

African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA) strategy Plan Launch and Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)

Formed in February 2020, the African CSO Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA) provides a platform for African CSOs to speak with one voice on issues of Sustainable Use of nature that contribute to conservation and equitable benefits from nature. The ACBA members comprise of national NGOs and CSO networks, community-based organizations (CBOs), youth networks and individual experts that share ACBA's vision and values. Therefore, to become a member of ACBA, you must be an African-based non-Governmental Organization (NGO)/CBO or an individual working in the area of biodiversity rights, community resilience, policy and advocacy.

Until today, African CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA) has a membership of more than 80 African CSOs with representation from the 5 subregions of Africa i.e. Northern Africa, Central or Middle Africa, Southern Africa, Eastern Africa and Western Africa. The members are involved in a diverse range of activities in the environment and conservation sector that include research, advocacy and implementing activities on the ground. Their interests are both terrestrial and marine and cover thematic areas such as forests, climate change, biodiversity conservation and the rights of Indigenous People and Local Communities (IPLCs) and peasant farmers.

The 3 main objectives of why ACBA was formed was to influence national, regional and global policy frameworks to enhance biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in Africa, Strengthen the ability of African CSO Biodiversity Alliance members to become effective and efficient organizations to deliver sustainable use of biodiversity through organizational development and lastly, Identify and design sustainable financing mechanisms to support African CSO initiatives

As the second phase of the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) approaches and the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) takes shape, African Protected Area congress that happened for the 18th to 23rd was an opportune moment for ACBA to reflect on how it engages throughout African countries between now and 2030.

Africa CSOs Biodiversity Alliance developed a 10-years strategic plan titled from bottom up nature people positive, which was launched at the African Protected Area Congress. The strategic plan carefully navigates the challenges of developing a plan for a geographically and thematically diverse network that

is united in its desire to sustainably manage and use biodiversity. The plan speaks differently to different members because of this diversity.

The strategic plan developed by ACBA is ambitious but achievable, the main mandate of the alliance is to make sure that the African voices are included in conservation models and agenda and also focused on empowering Indigenous People and local communities & small-scale farmers with rights to sustainably manage and benefit from their resources are recognized and most importantly create a platform where members are able to network.

The main theme of the ACBA pavilion at the African Protected Area congress was Strengthening partnerships to secure Africa's Biodiversity and heritage and that is because ACBA believes that partnerships are very key when it comes successful networks. Not only did ACBA launched its strategic plan, ACBA was also honored to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) as they believe in the vision and values of ACBA. African Wildlife Foundation has in the past provided critical funding and technical support that has enabled coordination of ACBA's activities as well its active participation at key events such as the IUCN WCC, CBD negotiations and APAC and the signed MOU is a clear indication that African Wildlife Foundation is willing to work together with ACBA to achieve its goals going forward.

"This Memorandum of Understanding is a game changer in the field of biodiversity conservation and we must therefore be very proud of this defining moment in the history of pan African conservation." Stated Mr. Kaddu Sebunya, CEO African Wildlife Foundation.