

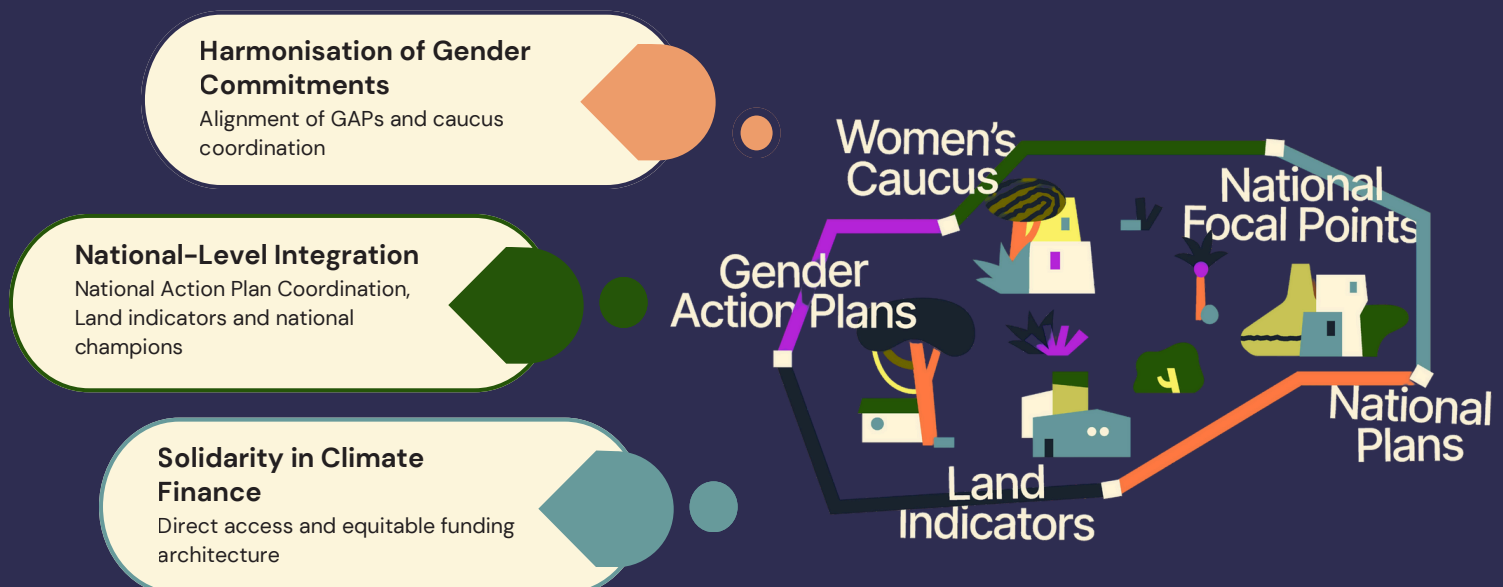
Moving to another triple COP year in 2026: Three powerful ways to reshape women's land rights advocacy across the Rio Conventions



This year, our Women's Land Rights Initiative gathered in Nairobi to chart a fresh course for tackling some of the most pressing challenges blocking women's land rights.

When women's land rights advocates from around the world come together, something powerful happens: conversations turn into shared purpose, and shared purpose into strategy.

We asked what's missing, right now, for our network to truly influence global policy and make it gender- and climate-just. With major negotiation moments ahead in 2026, the network recognised that the window for shaping global agendas is there now. And, for the first time, the network agreed on shared priorities and coordinated actions to take forward together, focusing on harmonising gender commitments, building solidarity in climate finance, and embedding women's land rights in national agendas. These three pathways took centre stage, each offering a collective approach to build synergies across the Rio Conventions on biodiversity, climate, desertification and even beyond.



Key shift 1: Breaking silos and strengthening gender commitments

Gender Action Plans (GAPs) and Women's and Gender Caucuses are powerful frameworks within the Rio Conventions into which land rights can be solidly anchored.

Gender Action Plans provide the policy architecture for integrating gender equity into environmental governance, so women play a prominent role in decision-making and have equal access to land and natural resources. Women's and Gender Caucuses turn up the heat. As networks of feminist and women's rights organizations, they advocate, monitor progress, and push governments to both update and follow through on their commitments. The Caucuses play an important role in keeping pressure on negotiators so women's lived experiences around access to land and resources, and their contributions to climate and environmental action inform solutions/global climate policy.

In 2025, we focused our discussion on two main elements: harmonising gender action plans across Conventions and identifying strategies to include women's land rights into gender action plans.

