



Despite significant progress by many governments in recognizing forest land rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, a daunting reality on the ground remains cause for concern: there has been a slowdown in the recognition of community rights to forest land in tropical forest countries.

The decline in both the pace of recognition of rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to forests and the strength of reforms enacted since 2008 are key findings of the new RRI report titled [What Future for Reform?](#), which tracks changes in forest tenure since 2002 across almost 90 percent of the world's forests. These findings are particularly disheartening given the growing consensus that community ownership is a key factor in the successful protection of forests in many developing countries. It also comes despite high hopes that recent international commitments and initiatives - such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and REDD+ - would catalyze a new wave of recognition and defense of local rights.

However, as we look forward into 2014, we are convinced that this “slowdown” is only a pause on the way to major changes in the status quo led by hundreds of millions of Indigenous Peoples and local communities around the world. Globally, government leaders and institutions, as well as investors and companies with stakes in land and other natural resources, are under increasing pressure to include and consult these groups and recognize their claims.

In support of this movement, RRI, the International Land Coalition, and Oxfam—three of the world's largest networks working on forest and land rights—have joined together to call for the [inclusion of community land rights in the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda](#). Their call is not isolated: 2014 has already seen [growing local movements](#) and new [commitments from the private sector](#) to recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to land and other resources. And as we look ahead, the upcoming World Parks Congress, the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, and the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP) on Climate Change provide ample opportunity to convince all actors - governments, investors, international conservation and development organizations - of the vast benefits secure community land rights can unlock.

- The Rights and Resources Initiative



GLOBAL LEVEL STRATEGIC ANALYSIS AND ACTION

FOLLOW-UP TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE MAPS PRIVATE SECTOR INTERESTS AND CHALLENGES IN SECURING COMMUNITY LAND RIGHTS

February 10-14, 2014 | Bellagio, Italy

A technical follow-up meeting to the Interlaken Conference on Scaling-up Strategies to Secure Community Land and Resource Rights, held in September, 2013 produced a conceptual framework mapping key private sector actors and their interests and constraints in securing community land rights. The meeting also determined preliminary priorities for leveraging the sector's engagement in driving progress on this issue, and advanced the understanding of its participants—both NGO and private sector representatives—on the challenges and opportunities in land-based investment in forest and other natural resources, particularly on using approaches and solutions that serve the interests of local smallholders, communities, and Indigenous Peoples. Outcomes of this meeting were used in a subsequent meeting in London on scaling up concrete actions to encourage sustainable and equitable investment in land. Learn more [here](#).

FIRST MEETING OF NEXT GENERATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND COMMUNITY LEADERS FROM INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

March 4-9, 2014 | West Kalimantan, Indonesia

Indigenous Peoples and community leaders from Indonesia and the Philippines developed a more cohesive cultural narrative for their challenges vis-à-vis persisting threats to their statutory and community land rights in Southeast Asia during this five day workshop. The 20 participants improved their understanding of the gender disparities within their own communities and shared examples of best practices and lessons learned in addressing these shortcomings. They were also exposed to more collaborative approaches to problem-solving and training on techniques to create space for community-wide communication. Finally, the meeting leveraged the cultural heritage of each community, while bringing group-wide attention to the importance of youth leadership for long-term planning. The workshop was organized with assistance from the Samdhana Institute, AMAN, and AIPP. [Contact Noer Fauzi Rachman](#).

15TH RRI DIALOGUE ON FORESTS, GOVERNANCE, AND CLIMATE CHANGE HIGHLIGHTS CHALLENGES OF ESTABLISHING CARBON RIGHTS

March 19, 2014 | Washington, D.C., USA

The 15th installment in RRI's series of global dialogues on forests, governance, and climate change took stock of two far-reaching developments in international efforts to reduce forest-based emissions. These included the adoption of the "Warsaw Framework for REDD+" at COP19 in Warsaw, which defines a rulebook for implementing REDD+, and the finalization of the "Methodological Framework" by the Carbon Fund of the World Bank which enables the purchase of titles to emission reductions from REDD+ Countries. The Dialogue was the first event to draw public attention to these two developments and discuss their implications on the livelihoods of local communities and Indigenous Peoples. It was attended by 100 participants from community organizations, governments, private sector firms, donor agencies, and research and development organizations, and viewed online by about 500 people from 65 countries. [Read the dialogue summary](#).



