



The Rights and Resources Initiative – Quarterly E-mail Update

April - June 2012

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

For those concerned with human rights, social and economic development, the news emerging in the past three months has made it is easy to despair.

The G20 and Rio+20 did little more than confirm current plans for conventional economic growth and avoided commitments for alternative development paths or ensuring respect for human rights. The Voluntary Guidelines on Land, Forests, and Fisheries, endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security in May in Rome, signal an increased appreciation among governments for the role that securing tenure plays in achieving national and global development goals, but they remain voluntary and lack monitoring and teeth for enforcement.

And though the winners of the Olympic Games are decided this week in London, we've come to accept that winning security for the rights, livelihoods and the environment of the world's rural people is not something often accomplished in global meetings or global capitals.

In fact, events in several countries across the world tell a different, quieter story than Rio, Rome or London: There has been great progress on the recognition of indigenous and community forest rights in the past few months. Perhaps the best news comes from Brazil, where after eight years of fighting with IBAMA and ICMBio, 63 families in Xapuri were granted a license to manage their reserve for timber production. In Laos, the government [committed](#) to developing a new land policy and forest law. In Liberia, local organizations successfully countered the Government's and Sime Darby's illegal grabbing of community land - and the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) [effectively enforced](#) the decision - a major precedent for the country. The Minister of Land Affairs in DRC [launched](#) the land reform process in the country. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) [ruling in Sarayaku v. Ecuador](#), made public on Wednesday, ended a decade-long legal battle by the Sarayaku Indigenous People after a foreign oil company was allowed to encroach on their traditional lands without consultation with them. Perhaps most encouraging is that RRI's new study, [Respecting Rights, Delivering Development](#), shows that the area of forests legally owned and managed by communities and Indigenous Peoples (IP) in the developing world has increased over the last 20 years, and now stands at just over 30% - an indication of amazing social and political progress globally. On the other hand, RRI's companion study, [What Rights?](#) shows that in most of these forest areas Indigenous Peoples and local communities do not have the minimum set of rights to manage and exclude outsiders from their forests, which limits their ability to protect their forests and benefit from its use.

The understanding that recognizing traditional tenure rights have strong social, economic, and environmental benefits is growing. The progress made by local and national actors should spur us all forward, and together we must continue to convert rights on paper into rights on the ground. The effort

to secure the rights and livelihoods of billions of rural people is not a 100 meter sprint. It is a marathon - and in the past three months, the world made a few more strides forward.

- The Rights and Resources Initiative

To see the full list of RRI impacts and activities from April to June, [click here>>](#)

P.S. Don't forget to check out RRI's [French](#) and [Spanish](#) websites!

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Global Level Strategic Analysis and Action

- On May 30th, RRI released two [new RRI global analyses](#) of tenure reform (and impacts) since the 1992 UN Conference on Sustainable Development: **Respecting Rights, Delivering Development: Forest Tenure Reform Since Rio 1992** and **What Rights? A Comparative Analysis of Developing Countries' National Legislation on Community and Indigenous Peoples' Forest Tenure Rights**. The “What Rights” report is the one of the most substantive analyses RRI has undertaken (59 pieces of legislation, 27 countries) and is based on the expert input of many RRI Partners and Fellows, and over 90 legal experts across the developing world. The “Respecting Rights, Delivering Development” report is a policy summary of the past 20 years of tenure reform and includes recommendations for continuing progress. [Download the reports here.](#) ([See a summary of media coverage here.](#))
- The Tenure Baseline Study for the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** was launched in Kinshasa on May 31-June 1, during a workshop hosted by RRI, Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) and Tropenbos International. The workshop gathered over thirty representatives from Congolese civil society organizations, international organizations, and international experts who will provide intellectual, logistical and financial support for the forest tenure baseline study. [View more information](#). Contact [Alexandre Corriveau-Bourque](#) (RRI) or [John Nelson](#) (FPP).
- The international training seminar on Global Issues in Governing Natural Resources brought together the “next generation” of leaders from public forest agencies in **Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, China, DRC, Indonesia, Liberia, Mexico, Peru, South Sudan** and the **US**. The meeting, held in British Columbia, **Canada** on June 4-8, engaged participants in a frank and open dialogue to produce clearer understanding of the challenges forest agencies are facing. [View more information](#). Contact [Claire Biason](#).

