



Indigenous
Women
Council

10TH
ANNIVERSARY



INDIGENOUS WOMEN COUNCIL (IWC)
10th Anniversary

2025



Investing in Indigenous Women & Girls

AUGUST 18, 2025

ABERDARE COTTAGE AND PRESTIGE HOTEL, LAIKIPIA COUNTY

Executive summary

The 10th Anniversary of the Indigenous Women Council (IWC), convened by the Samburu Women Trust (SWT) from 6th to 9th August 2025 in Nanyuki, brought together 400 delegates from 23 counties in Kenya, as well as networks from Tanzania and Uganda.

The milestone event served both as a celebration of a decade of resilience and advocacy, and as a strategic platform to chart the future for indigenous women, girls, fisherfolks, and persons living with disabilities (PWDs).

Over four days, participants engaged in high-level plenary sessions, thematic breakouts, and cultural exchanges that highlighted pressing issues: community land registration challenges, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response, inclusion in leadership and governance, equitable compensation for communities affected by extractive industries and infrastructure projects, and human-wildlife conflict redress.

The conference reaffirmed IWC's achievements in amplifying indigenous women's voices, building leadership capacities, and fostering cross-border solidarity. It also underscored persistent barriers - including prohibitive land registration costs, bureaucratic delays, underrepresentation in decision-making spaces, and inadequate access to justice for GBV survivors.

Outcomes included a Joint Outcome Statement consolidating commitments to accelerate land rights reforms, strengthen policy engagement, and enhance grassroots capacity. Recommendations were addressed to the national government and constitutional commissions, development partners, and indigenous women's groups, focusing on actionable, time-bound measures to advance rights and inclusion.

This report captures the full proceedings, from the rich cultural opening to the detailed thematic session discussions, alongside concrete recommendations and a synthesized vision for the next decade. It serves as both a record of achievement and a roadmap for continued advocacy and transformative change.

Background

2025 marks a significant milestone for the Indigenous Women Council (IWC) as it celebrates 10 years of empowering, organizing, and amplifying the voices of indigenous women and girls in Kenya and beyond.

Founded in 2015 and hosted by the Samburu Women Trust (SWT), IWC was born out of the lived experiences and collective struggles of rural indigenous women seeking self-determination, cultural preservation, and inclusion in governance structures.

Over the past decade, IWC has become a powerful movement of resilience, solidarity, and leadership that has bridged traditional knowledge with modern rights-based advocacy to advance gender justice, land rights, and socio-political participation of pastoralist, hunter-gatherer, and minority communities.

This 10th Anniversary celebration is a moment to reflect, honor the strides made, and chart a bolder path for future action.

Objectives of the 10th Anniversary

The 10th Anniversary of the Indigenous Women Council seeks to:

1. **Celebrate** the achievements, stories of resilience, and transformative outcomes of Indigenous Women Council (IWC) over the last decade.
2. **Enhance** the visibility of Indigenous Women Council (IWC)'s impact and elevate the voices of indigenous women and girls.
3. **Strengthen** strategic partnerships and build new collaborations with stakeholders, funders, and allies.
4. **Mobilize** resources to sustain indigenous women-led initiatives and support the NAAPU Indigenous Women Fund.
5. **Reinforce** solidarity, intergenerational learning, and shared advocacy strategies among indigenous communities.



10

years of IWC impact

In its 10 year journey, IWC has catalyzed transformative change across Kenya's indigenous communities. Its key accomplishments include:

- Expanding representation from 11 to 23 counties, including outreach across the wider African region.
- Establishing formal governance structures and legal existence to operationalize the movement.
- Launching economic empowerment platforms like the Indigenous Women SACCO and Nasaruni Women Beadworks.
- Supporting over 10,000 women and girls to access leadership spaces at local, national, and international levels.
- Influencing public policy and facilitating indigenous women's inclusion in decision-making spaces.
- Amplifying indigenous voices through media engagement and community storytelling.
- These achievements have not only elevated indigenous women's agency but also fostered inclusive development, justice, and resilience within their communities.



Conference structure and methodology

The 10th Anniversary of the Indigenous Women Council was structured as a four-day national conference held from 6th to 9th August 2025 at Aberdare Prestige and Royal Cottages, Laikipia County. The event adopted an inclusive and participatory methodology that combined plenary sessions, breakout discussions, cultural showcases, technical forums, and ceremonial reflections.

The conference structure included:

- DAY 1** Arrival, registration, and a closed-door Funders Roundtable convening to build trust and deepen investment in indigenous women-led initiatives.
- DAY 2** Opening ceremonies, keynote addresses, thematic breakout sessions on land rights, legal engagement, and psychosocial support, followed by reflections on land justice and a cultural trade fair.
- DAY 3** High-level dialogues on indigenous women in leadership, land governance, climate action, and marginalized voices, culminating in the development of conference resolutions and a celebratory Gala Dinner.
- DAY 4** Celebration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, including traditional performances, media briefing, and the presentation of the Joint Outcome Statement. The methodology emphasized co-creation, storytelling, indigenous knowledge sharing, and experience-based learning. Sessions were designed to be inclusive of persons with disabilities, youth, elders, and marginalized community members, ensuring that all voices were represented. Facilitation was led by Indigenous Women leaders in thematic docket and government and civil society allies.



Summary of proceedings

Welcome & conference agenda overview



Remarks by Dr. Margaret Lesuuda, Master of Ceremony

Dr. Margaret Lesuuda, serving as Master of Ceremony, opened the 10th Anniversary celebrations with a warm yet commanding welcome that set the tone for four days of deep reflection, intergenerational dialogue, and strategic visioning. She framed the gathering as both a milestone and a living testament to the resilience of Indigenous women, noting the remarkable transformation from a small council of 10 women in 2014 to a movement of over 10,000 voices spanning 23 counties in Kenya and networks in Tanzania and Uganda.

Her remarks celebrated landmark achievements, including: four Indigenous Women Council (IWC) members receiving the Head of State Commendation (HSC) award; a 20% rise in Indigenous women's representation across governance structures; the establishment of the IWC Investment SACCO with over KES 600,000 in pooled member contributions; and direct grant support to 40 Indigenous women-led, youth, and PWD organizations, alongside unrestricted funding to 23 community groups under a trust-based model.

Positioning the deliberations as the "heart" of the celebration, Dr. Lesuuda encouraged participants to move beyond commemoration toward collective action - posing guiding questions on milestones achieved, barriers remaining, and strategies to strengthen the Council for future generations. She underscored the importance of honoring intergenerational wisdom, ensuring that elders, youth, and allies alike contributed their perspectives to shape a more inclusive future.

Her facilitation style was inclusive and empowering, inviting every voice to be heard while maintaining a respectful, forward-looking tone. She called on participants to reflect, challenge, and co-create solutions that will carry the Indigenous Women Council (IWC) into its next decade with boldness, unity, and purpose.

