



FIG Working Week 2024

19-24 May

Accra, Ghana

Your World, Our World:
Resilient Environment
and Sustainable
Resource Management
for All

Presented at the FIG Working Week 2024,
19-24 May 2024 in Accra, Ghana

THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE CLIMATE STRATEGIES IN NAMIBIA

Mario SIUKUTA, Penehafo RICARDO, Laina ALEXANDER, Cathrine MARENGA,
Ntwala Vanessa SIMATAA and Uchendu Eugene CHIGBU (Namibia)

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Email address: mariosiukuta@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

- Climate change poses a serious threat to the livelihoods of humanity and the security of people and states.
- The impacts of climate change are affecting all countries around the world, developed and developing, alike.
- **Case Study:** NAMIBIA
- The state has actively promoted and adopted policies that maintain ecosystems, ecological processes, and biological diversities for the benefit of the present and future populations.
- However, what is often overlooked in the discourse of climate action strategies is the role of the Traditional Authorities in promoting climate solutions.
- Traditional Authorities are the custodians of indigenous and local knowledge systems and the governance of people in various rural communities.
- Therefore, their roles in promoting climate strategies are of the essence when developing climate strategies for the local communities.

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TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES AS AGENTS OF LAND GOVERNANCE

- Land governance is defined as the political and administrative structures and processes through which decisions concerning access to and use of land resources are made and implemented over land.
- The actual governing involves both formal and informal institutions.
- Communal Land Reform Act- Outlining the responsibilities of TA concerning the governance of land
- **Traditional Authorities are the custodians of Indigenous and Local Knowledge.**
- Traditional Authorities have a big role in ensuring that traditions are respected and maintained for the benefit of their prosperity
- As custodians of this knowledge system, TAs have the advantage of closing and bridging the gap between local knowledge and Western/Scientific knowledge on climate change strategies.
- TA's should be at the frontline and center in the fight against climate change.

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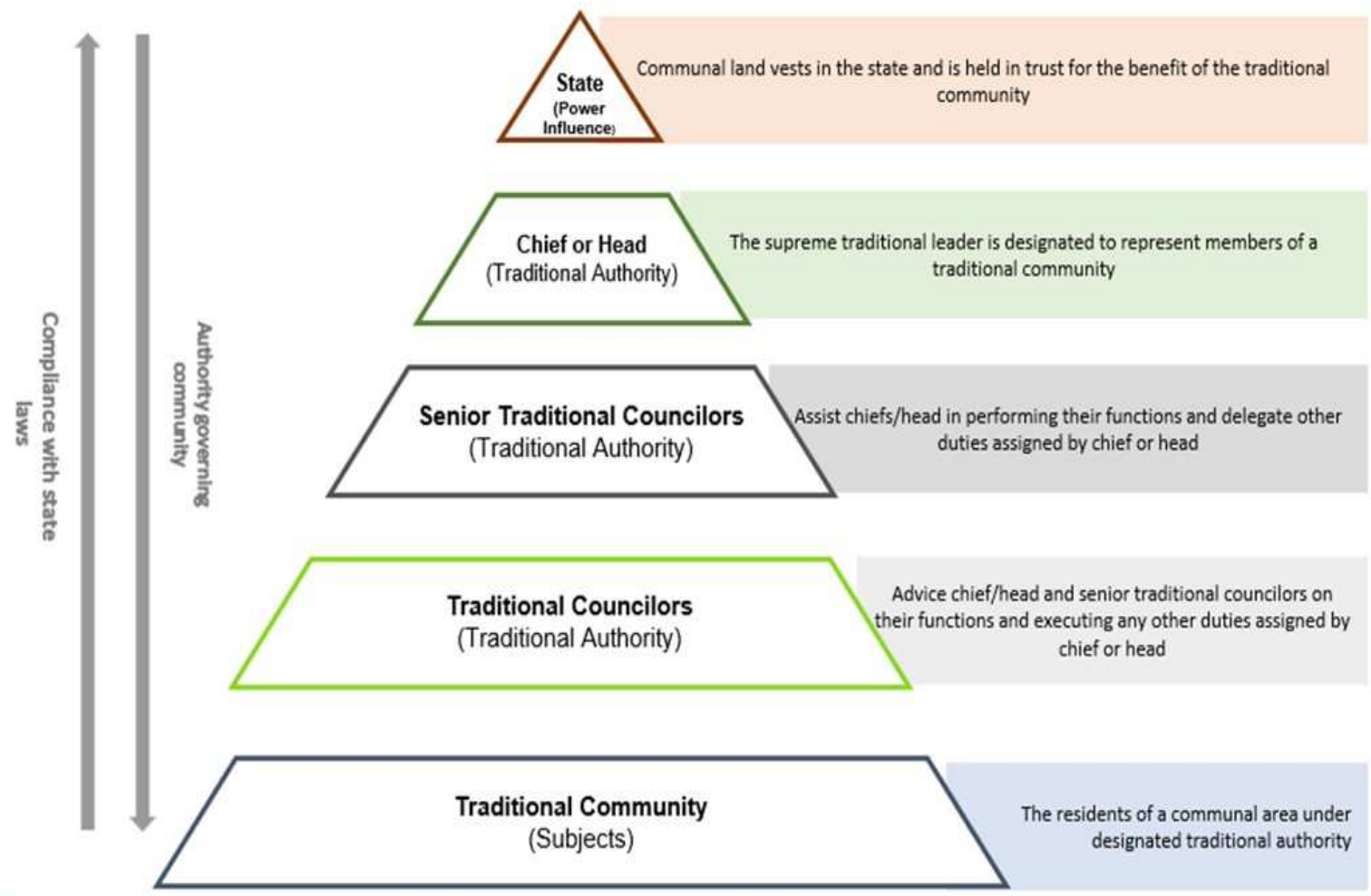


