



**acba**  
African CSOs  
Biodiversity Alliance

**ACBA WEBINAR REPORT**

# **How CBNRM can Deliver Inclusive, Fair and Equitable Conservation for People and Nature**

*African and Chinese Perspectives from Land and  
Marine Conservation*



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## Background

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Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) as a concept embraces a range of ecosystem-based approaches such as nature-based solutions (NbS) and ecosystem adaptation including restoration of degraded landscapes. It promotes the active engagement of local people in conservation in a manner that respects their rights and guarantees equitable access to benefits while considering their local knowledge and needs. As a model, CBNRM has had notable success in conservation for sustainable development for both African and Chinese communities but has also had difficulties reflective of gaps in design and or implementation in some contexts. One of the keys to the success of CBNRM initiatives is inclusive and transparent governance.

As people throughout Africa and China experience the beneficial impacts of economic and social development, it is essential that development is not positioned as incompatible with, or even hampered by conservation objectives. CBNRM develops linkages between natural resource conservation and poverty alleviation. Where underpinned by good governance, this model can facilitate the sustainable use of natural resources to the benefit of people and biodiversity. Nevertheless, in Africa and China, challenges to successful CBNRM are posed by the commodification of biodiversity which prioritizes economic values over ecological ones, chronic implementation and enforcement problems, and inconsistent and limited meaningful public participation.



## Proceedings

The Africa CSOs Biodiversity Alliance (ACBA) in collaboration with China's Civil Society Alliance for Biodiversity Conservation (CSABC) hosted a webinar to highlight African and Chinese perspectives in land and marine conservation on the topic: "How community based natural resource management (CBNRM) can deliver inclusive, fair and equitable conservation for people and nature." The webinar was held on the 1st April 2021 from 10:00 am to noon EAT.

This webinar aimed to illuminate how CBNRM has been used and can be taken forward in African and Chinese biodiversity conservation. The session engaged CSO professionals, related stakeholders from the ACBA and CSABC networks, and African, Chinese, and other Public engaged in Africa-China relations, biodiversity conservation, and environmental civil society. The webinar was led by:

