



UNITING FOR LAND RIGHTS IN

ECUADOR

HOW OUR MEMBERS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO CHANGE

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NLC ECUADOR works towards the realisation of the following ILC commitments for People-Centred Land Governance:

- » **Commitment 2:** strong small-scale farming systems
- » **Commitment 4:** equal land rights for women
- » **Commitment 5:** locally managed eco-systems
- » **Commitment 6:** secure territorial rights for indigenous peoples
- » **Commitment 7:** inclusive decision-making

INTERNATIONAL
LAND
COALITION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the work of ILC and its members in advancing people-centred land governance in Ecuador. The report focuses on the progress and outcomes of the **NATIONAL LAND COALITION (NLC)**¹ that has *worked to secure the land and territorial rights of indigenous peoples and peasant communities* in the country since its creation in 2016.

In Ecuador, the main land-related problems include inadequate land use, land concentration, land conflicts between indigenous communities and extractive industries, as well as the lack of an equitable land distribution policy and land titles. Moreover, limited financial resources, constantly shifting political mandates, and poor institutional capacities further fragment efforts to implement a land framework that places people and food sovereignty at its core. This context is compounded by the regressive policies of the current government, as well as by the limited progress in agrarian matters during the reign of the previous government of Rafeael Correa (2007-2017).

In response, the NLC Platform in Ecuador has worked to strengthen

- » the *advocacy efforts* of indigenous, peasant and Afro-Ecuadorian communities and organisations;
- » *knowledge generation* on alternative solutions to land and agricultural issues; and
- » the *formulation of working agreements* between local governments² and social organisations to improve land governance and sustainable natural resource management.

The main results catalysed by the NLC's joint political advocacy with the Network of Lands, Territories and Communities include the *declaration of the Mojanda³ Conservation and Sustainable Use Area (ACUS)* in 2019⁴, and the *Mojanda Water Protection Area⁵ (APHM)* in 2021, which *serve to assure water availability to nearly 500,000 people*, as well as the conservation of the ecosystem. Other notable outcomes in this regard include the formation of the *Public Consortium of Decentralised Autonomous Governments (GAD) of the Ancestral Territory of Imbabura and Carchi* in 2018. Together, these changes have *improved the living conditions of local populations and strengthened the protection of indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and peasant territories, ecosystems and water sources*.

1 Formerly known as the **NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (ENI)**

2 In the provinces of Pichincha, Imbabura, Carchi and Cotopaxi

3 Mojanda is an inactive stratovolcano of the Eastern Cordillera of the Andes in northern Ecuador

4 Through a 2019 municipal ordinance

5 Through a 2021 ministerial resolution



On the other hand, the NLC and its members have created and solidified *avenues for citizen participation in political processes*, including the *strengthening of land rights*. Relevant changes include *community land regulations to strengthen indigenous justice and land conflict resolution*, and a *reform of the regulations of the Pukara de Pesillo Indigenous Community*. These local level advances moreover fed the design of GAD policies in the Cayambe region, and likewise had a *favourable impact on the territory's indigenous population*.

Thanks to the promotion of multi-stakeholder dialogues⁶ together with the Afro-descendant Ancestral Youth Network, and the Public Consortium of GADs, the NLC also catalysed the *recognition of the Afro-Ecuadorian Ancestral Territory of Imbabura and Carchi*. Joint efforts with other key allies moreover allowed for the *set-up of the National Land Fund Observatory in 2021, as well as its promotion, monitoring and implementation* in regards to peasant family farming land access.

6 With the Ministry of Agriculture; the Autonomous Governments of Imbabura and Carchi; the National Coordination of Black Women (CONAMUNE) of Carchi and Imbabura; the Federation of Black Communities and Organisations of Imbabura and Carchi (FECONIC); the Afro-descendant Youth Network of Imbabura and Carchi (Red de Jóvenes Afrodescendientes); and the National Network of Afro-descendant Communities and Organisations of Imbabura and Carchi (Red de Jóvenes Afrodescendientes)

COUNTRY CONTEXT: THE STATE OF LAND IN ECUADOR

During the ten-year reign of President Correa (2007-17), a land and agrarian reform was implemented that promoted food sovereignty and land distribution, yet achieved limited progress in its implementation. Successive governments, including that of the current President Guillermo Lasso (2022-25), have hindered the possibility of land access for the country's half a million landless peasants.

Recent governments, such as that of Moreno (2017-21) and Lasso, have aligned with the neoliberal right and brought about a regressive trend in social, economic and political rights, and promoted extractivism. In turn, this context sparked two mass protests (October 2019, June 2022) led by the indigenous movement, the working and popular classes, as well as students and women. In response to the 2022 mobilisation, dialogue roundtables between the government and indigenous movements were organised; a key topic in these was the formulation of a National Programme for Peasant Family Farming, to which land access and the protection of territories are two important factors. The roundtables are currently underway and the implementation of these agreements is expected to begin in October 2022.

