



The Rights and Resources Initiative – Quarterly E-mail Update January - March 2012

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As global financial forces thrust the developing world's natural resources into focus, disenfranchised local communities are raising their voices to protect their right to use the land that has sustained them for generations. Mere confrontation, however, is not their goal. Many local and Indigenous Peoples want the infrastructure and development that large-scale investments aim to provide—but they also need, more than ever before, to be included in the decisions that will radically change their lives and traditional means of livelihood.

We began the first quarter of 2012 by taking stock of the key questions, challenges and possibilities faced in 2011, and taking a long view of the future in RRI's annual review, [***TURNING POINT: What future for forest peoples and resources in the emerging world order?***](#) The three billion people that currently live in the world's forests and drylands with little legal security for their customary rights are increasingly vulnerable to conflict, land-grabbing and widespread rights abuses. The emergence of new economic powers has propelled agribusinesses into regions that often lack mechanisms of redress for local people when their rights are ignored. For example, Indonesia saw a rise of 18 percent in foreign direct investment in 2011, a significant portion of which was in agriculture. However, the nearly 2,800 land disputes recorded by the country's National Land Agency in the same period, and the 738 complaints of human rights abuses arising from such disputes, give cause for concern. The bar must be raised for accountability and oversight wherever community rights are at stake.

Fortunately, there is unprecedented opportunity to make things right. The success of community-managed forests over the past two decades is one of the few feats that can be celebrated when the world meets at the Rio+20 summit this June. Bolstered by strong evidence, there really are more governments, more investors and more large conservation actors who are increasingly aware of the risks of business as usual. And the grounds are riper than ever before for stakeholders in global development to realize that secure land rights are good for people, good for business, and good for the environment.

- The Rights and Resources Initiative

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 January 17-20, RRI Board members, Partner Representatives and Donors convened in Washington, DC and Warrenton, Virginia for RRI's annual governance meetings. These meetings not only served to approve the Coalition's strategic objectives, budgets and work plans at the country, regional and global levels for 2012, but continued discussions on the strategy and new directions for the next phase in the Coalition's evolution. Contact [Misty Jones](#).
- On February 1, RRI hosted a panel of experts at The Royal Society in London, **England** to discuss new analyses on the status of forest and land rights in developing countries and highlight the globalized economic and political forces impacting land availability, equity and the potential for conflict. The studies released include RRI's annual review of the state of rights and resources, [TURNING POINT: What future for forest peoples and resources in the emerging world order?](#) (read the report in [French](#), [Spanish](#), or [Bahasa Indonesia](#)) and a five-brief series by RRI fellow Liz Alden Wily titled [Rights to Resources in Crisis: Reviewing the fate of customary land tenure in Africa](#) (also available in [French](#)). Panelists included: David Deng, South Sudan Law Society; Alfred Brownell, Green Advocates; Lou Munden, The Munden Project; and Jeffrey Hatcher and Andy White, RRI. The panel was moderated by Fred Pearce, co-author of Turning Point and renowned climate change journalist. For more information on the media launch and panel event, [click here](#).
- On February 14, the Government of **Lao People's Democratic Republic** and RECOFTC hosted a Forest Policy Dialogue discussing RRI's role in advancing forest tenure and policies in the country. Some of the concrete steps that were agreed upon include the convening of key actors at a meeting in late 2012 and the facilitation of knowledge exchange visits with other countries in the region. Participants from both the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment were present. Contact [Ganga Ram Dahal](#).
- On February 20-23, RRI participated in a meeting on Forest and Community Rights Issues in Goma, **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, organized by Réseau CREF. The meeting brought together 20 representatives of national and international NGOs working on land issues in DRC to facilitate more strategic thinking and planning by national NGOs. Contact [Claire Biason](#) or [Hortense Ngono](#).
- On March 25-27, RRI represented the Independent Advisory Group to the UN-REDD programme at the 8th UN-REDD Policy Board meeting and its joint meeting with the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) in Asunción, **Paraguay**. Jeffrey Hatcher and Andy White presented the outline of a significant, independent policy paper on land tenure issues requested by the Policy Board at its previous meeting. They also delivered a presentation highlighting a new planned initiative from RRI: a global land tenure facility that will leverage effort and funding towards securing forest tenure rights. Contact [Claire Biason](#).

Country and Regional-Level Analysis and Action

Africa

- The RRI Cameroon coalition (Cameroon Ecology, CAFT, CED, ICRAF, IUCN and FPP) formally presented its recommendations to the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF) for revisions to **Cameroon's** forestry law. The recommendations, on the theme “Rights, Tenure and Community Forests,” were well received by MINFOF and will be studied by a working group before a bill to revise the 1994 Forestry Law is sent to Parliament. For more information, [click here](#), or contact [Hortense Ngonu](#) or [Cécile Ndjebet](#).
- The Coalition in **Cameroon**, led by Cameroon Ecology, also succeeded in persuading the Government to declassify parts of two Unités Forestières d'Aménagement (Forest Management Units) for community use and access, initially reserved for logging concessions. Local villagers gained back 13922,7ha and 2752,5ha of area respectively in the units as a result of remapping by the Government, initiated after participatory maps with local communities were prepared and submitted by Cameroon Ecology and the coalition. Contact [Cécile Ndjebet](#).
- Forest Peoples Programme (FPP) partnered with with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation to convene a workshop in Douala, **Cameroon**. The workshop included representatives from the Malaysian multinational firm, Sime Darby; the **Liberian** Government's Land Commission; the Sustainable Development Institute – Liberia (SDI); and Green Advocates. Participants of the meeting studied cases of palm oil expansion in Cameroon and the **Democratic Republic of Congo** in order to develop guidelines on Free Prior and Informed Consent, customary rights and land acquisition in Africa.

