



## The Rights and Resources Initiative – Quarterly E-mail Update

July - September 2012

This past quarter, we have seen a welcome new wave of global attention—and response—on “land grabbing.” The month of October alone saw the FAO meeting in Rome to discuss the implementation of its Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure; Oxfam’s global call for a moratorium on World Bank investments in land intensive large-scale agricultural enterprises; and the Cornell University’s second Conference on “Global Land Grabbing.” The latter was a follow-up to a 2011 academic workshop in England in which 120 papers were presented on contentious land deals happening across the globe. The global conversation on land rights security has now entered a new phase of maturity, putting the thrust on the growing numbers of instances where the civil society has challenged economic and political actors to take action on global land acquisition.

And it’s about time that it did. The urgency of the developing world’s land acquisitions problem is highlighted by the number confrontations between communities and the rapidly expanding palm oil sector. In [Liberia](#), where 75% of total land is either already allocated to agribusiness or in the pipeline to be awarded in concessions by the government of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (study by Liberian Land Commission), a new complaint has been filed against a palm oil producer. RRI collaborator Green Advocates has filed this complaint against Golden Veroleum, a company with a proposed concession of about 33,000 ha., on behalf of the indigenous Butaw Kru tribes and several other communities who were allegedly evicted by the company to clear massive tracts of land for farming—without compensation or consent.

As past experiences in challenging and forestalling [Sime Darby’s expansion](#) in Liberia, and winning over 16,500 ha. of logging concessions back for displaced communities in [Cameroon](#) show: proactive and consistent advocacy can result in success on the ground.

While large-scale land acquisitions gain attention, the silent yet growing undercurrents of women’s rights have continued to rise as well. In fact, some of the most encouraging progress this quarter was made in women’s land rights in Asia and Africa through new analyses by RRI (see RRI’s recent briefs on women’s land rights in [Asia](#) and [Africa](#)).

Women’s land rights and engagement with the private sector are two key areas of focus for us in the coming year. Mindful of the crucial role played by women and the potential role of public-private partnerships in achieving forest tenure reform and sustainable development, RRI aims to translate its work in research, analysis and advocacy into global movements, affecting real change and action for forest communities across the developing world.

- Rights and Resources Initiative

*P.S. Don't forget to check out RRI's [French](#) and [Spanish](#) websites! You can also now translate the website in over 60 languages by using the "Select Language" tool on the top right corner of the Homepage.*

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### **Global Level Strategic Analysis and Action**

- On July 19-21, RRI co-sponsored the National Conference for Land Reform in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The conference launched the land reform process in DRC and developed a land reform road map to be implemented by the government, civil society and international partners. The Conference brought together representatives of the government, the civil society, "customary" leaders, and international actors. It was organized by the DRC's Ministry of Land Affairs and UN Habitat. See the event's [brochure in French](#). Contact [Alexandre Corriveau-Bourque](#).
- On July 23-27, RRI co-organized the annual international workshop, [Rethinking Forest Regulations](#) in Western Montana, in partnership with the US Forest Service and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. It exposed 22 participants from seven countries to a new and innovative approach to environmental regulations, and showed participants how forest sector regulations could be a tool to achieve better environmental, development and production results. Contact [Claire Biason](#).
- Fred Ngeywo Kibelio of Chepkitale Indigenous Peoples' Development Project (from the Ogiek community at Mt Elgon, Kenya) and Udom Charoennyomphrai (from Inter Mountain Peoples Education and Culture in Thailand) participated at the 5<sup>th</sup> World Conservation Congress in Jeju, South Korea in September with the help of the Forest Peoples Programme (FPP). The FPP-sponsored motion 055 on UNDRIP in World Heritage Sites was passed with strong text, including emphasis on the need for Kenya to rectify the situation of the Endorois. The Whakatane Mechanism is now much more prominent within IUCN and has benefited from crucial feedback: it will now move into a second phase, which involves seeking funding to undertake more assessments and improving and finalizing the Mechanism with the aim of officially launching it at the World Parks Congress in Sydney in 2014 as a major IUCN initiative. Contact [Justin Kenrick](#).