Climate and environmental crises

In 2008, Ecuador became the first country to constitutionally recognise the rights of nature. This obliges the State to protect the well-being of the environment and its ecosystems for current and future generations. The growing awareness of the importance of environmental issues is fostering opportunities to bring land tenure issues to the forefront of public discourse due to their intrinsic link to natural resources.

However, Ecuador's ecosystems are under severe pressure. The extractivist model, rooted in large-scale mining and oil exploitation, has been given more prominence and priority. This is compounded by expansions in the mining, logging, and construction sectors, in addition to heightened market demand for agricultural products such as dairy, meat and palm oil. In 2019, a crisis linked to the economic measures set forth by the new national debts contracted through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) generated deep popular discontent, especially among indigenous peoples, that eventually culminated in the repeal of these measures.

Margined voices and limited land access: indigenous and afro-ecuadorian peoples, women and the youth

Inequality in land distribution and access is rampant in Ecuador, mainly affecting the country's peasantry, indigenous peoples and rural women by hindering their productive capacities and participation in organised political spaces. Young people likewise suffer from poor access to land as well as high unemployment rates. Despite the 2008 Constitution recognising indigenous rights, along with other legal frameworks that establish equal land rights for women, this is not the case in practice, especially with regard to land titling and property registration.



Food systems and peasant family farming

Land concentration is destabilising food availability in Ecuador. Food production is highly affected by climate change, stock market speculation, the price volatility of fertilisers and agrochemicals, asymmetrical market relations, the impacts of COVID-19, among other factors. Current agricultural policies are governed by the neoliberal model, as exemplified through the signing of free trade agreements and the deinstitutionalization of the state. As a result, the country is experiencing high spikes in the price of food and other basic necessities that further drive inequality and poverty, particularly in rural areas.

However, Ecuadorian family farmers- responsible for over 70% of domestic food production- have organised themselves to collectively call for the transformation of food systems and the promotion of agro-ecology. They provide agro-exports such as cocoa and yellow maize, and are the driving force in both domestic food production and agricultural employment. Notably, family farmers and their organisations were also on the front lines of national food provision during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, despite the importance and value provided by peasant family farmers, the country lacks dedicated public policies to strengthen their participation within the different linkages in the agro-food chain, including marketing spaces and the coverage of production costs.

TIMELINE AND THEORY OF CHANGE



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DATOS

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2022

- Formulation of the Plurinational Action Plan for the UN Decade of Family Farming in Ecuador
- Presentation of the draft reform of the Organic Law on Rural Lands and Ancestral Territories to the National Assembly

2021

- Declaration of the Mojanda Water Protection Area
- Presentation of the draft Organic Code of Food Sovereignty to the National Assembly
- Creation of the National Land Fund Citizens' Observatory

2019

- Municipal Ordinance 022-2019 in Pedro Moncayo for the recognition of the Mojanda Conservation and Sustainable Use Area

2020

- Municipal ordinance on the collective rights of the communes of the canton of Ibarra
- Reform of the statute of the Pukará indigenous community
- Formulation of the regulations of the Pukará indigenous community
- CEDAW Shadow Report on the Situation of Rural Women in Ecuador
- Civil society Shadow Report on Land-Related SDG targets in the context of Ecuador's Voluntary Review at the UN High-Level Forum

2018

- Special Official Register (No. 688) on the creation of the Public Consortium of Autonomous Decentralised Governments of the Ancestral Territory of Imbabura and Carchi
- CEDAW Shadow Report on the Situation of Rural Women in Ecuador
- The Plurinational and Intercultural Conference on Food Sovereignty (COPIISA) receives proposed amendments to i) the Organic Law on Rural Lands and Ancestral Territories LOTRTA; ii) the Organic Law on Water Resources, Uses and Development of Water; iii) the Law on Food Sovereignty; the Law on Seeds; and, iv) the Law on Agricultural Sanitation
- Proposal for the implementation of the National Land Fund

2017

- Collaboration agreement with the autonomous decentralised intercultural and plurinational municipal government of Cayambe
- Collaboration agreement with the decentralised autonomous government of Pedro Moncayo
- Collaboration agreement with the Plurinational* and Intercultural Conference on Food Sovereignty (COPIISA)
- Document of contributions and recommendations on the regulation of the Organic Law on Rural Lands and Ancestral Territories submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture

* *The existence of several political communities and constitutional asymmetry define a plurinational state. Ecuador and Bolivia were the first countries in the region to formally recognise their multi-ethnic makeup and strengthen Indigenous peoples' rights in new constitutions.*