Why we celebrate indigenous women and girls



Welcoming remarks by Grace Lolim

Chairperson, IWC

In her heartfelt welcoming remarks, Grace Lolim, Chairperson of the Indigenous Women Council (IWC), set the tone for the 10th Anniversary celebrations by acknowledging the profound resilience, unity, and determination of indigenous women over the past decade. She emphasized that this milestone was not merely a commemoration of years passed but a celebration of a vibrant and growing movement of indigenous women leaders who have stood strong to protect their lands, cultures, and rights.

Her speech honored the journey from a small circle of courageous women to a national council representing voices from across Kenya's indigenous territories. She called upon the audience to reflect on their collective power, to heal, and to vision boldly into the future. She reminded all participants that the 10th Anniversary is both a tribute to the dreams of foremothers and an inspiration for the daughters who will carry the torch forward. Her call resonated deeply with the conference's theme - '10 Years, 10,000+ Women's Voices: Honoring Indigenous Women's Journey of Voice, Land, and Leadership' - as she urged all present to walk boldly into the next chapter with purpose and unity.



Statement by Ms. Rose Resiato & Ms. Florence Ntisiai; Indigenous Women

PWD Representatives

During the celebratory session titled 'Why We Celebrate Indigenous Women and Girls', a powerful declaration was issued by Indigenous Women with Disabilities, underscoring the importance of their recognition as agents of change, leaders, and vital contributors to inclusive development. The declaration highlighted the critical intersections of gender, disability, and indigeneity, and emphasized the ongoing systemic challenges such as exclusion from decision-making spaces, limited access to disability services, and heightened exposure to gender-based violence.

The women expressed deep appreciation to the Samburu Women Trust (SWT) for fostering safe, inclusive spaces that amplify marginalized voices and provide platforms for empowerment through advocacy, capacity building, and grassroots organizing.

Key demands included:

- Inclusive leadership and political representation through mandated quotas and dedicated programs.
- Comprehensive Gender-Based Violence (GBV) protection mechanisms and community awareness campaigns.
- Economic empowerment through vocational training, business support, and access to digital tools.
- Inclusive education and health services that are accessible and culturally relevant.

In a stirring call to action, the declaration urged national and county governments, civil society, development partners, and traditional leaders to partner with Indigenous Women with Disabilities as equals - emphasizing that inclusion must be intentional, intersectional, and actionable. The declaration set the tone for an inclusive and rights-based approach to development and policy that leaves no indigenous woman behind.

Statement by indigenous youth of Kenya by Silvana Lesuuda

Represented by Silvana Lesuuda, Chair of Young Women in Indigenous Women Council (IWC), the Indigenous Youth of Kenya delivered a powerful statement that echoed both gratitude and urgency. Acknowledging the foundational role of matriarchs who laid the groundwork for resistance, leadership, and identity, the youth asserted their position not as future leaders, but as the vanguards of today's struggles.

The youth statement detailed the existential challenges indigenous youth face - land dispossession, cultural erosion, climate-induced crises, exclusion from decision-making, and rising mental health issues. Despite these barriers, they emphasized readiness to lead and demanded inclusion in land governance, climate action, and national development frameworks. Their demands were clear: representation, direct funding, cultural education, digital access, and the full implementation of Article 56.

Calling for intergenerational solidarity, they urged governments to adopt youth-inclusive policies, partners to fund youth-led initiatives directly, and elders to mentor the next generation. In closing, the youth rejected symbolic inclusion in favor of impactful participation: 'We will no longer be included for visibility - we demand inclusion for impact.' Their declaration was a rallying call - 'We are here. We are rising. We are leading.'





IWC Investment SACCO presentation by Ms. Saadia Boru

In her presentation, Ms. Saadia Boru, representing the IWC Investment SACCO, provided a compelling account of the economic empowerment efforts led by indigenous women through cooperative finance.

The SACCO was officially established in June 2021 after years of informal mutual support among members. It currently comprises 60 registered members from 21 counties, reflecting the inclusive spirit of the Indigenous Women Council with leadership drawn from diverse indigenous communities including pastoralists, fisherfolks, hunter-gatherers, persons with disabilities, and widows.

The SACCO's main goal was to provide accessible financial services for indigenous women, particularly in the areas of emergency loans, school fees, and startup capital. Each member contributes KES 600 monthly (KES 500 for shares and KES 100 for welfare), with all funds managed transparently through a dedicated account in Laikipia County.

Despite its successes, the SACCO faces challenges such as limited financial literacy, lack of enterprise training, and constrained capital for scaling up investments.

Ms. Boru emphasized the need for increased capacity-building initiatives and appealed to development partners and donors to support the SACCO through financial literacy training, grants to boost share capital, and technical support. Her presentation underscored the SACCO's critical role in fostering indigenous women's economic autonomy, dignity, and long-term resilience.





OPENING REMARKS

A reflection on the 10-year journey, from cultural preservation and land rights to gender justice and solidarity

Jane Meriwas, HSC - Executive Director, SWT and National Convener, IWC

Jane Meriwas, Executive Director of the Samburu Women Trust and Convener of the Indigenous Women Council (IWC), opened the 10th Anniversary celebrations with a powerful reflection on the Council's journey from its humble beginnings in 2014 to its present status as a vibrant, transnational movement.

She described the IWC as "a decade of courage" – ten years of raising voices, claiming space, and creating opportunities for Indigenous women, rooted in ancestral heritage yet driven by the dreams of future generations.

From an initial group of 10 courageous women representing 11 counties, the Indigenous Women Council (IWC) has expanded to over 10,000 voices across 23 counties in Kenya, building solidarity with Indigenous women networks in Tanzania and Uganda. The movement has become an influential platform for pastoralists, hunter-gatherers, fisher folk, women with disabilities, young women, and adolescent girls, united by a shared vision of dignity, hope, and justice.

Meriwas celebrated key milestones, including:

- Four Indigenous Women Council (IWC) members receiving the Head of State Commendation (HSC) in recognition of their leadership.
- A 20% increase in Indigenous women's representation in governance structures at county, national, and state agency levels, including the Senate.
- The launch and registration of the Indigenous Women SACCO, with over 60 members and KES 600,000 in pooled contributions, as a driver of economic empowerment.
- Forty Indigenous women-led, youth, and PWD organizations accessing direct grant support, many for the first time.
- Twenty-three informal community groups benefiting from trust-based, unrestricted funding under a community-led response model.

She framed the anniversary not merely as a celebration but as an opportunity for deep reflection, inviting participants to examine lessons learned, identify transformative strategies, and envision a bolder, more inclusive future. Acknowledging the importance of intergenerational leadership, Meriwas urged participants to ensure that the next generation of Indigenous girls inherit a stronger, more resilient Council.