### **Country and Regional-Level Analysis and Action**

#### **Asia**

##### *Regional*

- RRI published a new suite of research, *Securing Women's Tenure and Leadership for Forest Management*, which shows that despite more understanding, more resources and policy

recommendations, women continue to be largely marginalized and ignored or exploited in resource management processes throughout Asia – to the detriment of global climate and poverty reduction goals. The analyses, released at the *International Workshop on Gender and Forest Tenure in Asia and Collective Forest Tenure Reform* in China, demonstrate that exclusion and inequality on gender grounds are still rife and complicated by the intersection of cultural and social norms, economic pressures, and inadequate legal and institutional frameworks. [View publications and press coverage here](#). Contact [Jenna DiPaolo](#).

- *The Asia Indigenous Women’s Strategy Workshop on Climate Change and Forest/Land Tenure* was held from August 16-18 in Baguio City, **Philippines**. Organized by Tebtebba in cooperation with the Asia Indigenous Women’s Network (AIWN), the workshop aimed to enhance and reinforce indigenous and women’s knowledge on sustainable forest management, strengthen the visibility of women as rights-holders, and explore possible paths to utilize the current discourse, define future strategies and identify mechanisms to enhance participation and status of indigenous women. 15 indigenous women’s leaders from 13 AIWN partner organizations in **Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand** and **Viet Nam** attended, as did representatives from RRI, FECOFUN, and REFACOF. Participants developed a framework of recommendations for collaborative work, as well as cohesive strategies and mechanisms for securing indigenous women’s forest and land tenure at the local, national and regional and global levels. Contact [Raymond de Chavez](#).

#### *China*

- On July 21, the [International Workshop on Gender and Forest Tenure in Asia and Collective Forest Tenure Reform in China](#) was held in Beijing, hosted by the China State Forestry Administration and the Chinese Academy of Forestry (CAF), in collaboration with RRI and Landesa-RDI. This event marked the launch of the RRI analyses, *Securing Women’s Tenure and Leadership for Forest Management*; two of the study authors presented their research findings on gender justice in Indonesia and gender and REDD+ in Asia. Over 60 participants from **China**, including central and provincial government, civil society, and academic representatives, gathered to discuss the role of women in managing and protecting forests, the extent to which women benefit from Asia’s land and forest tenure reforms, and strategies to ensure poor women’s participation in forest governance and institutions such as REDD+. This event showcased multidisciplinary dialogue and multi-scale approaches in addressing the challenges of gender inequality and realizing benefits from forest and land tenure laws, regulations and policies. Contact [Wu Shuirong](#).
- The Rural Development Institute, Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences (RDI-YASS) completed two case studies in Lijiang and Diqing, Yunnan Province, **China**, as the final two of five studies within a broad survey of collective forest management practices in Yunnan. Using comparative analysis, these two studies focused on forest management approaches in ecological forest area contrasted with those in commercial forest areas following China’s tenure reform in 2006. All five studies focus on the identification of traditional forest management practices in the context of collective reform, as well as the core reasons why these traditional systems are maintained. To read draft case reports in Chinese (with English translation forthcoming), please contact [Hu Jing](#).

#### *Nepal*

- HELVETAS-Swiss Intercooperation Nepal, ForestAction and Natural Resource People’s Parliament organized workshops on South Asia Forestland Tenure reform, *Ban Chautari* (Forestry Dialogue) and

contemporary forestry issues in transitional Nepal respectively. Forestland tenure experts, government officials, community forestry advocacy organizations, NGO activists, researchers, politicians and journalists participated in the events. These events have sensitized all – including policy makers and shapers – to take the agenda of forest land tenure reform further. Contact [Bharat Pokharel](#).