2016

- Establishment of the National Land Coalition in Ecuador
- Formation of the Land, Territories and Communities Network
- Monitoring of the legislative debate on the Organic Law on Rural Lands and Ancestral Territories

THEORY OF CHANGE

ILC works to secure land rights for and with people, namely through support to (i) National Land Coalitions, (ii) the generation and use of people's data for accountability; and (iii) regional and global advocacy- with the aim to influence governments, traditional authorities and corporations to realise people-centred land governance. ILC's 2022-2030 Strategy comprises the following three strategic objectives that guide the work of the NLC:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1:

NATIONAL LAND COALITIONS ADVANCE PEOPLE-CENTRED LAND GOVERNANCE

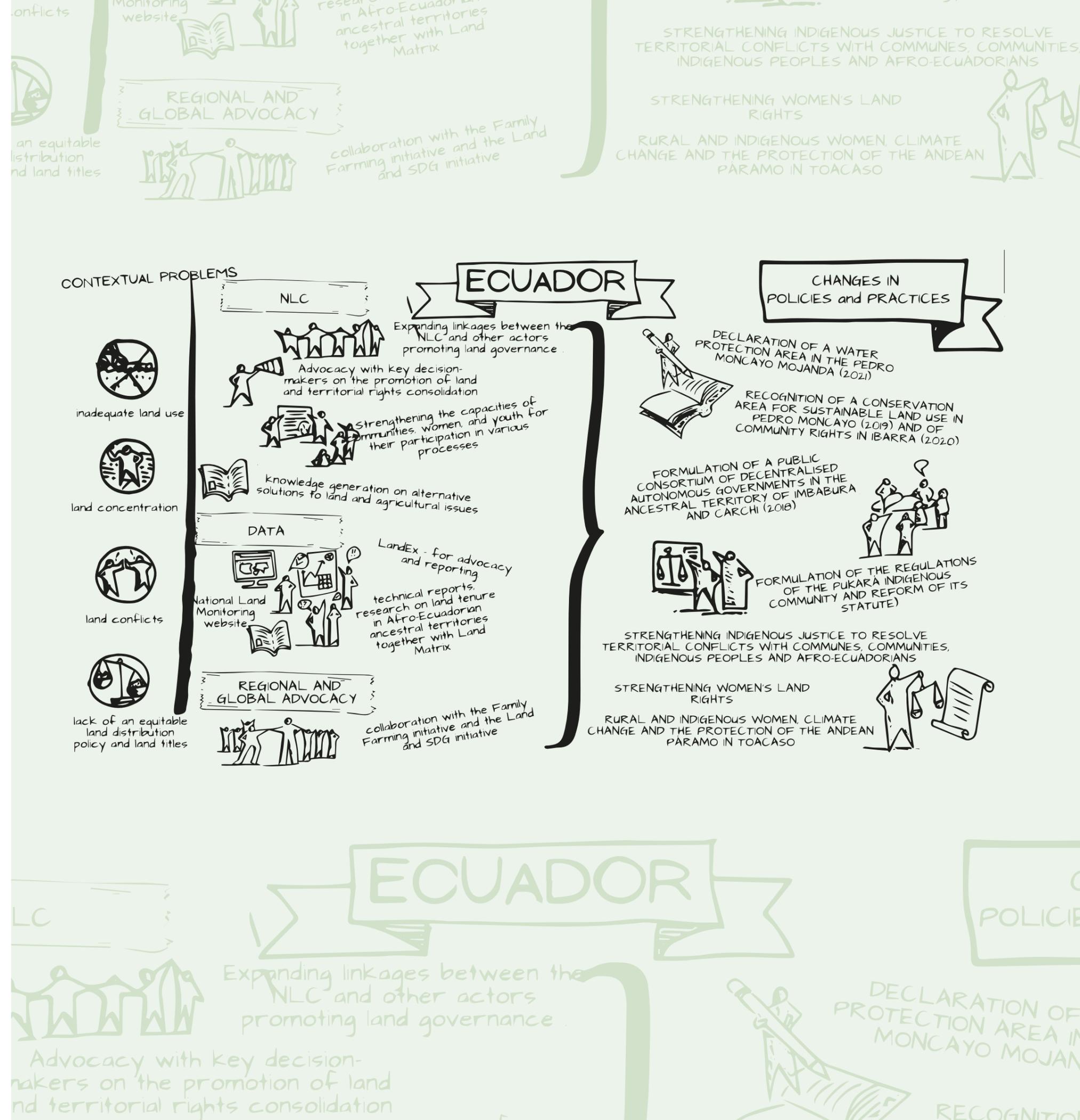
National Land Coalitions are key to ILC's work and Theory of Change. As land issues vary from country to country, there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and each NLC develops a unique strategy in line with its particular context. However, all NLC platforms draw on the diverse strengths of ILC's membership and allies to help improve land-related policies and practices, while strengthening accountability and protecting civic spaces. NLCs prioritise peer learning, fundraising support, and leadership development- especially for grassroots organisations and women.