Her remarks set a tone of unity, hope, and purpose, emphasizing that the next decade must be shaped by the collective truths, dreams, and visions shared by all present. The Indigenous Women Council (IWC), she affirmed, remains a living movement - growing in numbers, expanding in reach, and deepening in impact.



GUEST SPEAKERS

Highlighting the transformation led by indigenous women in governance, heritage, and sustainability



Opening Remarks by Ms. Kabale Tache Arero

CEO, National Land Commission

Ms. Kabale Tache Arero, Secretary and CEO of the National Land Commission (NLC), delivered moving and empowering opening remarks during the guest speaker segment of the 10th Anniversary celebrations. Speaking both as a public leader and an Indigenous woman, Ms. Arero honored the Indigenous Women Council for a decade of courageous leadership, cultural preservation, and transformative advocacy.

She acknowledged the Council's remarkable efforts in elevating Indigenous women's participation in governance, especially in land and natural resource management. Ms. Arero underscored that Indigenous women have not only demanded their rightful place at decision-making tables but have also reshaped governance narratives to reflect their lived realities and community needs. Their work, she noted, was foundational to inclusive policy-making and sustainable development.

Highlighting the critical role of heritage, Ms. Arero praised Indigenous women as custodians of knowledge, environmental stewards, and defenders of sustainability. Their deep-rooted values, traditional knowledge systems, and practices, she argued, are vital for the protection of ancestral lands and Mother Earth.

On behalf of the National Land Commission, she reaffirmed the institution's unwavering commitment to address historical land injustices, advance Indigenous women's land rights, and foster inclusive frameworks that empower Indigenous communities. Her address concluded with a powerful call to sustain the momentum of the Indigenous women's movement, strengthen governance reforms, and build a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future led by Indigenous voices.





Remarks by Hon. Rehema Dida Jaldesa

Chairperson – National Gender and Equality Commission

Hon. Rehema Dida Jaldesa, Chairperson of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), delivered a powerful keynote address during the 10th Anniversary of the Indigenous Women Council and the commemoration of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Her remarks paid tribute to a decade of profound transformation marked by the resilience, activism, and leadership of indigenous women and girls.

Framing the theme 'A Decade of Courage: Indigenous Women and Girls Rising to Shape Policy and Influence Inclusion' as both timely and deeply personal, Hon. Jaldesa emphasized that indigenous women are not mere victims of marginalization but are agents of change, keepers of ancestral wisdom, and shapers of national and global policy.

She highlighted the growing influence of indigenous women in Kenya's governance, citing recent appointments such as CS Soipan Tuya (Defense), CS Beatrice Askul (East African Community), PS Silvia Museiya (Wildlife), and CEO Qabale Tache (National Land Commission), among others.

Hon. Jaldesa lauded the achievements of indigenous women in global forums, national movements, land rights advocacy, climate justice, and cultural preservation. She spotlighted how previously marginalized women and girls have become digital storytellers, peacebuilders, and policy influencers actively shaping Kenya's development agenda.

Despite notable progress, Hon. Jaldesa acknowledged that structural inequalities persist - land dispossession, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), poverty, limited access to healthcare and education, and exclusion from decision-making continue to undermine indigenous women's advancement. She outlined a bold vision for the next decade centered on:

- Demanding full inclusion in governance, peacebuilding, and resource allocation.
- Investing in education, mentorship, and empowerment of indigenous girls.
- Safeguarding cultural heritage, sacred lands, and indigenous identity.
- Building cross-border indigenous women's networks to influence global discourse.

In her closing remarks, Hon. Jaldesa invoked the spirit of solidarity with a resonant affirmation: "When indigenous women rise, we do not rise alone - we lift entire communities, protect the earth, and redefine power." Her message was both a reflection and a rallying call for courageous, collective, and sustained action in the decade ahead.





Remarks by Hon. Josephat Lowoi, Secretary

Minorities and Marginalized Affairs Unit

Hon. Josephat Lowoi, Secretary for the Minorities and Marginalized Affairs Unit in the Executive Office of the President, delivered a powerful tribute to the achievements and leadership of indigenous women during the 10th Anniversary of the Indigenous Women Council. Representing the government at this landmark celebration, Hon. Lowoi extended heartfelt recognition for a decade marked by courage, resilience, and transformative progress led by indigenous women.

He acknowledged the deep impact of indigenous women's initiatives across Kenya - from grassroots organizing to high-level advocacy - emphasizing that indigenous women are not only defenders of heritage and land but also key contributors to Kenya's social, economic, and environmental fabric. Citing inspiring examples, he highlighted the leadership of Zaharia Ali in coastal conservancies, Amina Ahmed (Mama Pweza) in marine resource management, and the globally acclaimed Paran Women's Group, whose work in forest conservation earned them recognition at COP28.

Hon. Lowoi celebrated the instrumental role of organizations such as Samburu Women Trust in protecting indigenous identities, promoting gender justice, and preserving cultural integrity. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to indigenous women's empowerment, noting targeted support for vocational training, environmental projects, and legislative reforms aimed at land rights protection.

A key milestone mentioned was the establishment of the Minorities and Marginalized Affairs Unit within the Office of the President, which is currently developing a comprehensive national policy for ethnic minorities and marginalized communities. This policy will promote equitable access to resources, inclusive political participation, and the safeguarding of cultural traditions.

In closing, Hon. Lowoi pledged to facilitate a formal engagement between indigenous women leaders and the President - a request initiated by the Samburu Women Trust. His closing remarks underscored a vision of unity, justice, and empowerment: 'Your journey was a powerful testament to what was possible when courage meets purpose.' His remarks further anchored the importance of government-indigenous partnerships in realizing inclusive, sustainable development for all.



Hon. Tiyah Galgalo, MBS

Championing indigenous women's resilience and leadership

Hon. Tiyah Galgalo delivered a powerful and deeply inspirational address, celebrating the resilience, ingenuity, and leadership of Indigenous women in East and Central Africa. Speaking to a gathering of elders, leaders, and allies, she described Indigenous women as the bedrock of their communities - keepers of culture, architects of local economies, and guardians of ancestral land.

She emphasized that, for too long, these vital contributions had been overlooked, and women's voices silenced. However, she declared that this era was ending, with Indigenous women now "writing a new chapter" in history - one grounded in agency, solidarity, and self-determination.

Drawing on the example of the Paran group in Narok, Kenya, Hon. Galgalo illustrated how Indigenous women are reclaiming and restoring the Mau Forest. Through traditional ecological knowledge and determined stewardship, these women are not only planting trees but also "replanting hope", safeguarding water sources, revitalizing soils, and protecting future generations. They are building their own tables of influence, rooted firmly in the land they protect.

