ICCA Consortium Statement on the CBD COP17 Agenda Item 8(a): Resource Mobilization

Statement by the ICCA Consortium at the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Yerevan, Armenia

By **ICCA Consortium**

The ICCA Consortium welcomes the continued work on resource mobilization and the implementation of the Strategy for Resource Mobilization 2025–2030 to support the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). Yet, as the 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP17) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) undertakes the first review of the Strategy's implementation, we must be clear: The biodiversity finance gap extends far beyond how much finance is mobilized. It is equally a question of where the finance goes, who can access it and how, who decides how it is used, and whether it reaches the custodian Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities who are already sustaining biodiversity on the ground.

Target 19 of the KMGBF requires resources to be increased, and also to be effective, timely, and easily accessible. The target explicitly recognizes the collective actions of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, Mother Earth-centric actions, and non-market-based approaches. The ICCA Consortium emphasizes that these elements must be treated as integral to the implementation of Target 19, rather than as peripheral considerations.

The ICCA Consortium therefore highlights five priorities

1. **Meet international biodiversity finance commitments.**

We are deeply concerned that international public finance remains insufficient, unpredictable, and unevenly accessible. Expanding the range of financial instruments or

shifting responsibility toward private finance cannot simply compensate for the failure to meet public financial commitments.

The obligations under Article 20 of the CBD remain fundamental. Mobilizing finance "from all sources" must complement, not dilute or substitute, the obligations of developed country Parties and other Parties that voluntarily assume such obligations.

COP17 must therefore send an unequivocal signal that the implementation of Target 19(a), including the commitment to mobilize at least US$30 billion annually in international biodiversity finance by 2030, requires strict accountability, and that this finance must be timely, additional, predictable, non-discriminatory, and accessible.

2. **Ensure direct access to finance for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities becomes an operational feature of the biodiversity finance architecture**

Decision 16/34 already recognizes that Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities play an important role in implementing the Convention and achieving the KMGBF, yet they often lack adequate access to biodiversity finance.

The draft criteria for the institutional structure of the permanent financial mechanism of the CBD that have been under deliberation ahead of COP17 go further by recognizing their role and considering direct access to finance. We strongly urge Parties to retain and strengthen this provision.

Direct access must mean more than participation in projects designed and controlled by intermediaries. It should enable Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, including through their own institutions, organizations, and funds, to design, govern, receive, and manage resources according to their priorities and governance systems, with appropriate accountability mechanisms.

Making access conditional upon approval by national authorities, including through mandatory letters of support, risks recreating the exact barriers that direct-access modalities are intended to overcome, particularly where Indigenous Peoples lack formal recognition or where relationships with State institutions are constrained.

3. **Financing for Indigenous and traditional territories must recognize governance, tenure, and collective rights**

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities are not merely beneficiaries of biodiversity finance. They are rights-holders, knowledge-holders, and custodians who govern

territories that make substantial contributions to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Finance directed toward their territories must therefore respect free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), self-determined priorities, customary institutions, and collective tenure and governance systems, as applicable.

We particularly call for greater support for Indigenous Peoples- and Local Community-led funds and other locally governed financing mechanisms, which can reduce excessive intermediation and ensure that a greater proportion of resources reaches conservation action on the ground. Financing should support the continuity of successful conservation practices and collective stewardship. Conservation must remain the priority; restoration should be supported only where ecosystems are demonstrably degraded and rights-holders determine it is necessary.

4. **Strict safeguards must apply to all biodiversity finance, including innovative and private mechanisms**

The expansion of finance, biodiversity credits, offsets, payments for ecosystem services, and other so-called innovative financial instruments cannot proceed faster than the development and enforcement of effective social and environmental safeguards.

Target 19(d) itself explicitly predicates innovative schemes on these safeguards.

Finance labeled “biodiversity-positive” must not result in dispossession, restrictions on customary sustainable use, commodification of territories or knowledge, or the transfer of conservation burdens to Indigenous Peoples and local communities while financial benefits accrue elsewhere.

We therefore urge Parties to ensure that biodiversity finance mechanisms incorporate human-rights-based safeguards, transparency, full and effective participation, FPIC where applicable, grievance and redress mechanisms, and independent accountability.

We also caution against treating biodiversity offsets as equivalent to new and additional conservation finance without rigorous assessment of their additionality, ecological integrity, and rights implications.

5. **Substantially increase recognition and support for Target 19(f) and non-market-based approaches.**

Resource mobilization cannot become synonymous with the financialization of biodiversity. Target 19 explicitly recognizes collective actions by Indigenous Peoples

and Local Communities, Mother Earth-centric actions, and non-market-based approaches. These approaches are not residual alternatives to market-based finance. They represent longstanding systems of stewardship, reciprocity, collective governance, and care that sustain biodiversity without converting nature into financial assets.

The implementation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy must therefore track and support both financial flows and the contributions of the collective actions of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, while ensuring that recognition of those contributions is not used to offset or reduce financial obligations under Article 20.

As Parties consider the institutional architecture for biodiversity finance, the ICCA Consortium strongly supports retaining criteria that require a democratic, transparent, fair, equitable, inclusive, and representative governance structure; simplified and timely access; full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities; direct access to finance; and robust accountability, grievance, and redress mechanisms.

These priorities and principles should not remain aspirations in brackets. They are essential conditions for an effective financial mechanism.

The question at the close of COP17 must extend beyond how much biodiversity finance has been mobilized. We must ask: How much reaches Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities directly, and what are the barriers to doing so? How much supports their self-determined priorities and territories of life? How much reaches the local level rather than being absorbed by intermediaries? And how much is delivered without undermining rights, governance systems, and non-market values?

Closing the biodiversity finance gap while leaving these structural barriers intact will not deliver the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Finance must reach those who conserve biodiversity, not merely finance conservation around them.