In Ecuador, the NLC platform is made up of five ILC members⁷ that work to influence public policies for the responsible governance of land, territories, and natural resources- together with a broad group of people's organisations, women's organisations, intergovernmental organisations, and local governments.

The key work-areas and strategic objectives of the NLC platform in Ecuador include:

- » Expanding linkages between the NLC Platform with other actors promoting land governance, and which incorporate intercultural and gender justice approaches.
- » Strengthening the capacities of communities, women, and youth for their participation in various processes related to land and natural resource governance
- » Advocacy with key decision-makers on the promotion of land and territorial rights consolidation at local and national level.

⁷ Corporación Sistema de Investigación Sobre la Problemática Agraria en Ecuador (SIPAE); Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio (FEPP); Corporación de Gestión y Derecho Ambiental (COLEX); Instituto de Estudios Ecuatorianos (IEE); Movimiento Nacional de Mujeres de Sectores Populares Luna Creciente



Together with local governments and other national and local partners, the platform has supported the formulation of national regulations through concrete contributions (position papers, joint statements and policy briefs) in addition to analyses on the state of land and territories- further elaborated on in the section on NLC-catalysed changes below.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2:

PEOPLE'S DATA IS PRODUCED AND USED TO HOLD GOVERNMENTS AND BUSINESSES ACCOUNTABLE

The NLC works on and with locally-generated people's data in order to provide a powerful basis for evidence-based dialogue with public institutions, and to hold governments accountable for progress towards people-centred land governance, including on land-related SDG indicators.

To this end, the NLC in Ecuador worked with ILC's **Land Governance Index (LandEx)**—a global index built in consultation with ILC members and partners that puts people at the centre of land data while democratising land monitoring. Since 2021, the NLC's work with LandEx in Ecuador has been used for advocacy and reporting.

Key findings from the LandEx in Ecuador include:

- » In rural areas, 62.55% of respondents claim to hold some kind of documentation to support their property rights.
- » Only 60% of rural women in Ecuador report feeling secure in their land tenure
- » Only 3.33% of women living in an agricultural household have a legally recognised document outlining their right to sell or bequeath the land.
- » Although Ecuador has a vast legal framework that allows communities to own land, the government retains great powers regarding the effective recognition of land tenure rights.

Other land monitoring initiatives included work to produce technical reports on the impact of extractive industries, and local level research on land tenure in Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territories⁸ together with **Land Matrix** - an independent global land monitoring initiative ILC partakes in. In addition, the NLC actively supports land monitoring through the **National Land Monitoring website**, which outlines the design, approval and implementation of new regulatory frameworks on land to provide timely analyses on the various legal proposals of state entities. *In the northern highlands of the country, these activities included land tenure assessments, which influenced the recognition of the Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory in Imbabura and Carchi.*

8 in the provinces of Esmeraldas, Imbabura and Carchi



Moreover, the NLC has formulated extensive materials on the state of land tenure in Ecuador, including among others, a research paper on **“Governance of land and territory in Cayambe”** (2021); CEDAW shadow reports on the situation of rural women (2018, 2020); radio programmes on indigenous justice in Spanish and Kichwa (2021); a book on “The Afro-Ecuadorian ancestral territory of the Chota Valley⁹”; as well as a **proposed regulation for the National Land Fund**. These materials have been used both to position and promote land issues in public debates, and to support trainings for decision-makers throughout the country.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3:

REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ADVOCACY BUILDS POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE-CENTRED LAND GOVERNANCE

The impact of NLCs is further amplified by members and partners (especially people's organisations) supporting ILC's thematic platforms at regional and global levels. These efforts contribute to fostering an enabling environment to advance political will for people-centred land governance; to move towards the recognition of land as a human right; and to facilitate peer-to-peer learning across borders.

The NLC in Ecuador collaborates with the following ILC regional platforms:

- » **Family Farming in LAC (Agricultura Familiar):**
The Initiative worked with the NLC to formulate a reference report for the preparation of the Plurinational Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Decade of Family Farming. This document enabled the Sub-secretariat of Family Farming of the Ministry of Agriculture to resume the promotion of the UN Decade process in Ecuador, (together with FAO) - a process that had stalled in December 2020.
- » **Land and Sustainable Development Goals in LAC (ODS y la Tierra):**
The Initiative worked with the NLC platform to lead the formulation of an **Alternative Report on Land Governance in the framework of the SDGs and Ecuador's 2030 Agenda** (2020). The NLC, together with broader national civil society actors, also presented the Alternative Report and addressed the Ecuadorian State at the High Level SDG Forum.