She highlighted similar stories from across the region where women have become entrepreneurs, innovators, and community leaders - transforming beadwork, farming, and other traditional skills into sustainable businesses that uplift families and entire communities. These initiatives, she noted, prove that economic empowerment was not an abstract concept but a lived reality being shaped daily by Indigenous women.

Acknowledging the persistent challenges, Hon. Galgalo spoke candidly about the intersectional discrimination Indigenous women face: gender bias, ethnic marginalization, and reprisals for speaking out. She underscored ongoing struggles for land rights, justice, and protection from violence and harmful cultural practices. Yet, she affirmed that Indigenous women are not merely survivors - they are thrivers, leveraging their collective strength to secure justice, fight for land, and claim a place in decision-making from the village council to the international climate stage.

Her call to action was urgent and unifying: to leave the conference not just with ideas but with a renewed commitment to amplify each other's voices, invest in one another's enterprises, and present a united front against forces of marginalization. She concluded with a rallying reminder that when Indigenous women rise, entire communities, nations, and the world move towards greater justice, sustainability, and equity.



Remarks by Hon. Koinange Wahome

County Secretary – Laikipia County

Hon. Koinange Wahome, County Secretary of Laikipia County, delivered a heartfelt address on behalf of H.E. Governor Joshua Irungu and the people of Laikipia, welcoming the Indigenous Women Council and all participants to the 10th Anniversary celebrations. His remarks reflected a deep appreciation for the decade-long journey of courage, leadership, and transformative action led by Indigenous women across Kenya.

He commended the Samburu Women Trust and the Indigenous Women Council for their visionary leadership and their decision to host the celebration in Laikipia - home to diverse communities, resilient people, and progressive policies. He described the event as more than a celebration; it was a testament to the values that bind Kenyan society - justice, equity, and inclusive development.

Hon. Wahome emphasized Laikipia County's commitment to inclusive governance, especially for women in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs). Over the past decade, the county government has fostered partnerships with women-led groups, supported Indigenous initiatives, and implemented programs to enable women to lead in land ownership, entrepreneurship, peacebuilding, and environmental stewardship. Indigenous women, he noted, are the custodians of knowledge, protectors of biodiversity, and architects of cohesive communities.

Looking ahead, Hon. Wahome called for expanded partnerships, deeper integration of Indigenous knowledge systems in policy-making, and sustained efforts to amplify Indigenous women's voices in all spheres of governance. He pledged the County Government of Laikipia's continued collaboration with the Indigenous Women Council and other stakeholders, affirming that the county's development agenda will remain rooted in dignity, equity, and meaningful participation.

His concluding message was a reaffirmation of solidarity, shared prosperity, and a collective journey toward fulfilling the constitutional promise of inclusion for all - especially for Indigenous women and girls whose voices, leadership, and heritage remain vital to Kenya's present and future.

Breaking barriers: indigenous women in leadership

The guest speakers at the Indigenous Women Council (IWC) 10th Anniversary were all remarkable Indigenous women whose life journeys reflect courage, determination, and the unyielding spirit to overcome systemic and cultural barriers. Each has risen to leadership against all odds, transforming personal struggles into platforms for advocacy, policy change, and empowerment for other Indigenous women and girls.



Remarks by Hon. Naisula Lesuuda

MP, Samburu West

Hon. Naisula Lesuuda delivered a deeply inspiring keynote under the theme *"We Are Indigenous Women Leaders – The Butterflies of Our Generation: Don't Fear to Fly."* Drawing on her Samburu heritage, she explained the meaning of her name "Naisula" – victorious – and her hometown Maralal – the place of shiny things – framing leadership as both a personal calling and a collective inheritance for Indigenous women.

Acknowledging the hurdles faced by Indigenous women in leadership, Hon. Lesuuda emphasized that the systemic barriers they face were not self-created, but imposed by those threatened by Indigenous resilience, innovation, and unity. She likened the journey of Indigenous women leaders to the growth stages of a butterfly - an extended process of visioning, preparation, transformation, and impactful emergence.

She shared her *"Butterfly Leadership Guide"* for Indigenous women:

- **Egg Stage:** Birth of Vision: Planting the seed of leadership despite societal doubt.
- **Caterpillar Stage:** Learning and Preparation: Equipping oneself with knowledge, networks, and courage for the journey ahead.
- **Pupa Stage:** Transformation: Using periods of stillness or adversity to refine values, strategy, and inner strength.
- **Butterfly Stage:** Emergence and Impact: Stepping boldly into leadership roles, inspiring others, and mentoring the next generation.

Using the butterfly as a metaphor for transformation and resilience, she urged Indigenous women to embrace each stage of growth, protect their "wings" during life's storms by seeking refuge in safe spaces, and to re-emerge stronger and more determined.

Her address called on Indigenous women to break barriers, claim their rightful space in decision-making, and inspire those still in the early stages of their leadership journey.



Hon. Sarah Korere

MP, Laikipia North

Growing up in a pastoralist community in Laikipia, Hon. Korere faced a deeply patriarchal environment where women's roles were narrowly defined. Her path to leadership was paved through mentorship by other pioneering women, including those present at the conference. Despite public scrutiny, gendered criticism, and the challenges of political life, she broke through the barriers to become an influential legislator.

In her remarks, Hon. Korere emphasized the importance of women authoring their own narratives and refusing to be silenced by denigration. She urged participants to recruit male allies in advancing the cause of Indigenous women and challenged the fixation on women's worth "from the waist down." Her message was clear: resilience, mentorship, and strategic alliances are critical for women's advancement.



PS Silvia Museiya

Principal Secretary, State Department for Wildlife Management

Raised in a marginalized Indigenous community, PS Museiya's trajectory to senior government leadership was defined by her belief in education as the great equalizer. She entered spaces where women, particularly Indigenous women, were historically absent, and rose to national prominence through persistence and a commitment to justice.

Acknowledging SWT's steadfast advocacy, she celebrated the courage of anti-FGM trailblazers who have made it possible for today's movement to flourish. PS Museiya encouraged Indigenous women to venture beyond their immediate contexts into global arenas, turn misfortunes into opportunities, and embrace collaboration over competition. She reiterated the government's commitment to resolving human-wildlife conflicts and ensuring fair compensation for affected communities.



Bernadette Loloju

Chief Executive Officer, Anti-FGM Board

Having lived through the harsh realities of FGM, Ms. Loloju understands the urgency of protecting girls at the household level. Her leadership at the Anti-FGM Board reflects both professional expertise and personal commitment to ending harmful practices. She reminded participants that women's empowerment does not equate to men's disempowerment, and that self-worth was a cornerstone of leadership. Citing the My Dear Daughter campaign, she emphasized the power of dialogue involving both men and girls to break cycles of violence. She challenged women to acknowledge their role in perpetuating harmful traditions and take ownership in protecting the next generation.



