members in different regions

ACBA members are distributed across Africa. We have **23 members from East Africa**, **10 from Central Africa**, **4 from Southern Africa**, and **21 from West Africa**.

During 2023, the Membership and Partnership Working Group made significant strides in strengthening the network and enhancing engagement within the African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA). Recognizing that an informed and actively engaged membership base is important to the success of ACBA, the working group focused on creating clear, consistent channels of communication to keep all members up-to-date and aligned with ACBA's vision and initiatives.

Among the group's key achievements was the successful consolidation and re-organization of the membership database. With invaluable support from the Secretariat, the working group ensured that all records are both accurate and securely maintained. This structured database not only facilitates transparency but also highlights the range of voices and expertise within ACBA, representing a cohesive network that supports informed decision-making and collaboration.

To streamline the application process and ensure the collection of relevant data, the working group also revised the membership application form. This new version, set for use in the coming years, was carefully crafted to capture essential information about potential members, outline the criteria for joining ACBA and ensure that all applicants are well-informed about the standards expected of alliance members. The refined form will support the working group's ongoing efforts to build a community that is both inclusive and strategically aligned with ACBA's goals.

In 2023, the group initiated a comprehensive on-boarding process, which familiarized new members with ACBA's operations, values and expectations. As part of this initiative, all members, both new and existing, received certificates of membership—an ongoing effort to formalize affiliation and recognize contributions to ACBA's mission.

Additionally, the group developed and introduced a comprehensive value proposition document. This document provides clarity on the benefits of ACBA membership, the responsibilities expected of members and the unique opportunities for collaboration within the alliance. By laying out the value of ACBA membership in a structured manner, the document serves as a guide to help current and prospective members understand the alignment between their personal or organizational goals and ACBA's overarching mission.

2. Partnership

In 2023, ACBA reached out to RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands, an intergovernmental treaty that aims to conserve and use wetlands sustainably and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to introduce ACBA to explore avenues for impactful projects and collaboration.

ACBA also held extensive discussions with AWF to brainstorm a program to support ACBA members' access to and application of georeferenced data in their work programmes. AWF and ECOTRUST Uganda developed a concept note that would potentially involve two other ACBA members, namely, AROCHA Ghana and Vhembe Biosphere Reserve in South Africa.

This year, the ACBA Secretariat was invited by Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) to join the Steering Committee for the inaugural Africa Action Summit, coordinated ACBA also joined the Climate, Land, and Rights Alliance (CLARA) to network on climate changed related issues.

To strengthen its global ties, ACBA established a close relationship with the International Land Conservation Network (ILCN). This collaboration led to the development of a joint webinar on human rights, conservation effectiveness, and transboundary conservation, as well as featuring ACBA in ILCN's monthly newsletter.



POLICY AND INFLUENCING WORKING GROUP

1. Capacity Needs Assessment

In 2023, the network agreed to undertake a capacity needs assessment to inform investments in capacity building of members. Wild Authenticity was engaged to undertake this work supported by a reference group that included the secretariat, chairs of ACBA's working groups, AWF and African Biodiversity Collaborative Group (ABCG). However, one of the major challenges encountered was the slower-than-expected progress in getting members' responses. This led to an extension of the timeline, with project completion still anticipated by year-end.

2. ACBA Participation in Key events

Following active ACBA membership engagement at CITES COP 19 and CBD COP 15, ACBA was involved in a series of post-conference activities.

1. Post CBD COP 15 Activities

a) African Union Commission (AUC) Conference to develop a strategy to implement decisions from the CITES COP 19 and CBD COP 15

On 30th May to 2nd of June, 2023 ACBA actively participated in the African Union's conference focused on developing a strategy to support African countries implement the outcomes of CBD COP 15 and CITES COP 19. This conference followed the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and significant resolutions under CITES, marking a pivotal moment in Africa's collective biodiversity agenda.