9 Entitled “La Concepción and Salinas: El problema de acceso a la tierra”

NOTABLE OUTCOMES

CONTRIBUTIONS TO LAND GOVERNANCE CHANGES

Secure land and territorial rights are crucial to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems that regulate the climate and sustain all life on earth. ILC is committed to community-led restoration initiatives, including community-led forest and grassland management, as well as agro-ecology. The work of ILC members in Ecuador illustrates the importance of sustained efforts to advance people-centred land governance and land stewardship in light of a rapidly changing climate.

RECOGNITION OF A CONSERVATION AREA FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND USE IN PEDRO MONCAYO (2019) AND OF COMMUNITY RIGHTS IN IBARRA (2020)

In the Pedro Moncayo canton, NLC-supported negotiations contributed to the approval of a municipal ordinance (022-2019) for the establishment of a *Conservation Area for Sustainable Land Use (ACUS)* in February 2019. The platform, in particular ILC member ECOLEX, also led an analysis of local legislation and territorial structuring to feed the process. The declaration of the conservation area changed the practices of the Autonomous Decentralised Municipal Government of Pedro Moncayo (GAD-PM), *transforming its very limited sphere of participation to incorporate civil society actors in political debates and decision-making processes*. By facilitating dialogue between the Decentralised Autonomous Municipal Government, people's organisations and indigenous and peasant communities - the participatory formulation of the ordinance also contributed to *reducing social conflict in the region*.

In November 2019, the City Council approved the continuation of the process by declaring it an *Area of Water Protection (APH)*. Since then, NLC activities focused on supporting the implementation of the ordinance, as well as the protection and sustainable management of the *páramos*¹⁰ to safeguard the local ecosystem.

10 Páramo can refer to a variety of alpine tundra ecosystems located in the Andes Mountain Range

In 2020, the NLC furthermore contributed to the *approval of another municipal ordinance for the promotion and protection of the rights of Ibarra's communes, communities, and peoples*, through the **official register** of 20 January 2020, and with the support of organisations from the Cantonal Councils for the Protection of Rights of the Ibarra, Mira and Bolivar cantons. In 2022, the NLC, alongside indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian organisations, also contributed to the *construction of the ordinance's regulations*.

DECLARATION OF A WATER PROTECTION AREA IN THE PEDRO MONCAYO MOJANDA (2021)

The NLC, together with the GAD and the Union of Cochasqui Pedro Moncayo Organisations (UCCOPEM) in Pedro Moncayo also contributed to the continuity of its territorial governance strategy for the management of local ecosystems. As a result, *the Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological Transition declared the Mojanda as a Water Protection Area* on 23 June 2021. *The area, which covers 6,097 hectares, aims to guarantee the availability of water resources to 57,000 thousand people directly and a further 476,422 inhabitants indirectly.*

NLC members also *influenced the local government* to recognise the importance of ecosystem management, especially with regard to the *páramos*. These efforts received wide coverage and visibility among local communities, which in turn *contributed to greater participation* in the management of public policies and the promotion of **advocacy actions for the defence of the territory and rights vindications**.

FORMULATION OF A PUBLIC CONSORTIUM OF DECENTRALISED AUTONOMOUS GOVERNMENTS IN THE ANCESTRAL TERRITORY OF IMBABURA AND CARCHI (2018)

In the Ancestral Afro-descendant Territory of Imbabura and Carchi, the NLC platform and its members, in particular the ILC member Fondo Ecuatoriano Populorum Progressio (FEPP) contributed to the *formation of the Public Consortium of Decentralised Autonomous Governments of the Ancestral Territory of Imbabura and Carchi*, through its publication in the *Special Official Register* (No. 688) in 2018. The register notably *addressed the historical and current exclusion of the Afro-descendant people*, and demanded the vindication of collective rights in the Network of Decentralised Autonomous Governments (GADs) of the Ancestral Territory.

NLC members contributed to the process by supporting dialogues between civil society and local governments on land access and the recognition of the ancestral territory, catalysing the *formation of the Public Consortium*, and strengthening its technical coordination. During 2022, NLC moreover facilitated the construction of the Consortium's internal rules of procedure.