GLOBAL LEVEL STRATEGIC ANALYSIS AND ACTION

At the dialogue, RRI also launched a new analysis, “Status of Forest Carbon Rights and Implications for Communities, the Carbon Trade, and REDD+ Investments.” This analysis, based on a survey of 23 low and middle income countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa (spanning 66 percent of the developing world’s forests), finds a lack of legal protections for Indigenous Peoples and local communities in REDD+ plans and shows that most developing countries are currently not equipped to participate in the carbon trade. A map prepared by 13 community organizations from the Pacific Basin Region in Latin America was also shared with the participants, showing evidence that overlapping land claims are rampant and making the need to establish robust legal safeguards protecting community land rights critical. The participants concluded that UNFCCC safeguards and World Bank policies alone will not change developing countries’ underlying governance conditions affecting carbon trade until greater investment is made to prepare communities to effectively participate in processes that are sure to affect them. [Contact Claire Biason.](#)

STRATEGY TO EXPAND AND LEVERAGE PRIVATE SECTOR ACTION TO SECURE COMMUNITY LAND RIGHTS DEVELOPED

March 19-20, 2014 | London, UK

Representatives from NGOs, private companies, and financial institutions convened a follow up meeting for the private sector working group from the International Conference on Scaling-up Strategies to Secure Community Land and Resource Rights held last September. This meeting doubled the size of the original working group, which was created to provide an informal space where companies, financial institutions, and CSOs can speak openly about challenges and efforts to secure community land rights, and search for common solutions. This unique multi-stakeholder forum provides an opportunity for constructive dialogue concerning issues all actors face in relation to community land rights, in an effort to further boost commitments and actions supporting tenure reform and more appropriate business models in the areas of the world where they operate. During the meeting, participants identified priority activities and initiatives to create and/or leverage to achieve tenure reform, and recommended next steps. As they all represent influential and progressive organizations, their commitment to securing community land rights is expected to influence others in their field. [Contact Annie Thompson.](#)

SESSION TO DISCUSS OUTCOMES OF THE INTERLAKEN CONFERENCE ON COMMUNITY LAND RIGHTS

March 26, 2014 | Washington, D.C.

Jenny Springer, Director, Global Programs at RRI chaired a session on Scaling Up Strategies for Securing Community Land and Resource Rights at the World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty. The session was co-organized by the RRI, the International Land Coalition and Oxfam, and featured presentations by Abdon Nababan, Executive Secretary, AMAN (Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago, Indonesia); Rachael Knight, Program Director, Community Land Protection, Namati; and Arun Agarwal, Coordinator, International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) and Professor at the School of Natural Resources & Environment at the University of Michigan. Participants outcomes of the September 2013 Interlaken conference on scaling up strategies for community land rights and ongoing efforts to carry them forward. Presentations focused in particular on strategies for scaling up community land mapping and legal empowerment and for documenting the contributions of community rights to forest and livelihoods outcomes. They also highlighted the need for increased attention and resources from governments and donor institutions to overcome the widespread lack of clarity and recognition of community land and resource rights around the world. [Contact Jenny Springer.](#)



AFRICA

LIBERIA

WOMEN FROM ACROSS AFRICA RALLY IN SUPPORT OF LIBERIA'S TENURE REFORM

ORGANIZERS: African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF)

MARCH 4-8, 2014 | Monrovia

About 100 women brought together by The African Women's Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF), representing 12 countries in Central and West Africa, participated in a national rally to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8. The participants presented REFACOF's recommendations for strengthening land reform to Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who was present at the rally. The rally was preceded by an [online campaign urging President Sirleaf](#) to make good on her promise to support equal protection of women's land rights in Liberia's ongoing tenure reform process. The petition garnered over 500 signatories from across the world.

