



**OUR**

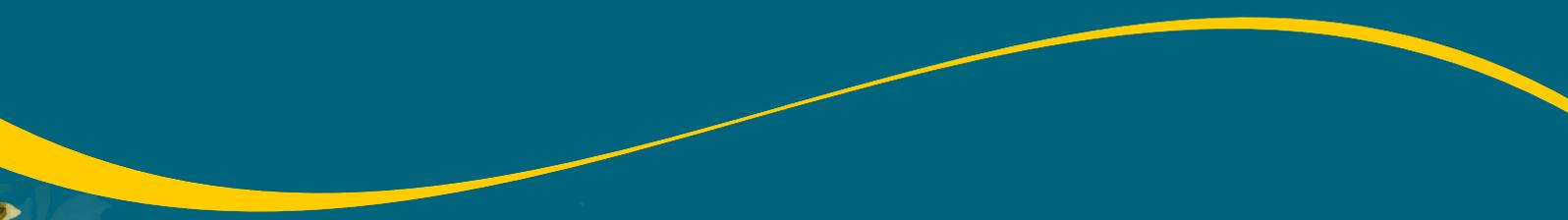
**MANIFESTO**

**2026 - 2030**

**Nurturing roots**

**Exchanging seeds**

**Stewarding forests**



January 2026



**COALITION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN DEVELOPMENT**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Mission

The Coalition for Human Rights in Development is a global coalition of social movements, civil society organizations and grassroots groups working together to ensure that development is **community-led** and that it respects, protects and fulfills **human rights**.

We do so by making sure that communities have the information, power and resources to determine their own development paths and priorities and to hold development finance institutions, governments and other actors accountable for their impacts on people, peoples and the planet.

## Vision

Our vision is that local communities – especially Indigenous Peoples, women, workers, human rights defenders, people with disabilities, children, youth, elderly and groups facing marginalisation – live peaceful, prosperous and dignified lives by safely determining and leading their development paths and priorities.

## Goal

We are working towards an exponential increase of local communities and human rights defenders who collaborate with allies and build collective power to:

- Lead and shape development activities on their territories;
- Resist, hold accountable and seek remedy from any projects and economic actors that cause them harm;
- Push for transformational change to make community-led development a norm of global economic governance.

## Values

We commit to practice within the Coalition the values and change that we are calling for outside in the world.

### Love & Safety

We create safe spaces for mutual care, love, protection and solidarity, based on feminist and intersectional justice principles.

### Community-led

We center the voices and priorities of local communities – with Indigenous Peoples and women at the forefront.

### Member-led

Members co-create and implement strategies, and co-facilitate collective decision-making processes.

## Actions



### Connect

We link local communities and Indigenous Peoples with information, skills, tools, resources and allies for peer learning, capacity-building, solidarity and collective action.



### Protect

We facilitate safety, protection and advocacy support for those facing threats.



### Mobilize

We co-create strategies with local communities, Indigenous Peoples and allies at national, regional, cross-regional and global levels to increase transparency, accountability and participation by public development banks.



### Visualize

We amplify the stories and perspectives of local communities and Indigenous Peoples, showcase their solutions, and expose the impacts of harmful development activities.

# Who

Our key advocacy target is public development banks, because of their central role in shaping the wider development finance ecosystem (they mobilize a large amount of resources, they act as norm-setters, and as public institutions they have a duty to be accountable to the people).

We will target public development banks through inside and outside strategies, including:

- **Advocacy** with bank management, board members and shareholder countries;
- **Mobilization, narratives and campaigns;**
- Legal and intergovernmental **accountability** strategies;
- Challenging banks in **inter-governmental spaces** that shape their behaviour.

Recognizing the complexities of the wider development landscape, we also support:

- National members who lead in national-level advocacy;
- Community partners who challenge transnational corporate actors that are violating their rights.

# What

We focus on four inter-connected themes, that represent key opportunities to push for broader and system-level change, and key challenges we need to address if we want to achieve our goal:



## Community-led development

Advocate for an inclusive, participatory, post-growth development approach that starts from the needs and priorities of communities, and respects their right to say no.



## Just energy and economic transformation

Mobilize cross-regionally for a community-led, inclusive, feminist, truly “just” energy transition and economic transformation, rooted in equitable energy access and economic transformation.



## Reprisals and civic space

Accompany communities and defenders, so they can safely and meaningfully engage with development banks to address reprisals, and pushing banks to prevent, address and remedy reprisals, and to use their power and influence to address civic space restrictions.



## Conflict and militarization

Collaborate with groups and networks working on conflict and militarization by contributing our collective expertise in community-led and member-led collaborations at the intersection of development finance and human rights.

# How

We deepen coordination among members and partners of the Coalition by investing in key field-infrastructure for our movement, including:

- Strategically using our **collective voice** and visibilizing our work;
- Co-developing **narratives**, mutually amplifying messages, and exchanging information with each other;
- Strengthening **governance** structures;
- Promoting greater participation of **Indigenous Peoples** in our work and decision-making structures;
- Facilitating opportunities for **mutual accountability**, collective **learning** and adapting our work to emerging trends;
- Exploring new fundraising **sustainability** strategies and mobilizing joint resources.