FORMULATION OF THE REGULATIONS OF THE PUKARÁ INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY AND REFORM OF ITS STATUTE

As part of the support provided by ILC/NLC member Corporación Sistema de Investigación sobre la Problemática Agraria en Ecuador (SIPAE), progress was made in the *formulation of the regulations of the Pukara de Pesillo Indigenous Community*, as well as a reform of its statute. This constituted a process initiated by the community which the NLC supported by promoting conflict resolution mechanisms on land and territory issues with a gender perspective, as well as effective approaches to advancing indigenous justice and territorial administration.

The relevant documents were promoted by the Confederation of the Kayambi People and the Decentralised Intercultural and Plurinational Autonomous Government of the Municipality of Cayambe (GADIP) that strengthened local capacities and awareness of the reform. These efforts provided important inputs to ensure compliance with the *Community Life Plan*.

STRENGTHENING INDIGENOUS JUSTICE TO RESOLVE TERRITORIAL CONFLICTS WITH COMMUNES, COMMUNITIES, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND AFRO-ECUADORIANS

The lack of recognition of intercultural justice by State institutions is a violation of the rights of Ecuador's peoples and nationalities. However, in 2018, Cayambe elected the first indigenous mayor, which favoured a *greater recognition of the indigenous justice system*, and promoted the *set-up of permanent dialogues*¹¹ to support the construction of a plurinational and intercultural State. The resulting visibility around the issues of legal pluralism in a plurinational and intercultural country further highlighted the State's historic failure to promote the equal exercise of justice as a collective right of its peoples and nationalities.

In this context, the NLC established *formal working agreements with the local government of Cayambe and the Governing Council of the Confederation of the Kayambi People* to promote the recognition of land issues faced by indigenous authorities.

11 Together with the territorial representative of the Kichwa population, and the Confederation of the Kayambi People



inadequate land use



land concentration



land conflicts



lack of an equitable land distribution policy and land titles

In Cayambe, NLC's trainings and dialogues also contributed to a *greater awareness of indigenous justice and land and territory issues* as seen through a gender and intercultural approach.

As a result, local authorities have increased their ability to exercise *justice according to their own cosmovision and customs*, and are now committed to guaranteeing the *equal participation of women in decision-making*. On the other hand, public entities now recognise indigenous authorities as legitimate actors.

In 2021-2022, the process was expanded with four indigenous groups of Kichwa nationality (Karanqui, Kayambi, Natabuela and Otavalo)¹² and through a *technical roundtable to share experiences on conflict resolution* in the realm of indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, and Chachi justice. By documenting these experiences, it became clear that these peoples have been resolving conflicts over land through internally enforceable sentences. As such, the strengthening of their own means of conflict resolution was promoted with an emphasis on land and territorial rights, while new strategies for networking on indigenous justice were enabled.

STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

NLC members work for the realisation of equal land rights for women and to increase their effective participation in decision-making on land and territorial governance. The platform collaborates with women's organisations at the territorial level, and jointly conducts research on pertinent topics, such as through the CEDAW Parallel Reports in 2018 and 2020 on the situation of rural women in the country. Meetings organised by the NLC and its partners¹³ between indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian and peasant women, also culminated in an *action plan to strengthen the CEDAW Parallel Report*, and to give more visibility to issues in land access faced by women in the Ecuadorian Amazon.

12 Together with the Confederation of the Kayambi People, the Afro-Ecuadorian people of Imbabura and Carchi, and the Chachi Nationality of Esmeraldas
13 The Cantonal Women's Movement of Cayambe and the National Coordinator of Black Women of Imbabura and Carchi

At the local level, women's organisations involved¹⁴ in NLC activities are moreover leading the *formulation of proposals to consider gender justice within various local aspects*, including access to land, water and indigenous justice. Notably, these *women have obtained municipal and provincial resolutions* with the GADs of Cayambe, Cotopaxi and Loja - and for the first time in history, they also *managed to include the Shuar women of Morona Santiago of the Amazon in their Community Life Plan*.

RURAL AND INDIGENOUS WOMEN, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE PROTECTION OF THE ANDEAN PÁRAMO IN TOACASO

In 2021-22, the ILC/NLC member Instituto de Estudios Ecuatorianos (IEE) accompanied the Organisation of Indigenous and Peasant Women "Sowing Hope" (OMICSE)¹⁵, in activities to protect and preserve the moorlands in Toacaso, Cotopaxi province. The NLC and its partners carried out *a baseline study of the regulatory framework on the moorlands*, and *formulated a roadmap* to advance its conservation, which in turn also strengthened the OMICSE women's protection of the area. In addition, a local sustainability strategy was proposed, as well as environmental protection activities based on agro-ecology.