Country and Regional-Level Analysis and Action

Asia

China

- In Guangxi, **China**, Landesa-RDI successfully implemented a legal education project to educate forest farmers about their land rights through legal outreach and consultation services. As of June 2012, volunteers recruited by the project have conducted seven rounds of legal educational outreach, distributed more than 7,300 copies of legal education materials to rural households, and provided one-on-one legal consultation to more than 200 farmers with respect to their rights to forestland. As a result, many forest farmers in Guangxi have gained greater legal awareness and bargaining power in situations that adversely affect their rights to forestland. Contact [Li Ping](#).
- Landesa-RDI completed a comprehensive report based on findings from field research on the gender dimensions of **China's** forestland reform. The report demonstrates that women's rights to forest land are far from secure under the present legal and policy frameworks. With much discretion to village committees to allocate forestland benefit and without effective legal supervision, the traditional gender practices, norms and roles in rural China influence those decisions in such a way that renders women's forestland tenure insecure. [Download a summary of the findings here](#). Contact [Xiaobei Wang](#).

Nepal

- In **Nepal**, COFSUN and HIMAWANTI co-organized a weeklong training on the Facilitators' Capacity Building for Forest Rights Campaign to garner support for the campaign, raise community-level advocacy expertise, and strengthen institutional governance in 23 Community Forestry User Groups (CFUGs) in the Terai region. Contact [Bhola Khatiwada](#).
- A resource book for community forestry institutions was released under the guidance of COFSUN to increase awareness among CFUG members on community rights in current forestry laws and policies and sectoral issues, such as gender and social inclusion, climate change mitigation and adaptation, governance assessments and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques. This resource, produced in collaboration with government and NGOs, aims to increase knowledge and strengthen governance in community forestry institutions, and includes a document summarizing the primary provisions of the Community Forestry Guidelines of **Nepal**. Contact [Bhola Khatiwada](#).
- On June 27, FECOFUN hosted an interactive dialogue on the case of Jogbudha Valley, Dadeldhura District, which has been the subject of a government investigation since its high deforestation rates were widely reported in the media. The discussions concluded that relations with timber concessions and large-scale contractors, political party cadres, and localized corruption were responsible for the spike in deforestation. Despite these driving factors, the local Raute people have been deemed guilty and imprisoned on corruption charges. It was determined that, moving forward, FECOFUN would work closely with the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation, CIAA, and local stakeholders on this case to analyze the issues more deeply in a synthesis report and improve public debate on deforestation and forest sector corruption. Contact [Jog Raj Giri](#).

- FECOFUN convened three policy advocacy trainings from April –June: one at the regional level, on April 22-23 in Makwanpur, and two at the district level, in Bardiya on June 5-6 and Kapilbastu on June 7-8. Participants identified local and regional level issues of concern developed a plan for future policy advocacy engagement based on the group’s prioritization. Issues identified ranged from strengthening good governance and transparency in community institutions and private sector timber interests, to forest encroachment and inclusion of distance users. Contact [Jog Raj Giri](#).
- An interaction on forest management issues and the role of the media was held on April 12 in Kathmandu, with the participation of more than 30 journalists from a wide array of media outlets. The objectives were to present community perspectives on forest management in Nepal, discuss the contribution of **Nepal’s** forest sector in the country’s overall economic development, and discuss the crucial role of media in promoting good governance and transparency in the forest sector. Journalists expressed their willingness to coordinate with FECOFUN and report perspectives from community based forest management. Contact [Jog Raj Giri](#).
- On April 13, FECOFUN organized a peaceful demonstration in Kathmandu, **Nepal**, to halt the process of amending the Forest Act of 1993, thereby upholding community rights specified within the Act, and to increase awareness among community forest users on the provisions of the Act. Nearly 200 people attended this event. Contact [Jog Raj Giri](#).

Indonesia

- In May, the **Indonesian** Ministry of Forestry issued an official Decree on the creation of a working group for the Macro Plan on Forest Tenure. The Working Group held their first meeting, attended by Ministry officials and representatives of the CSO Roadmap Platform on May 16, and agreed to formulate a draft framework for the formulation of the Macro Plan in preparation for discussions with upper-echelon officials at the Ministry of Forestry. It was also established that the Working Group would subsequently meet every two weeks to discuss emerging solutions to the three Macro Plan areas: forest gazettement, conflict resolution, and the expansion of community control of forest resources. Contact [Avi Mahaningtyas](#).
- FPP and members of the RRI Indonesia Country coalition convened in-depth discussions with the UK Climate Change Unit and the Ministry of Forestry to present a suite of research and recommend best practices for supporting HTR (*hutan tanaman rakyat*, Indonesia’s community based forest management program) through the planned Multistakeholder Forestry Programme, to highlight lessons learned and obstacles identified in FPP’s research. Both the UK Climate Change Unit and the Ministry of Forestry’s working group on tenure reform agreed to incorporate FPP’s findings into the current HTR model, and to fund additional research and policy reforms before embarking on initiatives to increase issuance of HTR licenses. Contact [Patrick Anderson](#).
- From March to May, FPP, HuMa, Pusaka and Sawit Watch held capacity building workshops in the Animha and Semangga Districts of **Indonesia** to assist the Malind peoples of Merauke District to resist the takeover of their customary lands and forests by the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate (MIFEE). The workshops presented proposed activities for advocacy at the international level (UN-CERD and UPR), national level (lawsuits, approaches to relevant ministries) and Merauke (engaging with the district and provincial government, village-level developments). These dialogues