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TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES AS CONSTITUTIONALLY MANDATED LEADERS

- Namibian Constitution Article 95 (I)
- Namibia's current legal framework outlines the responsibilities of Traditional Authorities in promoting sustainable utilization of its natural resources.

1

Traditional Authority Act of 2000

2

Communal Land Reform Act 5 of 2002

3

Forest Act of 2001

4

Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996

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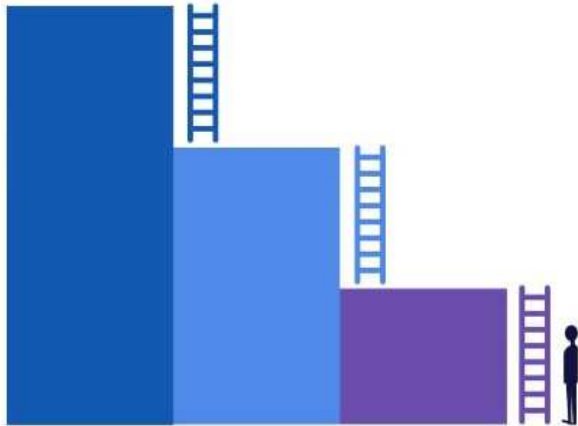
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DRAWBACKS AND DIFFICULTIES IN TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE



1. Loss of Power

The roles of traditional authorities such as influencing land negotiations virtually disappeared with the government and related external authorities taking over these rights

2. Loss of Obligation

Some TAs undermined the efforts of the Government and lawmakers by unlawfully aiding and abetting illegal settlement, environmental predators, and natural resource capture at the expense of local communities.

3. Top-down Approaches

Often, the voices of indigenous and local communities are ignored with top-down decision-making being imposed on marginalized communities.

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THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES IN CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

- 1 Traditional Authorities can play a broader role in localizing the development agenda. Specifically, climate climate-related agendas
- 2 Traditional authorities can advise members of the community on the best practices for climate change strategies.
- 3 Traditional authorities can mobilize the community to conduct activities believed to satisfy popular needs arising from global, national, and even local initiatives.
- 4 Traditional Authorities can help document local and Indigenous Knowledge within their communities.
- 5 In cases where the government has put in place climate change strategies, the possibility of loopholes exists. Traditional authorities with effective training can assist the government in better managing the loopholes better.

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CONCLUSION

Traditional Authorities have over the years proved to be highly resilient, remaining just as much a part of the modern political landscape as any constitution, legislature, or local council (Logan, 2013). They still exercise public authority and play a leading role in spearheading the mobilizing of communities in cooperating and partaking in sustainable climate strategies that benefit the community and the entire global community. Although flaws in the roles of Traditional Authority and the use of indigenous knowledge systems have been highlighted, traditional forms of governance (i.e. customs, practices & tradition) cannot simply be wished away given their continued relevance in modern Africa. Traditional Authorities still have the potential to harmonize the allocation and sustainable management of land and the natural resources

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