14 Including Ecuarunari and Confeniae, the Black Women's Movement of Esmeraldas and the Network of Amazonian Women,

15 Branch of the Movimiento Popular de Mujeres Luna Creciente



KEY CHALLENGES

STRENGTHENING THE LEADERSHIP OF PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The leadership of organisations participating in NLC actions (including the Public Consortium of GADs) now places greater emphasis on gender justice, as well as on intercultural and intergenerational knowledge. As a result of discussions on the reform of the statute and the construction of the Pukará community regulations, there has also been a strengthening of the capacities the local communities¹⁶, as well as women's and youth organisations in the area. Likewise, greater institutional capacities have been achieved in the local government of Pedro Moncayo through the implementation of highly participatory public policies that provide a point of reference for the establishment of future policies.

Moreover, *inter-institutional dialogue has been strengthened* between the GADs of the Imbabura-Carchi Ancestral Territory, the National Council for Citizen Participation and Social Control, the Ministry of Agriculture and civil society organisations, which has made it possible to specify the *requirements for the implementation of the National Land Fund Observatory*. The Land and Territory roundtable¹⁷ (in conjunction with the EQUITERRA project) also influenced activities to be carried out more collaboratively, whereas previously these were managed solely by local governments. The support of the NLC in the coordination, planning and organisation of the Technical Coordination of the Public Consortium has further favoured the development of *joint projects to improve the management of local governments*, which in turn also strengthened their capacities.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE NLC PLATFORM

The construction of the new three-year strategy in light of the platform's expansion in 2018 required joint reflection on the platform's priorities and working modalities. The process prompted an analysis of the roles and competencies of the facilitator, the host organisation, as well as its members and partners that led to adjustments to the NLC's governance mechanism. The NLC also conducted a Gender Audit, and formulated a collaboration manual as well as a communication and advocacy strategy as part of the process that ultimately fostered trust and culminated in a new strategy approved by all members.

16 These included participation in decision-making processes, and conflict resolution

17 A space for debate and networking in the northern highlands, made up of local and central governments and non-governmental organisations.

THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The context of social isolation and distancing due to COVID-19 generated a series of challenges for the continuity of the NLC's work and impact. Nevertheless, the NLC sustained its work through online, radio and audiovisual media to develop training activities, debates, and meetings to establish agreements on advocacy, which prevented the complete stalling of activities.

THE LINKAGES BETWEEN PEASANT, INDIGENOUS AND AFRO-ECUADORIAN ORGANISATIONS

The integration of a wide range of peasant agricultural actors in the formulation of the National Agrarian Programme, where the issue of land rights and the defence of territories is one of its unifying axes, has also been challenging. The NLC is working to render itself into a space that facilitates meetings of peasant populations so that they can better define their national agendas with territorial elements.

DATA GENERATION AND ADVOCACY TRAINING

The NLC faced complications in sustaining political advocacy due to an institutional framework with lengthy bureaucratic processes and difficulties in understanding the needs of peasant family farmers and land issues. To this end, the NLC prioritised strengthening their organisational capacities in order to demand their land rights, the defence of their territories, and the guarantee of food sovereignty. An important lesson learnt in this regard was the need and value in integrating capacity building processes on specialised land governance issues, together with data generation and research. This allowed for the formulation of stronger narratives for dialogue and advocacy with political actors to contribute to changes in practices and policies.

MAINSTREAMING THE CLIMATE CHANGE AGENDA IN THE NLC AND BEYOND

One of the key issues that remains to be taken up more broadly by the NLC relates to the impacts of climate change. As its effects are becoming increasingly evident in the country, climate change necessitates further incorporation in the national land governance agenda, and in a manner which aligns with the principles of environmental justice, i.e. that its effects have specific perpetrators inside and outside the country that must be made evident in order to undertake the necessary environmental and social remediation measures.

GENDER JUSTICE

Although the gender justice approach has been addressed by the NLC, the platform is also cognizant of the challenges in incorporating the approach in action plans and in securing resources to implement the recommendations of the Gender Audit undertaken in 2021-22.

WE COULD NOT DO IT ALONE

PARTNERSHIPS FOR IMPACT



By working within broad partnerships, ILC's impact is considerably broader than the limits of its network or budget. These collaborations contribute to changing the agendas, policies and practices of governments, traditional authorities and companies to secure land rights for and with people.

In Ecuador, the NLC platform has established broad alliances with various community organisations, local governments, intergovernmental organisations, as well as with the Land, Territories and Communities Network that incorporates 16 other organisations representing peasant, indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women, NGOs, universities and local governments.

The NLC also works directly with the *indigenous peoples* of the Cayambe canton, where its members support the strengthening of land management, links between civil society and the public sector, as well as the resolution of land conflicts. In the Ancestral Territory of Imbabura and Carchi, the platform works with the *Coordination of Youth Organisations*, composed of 36 Community Management Committees.