# FOREWORD

## From the Coalition's Steering Committee

January 2026

*For generations our ancestors, Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities have been exchanging and planting seeds, practicing solidarity and collective care. Drawing from their wisdom, ten years ago the founders of the Coalition for Human Rights in Development decided to join forces and plant some seeds.*

*Today, we are proud of the strong, interconnected forest ecosystem that Coalition members have stewarded. But we are also aware of the poachers, disease and other threats trying to uproot us or break the weakest amongst us. We know that to resist, we need to tend our forests and nurture our ancient roots while also planting new seeds.*

*We want to strengthen and grow our Coalition that stands as a sanctuary to protect us, a lab where we can practice building deep connections and learn from each other, and a global platform where we can reimagine development and strategize on how to reshape it.*

***We want to continue to build a different future, led by communities, for communities.***

*Our Manifesto – collectively developed by the Coalition members over the past 18 months – sets the direction we want to take for the next five years (2026-2030) to protect and grow our thriving interconnected forests, building on our strengths to respond to emerging opportunities and threats.*

*Our Manifesto aims to bring clarity during a time of chaos, amidst shifting geopolitics, increasing conflict and authoritarianism, growing corporate power, exacerbating inequalities, ecological collapse, and accelerating climate change threatening the future of humanity.*

***Our Manifesto offers a strategic, proactive and adaptive pathway – putting values, people and relationships first – to make a better world that is more equal, just and dignified for all.***

*As we are a diverse network and not a single organization, we have called this document a Manifesto rather than a strategic plan: it represents the collective commitment by the members of the Coalition to unite towards the same goal, and a call to action to all agents of change. The Methodology section in the appendix provides further details on the strategic planning process behind this document.*

*Our Manifesto starts by looking at our roots: our foundational values of mutual love and care for each other, our member-led approach, and our shared vision of a future led by communities.*



*In the second section, we articulate how we exchange seeds and knowledge to transform development. Drawing on our expertise working collaboratively with grassroots groups from the Global South and their allies, we will continue to work on public development banks as a key economic actor to shift the broader development and international investment landscape.*

*Our mission is to ensure that development is community-led and that it respects, protects, and fulfills human rights.*

*To advance this, we will steward and grow our forests by focusing on four interconnected areas of work:*

- *community-led development;*
- *just energy and economic transformation;*
- *reprisals and civic space; and*
- *conflict and militarization.*

*These themes represent key opportunities to push for broader and system-level change, and key challenges we need to address if we want to strengthen and protect our ecosystem.*

*Finally, we focus on how we can strengthen our trunk and branches. In this section, we outline how we want to better exchange information with each other, mutually amplify our messages, co-develop an aligned narrative, and deepen our internal coordination.*

*With gratitude for what was done before us and humility for the work ahead, in our Manifesto we commit to a world where local communities – with Indigenous Peoples and women at the forefront – can shape their own futures. Under our collective canopies, where branches and roots stretch from the Americas to Eurasia and Africa, we will keep resisting, connecting with each other, and building our collective power.*

### **About the Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee – composed of 10 member organizations, elected from and by the General Membership – serves as the board of the Coalition providing governance, oversight and accountability. The Steering Committee represents different geographies, strategies and other types of diversity including race and gender. For more information, see the Coalition [website](#).



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# A. INTRODUCTION

The Coalition for Human Rights in Development is a global coalition of social movements, civil society organizations, and grassroots groups working together to ensure that development is community-led and that it respects, protects, and fulfills human rights. We do so by making sure that communities have the information, power and resources to determine their own development paths and priorities and to hold development finance institutions,<sup>1</sup> governments, and other actors accountable for their impacts on people, peoples and the planet.

Over the years we have jointly mobilized resources to take action on gaps and opportunities in our collective work. Notably, we co-created and jointly implement:

- The **Community Resource Exchange**, collaborating with communities affected by development projects to defend rights in the context of international investments;
- The **Defenders in Development campaign**, working with human rights defenders, protection groups and allies to prevent and respond to reprisals; and
- **Regional and cross-regional** strategies to increase transparency, accountability and participation in key multilateral development banks, and center human rights-based and community-led development in broader conversations about development finance.

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, we use the terms “public development banks” and “development finance institutions” interchangeably.

Our key collective impacts over the last ten years include:

- **Movement-building:** hundreds of communities, defenders and civil society groups across the world have joined forces to advance human rights-based and community-led development through increased awareness, coordination and strategic mobilization.
- **Project-level changes:** scores of local communities have led powerful campaigns to successfully mitigate or stop harmful project impacts, prevent future harms and secure remedy.
- **Policy reform:** hundreds of members and partners have come together to successfully push the largest public development banks to introduce zero tolerance policies for reprisals and increase transparency, accountability and participation.