Ipato Surum

Chair, Anti-FGM Board

Ms. Surum's personal story was one of extraordinary resilience. Subjected to FGM at 13, married off at 17 to a man three decades her senior, and a mother of three by 23, she endured years of hardship, including gender-based violence from co-wives. At 33, after 17 years of marriage and raising six children, she returned to school, completing high school in two years and qualifying for university admission.

Her lived experiences have fueled her commitment to fighting harmful practices, promoting education, and advocating for women's economic empowerment as a path to self-sufficiency. She reminded participants that ending FGM was everyone's responsibility, not just the government's, and encouraged nominated MCAs to leverage their positions for greater political influence.



Hon. Mumina Bonaya Gollo

Women Representative, Isiolo County

From humble beginnings in Isiolo, Hon. Bonaya has risen to represent her community at the national level, driven by a passion for Indigenous women's empowerment. Her journey reflects years of grassroots activism, advocacy, and capacity-building work.

In her remarks, she encouraged women to sharpen their skills in areas they are passionate about and to seize volunteer opportunities as pathways to leadership. She emphasized the importance of continuous self-improvement and collective support in advancing women's voices.



Nuria Gollo, HSC

Executive Director, Marsabit Women Advocacy and Development Organization

A seasoned activist and one of the founders of IWC, Ms. Gollo has consistently fought against FGM and the marginalization of Indigenous women. She has contested various leadership positions, using the empowerment and solidarity cultivated within IWC and SWT as a springboard.

She underscored the peer-based ethos of IWC, where all members are equals, and cautioned against the tendency of some women to abandon collective causes after receiving individual support. Her work is rooted in a belief that unity is essential for sustained progress.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT: The speakers' stories, though unique, were bound by common threads: early-life adversity, societal restrictions on women's roles, and the transformational power of education, mentorship, and economic empowerment. Their messages underscored that the fight for Indigenous women's rights was both personal and political, and that turning personal struggles into leadership platforms can drive lasting systemic change.

Thematic plenary Q&A session

The plenary session, which combined the Legal & Human Rights Engagement and Land Rights themes, brought together representatives from the National Land Commission (NLC), Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), Anti-FGM Board, the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) and the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)

to respond to pressing concerns from Indigenous women, girls, and community leaders.

Officers from these agencies took time to outline the mandates, **Mode of operation**, **geographical reach**, and points of contact so participants could frame their questions effectively during plenary.

Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR)

Motto: Haki kwa wote, kila wakati! (Justice for all, all the time!)

Constitutional mandate

KNCHR was an independent constitutional commission established under Article 59 of the Constitution of Kenya to promote and protect human rights for all. Its mandate extends to economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights, with a focus on ensuring that Indigenous peoples' rights are recognised as human rights.

Mode of operation

- Receives and investigates complaints of human rights violations, including land rights violations, gender-based violence, and discrimination.
- Conducts public inquiries into systemic rights violations - e.g., their major inquiry on Business and Human Rights examined how development projects like the Turkana Wind Project affect Indigenous communities' land rights.
- Engages in litigation, advocacy, and advisory work on policies affecting marginalized communities.

Geographical reach

While headquartered in Nairobi, KNCHR operates across the country through field offices in Kisumu, Mombasa, Garissa, Wajir, Isiolo, Kitale and Nyahururu and community outreach programs, with past work in Tana River, Turkana, and Mau Forest (Ogiek case). They can be accessed in pastoralist and Indigenous areas through scheduled outreach visits and partnerships with local civil society organizations.

How to reach them

Complaints can be filed at KNCHR offices, through their website, or during mobile rights clinics. Indigenous women and girls can approach them for help with land rights, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases, and violations by state or private actors.



Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) – The Ombudsman

Constitutional mandate

The CAJ was established to enforce the right to fair administrative action under Article 47 of the Constitution. Its primary role was to investigate and address maladministration, unfair treatment, or abuse of power by public offices.

Mode of operation

- Handles complaints about delays or denial of government services such as issuance of birth certificates, identity cards, pensions, and other entitlements.
- Investigates denial of access to public information, a right enshrined in the Constitution.
- Mediates between citizens and public offices to resolve complaints efficiently.

Geographical reach

CAJ operates offices in Nyahururu, Isiolo, Nairobi, Mombasa, Eldoret, Kisumu, Makueni, and Garissa, with plans to devolve to all counties. This network enables them to serve pastoralist and Indigenous counties directly.

How to reach them

Complaints can be lodged in person, by post, or via email. Indigenous women can approach CAJ to challenge bureaucratic delays, demand transparency in government processes, or appeal unfair administrative decisions.

National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)

Constitutional mandate

NGEC was mandated under Article 59 to promote gender equality and freedom from discrimination, focusing on special interest groups - women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, older members of society, minorities, and marginalized groups.

Mode of operation

- Monitors and advises on gender mainstreaming in national development.
- Receives, investigates, and litigates cases on discrimination, gender-based violence, FGM, early marriage, and exclusion from decision-making.
- Works with both state and non-state actors to develop inclusive policies and practices.

Geographical reach

NGEC operates from Nairobi with a countrywide mandate. They partner with county governments and civil society to extend services to marginalized and pastoralist communities.

How to reach them

Complaints and requests for intervention can be made via NGEC offices, county gender offices, or during mobile outreach clinics. Indigenous women can seek their assistance in cases of exclusion, gender-based violence, or denial of services based on discrimination.

National Land Commission (NLC)

Constitutional mandate

NLC was established under Article 67 of the Constitution to manage public land, recommend national land policy, and investigate historical land injustices. It plays a crucial role in community land registration, which was vital for protecting Indigenous peoples' tenure rights.

Mode of operation

- Coordinates with the Ministry of Lands to facilitate community land registration under the Community Land Act.
- Investigates and recommends remedies for historical land injustices affecting Indigenous peoples.
- Advises government and communities on fair compensation in cases of compulsory land acquisition.

Geographical reach

With a presence in all 47 counties through county land management boards, NLC can directly engage Indigenous communities in Laikipia, Samburu, Turkana, Marsabit, Garissa, and other pastoralist areas.

How to reach them

Indigenous women can approach NLC for help with land registration, compensation claims for development projects like Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET), and addressing historical land injustices.



Anti-FGM Board

Constitutional mandate

The Anti-FGM Board was mandated under the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2011 to coordinate and harmonize work on the elimination of FGM across Kenya.

Mode of operation

- Works with communities, government agencies, and civil society to implement anti-FGM laws.
- Conducts public education campaigns and supports survivors in accessing justice and psychosocial services.
- Engages elders, youth, and cultural leaders in alternative rites of passage to replace FGM.