### MODERATORS

Maxi Louis  
Dr. Kui Peng

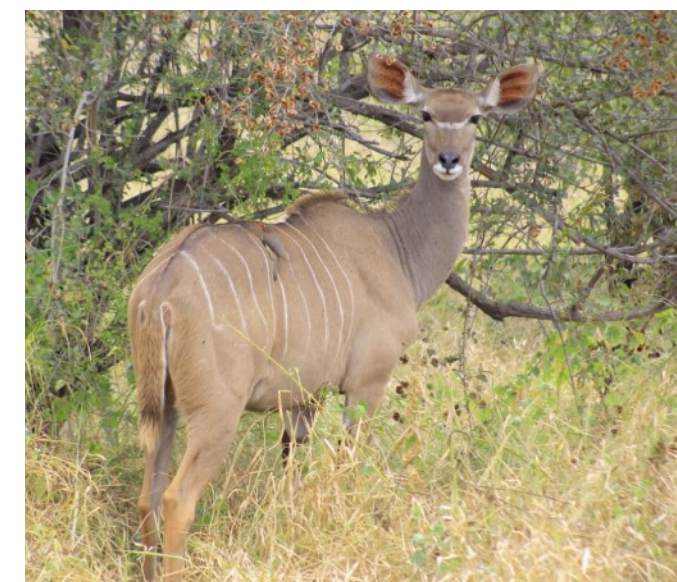
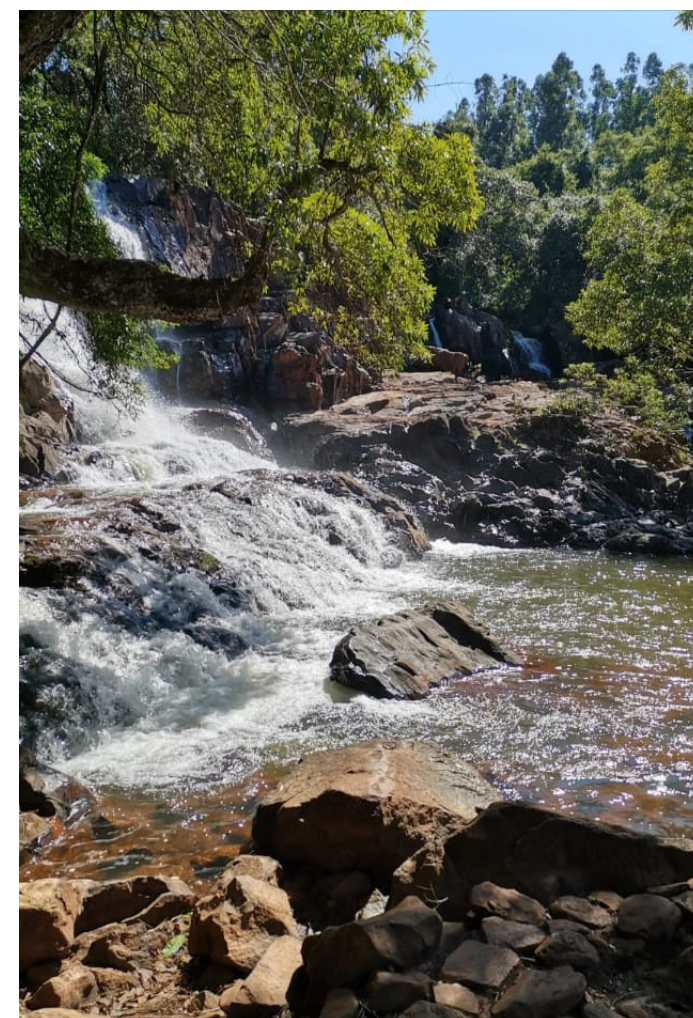
### SPEAKERS

Dr. Shylock Muyengwa  
Shi Xiangying  
David Obura  
Han Han



The outcomes sought were to build common understanding on how CBNRM can deliver on multiple elements of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) such as nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based adaptation, other effective conservation measures (OECMs), and other approaches to promoting biodiversity. Throughout the discussion, the diversity in approaches to defining communities was evident. The importance of ensuring community resilience, taking long term approaches to ecosystem management, and addressing challenges posed to conservation financing were highlighted across the board.

The webinar opened with a brief introduction to ACBA, CSABC, and their partnership towards Africa-China collaboration among biodiversity CSOs. Session I highlighted perspectives on land conservation and was led by Dr. Shylock Muyengwa and Shi Xiangying with moderation from Maxi Louis.



## Session I

Dr. Muyengwa presented his case study of community-based wildlife conservation in Southern Africa. He shared perspectives on CBNRM models in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique and Tanzania, with a focus on their evolution since conception. Dr. Muyengwa highlighted the diversity in approaches, and revenue as well shared principles, non-financial return on investment and challenges to sustainability across countries.

