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## [West and Central African grassroots organisations reaffirm their commitment against tree monocultures and in defence of their ancestral lands and forests](#)

For almost 10 years, the Informal Alliance against the expansion of Industrial Monocultures in West and Central Africa has had an important role in connecting grassroots organisations and activists and strengthening the resistance against land grabbing and other attacks by oil palm and other plantation companies in the region.

Last November, community activists and grassroots organisations that are part of the Alliance, from 10 countries, gathered at their General Assembly to renew their commitment to the defence of ancestral lands and to keep resisting against neo colonial interests and the corporate takeover of communities' lands.

See below the full declaration:

**Gabon, November 2024**

### **THE MOUILA DECLARATION of the Informal Alliance against the expansion of Industrial Monocultures**

We, the 60 members gathered at the 6th General Assembly of the Informal Alliance against the expansion of Industrial Monoculture Plantations, in Mouila, Gabon from November 19 to 22, 2024, representing communities and organizations of Gabon, Nigeria, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Congo Brazaville, Liberia, Ghana, Congo Kinshasa, Ivory Coast and Uganda are deeply committed to the fight against land grabbing, particularly by tree plantation companies. LET US ADOPT this Declaration which marks our conviction in the vital importance of the recognition and return to ancestral community land ownership in Africa, for the well-being of the first occupants.

#### **WE RECOGNIZE THAT:**

- Ancestral lands are home to communities of people with traditional culture and knowledge of nature;
- Women play a critical role in the defense of their ancestral lands and forests;
- Community ancestral land in Africa has intrinsic worth and warrants respect regardless of its usefulness in habitats and humanity as a whole;
- The natural wealth, rights and freedom to their land is being eroded this day at a frantic and unprecedented manner and rate because of deliberate harmful development policies clade in colonial legacy;
- Ancestral community territories illegally occupied during colonial and post-colonial government regimes as concessions to corporations for business development violate the rights of the people and therefore, constitutes serious crimes against human, an illegality is an illegality regardless of the time they were committed;

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## WE FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGE THAT:

- Post-colonial governments have failed in their responsibilities by giving true independence to the communities by prioritizing colonial interests by foreign agents by enacting neo-community laws to dislodge and robbed communities of their ancestral land using various opaque notions of national land and/or government land ownership;
- The threats caused by the senseless acts of grabbing ancestral land and awarding them as concessions to business has brought untold hardship, violence and irreparable damage such loss of lives and biodiversity, entrenched poverty due loss of livelihoods and community property, early child pregnancy, and gender-based violence, etc.
- African countries that got independence in the 1960s and 70s, today consider communities as belonging to the State and governments and sit in the comfort of their armchairs in faraway land to grant concessions to corporations without Free, Prior, and Informed Consent of the true of the ancestral landowners.

## WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

- Promote and defend agroecological practices and food sovereignty as a form of resistance;
- Facilitate the establishment of effective and efficient network of communities, activists and NGOs cooperating at local and international level to understand the strategies and tactics used by corporations to steal communities ancestral land and to develop further strategies and tactics to guide communities to stop land grabbing and recover previous illegal occupied land according to the Alliance objectives;
- Develop mechanisms that permit all sectors of society, especially the longstanding local populations to nonviolently start the journey to assert their ancestral rights to land fondly referred to by some governments as national land and/or state own land, be partners in planning, establishment of initiative that add value to the ancestral land;
- Strengthen nonviolent resistance education and provide training that will improve their ability to confront governments and corporations that want to take over their territories.
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- Plead for the authorities to provide young people with access to land in rural areas, facilitate their training and support.

**RECOGNIZING that action to protect the living riches and beauty of ancestral land depends, on the full commitment of the affected local people, WE PLEDGE OURSELVES to work wholeheartedly to implement the provisions of this Declaration.**

**EMPHASIZING that the recognition of ancestral land is essential to sustaining human society and conserving our planet, WE INVITE THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE ALLIANCE to convey this Declaration far and wide with the purpose of ensuring that the conclusions are incorporated in daily activities.**

## Signatories:

- Community members from Gabon
- Musiru Divag de Fougamou Gabon
- Institute of sustainable Agriculture, Grand Bassa county, Jogba clan, Liberia
- Women's Network Against Rural Plantations Injustice (WoNARPI), Sierra Leone
- Alliance Uganda Chapter
- Witness Radio, Uganda

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- Nature Cameroon
  - Synaparcam, Cameroon
  - COPACO, DRC
  - RADD, Cameroon
  - Struggle to Economize Future Environment (SEFE), Mundemba, Cameroon
  - CPPH, Cote d'Ivoire
  - Collectif des Ressortissants et Écologistes des Plateaux Bateke, Gabon
  - REFEB, Cote d'Ivoire
  - YVE Ghana
  - JVE Côte d'Ivoire
  - Association Gulusenu du village Doubou, Gabon
  - Muyissi Environnement, Gabon
  - Komolo Agro Farmers Association Kiryandongo, Uganda
  - Ndagize julius, East African, Uganda
  - LOOK GREEN, CARE FOUNDATION, Nigeria
  - Association les Rassembleurs du Village Mboukou, Gabon
  - Joegba United Women Empowerment and Development Organization (JUWEDO), Liberia
  - COLLECTIF ADIAKE. Cote d'Ivoire
  - CNOP, Congo
  - Maloa, Sierra Leone
  - World Rainforest Movement
  - GRAIN