Why harmonising Gender Action Plans matters

The GAPs across the three Conventions largely correspond to each other: they recognize the essential role women play in achieving the goals of the Conventions.

Participants therefore agreed: significant improvements in efficiency and effectiveness can be achieved, through **integrated gender action planning across the Rio Conventions at national level**, with secure women's land rights as one of the connecting threads.

This includes for instance:

- Coherent GAPs across the Conventions, or even the development of one Gender Action Plan for all three Conventions.
- It also means the integration of gender in all National Action Plans (NBSAP, NDC, LDN).
- This requires a coordination mechanism between the National Action Plans and the national GAPs of all three Conventions.

A concrete next step agreed in Nairobi was to map champion countries and initiate peer-to-peer support on harmonisation of GAPs, starting with Panama and Grenada.

Anchoring women's land rights strongly in the Gender Action Plans

Securing women's access to land is one of the connecting threads between the Conventions and should therefore be strongly anchored in Gender Action Plans at global and national level. The participants of the workshop called for guidance and arguments, to advocate for better Gender Action plans, at global and national level. Following the workshop, the WLRI equipped for instance representatives of the Delegation of Panama with arguments for the explicit reference to women's land rights in the Gender Action Plan of UNFCCC, that was adopted at COP30 in Belem.

Similar inputs can guide the revision process of the global Gender Plan of Action for CBD, that is planned to be closed at COP17 in August 2026.



From grassroots to national advocacy

Grassroots women's organisations hold essential knowledge and experience for designing and implementing effective environmental measures. They need to act together to realize their right to participate environmental decision-making processes.

The focus is on mapping existing capacities of grassroots organisations, building advocacy skills, and identifying joint priorities to ensure the views of women's grassroots organisations are integrated in local and national policies, and reflected in national positions at global events. Crucially, this work will also feed into the harmonisation efforts by ensuring that coordinated Gender Action Plans and Caucus advocacy are grounded in the realities and priorities of women on the frontlines.