*For more information, please see this [infographic](#) and the [impacts page](#) on the Coalition website.*



# B. NURTURING ROOTS: VALUES TO ACTION

*We commit to practice within the Coalition the values and change that we are calling for outside in the world.*

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## 1. Mutual love, care and respect

We recognize mutual love as a key organising principle of our work. We understand love as seeing and respecting ourselves and others as whole and legitimate, and yet deeply connected. We practice love by taking care of each other as people, enabling safety and solidarity, and nurturing relationships and networks that **share power to advance equity, dignity and justice**.

We come together with a genuine interest in collaboration as a philosophical choice and as a strategic choice. We want to see a world where there is no one prescribed model of development, but where **communities decide their own destinies**, where people and peoples come together in global solidarity embracing our differences across languages, geographies, cultures, and strategies as strengths.

**We know we are up against forces that are big in power and reach. To confront them effectively, we have to continuously choose to have faith, and come together with hope and trust in each other and our shared vision.**

## 2. Being a member-led coalition

Since we are a **member-led coalition**, members are actively engaging and collaborating in collective work. Members benefit from platforms to cross-share experiences and access support for their work, conduct joint advocacy efforts, practice facilitative leadership within the Coalition's governance structures, and opportunities to deepen impact by building stronger networks and solidarity. However, members' abilities to contribute may be limited by funding, capacity, security issues, etc.

To make our collective work more impactful and resilient, we work closely with non-member partners and allies, especially grassroots, Global South and other mission-aligned groups, based on priorities set by our members. These partnerships expand the Coalition's reach, enrich collective learning, and strengthen joint advocacy for human rights in development.



### 3. Protagonism of communities

We are committed to the **leadership of directly affected communities and Indigenous Peoples** in our collective work with members and partners. We collaborate with local communities and their allies to prevent harm, and seek accountability and redress in cases of violations of rights by internationally financed projects.

We also work together to push for policy and systems change to ensure development is community-led, and that it respects, protects, and fulfills human rights. We build and implement our collective work from the ground up with community collaborators, guided by the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and adopt an **intersectional and feminist lens**.

*To turn our values into action we:*

➤ Create **safe spaces for mutual care, love, protection, solidarity, peer-to-peer learning and horizontal collaborations**, based on feminist and intersectional justice principles;

Center the **voices and priorities of local communities** – with Indigenous Peoples and women at the forefront – in our:

➤ 

- collective strategy-setting and decision-making processes;
- joint advocacy and campaigns; and
- narratives, communications, and research products;

➤ Prioritize **long-term accompaniment and relationship-building** with communities and allies, rather than focusing on “service delivery”;

➤ Mobilize **resources** (e.g. regrants and donor referrals) for grassroots groups and defenders.



# C. OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

**Our vision is local communities and rightsholders – especially Indigenous Peoples, women, workers, human rights defenders, people with disabilities, children, youth, elderly, and groups facing marginalisation – live peaceful, prosperous and dignified lives by safely determining and leading their development paths and priorities.**

All too often, we see that powerful economic actors – including public development banks, governments, transnational corporations, and multilateral institutions – enable and advance development projects in a top-down manner without the meaningful participation or consent of directly-affected communities.

As a result, many of these projects harm communities, and violate their rights, including by: land grabbing, polluting ecosystems, extracting water and resources, disregarding culture, increasing divisions and conflict in the community, and using force to silence dissent.

In response, we are building collective power and working towards an exponential increase of local communities and human rights defenders who collaborate with allies to:

- **Lead and shape development activities** on their territories;
- **Resist, hold accountable and seek remedy** from any projects and powerful economic actors that cause them harm; and
- **Push for transformational change** to make community-led development a norm of global economic governance.



# Implementation



## Connect

Gather and link local communities with **information, skills, tools, resources and allies** (including other communities facing the same or similar actors and impacts) for peer-to-peer learning, capacity-building, mutual solidarity, resilience and collective action (including joint research, complaints or advocacy letters).



## Protect

Collaborate with grassroots human rights defenders facing threats or attacks in the context of public development bank financed projects; accompany them to **access safety and protection**; and engage in advocacy and campaigning.



## Mobilize

**Advocate and campaign** for human rights-based and community-led development at national, regional and cross-regional levels by collectively:

- Identifying key shared grievances;
- Co-creating and jointly implementing strategies to advance transparency, accountability and meaningful participation of directly affected communities;
- Pushing for reform in laws, policies and practices; and
- Demanding systemic transformation.



## Visibilize

Co-create collaborative **research, narratives and strategic communication products** that:

- Amplify the voices, stories and analysis of local communities, with Indigenous Peoples and women at the forefront;
- Analyse trends, document and expose harmful activities by powerful economic actors and their social and environmental impacts; and
- Recommend solutions including by drawing on the human rights framework and showcasing examples of community-led development.



# D. EXCHANGING SEEDS: WORKING TO TRANSFORM DEVELOPMENT

Communities and their allies created the Coalition to work together to center human rights in international development finance.