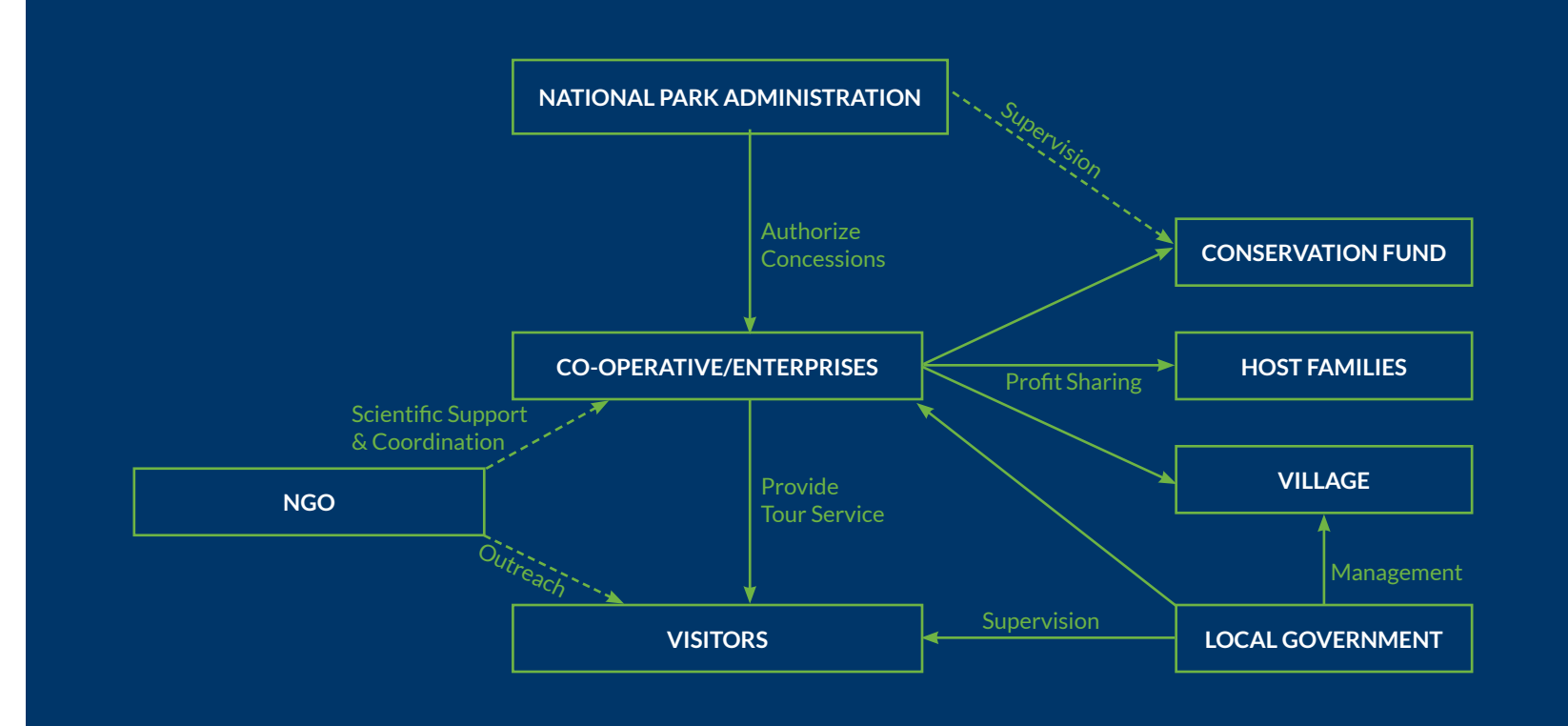
His presentation emphasized that CBNRM in Southern Africa has demonstrated local resilience in the face of numerous challenges in the 30 plus years since it began to be pursued. CBNRM has fostered key services to communities including developing human capital in areas that struggle to attract the resources for education, local infrastructure development (including water), employment, among other crucial factors essential for human development.

Addressing recent seismic changes, Dr. Muyengwa put forward that the 21st century presents new challenges that communities must grapple with, but more than ever need support to address. These include climate change, pandemics and other human health-related concerns (e.g. COVID-19). For wildlife conservation CBNRM in Southern Africa, shifting global norms are especially relevant. For instance, shifting global attitudes towards hunting entail that communities develop strategies that respond to potential declines in sustainable hunting.

Looking to the future, Dr. Muyengwa recommended that support for new forms of resilience-based programming be introduced to support local community efforts, formal markets for wildlife are broadened to increase competition, and that participation of local communities at regional and international level for communities is effectively increased to ensure that decision making at these platforms addresses the impact on their lives.