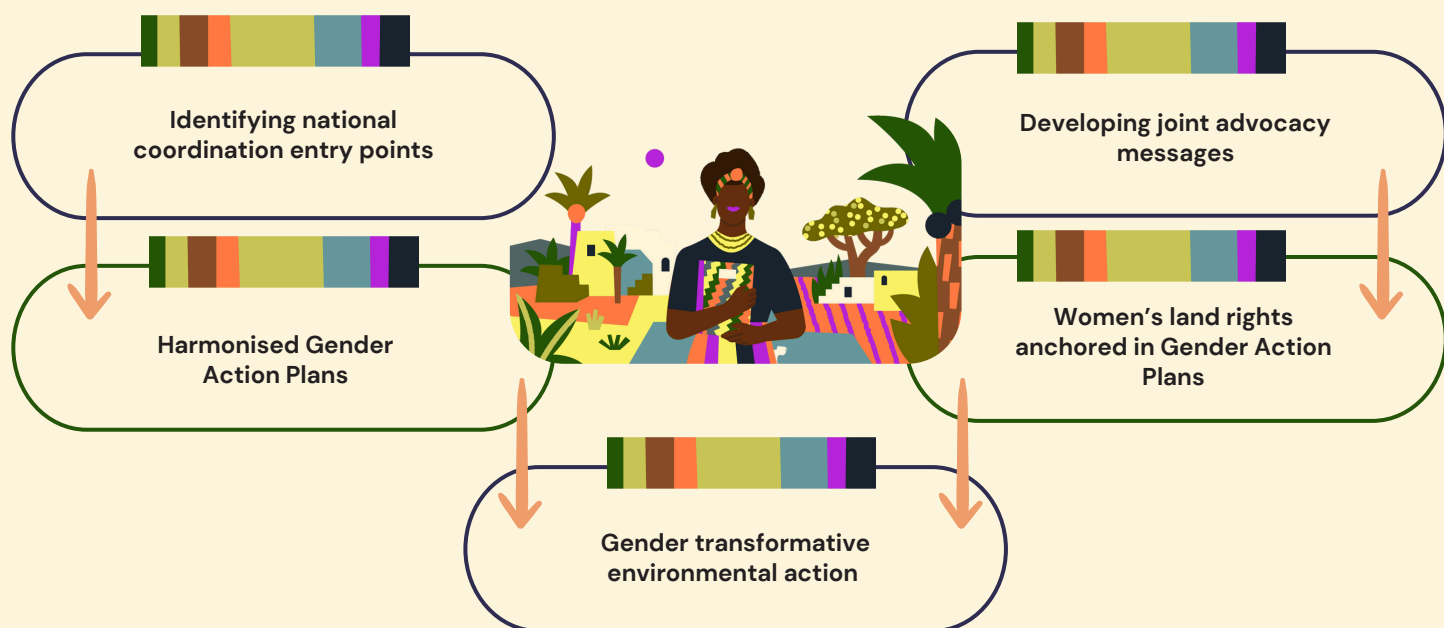
Making the case for women's land rights

WLRI partners will build a stronger evidence base linking women's land rights to the Rio Conventions, the SDGs, and human rights frameworks, serving as evidence that placing women at the heart of climate action strengthens both outcomes and rights.

Stay tuned for a new synthesis brief outlining concrete actions on coordination of Gender Caucuses and GAPs. Planned for early 2026, it can equip advocates, negotiators, and allies with data and messaging to shift national and global agendas to grow the momentum for women land rights in the national and global Rio agendas, and defend gender inclusion and gender responsive languages in the negotiations.

We are not just talking about participation; we want to redesign the space where decisions are made.

Focus of the WLRI so far



Key shift 2: Building solidarity over competition in environmental finance

One of the toughest systemic challenges to overcome is funding. But a powerful shared sentiment echoed during this event: we must stop competing for scraps and start rebuilding the entire kitchen together.

As political actors set on achieving shared goals, we need to learn how to collaborate differently. That means democratising knowledge of and direct access to financing, especially for grassroots organizations, and asking questions about the roles, responsibilities and complementarities between organisations in the ecosystem. Women-led grassroots organizations are at the forefront of resilience efforts, but they are cut off from critical resources, with less than a fraction of climate finance reaching them.

Reimagining funding ecosystems

For 2026, WLRI members will conduct research on how funding competition affects community-based and national organisations, informing guidelines for funders to promote collaboration over competition. Our goal is to root fundraising relationships in solidarity and shared purpose, transforming the very architecture of funding so it is rooted in justice, trust, and inclusivity. By supporting alternative community-led mechanisms to integrate gender and land rights, testing alternative funding models (e.g. reverse call for proposals) and engaging in ongoing conversation with funders on how to fund women's land rights, we can further strengthen the ways in which the funding ecosystem systemically prioritises women's land rights in collaborative ways.

We want to shift from gatekeeping to gate-opening.

Engaging global funds for real impact

Women's land rights cut across food security, climate action, conflict resolution, gender equity, economic development, and biodiversity conservation – connecting to funding streams from climate finance to peacebuilding, agricultural development, and conservation.

With major funding mechanisms like the GEF, Green Climate Fund, and Adaptation Fund under review, but also with the new 'COP30 Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant communities Forest and Land Tenure Pledge', we're advocating for women's land rights to be recognised as a cross-cutting priority. They serve as a vital foundation that delivers returns across multiple development goals simultaneously – but only when funded adequately.

The WLRI is engaging in funding policy consultations, donor replenishment processes, and gender strategy revisions to make access to funding more democratic and direct.

Key shift 3: Embedding women's land rights in national agendas

There is a growing recognition that women's land rights must become visible and measurable at the national level. National Action Plans and Indicators are critical for moving beyond one-off projects toward coordinated, nationwide approaches that make women's land rights a standard part of development and environmental planning.

Learning from best practices

Case studies from Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, and India will inform the development of guidelines for gender-responsive National Action Plans. These can be shared in time for the CBD meetings in Rome in 2026, at ICARRD+20 and of course in preparation of and during the triple COP year 2026, where WLRI and partners such as Women4Biodiversity and TMG are planning to present findings and recommendations.

Coordinating action in Kenya and beyond

There is an opportunity to explore how the ongoing alignment of national plans in Kenya such as the NBSAPs and LDN targets, could inform more coordinated and gender-responsive approaches across sectors and institutions. This process may offer valuable insights into how greater coherence among national strategies can strengthen the integration of women's land rights and enhance overall policy impact.

Exploring a Women's Land Rights champions approach

To achieve this, Women's Land Rights Champions among National Focal Points and Gender Focal Points is emerging as a promising approach.