Public development banks matter because they:

- Are **owned by governments**, and so, they should be accountable to the people;
- Are some of the **world's largest investors and creditors**: they hold 23 trillion USD in assets and deliver around 12% of all global investment annually, and their numbers are rising;
- Are involved in funding projects and programs in nearly **every sector of the global economy** – from finance to judicial reform, agricultural standards and post-war reconstruction;
- Influence development policy and the relationship between governments, companies and citizens through **technical assistance** or 'knowledge products', capacity-building, diplomacy, and the **conditionalities** they attach to their assistance;
- Are sometimes the only available sources of financing for impoverished governments, and so a **crucial source of financing**; and
- Act as a **stamp of approval**, influencing whether a government, company or project is able to attract necessary financing from others.

Over the years, we have developed significant experience and expertise working collaboratively to transform public development banks, and to seek accountability and remedy, including through:

- **Inside advocacy** (with bank staff, management and board members);
- Filing **complaints** with independent accountability mechanisms (IAMs);
- Participating in **policy review** processes in banks and IAMs; and
- Applying pressure on banks through **mobilizations, communications, narratives** and advocacy strategies from the outside.

On one hand, we see public development banks – directly and indirectly – contribute to human rights violations by advancing a top-down, neoliberal version of development that benefits large corporations and billionaires over Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Still, we recognize public development banks are a key actor that can potentially drive systemic change to advance our goal of human rights-based and community-led development, and enable a safe environment for participatory, inclusive development. So, we will continue to use and instrumentalize the power and influence that public development banks have in the global economy to advance our goals, by engaging them from within, even as we challenge their role from the outside.

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To read more about public development banks, check out our collective report "[Demystifying Development Finance](#)".



# 1. Leveraging public finance to transform development

While continuing to engage with banks and their accountability mechanisms, we also want to move banks out of their comfort zone by exploring additional outside spaces to hold them accountable. With the overall goal of making community-led development a norm of the global economic system, we will push public development banks to recognize local communities and Indigenous Peoples as cornerstones of sustainable development, and **strengthen their policies and practices** to ensure they advance human rights-based and community-led development.

## 1.1 Using legal and intergovernmental accountability strategies

Some members and partners are working to hold public development banks and their clients accountable for impacts using **national courts and strategic litigation** in host countries, and for extraterritorial impacts in countries where the development bank is registered. We also have some experience pursuing **intergovernmental grievance mechanisms** including intergovernmental human rights procedures, committees and commissions, such as United Nations' Special Rapporteurs, Universal Periodic Reviews, and regional human rights commissions.

As a Coalition, we want to collaborate more systematically to hold public development banks, governments (both as bank shareholders and clients) and their corporate partners accountable to **international, regional and national human rights laws**. We will continue our learning on how to better use these strategies at the project level for communities to seek accountability and remedy, as well as to push for broader policy and systems change.

### Implementation

- Support **knowledge exchanges** across members and partners on different legal and intergovernmental accountability procedures, including how they can be coupled with other strategies for resistance and change;
- Map potential **civil society collaborators** on legal research, advocacy and documentation strategies; and
- Proactively advance our priorities with **intergovernmental accountability procedures** in a more systematic way, including by mapping upcoming opportunities like committee proceedings, thematic reports and country peer reviews.

## 1.2 Challenging banks in normative spaces that shape their behavior

Public development banks are positioning themselves as key actors and inflating the role they can play to respond to crises like climate change, even though they violate their own standards for transparency, accountability and participation. To hold public development banks accountable and advocate for community-led development, we will work systematically with communities and their

allies to engage in **decision-making and norm-setting spaces** – like the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COPs), Group of Twenty (G20), and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Finance in Common Summit – which shape the role and priorities of development banks.



We also see opportunities to collaborate with **intergovernmental human rights procedures** related to business and human rights, human rights defenders, right to development, etc. to challenge the role of development banks and pressure them to change.

Several members and partners already have expertise engaging in such multilateral spaces. We will build on these strengths to work together to center human rights and community-led development, and challenge the role of development finance in multilateral spaces and with intergovernmental actors. Engaging in these spaces will also offer learning opportunities for our members and partners to assess what are the most effective strategies to shape development policies and practices.

## Implementation

- Use **evidence** to expose the legacy of development banks' negative impacts;
- Advocate for **transformational changes** needed in development banks as a precondition for them to play a bigger role in the response to global challenges;
- Advance our own **narratives** and priorities for change; and
- Learn and adapt from our collective engagement in these spaces.

## 2. Joining forces to work on key public development banks

Local, national and regional members and partners of the Coalition collaborate in working groups and lead advocacy with the InterAmerican Development Bank, African Development Bank and Asian Development Bank. We also collaborate with groups targeting the World Bank Group, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank,

European Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and several bilateral development finance institutions from the Americas, Europe and Asia. The universe of **public development banks** is large so we need to develop criteria on which banks we focus on collectively, when and how.

## Implementation

- Identify **list of criteria** to decide which additional development banks are strategic to work on collaboratively, including internal criteria (such as: interest, capacity, leadership of members, no duplication) and external criteria (such as: relevance/human rights violations against local communities, where there are strategy revisions, where the engagement could have an outsized systemic impact, etc.); and
- Co-create and implement **regional and cross-regional strategies** with members and partners working on specific public development banks.