Shi Xiangying presented on wildlife ecotourism in the Valley of Cats in China. Located in the Tibetan plateau, this is a crucial habitat for large carnivores in China. Among these are snow leopards. She began by pointing out that wildlife ecotourism is well established across Africa, and that there is an opportunity for Chinese communities to learn from African efforts. She further discussed wildlife's diverse benefits: what we consume from them, what we gain intangibly, and their contribution to the environment through biodiversity. Conversely, she shared that there are costs to wildlife conservation, and these are mainly shouldered by communities in their proximity. Additionally, benefits are not equitably distributed, and while collective efforts are needed to protect wildlife, the benefits of these efforts may be mainly or even solely individual.

CBNRM provides an opportunity to ensure communities experience more benefits that incentivize them to protect wildlife. In the Valley of the Cats, Shi Xiangying's team support communities to develop effective approaches to collective governance and management of their conserved areas, including building community capacity to monitor biodiversity themselves. Further, the Shanshui Conservation Centre supports communities in making eco-tourism more economically viable for sustainable livelihoods, and in building climate resilience. These communities, many of whom are indigenous Tibetan groups, are not reliant on eco-tourism for poverty alleviation, it delivers essential benefits to the local economy. Besides CSOs and the local community, government authorities also participate in the project, with national park administration and local government playing crucial roles in creating an enabling environment.



### STRUCTURE OF CBNRM IN VALLEY OF THE CATS

While the local communities do not traditionally hunt wildlife, some of their economic activities negatively impact wildlife habitats e.g. overgrazing. Other sources of pressure for wildlife in the area include human-wildlife conflict resulting from illegal hunting and private tourism, and habitat degradation due to climate change. In response, local eco-tourism for livelihoods is incentivized, with government support to limit private tourism (by conferring concessions to communities to have preferred access for eco-tourism initiative). To ensure community livelihoods are sustainable, the most impoverished in the community receive subsidies.

Challenges the community are currently facing include conclusively evaluating conservation impact e.g. the species abundance since the project began, linkages to market, and long-term sustainability without CSO support and resiliency of the project to unprecedented challenges e.g. COVID-19.

## Session II

Session II focused on perspectives from marine conservation and was moderated by Dr. Kui Peng.

David Obura presented on CBNRM in small scale fisheries, sharing findings from analysis of projects across East Africa, homing in on the Kenyan coast. He mentioned that a lot of our livelihoods and global economy comes from the sea, that we are a lot more conscious of that now as there is increasing pressure on land.

In the 20 plus years since the Kuruwitu case study began operating, there have been improvements for the community and the marine ecosystem surrounding them. While significant, these improvements have been gradual and are reflective of the difficulties in incentivizing restoration of marine ecosystems which require long term interventions for crucial efforts to materialize into tangible progress. Some of the key impacts of CBNRM include improved fishery and tourism income, and coral reef health; greater community resilience due to improved social and economic assets; and a shift from community stakeholders to 'shareholders' who are able to derive primary assets and greater economic value from their fisheries.

Success factors have included co-management legislation and fisheries policy, for which government buy in and support are essential. Local ownership, facilitated by leadership and dialogue, has also been effective towards successful outcomes, and to long-term commitment. Sustainable revenue from primary assets has given communities greater incentive towards marine conservation as it enhances their livelihoods as well. Securing the initial capital investment needed to make the initiative viable was also essential, given that inadequate capital can be prohibitive to the off-take of small-scale projects of this kind. Finally, external interest from other communities and the recognition entailed

in being a 'flagship' that can lend to scalable impact across small scale fisheries in Africa has been a source of motivation for the Kuruwitu community.

In the last 15 years, efforts to scale up have been successful where underpinned by capacity development, multi-level network building among community-based groups into local, sub-national and national fora, ecosystem approaches to fisheries, and embedding responses to climate change vulnerability for resilience. Besides the success factors at project level, scale up has also entailed inclusive leadership, training and capacity building among local communities to ensure sustainable fishing that foster controlled catches and coral reef health, participatory research which improves fishing methods for sustainability and climate resilience, and building learning networks for knowledge exchange.