During this meeting, ACBA developed a comprehensive technical paper to guide discussions among state parties and stakeholders. This paper highlighted the integrated approach of the Sustainable Development Goals, offering a framework for engaging with key targets in the GBF and CITES COP 19's critical outcomes. Beyond addressing the pressing global challenge of climate change, the CBD GBF section of the document underscores five key areas for action and investment. ACBA proposed that National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (NBSAPs) serve as the primary mechanism for implementing both GBF and CITES outcomes.

ACBA also had the opportunity to deliver opening and closing statements, which helped to clearly convey the priorities and perspectives of African civil society organizations (CSOs) regarding the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework and CITES commitments.

b) Participation at the inaugural Target 3 partnership meeting at a Cambridge

The meeting on a partnership for the implementation of Target 3 was organized by the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas and the CBD Secretariat, with ACBA's participation funded by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF). The meeting focused on five main objectives:

- Reconstitute and re-envision the partnership, building on lessons learned from the Aichi Target 11 partnership.
- Identify priorities, challenges, and opportunities for the successful implementation of Target 3.
- Map existing plans and initiatives by organizations to support Parties in implementing Target 3.
- Agree on strategies for collaboration and alignment to support Parties effectively.
- Develop a clear strategy for the partnership to assist Parties in achieving Target 3.

The meeting brought together representatives from Parties, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), NGOs, and donors. It was structured into working sessions designed around the five objectives. These sessions encouraged collaborative discussions and strategic planning.

Additionally, selected institutions delivered presentations showcasing examples of what Parties and various organizations are currently doing to advance the effective implementation of Target 3. These insights provided practical inspiration and highlighted existing best practices, fostering a collective understanding of the steps needed to achieve the framework's goals.

c) **ACBA was invited by the Third World Network to attend a meeting held from September 17–21 in Malaysia.** The meeting aimed to explore how the climate change and biodiversity communities can better align and collaborate to address the critical nexus between these two areas.

The gathering brought together members of the CBD Alliance and climate-focused CSOs to exchange ideas and insights. During the discussions, specific follow-up actions were identified to enhance cooperation and implementation strategies. Notably, ACBA was tasked with leading a small group to develop a two-page note on agriculture and its connection to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

d) ACBA contributed an article to the special issue of *ECO* titled "Avoiding the Mistakes of the Aichi Targets – Why Implementation of the Kunming–Montreal GBF Must Be Unapologetically Transformative." The article was co-authored by Yemi Katerere from the African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance and Simangele Msweli from the African Wildlife Foundation, Nairobi.

2. Participation in GEF 7 Assembly

ACBA participated in the GEF-7 Assembly and was invited to join a panel discussion on the role of youth in biodiversity conservation and climate change.

In collaboration with AWF, ACBA submitted a joint statement on the launch of the GBF Fund. This platform also provided ACBA with an opportunity to explore potential avenues for active engagement with the GEF CSO Network.

The GEF CSO Network is an independent global alliance of civil society organizations dedicated to addressing global environmental challenges across the GEF's focal areas. ACBA's engagement with this network represents a valuable step toward fostering stronger partnerships and collaborative efforts to advance biodiversity and climate action.

3. Climate Change and Development in Africa (CCDA XI Conference)

The conference was co-hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Pan-African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), and the African Development Bank (AfDB). It addressed climate change issues from an African perspective, providing a platform for in-depth discussions on critical topics.

ACBA participated in the three-day event, which focused on carbon markets, trends in climate legislation on the African continent, carbon pricing, and the pressing issue of securing funding from wealthy nations to support Africa's climate goals.

The conference concluded with a set of recommendations to be presented to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the African Group of Negotiators, aiming to strengthen Africa's collective position in global climate negotiations and policy-making.

4. The Africa Climate Action Summit and Africa Climate Week

The Africa Climate Action Summit and Africa Climate Week, held from September 4-8, provided a critical platform for dialogue among policymakers, practitioners, businesses, and civil society to address climate challenges and share solutions tailored to Africa's unique needs. These events, organized in parallel with the African Climate Summit, were key in setting the stage for the first global stock-take concluding at COP28 in the UAE in December.