Preceding the rally, REFACOF's third regional workshop on Gender, Land and Forest Tenure Rights in Africa strengthened the capacity of network members in the context of climate change, REDD+ and land/forest reforms. The workshop provided a space for women from seven different countries to exchange experiences with their African counterparts, and for each to cultivate a better understanding of the critical role women play in forest management and in the implementation of national REDD+ processes. Participants identified the biggest challenges for women in natural resource management, including limited access to new technologies and little control over forest revenues, as well the existing opportunities to bridge these gaps, such as: the use of new platforms to raise awareness of women's tenure rights and available advocacy tools; raising awareness of legal texts clarifying Indigenous Peoples' and communities' rights; and greater support for women's involvement in the commercialization of non-timber forest products and derived agricultural products. [Contact Jennifer Schenk](#).



ASIA

NEPAL

NEPALI FOREST MINISTER COMMITS TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY FORESTRY CONCERNS

ORGANIZERS: FECOFUN, COFSUN, NRM Peoples' Parliament and Himawanti

March 3-9, 2014 | Sindhuli

Nepal's Forest Minister, Mahesh Acharya, committed to address the concerns of community forest users following a rally attended by over 3,000 people in Sindhuli, at which participants urged both the Ministry and Constituent Assembly Members to address community rights in Nepal's new Constitution and forest policies. The grassroots community forestry movement in Nepal has been consistently pressuring the government to include community property rights in the South Asian nation's policy since the beginning of the development of the new constitution through an ongoing and constructive dialogue with Assembly members. This announcement was welcomed by the organizers of the rally—FECOFUN, COFSUN, NRM Peoples' Parliament and Himawanti—though additional follow up will be necessary to ensure that the commitment is translated to action on the ground. [Contact Bharati Pathak.](#)



LATIN AMERICA

PERU

ADVOCATES ADVANCE COLLECTIVE LAND TITLING REFORM IN PERU

IMPLEMENTORS: Instituto del Bien Comun Peru and other members of the campaign, “Safeguarding Communal Territories in Peru”

March 2014 | Loreto, Peru

A new set of recommendations to improve community land titling was developed by indigenous communities and civil society organizations in Peru as a part of the campaign, “Safeguarding Communal Territories in Peru,” and presented to the Peruvian Ministry of Agriculture in March. The Ministry, responsible for improving the country’s rural collective land titling processes, was informed of the hundreds of native community land titles pending in Loreto. In turn, Ministry officials updated the members on the current status of their negotiations with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the main donor financing the government’s ongoing rural land titling program (PETT), on the implementation of the program’s third phase (PTRT3). PTRT3 will drive the rural land titling claims process in Peru, covering both individual and collective property. Members of the indigenous and civil society groups urged government officials to incorporate collective land titling in the project’s goals.

SUSTAINED ADVOCACY EFFORTS LEAD TO IMPROVED LEGAL FRAMEWORK TO PROTECT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN VOLUNTARY ISOLATION

IMPLEMENTOR: AIDESEP

March 2014 | Ucayali, Madre de Dios and Cusco, Peru

As a result of sustained advocacy efforts by AIDESEP and other civil society organizations in Peru, the Ministry of Culture of Peru formally recognized the Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact (IPVI and IC) living in five territorial reserves in the country. The Supreme Decree strengthens protection for IPVI and IC in these reserves by granting them greater rights within the 2006 legal framework of Indigenous Reserves. It is a significant victory for indigenous rights given the strong pressures within the Amazon region from extractive industries against their recognition.

In the backdrop of these pressures from investors to withdraw its decision to recognize IPVI, the Ministry of Culture accepted two studies by AIDESEP and ORPIO presenting evidence of their existence between the Napo and Tigre Rivers. The oil industry investors in this area had repeatedly claimed a lack of rigorous research confirming the communities’ presence, and pressured the government to overturn its recognition of their rights. The new research submitted by AIDESEP and ORPIO compelled the government to uphold its decision, and is expected to prevent a rollback of their rights in the future. [Contact Mario Osorio.](#)



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What Future for Reform? Progress and slowdown in forest tenure since 2002.

Status of forest carbon rights and implications for communities, the carbon trade, and reddy+ investments

Forest Land Acquisition by Stora Enso in South China: Status, issues, and recommendations

UPCOMING EVENTS

MegaFlorestais Annual Meeting

May 5-9, 2014

Buea, Cameroon

Next Generation of Forest Agency Leaders

July 28 - August 1, 2014

Oaxacca, Mexico

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