Geographical reach

Active in high-prevalence counties including Samburu, Marsabit, Garissa, West Pokot, and Narok. Uses both county-based staff and mobile outreach to access remote areas.

How to reach them

Community members can report FGM cases through local administration, police, or directly to the Board. Indigenous women and girls can also access information, safe spaces, and referrals for health and legal services.



Key thematic issues and responses

Participants raised deeply personal, community-specific, and cross-cutting issues, seeking practical solutions from the agencies mandated to protect their rights and livelihoods during the Q & A plenary session. The issues and agencies' responses are as synthesized hereunder.

Harmful cultural practices – FGM and child marriage

Participants from Marsabit, Baringo, Laikipia North, Pokot, Turkana, Kajiado, and Narok counties shared disturbing accounts of ongoing FGM, some perpetrated during school holidays or under the guise of cultural events. Survivors and activists reported resistance from communities, lack of rescue centres, and threats to those advocating against the practice.

Participants underscored the need for stronger support mechanisms for survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and harmful practices, especially young mothers who are still children themselves.

Agency responses

- The Anti-FGM Board acknowledged that enforcement challenges persist due to FGM being a “family issue” that was hard to report. The Board committed to strengthening community awareness campaigns, sharing hotline numbers, and pushing for at least one rescue center per county, despite most existing ones being privately run.
- They confirmed the review of the Prohibition of FGM Act was underway to address evidence gaps and survivor protection.
- Agencies emphasized the importance of survivor-led campaigns and urged men to actively support anti-FGM initiatives to dismantle stigma.
- The Anti-FGM Board and NGEN expressed commitment to exploring targeted grants, direct survivor funding, and partnerships with NGOs to enhance protection and rehabilitation services for survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and harmful practices.

Land rights, community land registration, and compensation

Speakers highlighted unresolved historical injustices, the fencing-off of grazing lands, land grabs linked to development projects (e.g., Lake Turkana Wind Power, Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET)), and inadequate or delayed compensation for compulsory acquisition and human-wildlife conflict. Concerns included costly, slow, and opaque community land registration processes, which hinder claims for redress.

Agency responses

- The NLC clarified its mandate over public and community land and historical land injustices, noting that electoral boundary disputes fall outside its remit.
- For unregistered community land, compensation claims cannot be processed; thus, expediting registration was crucial.
- NLC's new Community Land Docket and four county coordinators are tasked with supporting adjudication, demarcation, and registration. However, the Community Land Act, 2016 did not allocate adequate funding for these processes.
- The NLC was researching registration challenges with the intention of advising the Ministry of Lands and urged communities to document complaints formally.
- On human-wildlife conflict, the CAJ and Ministry of Tourism & Wildlife acknowledged a backlog of claims - some dating to 2020 - caused by underfunding, but noted new allocations (KES 1 billion annually) may speed up resolution. They also plan to reduce the statutory presumption of death period from seven to three years for missing persons.

Public participation and inclusion in decision-making

Community leaders expressed frustration at exclusion from policy-making, land use planning, and benefit-sharing from natural resource exploitation. Indigenous women, girls, and youth called for representation in development negotiations and integration programmes across counties. They also requested grants to scale up grassroots projects.

Agency responses

- The KNCHR stressed that free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) must precede any development project, such as Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET). They committed to monitoring, documenting violations, and advising on remedies.
- Agencies encouraged communities to utilize
- The CAJ explained its role in addressing maladministration, including exclusion from decision-making processes, and invited women to channel specific cases through its offices and mobile clinics.

Socio-economic rights and livelihood security

Speakers drew attention to poverty-driven vulnerabilities - such as former FGM practitioners turning to the practice for income and the displacement of pastoralists by refugees or security operations. Others noted the absence of coordinated agency action in addressing overlapping mandates.

Agency responses

- Agencies acknowledged the need for inter-commission collaboration to avoid duplication and ensure comprehensive support for Indigenous communities. They however decried chronic underfunding that has stalled the envisaged Integrated Grievance Management System (IGMS) that would have aided in lodging and tracking complaints across commissions. - CAJ and KNCHR agreed to explore joint interventions for issues cutting across human rights, gender equality, and land administration.
- The Anti-FGM Board expressed interest in supporting alternative livelihoods for ex-practitioners to break economic dependency on harmful practices.
- This session reinforced the value of direct dialogue between communities and state actors, providing a space for transparency, joint problem-solving, and the reaffirmation of mutual commitments to address systemic challenges facing Indigenous women, girls, fisherfolk, and persons with disabilities.
- Overall, the plenary session underscored deep systemic barriers to justice, land security, and protection from harmful practices, but also highlighted ongoing policy reviews, resource allocations, and institutional mechanisms that communities can leverage for redress. The agencies urged Indigenous women leaders to maintain momentum through structured advocacy, formal complaint mechanisms, and active participation in public decision-making spaces.



Comprehensive synthesized recommendations narrative

The 10th Anniversary of the Indigenous Women Council (IWC) provided a pivotal platform for reflection, learning, and the co-creation of actionable pathways to advance the rights and wellbeing of Indigenous women, girls, fisherfolk, and persons with disabilities. Across plenary sessions, thematic breakouts, and stakeholder engagements, a clear consensus emerged: transformative change requires coordinated, well-resourced, and sustained action by the National Government, development partners, and grassroots Indigenous networks.



National government (through relevant state agencies)

For the National Government, the call is to decisively address systemic barriers to land ownership, political representation, justice, and equitable compensation. Participants urged the Government - through the National Land Commission (NLC), Ministry of Lands, relevant state agencies, and constitutional commissions - to fast-track and subsidize community land registration processes, reduce bureaucratic hurdles, and establish mobile registration units targeting pastoralist and remote Indigenous communities.

There was strong advocacy for embedding affirmative action measures and quotas that ensure Indigenous women, youth, and persons with disabilities are not only represented in leadership and decision-making forums but are also empowered to influence policy and budgetary decisions at national and county levels. The Government was also urged to expand GBV prevention and survivor support infrastructure, including establishing at least one operational rescue center in each county, deploying trained female

police officers in Indigenous territories, and instituting a fast-track judicial mechanism for GBV cases to mitigate delays and secondary victimization.

In addressing historical and emerging displacements linked to development and extractive projects such as Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) and Lake Turkana Wind Power, stakeholders recommended a transparent, time-bound compensation framework that ensures communities receive fair restitution and equitable benefit-sharing.

Similar urgency was expressed for compensation to victims of human-wildlife conflict, coupled with proactive wildlife management strategies. Additionally, participants called for greater inter-agency coordination - bringing together NLC, KNCHR, CAJ, the Anti-FGM Board, and sector ministries - to address overlapping mandates and respond to community grievances in a unified, effective manner.