The NLC also coordinates actions with the *Mesa de Soberanía Alimentaria del Cantón Cayambe*, a network that unites local organisations working on food sovereignty; as well as with *Grupo Tierra*, a network of universities and institutions that carry out research on rurality, environment, territory and food.

Other key partners of the platform include:

THE LAND, TERRITORIES AND COMMUNITIES NETWORK

The Land, Territories and Communities Network is the main partner of the NLC, and is jointly led by indigenous peoples, communities and local governments, women, youth, universities and non-governmental organisations. The network promotes political actions to enable access to land for peasant families, the defence of ancestral territories, as well as food sovereignty.

THE EQUITERRA PROJECT

The Equiterra Project builds on NLC's research, training and advocacy to broaden debates and processes on land and territories. Since 2019, activities have been promoted together with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Food Programme, UN Women, and the Ministry of Agriculture on issues related to women, gender justice and family farming. In 2020, collaborations with the EQUITERRA project were strengthened, allowing for increased learning exchanges, knowledge generation and advocacy activities.

This enabled the NLC's partner organisations to participate in a vocational training programme for equitable community land management and on the management of agricultural land.

The NLC and Equiterra also collaborated on research projects, including the report on **The 'Governance of Land and Territory in Cayambe'**¹⁸. Equiterra furthermore supported the redesign of the Land Monitoring website that serves as a repository for the various documents produced, and for the dissemination of activities by NLC and its partners.

WORLD RURAL FORUM AND NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF PEASANT FAMILY FARMING (AFC-ECUADOR)

The NLC obtained funds from the World Rural Forum to "*Strengthen the National Committee of the Agricultura Familiar Campesina-Ecuador*". The sponsorship enabled the creation of a training school for leaders and a school for community communicators. It also enabled visits to grassroots family farming organisations and the development of numerous analytical documents on the situation of family and peasant agriculture in Ecuador.

18 Together with the Confederation of the Kayambi People, the Municipality of Cayambe, the Kawsay Indigenous Cultures Foundation and the Council for the Integral Protection of the Rights of Cayambe

PLATFORM MEMBERSHIP

The NLC Ecuador platform is made up of five ILC members. With the entry of two new members in 2018, the NLC has expanded its advocacy framework at both the local and national level, incorporated the themes of sustainable agriculture and moorland protection, and increased actions with peasants and indigenous peoples.

ILC members involved in the NLC platform in Ecuador include:

SIPAE	<i>Corporación sistema de investigación sobre la problemática agraria en Ecuador</i>	SIPAE works to strengthen linkages with academic institutions to better inform policies that promote sustainable, democratic, inclusive and competitive agriculture. SIPAE is the host institution of the NLC platform and carries out trainings, data generation, and advocacy on self-justice and access to land at local and national levels.
FEPP	<i>Fondo ecuatoriano populorum progressio</i>	FEPP is a non-profit organisation that works at regional and national level, together with cooperatives, social enterprises and schools to create an assistance fund for the most disadvantaged. Within the NLC, FEPP carries out advocacy work in the Afro-descendant ancestral territory of Imbabura and Carchi in five cantons.
ECOLEX	<i>Corporación de gestión y derecho ambiental</i>	ECOLEX works to influence policy and legislation to protect human rights and the environment. It works on projects on environmental sustainability and its legal aspects, and on implementing community development and natural resource management programmes. Within the NLC, ECOLEX works with the GAD in Pedro Moncayo to safeguard the páramo ecosystem and to carry out advocacy activities, as well as the climate justice approach.
IEE	<i>Instituto de estudios ecuatorianos</i>	The IEE seeks to develop a committed research framework to promote critical thinking as a whole and among indigenous, peasant and rural women's organisations. The IEE has promoted advocacy actions on Peasant Family Farming in national and regional spaces through the NLC.
LUNA CRECIENTE	<i>Movimiento nacional de mujeres de sectores populares Luna Creciente</i>	The Luna Creciente Foundation seeks to strengthen women's organisations in training and political advocacy, as well as through proposals to reduce the gender gap and to increase women's rights. Within the NLC, Luna Creciente leads the networking of women's organisations from popular sectors in six provinces of the Sierra, Coast and Amazon.


inadequate land use


land concentration


land conflicts


lack of an equitable land distribution policy and land titles



STRATEGIC PARTERS AND CORE DONORS





NATIONAL LAND COALITIONS (NLCs) - previously referred to as **NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES (NESs)** - are multi-stakeholder platforms set in motion by the **International Land Coalition (ILC)**.

They are **led by ILC members** and include both members and non-members, to realise the Coalition's **joint goal of people-centred land governance** and to push forward national land reform and agendas.



ECUADOR

Desde 2016

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