Latin America

- On February 22-25, the Latin American Institute for an Alternative Society and an Alternative Law (ILSA) led the event “The Colombian REDD+ Strategy: Possible Environmental and Social Impacts on Territories and Natural Resources,” ([English](#), [Spanish](#)) as part of a Strategic Response Mechanism project in **Colombia**. Held in Bogotá, Colombia, the event provided opportunities for indigenous, Afro-descendant, and *Campesino* communities to meet with government, World Bank, and civil society representatives from Colombia, **Brazil**, **Peru**, and **Mexico**, and exchange perspectives and experiences in social and environmental assessment for national REDD+ plans. Their exchange brought about plans for continued regional influence and coordination between civil society and community actors in the four countries present, as well as **Costa Rica**. Contact [Omaira Bolaños](#).
- The fourth phase of the RRI Latin America project “The Territory and Governance Initiative” led by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, came to a close in March, 2012. Since its

inception in 2009, the project has produced and disseminated a series of analyses and documentaries, including one produced in coordination with local indigenous and peasant organizations in **Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia**, titled “Indigenous Territory and Good Living”, which highlights the economic valuation of indigenous territories in Latin America. [Click here](#) to access these and other resources. For details, contact [Esther Haldimann](#).

- PRISMA in **Central America** and CEDLA in **South America** completed the following complementary analyses on regional investments in indigenous territories:
 - [Inversiones y Dinámicas Territoriales en Centroamérica](#) - summarizes the results of the project "Investment and Territorial Dynamics in Central America", which sought to improve the understanding of new patterns of investment in Central America and its links with rural territorial dynamics and indigenous peoples' rights in the region.
 - [South American Case Studies on Investment in Indigenous Lands and Territories](#) - This paper analyzes investments into the indigenous lands and territories of **Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, and Peru**; their relationships with public policies and business strategies; and impacts on social relations, forms of property, and the exploitation of natural resources. Contact [Omaira Bolaños](#).

Asia

- On February 22-23, FECOFUN organized a national-level advocacy planning workshop in Kathmandu, **Nepal**, which focused on identifying pressing issues facing FECOFUN's constituencies. The workshop resulted in the drafting of an official Advocacy Plan for strategically campaigning government institutions. Concurrent meetings were held in six districts to develop approaches for linking local and national strategic advocacy regarding the proposed amendment to the Forest Rights Act and expansion of conservation areas. National FECOFUN representatives continued to implement the Advocacy plan at subsequent meetings with the Natural Resources Parliament Committee, the Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation, and the President of Nepal. Contact [Bharati Pathak](#).
- On March 13, a multi-stakeholder workshop was held in Yunnan Province, **China** by the Rural Development Institute: Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences. The workshop, titled “New Problems of Collective Forest Tenure Reform,” gathered government representatives and policymakers with researchers from several forestry institutions to present findings of the YASS report *Develop an Understanding of Community Perspectives on collective Forest Policy Reforms in Southwestern China*, and to ceremoniously disseminate community narratives contained within the publication, to policymakers. The research was well-received and the final publication is now pending. Contact [Hu Jing](#).
- Forest Peoples Programme published a new booklet summarizing its research into the real experiences of communities impacted by Hutan Tanaman Rakyat (People's Plantation Forest) leases in Indonesia, the tenure program through which the government plans to

allocate some 5 million hectares of State Forest Areas to people. The study concluded that current permit mechanisms favor corporate control over State forest areas, with private interests claiming customary lands as monopolistic outgrower schemes. Contact [Marcus Colchester](#).

Publications

- [TURNING POINT: What future for forest peoples and resources in the emerging world order?](#)
- [Accelerating Reforms in Forest Rights, Governance and Markets: 5 Years of the Rights and Resources Initiative](#)
- [Rights to Resources in Crisis: Reviewing the Fate of Customary Tenure in Africa](#)

Coming Up

- **May 29:** Virtual release of new RRI global analysis of tenure reform (and impacts) in the 20 years since the 1992 Earth Summit. Contact [Alexandre Corriveau-Bourque](#)
- **May 29-31:** National workshop on land and forest reforms in Cameroon - Yaoundé, Cameroon (Center for Environment and Development). Contact [Samuel Nnah](#).
- **May 31 – June 1:** Democratic Republic of the Congo Tenure Baseline Study Launch Workshop - Kinshasa, DRC (RRI). Contact [Alexandre Corriveau-Bourque](#)
- **June 20-22:** Rio+20 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- **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 (RRI, the US Forest Service and the Montana Department of Natural Resources). Contact [Claire Biason](#).

Spotlight

[TURNING POINT: What future for forest peoples and resources in the emerging world order?](#)

This report takes stock of the current status of forest rights and tenure globally, assesses the key issues and events of 2011 that shape possibilities to improve local rights and livelihoods, and identifies key questions and challenges that the world will face in 2012 and beyond.



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