Indigenous Women Council (IWC)/SWT partners and funders

For Indigenous Women Council (IWC)/SWT funders, the conference reaffirmed the critical role of sustained, flexible, and targeted support. Funders were urged to scale up investments in grassroots legal aid services, paralegal training, and collective community mobilization to accelerate land registration and challenge illegal land dispossession.

Donor support was seen as vital in strengthening leadership pipelines through scholarships, mentorships, and tailored training for Indigenous women, girls, and persons with disabilities to enhance their participation in governance.

Beyond leadership, funders were encouraged to resource GBV survivor services, including shelters, psychosocial support, and awareness campaigns that dismantle stigma and foster safe reporting environments. Recognizing the vulnerability of Indigenous territories to resource exploitation, stakeholders called on funders to support independent monitoring and advocacy for adherence to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in all development interventions.

Grassroots indigenous women organizations and groups

At the grassroots level, Indigenous women's organizations and groups were recognized as the backbone of community-led change. They were encouraged to organize collective applications for community land registration, pool resources for survey and adjudication costs, and maintain continuous engagement with land administration authorities.

Building strong, coordinated advocacy networks was highlighted as essential for pressing for inclusive governance, anti-FGM enforcement, and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention, including the establishment of community-managed rescue centers.

Grassroots actors were also urged to take proactive roles in negotiating with developers and government agencies on benefit-sharing, resettlement, and environmental safeguards, ensuring that Indigenous voices are central to decision-making processes.

In addressing human-wildlife conflict, communities were advised to document incidents systematically, engage with wildlife authorities, and advocate for prompt and fair compensation mechanisms.

Complementing these actions, grassroots groups should lead education and empowerment programs that challenge harmful cultural practices, enhance literacy, and promote sustainable, community-driven livelihoods - particularly targeting ex-FGM practitioners, fisher folk, and other marginalized groups.

In sum, these forward-looking recommendations form an actionable roadmap for dismantling structural inequities and enhancing the agency of Indigenous women and girls. The implementation of these measures will require political will, resource commitments, and inclusive partnerships across all sectors.

If acted upon with urgency and unity, they hold the potential to transform Indigenous communities into spaces where women and girls lead, thrive, and safeguard their collective futures.

Annexure I

Women's Declarations at the Tail-End of the Indigenous Women Council (IWC) 10th Anniversary Celebrations

400

Total IWC members

23

Kenya counties covered by IWC

We, the 400 members of the Indigenous Women Council (IWC), representing Indigenous women in 23 counties across Kenya and sister networks in Tanzania and Uganda, convened in Nanyuki from 6th to 9th August 2025 for the 10th Anniversary celebrations of the IWC and to mark the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples under the global theme "*Indigenous Peoples and AI: Defending Rights, Shaping Futures.*"

Recognizing a decade of courage, resilience, and leadership by Indigenous women, girls, and persons living with disabilities, we celebrate 10,000 voices that have defended our lands, challenged harmful practices, preserved cultural heritage, and led Indigenous-driven climate solutions.

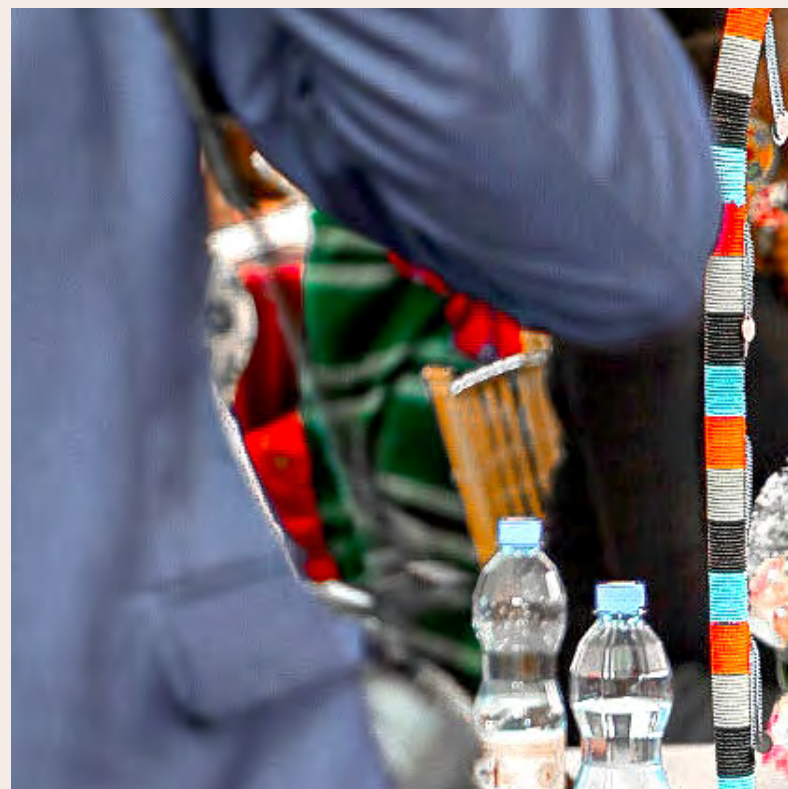
We are cognisant that while immense progress has been made in inclusion, representation, and the protection of our rights, persistent barriers in community land registration, equitable participation in decision-making, access to justice, and fair compensation for communities affected by extractive and development projects still undermine our advancement.

We acknowledge the power of technology and innovation, including Artificial Intelligence, as tools that can preserve our languages, document our traditional knowledge, and amplify our advocacy. Yet, we are aware of the risks these tools pose when Indigenous voices are excluded from their design, governance, and application. Our future must be shaped with Indigenous peoples at the decision-making table, ensuring technology strengthens rather than erases our identities.

As we reflect on the past decade and look to the future, we reaffirm our collective commitment to:

- Protecting our lands and resources from exploitation and harm.
- Ensuring full inclusion of Indigenous women, girls, youth, and persons with disabilities in leadership, governance, and decision-making spaces.
- Safeguarding cultural heritage and advancing Indigenous-led climate action.
- Prioritizing access to justice for survivors of gender-based violence and harmful cultural practices. - Securing just and timely compensation for communities impacted by mega projects and human-wildlife conflict.

This joint outcome statement was both a reflection of our journey and a roadmap for the work ahead - rooted in solidarity, driven by purpose, and committed to defending rights, shaping futures, and ensuring our voices remain strong for generations to come.



National government (through relevant state agencies)

Community land registration

- Streamline and decentralize community land registration processes to county levels to eliminate bureaucratic delays.
- County governments should allocate resources to undertake adjudication and fasttracking registration of community lands.
- Allocate a specific budget line within the Ministry of Lands to support the registration of community lands and issuance of titles to Indigenous communities.
- The National Land Commission should fasttrack addressing historical land injustice claims to unlock registration of community lands
- National Land Commission (NLC) to monitor land rights violations and prioritize redress mechanisms for Indigenous women-led claims.