5. ACBA Participation at the UNFCCC COP 28 in Dubai

The Africa CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA) actively participated at UNFCCC COP 28 in Dubai COP28 to advocate for climate solutions that support both people and biodiversity, foster partnerships with aligned networks and promote climate finance reforms to benefit African governments and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) on the frontlines of biodiversity and climate challenges. This COP28 saw the operationalization of the Loss and Damage fund, with \$792 million in initial pledges aimed at supporting vulnerable nations. Additionally, COP28 introduced a framework for the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) and formalized the Youth Climate Champion role to ensure youth inclusion in future climate dialogues. However, the conference's language around fossil fuel reduction was criticized as weak, with vague calls for transitioning away from fossil fuels rather than a concrete phaseout.



Despite the lack of clear action on fossil fuel reduction, COP28 made significant progress by setting ambitious new targets: tripling renewable energy and doubling energy efficiency by 2030. There was also a push toward “economy-wide emission reduction targets” in future Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which could shift climate efforts on a broader scale. Furthermore, a critical step forward was made in acknowledging credit rating agencies in climate finance, marking a notable step in reforming financial architectures and scaling up concessional and grant finance. Nevertheless, adaptation finance must be significantly scaled up to meet Africa’s needs, and a consensus was not reached on Articles 6.2 and 6.4, which address market mechanisms for carbon credits. Instead, the focus moved toward implementing non-market mechanisms (Article 6.8), which could enhance

joint mitigation and adaptation initiatives.

ACBA’s involvement underscored the importance of equitable climate finance access, particularly for IPLCs, and highlighted that effective climate solutions must recognize and integrate traditional knowledge from Indigenous communities, women, and youth. ACBA emphasized that solutions should avoid “false” or harmful climate approaches and instead prioritize nature-based and rights-based solutions that genuinely address the climate crisis.

“Traditional knowledge is very important and many times we undervalue the importance of this knowledge. Therefore when we talk about adaptation and resilience, it’s important to look at what is happening at the local level and how to bring formal science and traditional knowledge together.” Yemi Katerere, Coordinator, African Civil Society Biodiversity Alliance

COP28 SIDE EVENT: Protected and Conserved Areas as a Solution to Climate Change. Zimbabwe Pavilion.



Photo: Joel Mwaide, WWF-Africa

This year’s outcomes indicate that while progress was made in some areas, a stronger commitment to concrete and equitable action is essential for achieving climate justice and sustainability in Africa.



COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

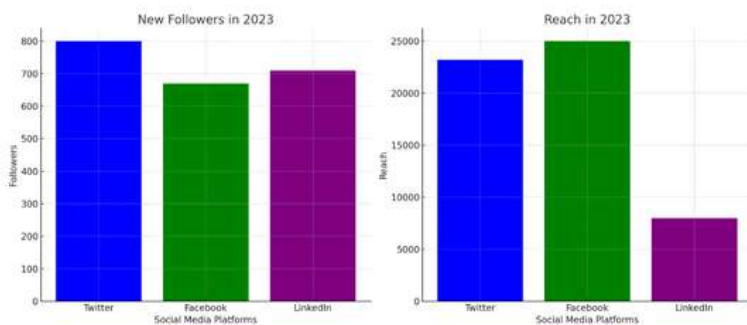
1. From Paper To Action Campaign

Following the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which includes four goals and 23 targets to guide global conservation efforts until 2030, several pressing questions have emerged. Do people understand these targets? What happens next? How can we ensure the framework is implemented effectively?