The final presentation was made by Han Han on small scale fisheries and fish farming in Hainan, China. She highlighted that marine communities in Hainan have been significantly impacted by economic and social development throughout China. Not all marine communities have been able to adapt to these changes and to keep their way of life. In many of the communities, there has been a youth drain, where the young people leave for cities to improve their socio-economic prospects. This significantly impedes the economic viability of fishing. In response, the role of China Blue has been to seek a shift in cultural mindsets towards fishing. To this end, they have hosted exhibitions to highlight the cultural and economic value of fishing communities primarily to the communities themselves and across China.

Besides engaging in sustainable fishing practices, China Blue promotes the participation of fishing communities in addressing marine pollution by engaging fisheries in

cleanups. Success is underpinned by partnering with local government, and by building a sense of ownership among communities. Han Han discussed the role of building intergenerational partnership which seeks to ensure knowledge exchange and mutually reinforcing practices in fisheries based on the unique skillsets older and younger generations possess.

Besides supporting fisheries, Han Han and her team work with tilapia fish farmers, providing technical and financial support. This support leverages on data to ensure that fish farming is sustainable for the surrounding ecosystem e.g. capacity building to support fish farmers in managing the quantity of fish they farm using technology to measure excess nutrients. Han Han concluded by sharing the importance of capacity building, technical and financial support moving forward, and that communities will only invest in change if it creates value for them.



Obura et al. 2017 Reviving the WTO ocean economy.



Exhibition of Hainan fishing communities for Hainan fishing communities

## Conclusion

In her concluding remarks Maxi Louis, the ACBA moderator of the webinar, highlighted that it is impressive that communities are increasingly involved in monitoring and evaluation processes, and that long-term sustainability is addressed in Chinese communities in comparable ways to conservation communities in Southern Africa. She also mentioned that this is the first collaboration of many to come between ACBA and CSABC.

Dr. Kui Peng echoed the importance of this platform in facilitating much needed collaboration among African and Chinese CSOs as they respectively work towards a post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework reflective of the challenges and opportunities in Global South biodiversity.

The webinar attracted close to 100 attendees, more than half of which were African CSOs. Many thanks to the ACBA membership for their participation and sharing with their networks. The recording of the full webinar can be accessed [here](#).

## Annex

TIME	TOPIC
<b>INTRODUCTION (10 MINS)</b>	
15:00 - 15:10	Overview of ACBA & CSABC partnership
<b>SESSION 1 CBNRM-from Wildlife Perspective (40 mins) Moderator: Maxi Louis</b>	
15:10-15:25	CBNRM for wildlife conservation – Southern Africa
15:25-15:40	Valley of the Cats—Conservation Tourism in Sanjiangyuan National Park, China
15:40-15:50	Dialogue & Comments
<b>BREAK TIME (5 MINS)</b>	
<b>SESSION 2 CBNRM-from Marine Conservation Perspective (40 mins) Moderator: Dr. Peng Kui</b>	
15:55-16:10	CBNRM for small scale fisheries & marine conservation – East Africa
16:10-16:25	Engaging small-scale fisher and fish farmer in responsible fishery and aquaculture in Hainan Island
16:25-16:35	Dialogue & Comments
<b>SESSION 3 Q&amp;A (35 mins)</b>	
16:35-17:00	Question and Answer
17:00-17:10	Closing Remarks



# How can CBNRM deliver inclusive, fair and equitable conservation for people and nature?

African and Chinese Perspectives from land and marine conservation



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**DATE:** 01 APRIL 2021 | **LOCATION:** ZOOM

**TIME:** 10:00 AM EAT | 3:00 PM CST

**LIVE ON:** [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ACSOSBA](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ACSOSBA)