Inclusion and representation

- Enforce affirmative action policies to guarantee political representation for Indigenous women, youth, and persons with disabilities at national and county levels.
- Operationalize Article 56 of the Constitution by establishing a National Inclusion Fund for minority and marginalized groups.

Access to justice

- Establish and adequately staff gender desks in police stations located in Indigenous territories, with a focus on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and FGM cases.
- Deploy women police officers in all areas with high incidences of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and harmful cultural practices for better response and trust-building.

Compensation and redress

- Fast-track compensation for human-wildlife conflict victims and communities displaced or harmed by extractive and mega infrastructure projects such as Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) and British Army training operations.
- Enforce community consultation and consent (FPIC) before any development project was approved in Indigenous territories.

Education and curriculum reform

- Direct the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to integrate Indigenous knowledge and harmful cultural practice awareness into school curricula.
- Promote inclusive education for children with disabilities in Indigenous communities through adaptive infrastructure and culturally relevant learning tools.





Sustainability and capacity building

- Increase financial and technical support for grassroots-led Indigenous women's groups, especially the Indigenous Women Council (IWC) Investment SACCO, to expand enterprise training, savings schemes, and capital access.
- Invest in long-term capacity-building programs for financial literacy, legal literacy, leadership development, and digital advocacy targeting Indigenous women and girls.

Strategic advocacy support

- Support evidence-based advocacy by resourcing community-led documentation, participatory research, and legal aid initiatives on land rights, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and extractive impacts.

Resourcing safe spaces and networks

- Fund the establishment and operationalization of county-level rescue centers for girls escaping FGM and early marriage.
- Facilitate inter-county exchange forums and solidarity networks among Indigenous women and youth to strengthen collective voice and resilience.

Monitoring and learning

- Support the development of participatory monitoring frameworks to assess the impact of funded initiatives and ensure accountability to Indigenous communities.

Grassroots indigenous women organizations and groups

Community land rights advocacy

- Mobilize communities to accelerate identification, mapping, and documentation of communal land claims.
- Forge alliances with legal aid providers and paralegals to navigate registration and claim processes effectively.

Inclusive leadership mobilization

- Identify and mentor indigenous women and girls with leadership potential to take up spaces in community development committees, resource management boards, and electoral processes.
- Build cross-generational leadership models that pair elders with youth leaders for knowledge transfer and solidarity.

Justice and protection

- Establish community-based reporting and response mechanisms for Gender-Based Violence (GBV), leveraging safe houses, traditional leadership, and faith-based allies.
- Work with trusted legal allies to push for restitution, compensation, and the criminal prosecution of perpetrators of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and land-related abuses.

Documentation and visibility

- Collect and disseminate stories of change and resilience from Indigenous women to influence policy and public perception.
- Leverage social media and local media outlets to amplify Indigenous women's voices, challenges, and contributions.

Environmental and cultural defense

- Partner with conservation actors to integrate Indigenous knowledge systems into climate action and ecosystem restoration.
- Monitor and challenge external actors, such as the British Army and extractive industries, whose operations threaten community safety or ancestral lands.

Issued this 9th Day of August, the Year of our Lord 2025.

From the roots of our traditions to the possibilities of tomorrow, we walk forward - defending rights, shaping futures, and ensuring that our knowledge, our lands, and our voices remain strong for generations to come.



Annexure II

Indigenous Women Council (IWC) End Conference Statement 2025

This statement represents the collective voice of the Indigenous Women Council (IWC) and its partners, delivered at the close of the IWC 10th Anniversary celebrations in Nanyuki, held from 6th to 9th August 2025. It encapsulates the deliberations, commitments, and calls to action emerging from four days of reflection, dialogue, and strategic planning.

August 9, 2025

Indigenous Women Council Marks 10 Years of Resilience and Leadership on International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

THEME 2025

Indigenous Peoples and AI: Defending Rights, Shaping Futures

Nanyuki, Kenya - Today, as the world commemorates the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, the Indigenous Women Council of Kenya (IWC) proudly celebrates a decade of solidarity, advocacy, and action - amplifying the voices of over 10,000 Indigenous women from pastoralist, hunter-gatherer, and fisherfolk communities.

The 10-year celebration brought together 300 Indigenous women leaders from across Kenya, honoring them as unique inheritors and practitioners of ancestral cultures, knowledge systems, and ways of relating to people and the environment. For generations, Indigenous Peoples have sought recognition of their identities, ways of life, and rights to their traditional lands, territories, and natural resources. Yet, history bears witness to persistent violations of these rights.

This year's global theme, "Indigenous Peoples and AI: Defending Rights, Shaping Futures," underscores a new frontier of struggle - ensuring Indigenous Peoples are not excluded or exploited in the digital age. Central to this was Indigenous Data Sovereignty: the right of Indigenous Peoples to govern, control, and protect data that pertains to their cultures, lands, languages, and bodies.



Women are reclaiming Indigenous seeds. Youth are organizing around water as a right, not a commodity. Elders are restoring traditional governance systems to protect communal lands. What sustains us was not just advocacy - it was memory, and the moral clarity that this struggle was not for us alone. It was for those not yet born. Let us be the generation that did not break the chain of responsibility. The land remembers. The water listens. And the climate waits."

Call to action

On this day, Indigenous women call upon the State to recognize, honor, and deliver services in consultation with Indigenous Peoples, and to take urgent action in the following areas:



Community land rights

Streamline and decentralize community land registration processes to county levels to eliminate bureaucratic delays.



Political representation

Enforce affirmative action policies to guarantee representation for Indigenous women, youth, and persons with disabilities at both national and county levels.



Access to justice

Fast-track resolution of historical injustices and provide compensation to victims of human-wildlife conflict, displacement, and harm caused by extractive and mega infrastructure projects such as Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) and British Army training operations.



Education reform

Direct the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to integrate Indigenous knowledge and harmful cultural practice awareness into school curricula.



Gender justice

Establish and adequately staff gender desks in police stations located in Indigenous territories, prioritizing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and FGM cases.

As the Indigenous Women Council (IWC) reflects on its 10-year journey, it reaffirms its commitment to protecting ancestral lands, advancing women's leadership, and ensuring that technology serves as a tool for empowerment rather than exploitation.

Investing in indigenous women and girls





About the Indigenous Women Council (IWC)

The Indigenous Women Council (IWC) is a national platform bringing together Indigenous women leaders and communities in Kenya to defend rights, promote Indigenous knowledge systems, and advance gender equality. Founded in 2015, the Council has been a driving force in advocacy, capacity building, and solidarity movements across Indigenous communities.

Signed on this day 9th of August 2025



Name Name
Chairperson
Indigenous Women Council

Jane Meriwas
Executive Director
Samburu Women Trust/National IWC
Convenor



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