To address these questions, the African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA), the Global Youth Biodiversity Network Africa Chapter (GYBN Africa), and the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) launched a campaign to raise awareness about the COP15 outcomes and inspire diverse stakeholders to take action in implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

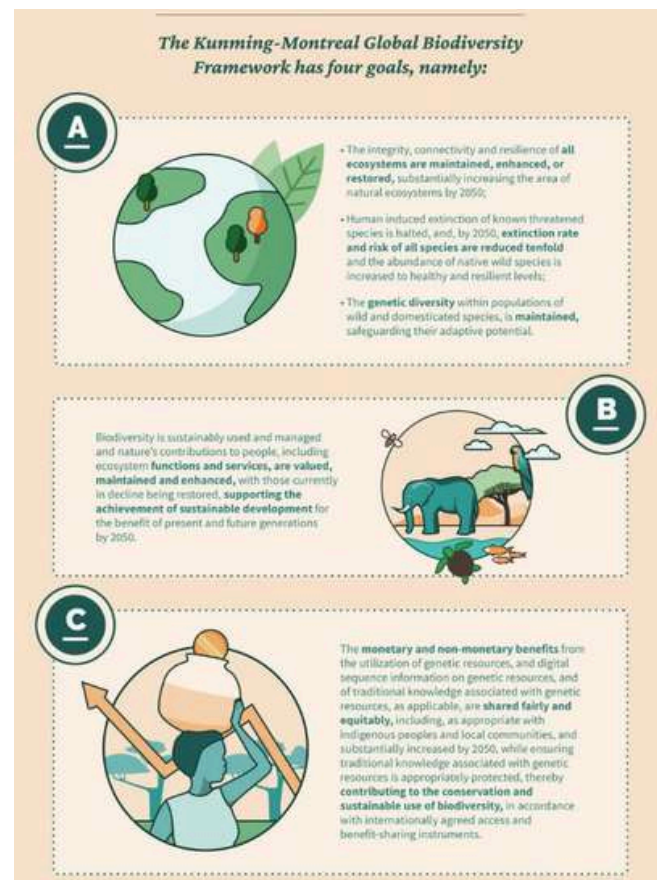
The campaign, conducted in July 2023, aimed to ensure that at least 1,000 African youth understood the framework and were motivated to act. To achieve this goal, the organizations employed strategies such as publishing a series of infographics that simplified the framework's key messages and organizing a webinar to discuss specific targets.

1. Social Media Reach



As highlighted at the beginning of this report, 2023 presented significant challenges due to a lack of sufficient resources. Despite these constraints, it has been a remarkable year of growth and impactful activities for the African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA). Notably, our social media presence has experienced substantial development, reflecting the increasing recognition and interest from stakeholders who wish to associate with our work.

The growth in our social media engagement underscores the success of our outreach efforts. On Twitter alone, we welcomed nearly 800 new followers in 2023, bringing our messages to a broader audience.



Our Facebook page saw an impressive increase of at least 670 followers, while our LinkedIn account, launched in 2023, achieved a follower base of approximately 710 by the end of the year.

In terms of reach, our social media platforms demonstrated robust performance. On Twitter, we reached over 23,200 people, while Facebook surpassed 25,000 in reach. LinkedIn, despite being a new platform for us, made significant strides, achieving 8,000 in reach. This represents a notable improvement compared to our 2022 metrics and highlights the growing interest in our initiatives and campaigns.

These numbers are more than just statistics, they reflect the increasing engagement and support for ACBA's mission. They also validate our efforts to raise awareness and foster dialogue around biodiversity issues across Africa. As we continue to build on this momentum, we remain committed to leveraging our digital platforms to amplify our voice, engage with diverse stakeholders and inspire collective action toward biodiversity conservation.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The continued support provided by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) to the African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA) secretariat ensured that ACBA could effectively coordinate membership participation in important events, host webinars, and fulfill its mandate.

We appreciate ACBA members for generously volunteering their time and making invaluable contributions. These efforts play a pivotal role in advancing ACBA's mission and vision

CONTACT US :



+25426712969



info@africancba.org



<https://africancba.org/>



Ngong Road, Karen, Kenya