## 3. Challenging transnational corporate actors who are violating rights in development

The **private sector** is increasingly playing a bigger role in financing and implementing development activities. Public development banks are increasingly supporting private sector companies to implement projects directly – through loans, equity investments, risk guarantees, public-private partnerships, etc. – including in sectors such as water and education that have traditionally been the remit of the government. Development banks also obscure their role by indirectly funding activities through modalities such as **financial intermediaries**, technical assistance and development policy loans.

Most community groups who collaborate with us through the Community Resource Exchange (CRE) are defending their rights in the context of projects that are not directly funded by public development banks, or where development bank support is unknown, hidden or indirect. We will continue to collaborate with communities affected by international investments even if there is no known development bank connection, and we will also explore new linkages and advocacy opportunities to support communities impacted by transnational corporate actors.

### Implementation

- Hold public development banks accountable for the impacts of their private sector investments and also for their role as norm-setters for the private sector;
- Assess if there are any systemic trends or themes (e.g., about specific sectors or economic actors who are repeat offenders) and facilitate joint actions by community groups facing same or similar actors/impacts; and
- Link our community partners with groups or networks working on corporate accountability, both at a policy and systems change level and at a project level.

## 4. National level advocacy

To make community-led development a norm of the global economic system, we need more governments to step up and change laws, policies and practices to: protect and fulfill human rights, open up civic space, and increase transparency, accountability and safe participation of local communities and Indigenous Peoples in the context of development activities.

We need new allies, especially from among Global South governments, to advance our community-led approach to development, since governments that have previously championed the human rights systems are retreating from these goals.

Additionally, the recent shift in international public finance towards country level platforms and host government-led investment strategies, makes it important for the Coalition to influence development related decision-making in borrower countries.

National members and partners, who lead on **national work** in their own countries:

- Work with community networks in their countries, for awareness-raising and coalition-building;
- Consider domestic legal strategies (like litigation and advocacy to advance safeguards for human rights defenders, and raise national standards for natural resource extraction); and
- Conduct research on reprisals and other human rights violations to conduct evidence-based advocacy.

However, the Coalition has a role in supporting exchanges across different countries and regions, and supporting links with others, including by drawing on our past efforts to increase safeguards for transparency, accountability and participation, and collaborating with local and national groups on security and resource mobilization.



## Implementation

- Coordinate and apply **international pressure** (through embassies, intergovernmental bodies, development banks) in a way that is locally-led – and complements local and national strategies – and security-sensitive;
- Mobilise **financial resources and communications support** (by assisting with dissemination and amplification) for national advocacy strategies;
- Mobilise **resources** for members facing legal costs, strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs), and reprisals linked to national-level advocacy;
- **Exchanges** across members and partners to cross-share national experiences and replicable strategies;
- Members and partners **support each other** to:
  - Map power structures at national level and assess national country situations to support strategic advocacy, including at intergovernmental levels;
  - Conduct workshops about impacts of development finance institutions tailored to national context and languages;
  - Explore linkages with National Human Rights Institutions and labour unions as allies with additional levers of influence; and
  - Engage with country offices and representatives from development banks keeping in mind safety and security.



# E. GROWING RESILIENT INTERCONNECTED FORESTS: OUR THEMATIC STRATEGIES

We have learned that the biggest successes with shifting development banks and transforming development come from **sustained, grassroots-led, collaborative processes**, where we set our own demands and agenda within our thematic priorities and then work to advance these demands in different forums (including: banks policy review processes, public campaigning, advocacy with shareholder governments, and engagement through intergovernmental human rights procedures and high-level norm setting spaces). To advance our broader goal, we will be focusing on the following interconnected themes: community-led development; just energy transition within the framework of climate justice through economic transformation; reprisals and civic space; and conflict and militarization.

## 1. Community-led development

Indigenous Peoples and local communities have the right to self-determination and control over their lands, resources and livelihoods, but way too often their rights are violated. We advance community-led, inclusive, participatory, post-growth development activities that start from the needs and priorities of communities.

We also work with communities to build power as they participate in the decision-making process from an informed perspective and have the freedom to consent or say no to projects.

### Implementation

- Advocate for the right to **self determination**, and Free Prior and Informed Consent for Indigenous Peoples, including the **right to say no** in the context of development;
- Better articulate what we mean by community-led development in a manner that works for a diversity of communities, in both urban and rural settings;
- Advance **communications, evidence and narratives** in support of community-led development;
- Push for increased financing and support for community-led development;
- Collaborate with communities to advance **local alternative solutions**, especially community-led energy systems and local economic development projects;
- Link communities affected by international investments and development finance with **skills, tools, resources, and allies** to defend their rights; and
- Hold public development banks, governments, corporations and other actors **accountable**, and seek remedy for any harmful impacts.



