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Assessing the Real Cost of Extracting Natural Resources, the Development Model fueling Latin America's Economic Growth

*Rights and Resources Initiative Hosts 16th Dialogue on Forests, Governance & Climate Change—
Investments, Communities and Climate Change: Risks and Opportunities*

New Research Will Quantify Challenges in Natural Resource Exploitation

In the past decade, Latin America has based much of its economic development on the extraction of natural resources and the clearing of forests for agricultural production. Mining, oil and gas drilling, logging, and large-scale agriculture have helped fuel growth, yet the sustainability of this business model has been questioned by many; lost in the macro-economic picture is the situation on the ground. Indigenous Peoples and local communities who have lived on their land for generations are finding their territories and their rivers sold out from under them by national governments in the name of economic growth.

Forest ecosystems in Latin America cover approximately 21% of the land (940 million hectares) and constitute more than 50% of the world's tropical forests. Communities control or own a little more than 39% of forests (RRI 2014). An estimated 45 million people live in the jungles and forests of the region. Furthermore, Latin America has the best examples of worldwide community forest management. Communities there legitimately manage 216 million hectares (FCMC 2014).

During an event in Lima, co-hosted by Instituto del Bien Comun (IBC), top Peruvian and international researchers, government representatives, and private sector leaders will join indigenous leaders of the region to assess the impacts and costs of overlapping claims and rights to lands and forest resources in Latin America. The event takes place one month before the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in December, where governments will continue negotiations on a binding international treaty.

Volumes of peer-reviewed research establish that collective ownership of forests by communities protect forests more effectively than government protections or economic development. More importantly, ownership rights, an essential and often overlooked human right, maintain the economic and social wellbeing of communities for generations to come.

Who:

- Daysi Zapata, Vice-president, Interethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Rainforest (AIDESEP)
- Candido Mezua, President, COONAPIP, Panama

- José Absalón Suárez, Coordinador Territorio y Medio Ambiente, Proceso de Comunidades Negras, Colombia
- Fabiola Muñoz, Director, National Forest and Wildlife Service (SERFOR), Peru
- Gustavo Suarez de Freitas, Executive Coordinator, National Forest Conservation Program for the Mitigation of Climate Change, Ministry of Environment, Peru
- Richard Smith, Executive Director, Instituto del Bien Común (IBC)
- Peter Cronkleton, Senior Scientist, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Peru
- Jack Dentith, Associate, The Munden Project
- Leonardo Pradela, Associate, The Munden Project
- Andy White, Coordinator, Rights and Resources Initiative
- Omaira Bolaños, Latin America Regional Program Director, Rights and Resources Initiative

What:

- One-day conference in Lima, Peru—host city to the coming climate negotiations—will explore the collision of economic development and Indigenous land rights in Latin America.
- Research to be released on the eve of the conference will quantify the impact of natural resource developments on Indigenous Peoples and local communities in Peru, Brazil, Colombia, and seven other tropical forest countries in Asia and Africa.

Where:

Hotel Sonesta El Olivar
Pancho Fierro, San Isidro 27, Lima, Peru

When:

0830-1645, 30 October, 2014
Spokespeople available for interviews on request

Webcast Information

Watch the webcast live in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Ask questions to panelists via skype (RRIDialogue) or join the conversation on Facebook and Twitter with #LandRightsNow.

To schedule an interview, please contact:

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The Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) is a global coalition of 14 Partners and over 150 international, regional and community organizations advancing forest tenure, policy and market reforms. RRI leverages the strategic collaboration and investment of its Partners and Collaborators around the world by working together on research, advocacy, and convening strategic actors to catalyze change on the ground. RRI is coordinated by the Rights and Resources Group, a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC. For more information, please visit www.rightsandresources.org.