- On August 1, FECOFUN organized an issues-based discussion in Barandavar, Chitwan district, **Nepal**, where the Barandavar area Community Forest Committees issued a manifesto against the expansion of a conservation area in Barandavar. The manifesto requested the drawback of a declaration classifying Barandavar as conservation forests, stating that it should be returned to the communities. Political parties in attendance publically agreed. Contact [Jog Raj Giri](#).
- FECOFUN organized two district-level policy advocacy trainings in July in Chitwan and Myagdi, and one regional-level training in Morang. Participants from throughout these districts identified major issues facing Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) in their district and worked together to prepare a coordinated advocacy plan of action. Contact [Jog Raj Giri](#).
- FECOFUN hosted a series of workshops in nine districts to discuss the status of inclusiveness in community forestry institutions and raise awareness of the need for increased participation of women, dalits, Indigenous Peoples and the very poor. Participants agreed that ensuring participation of disadvantaged groups in the general discourse and governance of CFUGs would reduce existing equality gaps and make all organizations involved better equipped to advocate for an inclusive policy in the forthcoming Constitution of **Nepal** and CFUG Operational Plan. Contact [Jog Raj Giri](#).

#### *Indonesia*

- The network of CSOs promoting the Roadmap for Tenure Reform in **Indonesia** gathered in Jakarta on August 9-10 at the *Workshop on Data Consolidation of Villages in Forest Areas and Formation of its Strategic Resolution*. Hosted by KPA (Konsorsium Pemberuan Agraria) and facilitated by Myrna Safitri of Epistema Institute, workshop participants finalized criteria, typology, and selection of ten “model villages” for the Ministry of Forestry’s program on tenure resolution in forest areas. Contact [Idham Arsyad](#) or [Myrna Safitri](#).
- FPP and its partners carried out a series of six investigations on the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) in RSPO-member companies in Sumatra and Kalimantan, **Indonesia**. This detailed information from the field is being used to assess if FPIC is being applied adequately by companies, to expose any malpractice of palm oil companies, and to argue for a strengthening of the RSPO procedures and standards where necessary. The main findings show that many companies are still not taking the requisite steps to recognise customary rights and are running highly abbreviated processes to secure consents. Even where companies seek to acquire lands through just means, current statutory laws and administrative procedures with respect to land rights, land acquisition, legal personality and representation, make it hard or even impossible for companies to comply, thus exposing the gulf that exists between the law and the RSPO standard. The findings are being used as the basis of recommendations in the ongoing RSPO Principles & Criteria Review, and will be published as an authoritative book in November 2012. Contact [Sophie Chao](#).

## Lao PDR

- On August 28-29, the [International Knowledge Sharing and Learning Workshop on Land and Forest Tenure Reform](#) was held in Vientiane, **Lao PDR**. Hosted by the National Assembly of Lao PDR in collaboration with RRI and RECOFTC-The Center for People and Forests, this workshop distilled lessons from international experiences relevant to the ongoing land and forest policy revision process in Lao PDR, and created a deeper understanding of land and forest tenure issues amongst policymakers and other stakeholders. Speakers from 11 countries in **Asia, Africa, Latin America** and **Europe** spoke of their countries' experiences resolving state, private and community ownership over land and forests. During the workshop, Mme. Souvanpheng Boupphanouvong of the National Assembly announced the government's intention to undergo a nationwide formal process of large-scale land reform, and prioritized effectiveness of land policy implementation and the needs for increased local land management, given that access to land for rural households is fundamental to sustained poverty alleviation. Contact [Naomi Basik](#)

## Thailand

- RECOFTC-The Center for People and Forests collaborated with Chiang Mai University and our strategic partners in organizing the 2nd Policy Dialogue on "Forest and Land Tenure Reform in Thailand" in Chiang Mai on August 8th. Seventy-five participants shared experiences on best practices and new direction on proposed policies on forest and land self-management in the northern part of **Thailand**. A field visit also took participants to the Maeki community to observe local forest and land management. Contact [Somying Soontornwong](#).

## Africa

### Regional

- On 21-23 August, ACRN (Africa Community Rights Network) hosted a regional workshop on *How to use REDD to effectively strengthen community rights and participation*. Participants explored options associated with REDD that can effectively strengthen community rights and participation in sustainable forest management. The workshop resulted in three advocacy messages which then served as a basis for a press conference: 1) continue the push for tenure reform to recognize forest community rights and the implementation of existing laws; 2) improve the participation of CSOs and communities in REDD discussions and 3) encourage a participative design of methodologies for assessing the drivers of deforestation. Contact [Samuel Nnah](#).