## 2. Just energy and economic transformation

Climate change caused by human action during the industrial era is one of the key existential threats for humanity and for our planet. Technically, fossil fuel emissions are the largest contributors of greenhouse gasses. But fossil fuels are just one symptom of a neoliberal model of economic development focused on exploitation, extraction and export in which value and profits are captured by corporations and powerful economic actors – often in the Global North – while communities in the Global South bear the social, environmental and economic costs.

Moreover, many communities across Africa and the Global South lack access to safe and sustainable energy so any work on just energy “transitions” (JET) must first center reliable, affordable, dignified and equitable energy access, especially for the most marginalized communities.

The policy responses to climate change – such as more public finance for mineral extraction, conservation through offset markets, and promotion of large-scale renewable energy systems – are going hand in hand with weakening safeguards and land and resource grabbing. All too often, communities are either threatened into silence or attacked when they raise their voices.

Members and partners are pushing for a **community-led response to climate change** by transforming the economic and energy system and making it more bottom up. At the regional levels, we are organizing this collective work on climate change in the broader framework of the Just Energy Transitions, and want to strengthen our advocacy and deepen our impact by increasing cross-regional coordination to push for transformational change.

### Implementation

- A **Global South-led, cross-regional articulation** of how a community-led, inclusive, feminist, truly-“just” energy transition should look;
- Better global **coordination** through grassroots-led, cross-regional level exchanges and advocacy efforts;
- Push for **systemic transformations** that:
  - Address historical injustices and neo-colonialism;
  - Challenge top-down, false, exploitative and extractive solutions to energy access and economic development (including many projects – such as carbon offsets, nuclear power and large-scale energy and mining – which are causing harm and being resisted by local communities); and
  - Respect ecosystems and planetary boundaries, and the cosmovisions of Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities living in harmony with nature;
- Advance **narrative strategies** that center Indigenous Peoples and local communities leadership to advance community-led development as a solution for JET;
- Foster **sustainable, community-led projects** for energy access and economic development; and
- Continue to work on development banks, promoting **unified demands** to ensure transparency, accountability and participation in large energy or extractive projects.



## 3. Reprisals and closing civic space

Around the world, human rights defenders, particularly those defending land, environmental, and Indigenous Peoples' rights in the context of development projects, are facing increasing threats and attacks, ranging from criminalization to killings. Additionally, we are witnessing a **shrinking of civic space** and rise in authoritarianism as governments introduce repressive laws that restrict civic freedoms and limit opportunities for communities, human rights defenders and journalists to raise concerns, monitor development projects, and make their voices heard. Public development banks continue to work with authoritarian governments and invest in contexts where reprisals are systemic, even though their policies require the participation of affected communities and the need to address reprisals.

Given the dissonance between development banks' policies and actions, and their own concerns about being linked to reprisals, we are seeing opportunities to push the banks to improve and better implement their policies, and to have a more coordinated, stronger approach in their response to civic space restrictions.

We will also continue to use opportunities to highlight development banks linkages to closing civic space and reprisals with allied governments and in intergovernmental spaces, and partner with groups advocating for international legal norms that support human rights defenders.

In its [strategy-setting process](#), the Defenders in Development campaign identified the following objectives:

- **Strengthen support for human rights defenders**, so they can safely and meaningfully engage with development banks to address reprisals and civic space issues;
- Push development banks to take **effective action to prevent reprisals** and civic space issues; and
- Increase **accountability of development banks**, pushing them to address and remedy reprisals they cause, contribute to or are linked to.

### Implementation

- Continue **strategic collaborations** to mitigate risks and protect defenders from reprisals through advocacy and capacity building;
- Continue **documenting** cases of reprisals and collaborating with defenders in their advocacy efforts;
- Continue facilitating **protection responses** for defenders facing reprisals;
- Develop stronger **security protocols**, including guidelines for alternative outreach methods to communities/defenders in closed civic spaces;
- **Map gaps** in banks' policies and practices;
- Promote **solidarity actions and learning exchanges** among defenders;
- Target shareholder governments and bank management to recognize shrinking civic space and increasing reprisals as operational risks, and to act on them;
- Engage in **intergovernmental advocacy spaces** around the relationships between economic development activities and increasing reprisals and closing civic spaces;
- Coordinate **advocacy about shrinking civic space** across different development financiers who are investing in the same country; and
- Publish **collaborative briefing papers or reports** highlighting trends in reprisals faced by defenders affected by development finance funded projects.



## 4. Conflict and militarization

While increasing conflict and militarization has been a salient part of the context of our work, during this strategy period members and partners will further define how we want to better work together to counter this significant existential threat.

We recognize that conflict and militarization is a broad theme and we include within this term: internal conflict, colonial aggression/occupation, armed conflict, the arms industry, surveillance, crimes against humanity (such as genocide, apartheid, ethnic cleansing, and war crimes) and the increasing involvement of the military in development projects (e.g., the creation of military enterprises that build, administer and operate development projects and aim to control value chains in different sectors).

The Coalition's area of expertise – working collaboratively on the intersections of development finance and human rights – would complement existing efforts by other groups and networks working on these issues.