have lead to increased understanding by these communities of advocacy options and an increase in their capacity to voice their concerns. Contact [Patrick Anderson](#).

Africa

Liberia

- Following advocacy by Green Advocates and the RRI coalition in **Liberia**, the Forestry Development Authority adopted regulations to recognize small-scale loggers (pit-sawyers) and their right to operate, stating in the regulations that “the Government of Liberia recognizes the need to formally recognize and regulate chain sawing in Liberia as a means of maximize the socio-economic benefits of chain sawing while addressing/mitigating its negative ecological and environmental impacts.” Contact [Francis Colee](#) or [Alfred Brownell](#).

Cameroon

- On June 10, Coopérative Agroforestière de la Trinationale’s workshop advocating for legislation favorable to small and medium community forest enterprises in **Cameroon** produced two major advocacy propositions targeting key ministries. These propositions were for better recognition of community forestry’s role in securing loans, and to institutionalize equitable benefit sharing for community forestry. Contact [Patrice Pa’ah](#).
- The African Women’s Network for Community Management of Forests (REFACOF) identified main advocacy activities geared towards forest tenure with an emphasis on women at a national workshop on June 12. The workshop also focused on the key actors necessary to advance women’s rights in forestry and identified their respective roles and responsibilities. Contact [Antoinette Pa’ah](#) or [Cécile Ndjebet](#).
- On May 28-29, Centre for Environment and Development (CED) organized a national multi-stakeholder workshop advocating for the centrality of secure community tenure to successful land reform. In addition to yielding a concrete proposal to recognize villages as legal units with collective property rights/ land titles over their demarcated territories, the participants produced recommendations for government recognition of community rights to forests within village lands and limitations on alienation of village lands. Contact [Samuel Nguiffo](#).

Latin America

Peru

- On April 15-17 in Zungaracocha, **Peru**, AIDSEP convened a workshop with ORPIO and CORPI-SL on Peruvian indigenous forest_territory, the national REDD+ process, and its links to international processes. This workshop was implemented to tackle the lack of titling of the indigenous territories in the Peruvian Amazon, especially confronting the advances in the national REDD+ process and the irregular contracts in the voluntary carbon market. Please click [here](#) to see the official meeting agreement, which: affirms the Indigenous Peoples of Loreto’s

stance against pressures to sign illegal or irregular carbon financing projects; rejects carbon financing as the sole service of forest ecosystems and promotes an integrated ecological and cultural view of the forest (REDD+ Indígena); promotes the titling of the pending land claims in the Peruvian Amazon; and calls for modifications in the Peruvian forest law and other government initiatives which affect Indigenous Peoples in the Peruvian Amazon. For more information, please contact [Omaira Bolaños](#) or [Roberto Espinosa](#).

- The Instituto del Bien Común launched two studies on the state of the communal property system led by experts in the field. The first study, **Indigenous Rights in Peruvian Law** (written by Alberto Chirif), analyzes how the rights of native Amazonian communities have been gradually weakened by since being legally recognized in 1974– particularly under the leadership of Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000) and Alan García (2006-2011). The second study, **Legal and Institutional Framework for Campesino Communities’ Property System** (written by Pedro Castillo Castañeda and Laureano del Castillo) analyzes modifications to the legal and institutional frameworks related to *campesino* communities’ property systems. The studies are being prepared for publication and will be available on the RRI website soon. Contact [Omaira Bolaños](#) or [Richard Smith](#).

