



**Kinshasa Declaration  
at the conclusion of the  
15th General Assembly of  
the CAFÉ network**

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**27 AUGUST 2025**

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## Kinshasa Declaration

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*Following the General Assembly - Kinshasa, 27 August 2025*

### **Conservation Trust Funds in Africa: A Commitment to Ecological and Social Resilience and Human Rights**

#### **Declaration of the African Conservation Trust Funds Network (CAFÉ) following its 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

We, the members of the Consortium of African Funds for the Environment (CAFÉ), gathered at our 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, reaffirm our commitment to the sustainable conservation of biodiversity in Africa, based on principles of environmental, social and economic responsibility. Our trust funds play a key role in financing the preservation of ecosystems, while ensuring the improvement of living conditions for local populations.

#### **1. Promoting investment in African financial markets**

We recognize the importance of developing Funds that incorporate investment practices in African financial markets. A portion of the financial investments of the Trust Funds must be devoted to the economic development of African countries. **We are therefore committed to directing a portion of our investments (endowment funds and/or sinking funds) towards investments in African financial markets,** thereby ensuring consistency between our missions and our financial strategies for the benefit of the African continent.

- **Commitment: To invest an increasing portion of our endowment funds and/or sinking funds in African financial instruments each year.**



## 2. Measuring and Strengthening the Social Impact of Our Actions

African trust funds must not only finance the conservation of protected areas, but also concretely assess their impact on local populations. **We call for improved methods of assessing the socio-economic impact of our actions, taking into account the needs of communities living near protected areas.** Access to income-generating activities, education, health and capacity building must be an integral part of the benefits of conservation.

- **Commitment: Impact studies measuring the improvement in the living conditions of the populations living near the protected areas we support will be conducted regularly and financed by conservation trust funds.**
- **African Conservation Trust Funds (CTFs) are committed to promoting:**
  - The systematic evaluation of the socio-economic impact of funded projects (access to water, education, green jobs).
  - The strengthening of equitable redistribution mechanisms, ensuring that local communities benefit directly from the income generated (ecotourism, sustainable forest products).
  - The active participation of local populations in the governance of protected areas, in order to avoid conflicts and promote inclusive conservation.

## 3. Prioritizing Carbon Projects with High Social Impact

As climate finance grows, it is essential that carbon projects primarily benefit local populations and are not limited to generating income. **We are committed to supporting only carbon initiatives with a high social impact, creating economic opportunities and strengthening community resilience.** Carbon projects must be designed as levers for inclusive development, promoting food security, access to water and the preservation of local knowledge.

As conservation stakeholders in Africa, we are committed to being catalysts for change in conservation that benefits nature and people. Together, we reaffirm our commitment to developing transparent and ethical financing solutions for a sustainable and prosperous Africa.



- **Commitment: Only carbon projects with significant social impact will be promoted and financed, while ensuring that the social and economic commitments of these initiatives are respected.**
- **African CTFs require:**
  - **Strict screening of carbon projects**, prioritising those with a **verifiable social impact** (health, education, local job creation).
  - **The exclusion of "low-cost" initiatives** that exploit land without the informed consent of communities.
  - **Full transparency** on the distribution of carbon revenues, with at least 50% returned to local beneficiaries.

#### **4. Defending human rights in and around protected areas**

We affirm that conservation cannot be achieved at the expense of the rights of local populations living in and around protected areas. We support conservation practices that respect human rights, ensuring that local populations are neither displaced nor marginalized. All conservation initiatives must be inclusive, transparent and based on the active participation of the communities concerned, in order to reconcile conservation with human well-being.

- **Commitments:**
  - Ensure respect for customary land rights by requiring the free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) of communities for any conservation project on their traditional territories.
  - Condemn and prevent any form of forced eviction or abusive restriction of access to natural resources that are vital to local populations.
  - Establish independent recourse mechanisms enabling communities to report rights violations related to conservation activities.
  - Train eco-guards and protected area managers in human rights and community-based approaches to conservation.
  - Collaborate with human rights defenders to develop indicators for monitoring the social impacts of funded projects.

*"Truly sustainable conservation protects both ecosystems and the dignity of the peoples who have historically been their guardians."*

**Other concrete commitments by CAFÉ to put these principles into practice:**

- **Create an "Impact Trust Fund" label** certifying responsible practices.
- **Establish an independent observatory** to assess the social impact of funded protected areas.
- **Publish a guide to good practices** for equitable carbon projects.
- **Include a human rights clause** in all financing agreements.
- **Publish an annual report** on the state of human rights in funded protected areas.

**Together, let us build African conservation that protects both nature and the rights of peoples.**

*Adopted by CAFÉ members in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, on this 27<sup>th</sup> day of August 2025*

For the General Assembly  
The President

A circular blue stamp with the text "CONSORTIUM AFRICAIN DES FONDS POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT" around the perimeter and "café" in the center. A signature in blue ink is written over the stamp.

**Dr. Théophile Zognou**