Our expertise could be relevant and impactful because there are many entanglements between development finance, and conflict and militarisation, including:

- Some development banks have identified working in **fragile, conflict and post-conflict situations** as a strategic priority;
- Many projects supported by development banks **militarise project areas** by bringing in public or private security forces to silence Indigenous Peoples and local communities, or in some cases the military is directly controlling or has vested interests in internationally financed development projects (leading to increased risks for local communities and activists); and
- Many projects supported by development banks end up feeding conflict and militarisation (e.g., **minerals** purportedly extracted for economic development get sold to the arms industry; digital biometric identification projects can be used to expand **surveillance** capacities; civil infrastructures projects like roads and ports are used by the military and designed to advance **geopolitical interests**; and even clients like private banks and shipping companies may end up being complicit in crimes against humanity).

### Implementation

- **Collaborations** with Indigenous Peoples and traditional, pastoralist, and local communities who are defending their rights in the context of internationally financed investment projects in militarised and conflict areas;
- **Map groups** working on conflict and militarisation and link directly affected communities, their networks and potential allies with each other, to explore collective work;
- Rigorous **research and documentation** of how development finance causes, contributes or may be directly linked to increases in “conflict and militarisation” (as defined above);
- Engage in **evidence-based advocacy** calling for development banks, governments and other actors to comply with existing international human rights law and standards;
- **Security risk assessment and mitigation plan** for Coalition secretariat, and for members and partners engaging in Coalition work, by seeking the support of protection groups (given that the work on conflict and militarisation is likely to bring the work of the Coalition and its members and partners under greater scrutiny); and
- Be creative and persistent in advancing our own **narratives** by amplifying stories, linking with justice and memory groups, and memorializing the role of development banks in perpetuating conflict, to prevent recurrence of harms.



# F. STRONG TRUNKS AND BRANCHES: STRENGTHENING COORDINATION FOR IMPACT AND VISIBILITY

To build collective power we are further investing in key field infrastructure for our movement. This means better coordination so that we can be stronger and more effective as we seek to make change.

## 1. Communication and narratives

Given the diversity of groups coming together in the Coalition, we benefit from co-developing narratives, mutually amplifying messages, and exchanging information with each other. We will continue to deepen coordination and collaboration on communications and narrative work across different members and partners of the Coalition.

### Implementation

- Work together to **co-create and advance narrative** and communication strategies that center communities and seed transformational change, especially around our thematic priorities;
- **Exchange skills, tools, information and resources** in an accessible manner (e.g., developing explainers, webinars and toolkits on technical matters like post-growth development theories, “green” technologies, and development finance trends);
- Organize **events** bringing together journalists and community members for education and alliance building;
- **Map** strengths, resources, needs and gaps to strengthen communications-related accompaniment for community and grassroots groups;
- Members, partners and Secretariat better coordinate on communications and narratives, including through dedicated **communications working groups**;
- Amplify each others’ work and collective work on **social media**;
- Develop **joint collaborative research** – pulling out systemic trends – to advance collective demands and actions; and
- Support members and partners in **building their capacity** on documentation of human rights impacts.



## 2. Strengthening our network

### 2.1 Member-led governance

One of the Coalition's greatest strengths is its member-led approach. The Coalition is governed by a ten-member Steering Committee elected transparently by Coalition members, from among Coalition members. Elections include processes to ensure geographic distribution, gender diversity, representation of Indigenous Peoples and that the majority of elected representatives are from local, national or regional groups from the Global South.

### 2.2 Collective voice

We prioritise showcasing the voices of our members and community partners but we also see value in using our name and collective voice strategically, especially where it increases the strength of messages before target institutions or the public, or contributes to safety and solidarity for members and grassroots partners.

### 2.3 Decentralization

The Coalition's decentralized decision-making structure – including the Steering Committee, programmatic committees, and issue-based, programmatic and regional working groups – enables flexibility and autonomy for those who are most directly affected and working on a particular matter to advance collective work on the topic. Going forward, we want to continue strengthening our network and internal processes by discussing and making clearer who in the Coalition has what kinds of decision-making powers.

### 2.4 Organizational and network resilience

We recognize there is a retreat from funding of human rights work, so will explore new fundraising sustainability strategies, including through greater exchange and collaboration with and across members and partners. We also decided to register the Coalition as a legal entity to create longer term control of collective resources, network resilience and to access funding opportunities and advocacy spaces that require a legally registered organization.

## Implementation

### Governance and decision-making

- Promote greater participation of **Indigenous Peoples** in our work and decision-making structures;
- More accessible and consistent **communication** with members about governance, decision-making and opportunities for collaboration;
- Avoid creating silos by engaging in more **cross-regional collaboration**, thematic working groups, and regular cross-programmatic, regional and global meetings;
- Adopt a Coalition **code of conduct** and internal accountability procedures;
- More representative, engaged and visible **Steering Committee**:
  - Develop a framework to renew the Steering Committee and update its Terms of Reference;
  - Increase the weight of votes by members from within a geographic region about who represents them in the Steering Committee; and
  - Create a “flexible” seat on the Steering Committee which can be used to ensure the Steering Committee has the skills, strategies, networks and lived experiences it needs to succeed.