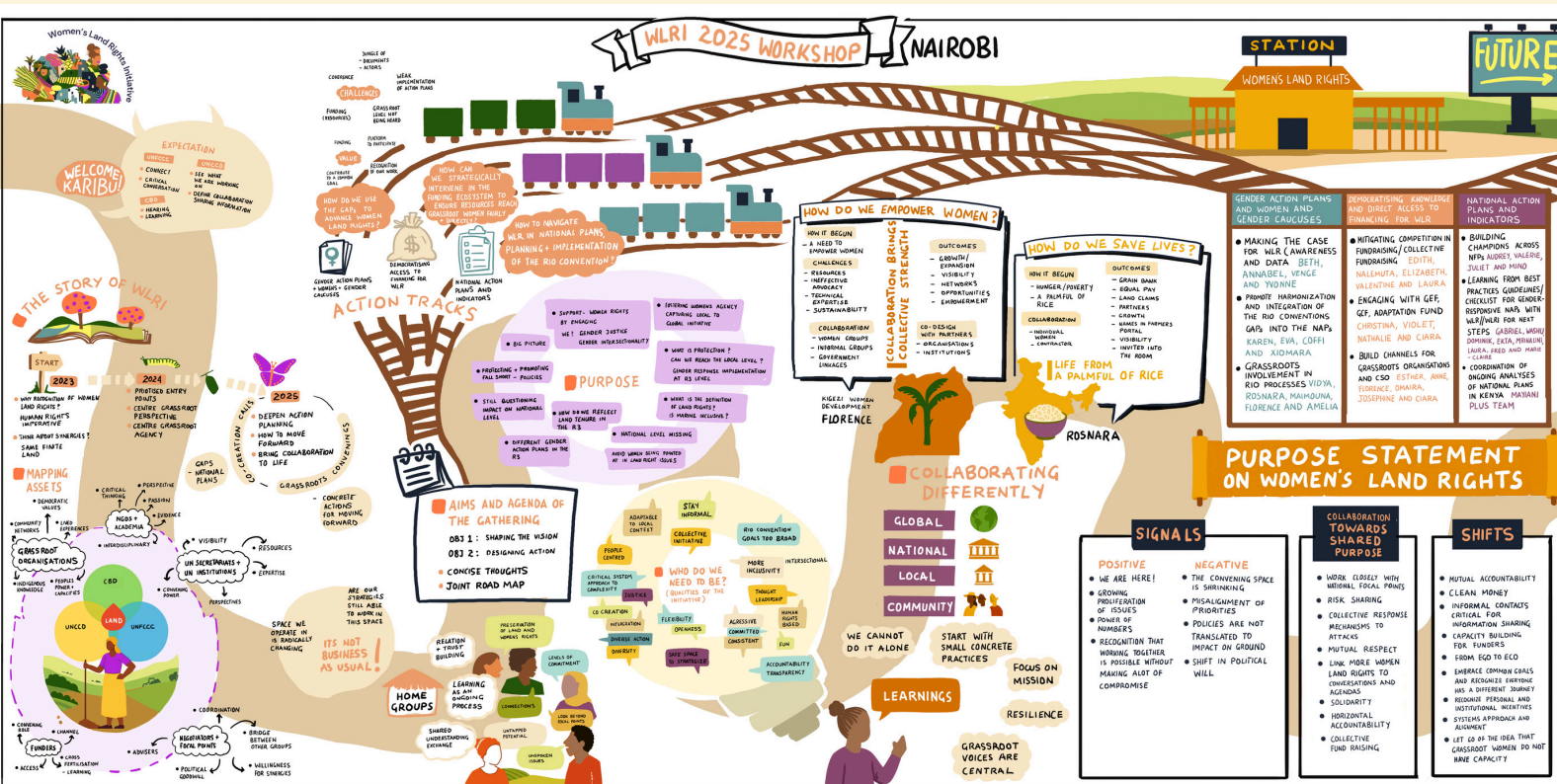
The concept aims to explore how motivated individuals within these roles could help advance the integration of WLR across national processes under the Rio Conventions, while fostering stronger synergies between institutions. Further reflection and co-design within the network will help define what these champions could look like in practice and how best to support them.

Across UNCCD, CBD, and UNFCCC processes, National Action Plans and indicators are a practical lever to operationalise women's land rights.

Looking Ahead

By 2026, new advocacy briefs, funding protocols, and best practice guidelines will circulate across the WLRI network, feeding directly into international processes such as the review of the CBD Gender plan of Action, GEF Replenishment, and COP 17.

Because when women's land rights take root, climate justice becomes possible.



To hear more about why we seek to place land rights for women at the heart of just climate action, see [this video](#) or visit the [WLRI website](#) here.

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