Guatemala

- Participants at the June 18 seminar on “The Role of Communities in Forest Management in the *Altiplano*” [highland plateau] in **Guatemala** analyzed the way in which the forest communities contribute to forest maintenance in the Guatemalan *altiplano*, and learned about the role municipalities, other governmental institutions, and NGOs can play in confronting pressures on the resource base and forestlands. The seminar was hosted by PERT-FAUSAC (the Faculty of Agronomy) in collaboration with the National Institute of Forests (INAB), HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and other members of the RRI Latin America Coalition. Contact [Iliana Monterroso](#) or [Silvel Elías](#).
- In **Guatemala**, the Ut’z Che’ Association of Community Forestry of Guatemala has systematized a series of cases which seek to contribute an integrated vision of the state of communal lands in Guatemala by utilizing a methodology developed jointly with PERT in four different communal lands in the country. Results are now being disseminated across the region. [View the case studies here](#). Contact [Iliana Monterroso](#) or [Víctor López](#).
- ACOFOP and Ut’zChe’ organized an exchange between Guatemalan forest communities and community representatives from **Peru** and **Colombia** from May 21-25 in **Guatemala**. The groups visited forest concessions and other communities in the Petén region, as well as throughout the southern and western parts of the country. Representatives from indigenous, *campesino*, and Afro-descendant communities exchanged experiences and strategies on community forests management, such as the political, organizational and entrepreneurial aspects that can strengthen the capacity of communities to manage and benefit from the natural resources in their territories. The participants in the exchange also had the opportunity to learn about the

implications of the Lacey Law in the **United States**, as well as the FLEGT system in the **European Union**. Contact [V́ctor L3pez](#) or [Omaira Bolaños](#).

Colombia

- At the June 26 Seminar on “Early Actions, Forest Governance, and the Process of the National REDD+ Strategy,” in Santa Marta, **Colombia**, representatives of forest communities, Indigenous Peoples, and Afro-descendants of the Latin American region met with representatives of the Forest Carbon Partnership Fund (FCPF) and NGOs to discuss experiences with REDD, as well as prioritize and analyze the minimum criteria for ensuring that communal tenure rights and resources are protected in REDD+ policies and projects. This event took place in parallel to the 12th meeting of the Participants Committee of the FCPF (PC-12) and was organized by Agenda Común, ILSA, the Mesoamerican Alliance of Peoples and Forests, SAKBE, Red MocaF, COICA, AIDSEP, and OPIAC, with the support of BIC and RRI. FPP also participated in the event. Additionally, as a result of the community organizations’ prior advocacy, two related themes were discussed as part of the official agenda of the PC-12: “Land and Territory in the REDD+ Context” and “Contracts in the Voluntary Carbon Market,” both presented by representatives of forest communities. Contact [Omaira Bolaños](#) or [Mayra Tenjo](#).

Bolivia

- As a part of RRI’s strategy in **Bolivia**, IPHAE led a series of 16 workshops between April and June on territorial governance and the opportunities for including greater gender equity in the territorial governance of forests. This series of workshops aims to strengthen marginalized groups, like women and Afro-descendants, in order to promote more inclusive governance and greater coordinated advocacy efforts in indigenous territories before institutions of the Bolivian State. Contact [Omaira Bolaños](#) or [Aymara Llanque](#).
- On June 14-15, IPHAE hosted the first planning meeting for the regional workshop on gender equity in territorial tenure rights and forest resources in Latin America with participants across the RRI Latin America coalition. The regional workshop, tentatively planned for September, will result in the creation of a strategic plan for a greater degree of incorporation of a gender perspective in RRI’s engagements in Latin America. The presentation given by Omaira Bolaños and Iliana Monterroso in the meeting can be found [here](#). Contact [Omaira Bolaños](#) or [Aymara Llanque](#).

New Publications

- [What Rights? A Comparative Analysis of Developing Countries’ National Legislation on Community and Indigenous Peoples’ Forest Tenure Rights](#)
- [Respecting Rights, Delivering Development: Forest Tenure Reform since Rio 1992](#)
- [Securing Women’s Tenure and Leadership for Forest Management](#)

Recent and Upcoming Events

- **July 21:** International Workshop on Gender and Forest Tenure in Asia and Collective Forest Tenure Reform in China - **Beijing, China.** [Event Details](#). Questions: [Naomi Basik](#).
- **July 23-27:** Rethinking Forest Regulations: An international training workshop for forest agency officials and civil society representatives to study the Montana case and discuss challenges linked to forest regulations - **Missoula, Montana, US.** [Event Details](#). Questions: [Claire Biason](#).
- **August 28-29:** International Knowledge Sharing and Learning Workshop on Land and Forest Tenure Reform - **Vientiane, Lao PDR.** [Event Details](#). Questions: [Naomi Basik](#).
- **October 22-26:** MegaFlorestais 2012: Responding to Forest Governance Challenges in Times of Economic & Climatic Turmoil – **Santa Fe, New Mexico, US.** [Event Details](#). Questions: [Claire Biason](#).

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