## Implementation

### Using our collective voice

- Greater visibility for the Coalition's messages and our collective work; and
- Develop revised procedures for the Coalition to sign on to policy positions and advocacy letters using our collective voice.

### Financial resilience

- Explore new fundraising sustainability strategies, including by jointly mobilizing resources with members and partners and fostering exchanges; and
- Facilitate learning exchanges and capacity-building workshops on fundraising skills, tailored for our grassroots members and partners.

## 2.5 Collective learning and mutual accountability

Learning is the soil through which our strategies gather strength, and mutual accountability is the light and water which keep us rooted in our shared purpose. Our terrain shifts with changing political winds, deepening inequalities, and growing threats to those who defend land and rights. Rigidity in planning means fragility. Instead, our Manifesto commits to adaptive stewardship, shared responsibility and alignment with our roots: mutual love and care, community protagonism and member-led action.

Because the Coalition is decentralised, learning occurs at different sites. Members and partners lead evaluations at their programmatic and working-group level, including through facilitated reflections, peer-exchanges and surveys, grounding insights in their experiences.

Collectively we identify work that thrives and prune what doesn't.

**Mutual accountability** keeps us aligned as we grow. Rooted in shared commitments and transparent practices, it helps us to monitor progress, identify gaps and co-create strategies. We check in with one another. We hold one another responsible for living our values, and staying honest in our work with communities.

The Secretariat and Steering Committee play a connective role, weaving insights from evaluations into a bird's-eye view of our collective progress. This synthesis guides **collective decision-making**, and ensures that learning informs adaptation across our work.

## Implementation

- Develop and implement an **impact and results measurement framework** for our work;
- Convene periodic **collective reflection** on progress and alignment with our Manifesto (2026 to 2030);
- Conduct regular program level assessments of achievements, learnings, challenges and opportunities;
- Facilitate opportunities for **peer-learning**, mentoring and exchange between members and partners;
- Establish spaces for communities to share reflections, priorities and feedback to realign our actions;
- Maintain shared, accessible **learning platforms** where members and partners can contribute and draw from pooled knowledge and resources;
- Share our stories widely through **annual reports, newsletters, and narrative work** that showcase the work of the Coalition, and our members and partners; and amplify the struggles and voices of communities and members.



# APPENDIX:

# METHODOLOGY

The Coalition's Manifesto was developed through a comprehensive [strategy-setting process](#), leading up to and including the Coalition Members' Gathering in July 2025. Engagement and leadership of members through collaborative processes – such as consultations, collective design, shared responsibility and opportunities to connect – has served to build mutual trust and buy-in. Our Manifesto is grounded in our values, fostering community, creativity and flexibility, not fear. Below, we outline the key steps.

- **December 2023 to March 2024:** The Coalition's Secretariat and outgoing Steering Committee conducted a [reflection on the collective achievements of the Coalition](#) in the period since the last Coalition members' gathering that took place in 2017 (before the coronavirus pandemic).
- **April to July 2024:** The Coalition's Secretariat and our first fully-elected Steering Committee facilitated a series of one-on-one conversations, group discussions and surveys with more than 80 members, partners and other stakeholders.
- **August to December 2024:** The Secretariat and Steering Committee analysed results from the consultation process. The results to the consultations were summarized and presented in two key documents:
  - A [2-page infographic](#) on the main priorities going forward (divided under thematic issues, advocacy targets/spaces, and ways to improve our collective work).
  - A [30-page summary](#), which includes: key priorities and how to move forward, key trends, and a reflection on key strengths and weaknesses of the Coalition.
- **2024/2025:** In parallel, the different programs of the Coalition conducted their targeted strategy-setting processes:
  - Regional strategic conversations in [Africa](#), [Asia](#) and [Latin America](#);
  - [Defenders in Development Campaign strategy-setting \(2025-2028\)](#);
  - [Community Resource Exchange Evaluation and launch of the new pilot](#).
- **January 2025:** The Coalition Secretariat and Steering Committee co-developed a document with [key strategic questions](#) that came from the consultation process, organized under three overarching themes:
  - *How do we want to work together on thematic priorities?*
  - *How can we better influence the broader political economy of development?*
  - *How can we create more ownership over and engagement with our collective work?*
- **July 2025:** around 70 participants from 55 organizations and 40 countries gathered for a four-day Members' Gathering in Nairobi, Kenya. Coalition members led an inclusive and participatory approach to address the strategic questions and find alignment on key priorities. Together, we set the direction for the future of the Coalition and our collective work (*for more information see the [Members' Gathering Highlights](#) and [Summary Report](#).*)
- **August to November 2025:** Secretariat and Steering Committee co-create our Manifesto based on discussions and decisions during the Members' Gathering.
- **November to December 2025:** Our Manifesto is shared with General Membership for comments and approval.