### Cameroon

- On July 4, Cameroon Ecology organized a workshop with civil society and seven ministries involved in land and forestry. The participants validated and submitted three articles to support participatory community rights mapping to integrate into the Ministry of Economy, Land Use Planning and Zoning (MINEPAT)'s regulations for the framework law on sustainable land management, which are currently being drafted. The ministries in attendance mandated RRI and Cameroon Ecology to propose sample texts for application in MINEPAT's framework law on sustainable land management, and to identify the rights of local and Indigenous peoples that are recognized under the law. Contact [Cecile Ndjebet](#).

- On July 5, the RRI **Cameroon** coalition met with the various ministries involved in land and forest tenure at a workshop organized by Cameroon Ecology to promote inter-ministerial coordination in policy-making and formal collaboration with the RRI coalition. Conventions for collaboration between the RRI Coalition and the ministries were validated, and participants developed a road map to determine the modalities for RRI's contribution to land reform processes with the various ministries. Contact [Cecile Ndjebet](#).
- On August 7, as a follow -up to the submission of RRI's proposals to reform the 1994 Forestry Law earlier this year, Cameroon Ecology organized a workshop to present the coalition's contributions to the reform process to other civil society members. The participants developed a vision statement to submit to the European Union to support the recognition of the coalition's proposals regarding the new law. Contact [Cecile Ndjebet](#).
- On 16-17 August, IUCN, CED and FPP co-organized a workshop in Yaoundé, **Cameroon**, on *CSOs and Legal Reforms in the context of FLEGT/VPA*. Discussions aimed at exploring how to use the VPA/FLEGT to advance a tenure reform agenda that is supportive of local communities and Indigenous Peoples' rights and the role of CSOs in shaping these processes. A policy brief and an advocacy position paper based on the deliberations of the workshop is currently being drafted by CSO representatives and will be presented to relevant actors in the administration and the national VPA /FLEGT committee in Cameroon. Contact [Samuel Nnah](#) and [Chantal WANDJA](#).

#### *Liberia*

- On July 19, Sustainable Development Institute (SDI) organized a multi-stakeholder dialogue on land policy reform. The Land Commission presented its mandate and plans for reforms to participants, including community leaders from four counties. The commission was challenged to present its plan for broadening and deepening engagement with civil society. Notably, one representative spoke on the challenges facing rural farmers in terms of access to land. Following the meeting, participants discussed initiating a dedicated civil society coalition to engage the land reform discussions going forward. Contact [Jonathan Yiah](#) and [James Otto](#).
- Green Advocates organized a workshop in Liberia On August 6 to address the challenges associated with implementing regulations for pit-sawing in **Liberia**. More than 35 participants from five counties, including pit-sawyers and community leaders, participated and analyzed all provisions within the Chainsaw Regulation, identifying several preliminary implementation challenges. Participants recommended that the Forestry Development Authority commission a comprehensive needs assessment and a diagnostic analysis of the Chainsaw Regulation as a way of clearly mapping and addressing all potential implementation challenges. Contact [Alfred Brownell](#) and [Francis Colee](#).
- On August 7, Green Advocates organized a preparatory workshop for local community leaders in Liberia to identify provisions within the Community Rights Law regulations that violate community rights. More than 40 participants from seven counties participated and reviewed the regulation, observing inconsistencies between the Community Rights Law and its regulating implementations. These will serve as the basis for stakeholder inputs to amending the regulations in favor of community rights. Contact [Alfred Brownell](#) and [Francis Colee](#).

## *Mali*

- From 23-24 July, IUCN Mali organized a workshop with the Malian National Federation of Rural Women (FNAFER) that covered advocacy methods, trained the participants to carry out advocacy, and enabled them to master the legal texts regulating land and forest management. The workshop recommendations also served as the basis for the development of a strategic advocacy plan currently being developed. Contact [Keffing Sissoko](#).

## **Latin America**

### *Regional*

- The Latin America regional team, led by NITLAPAN, hosted two events on Territorial Governance in Managua, **Nicaragua** this quarter: (1) a workshop on methodology and planning with experts in training in the area of territorial law on July 2-3, and (2) a regional workshop to analyze the design, content, and thematic foci with an emphasis on the diverse groups which enjoy territorial rights across Latin America in September. A presentation given by Omaira Bolaños and Iliana Monterroso at the preliminary workshop can be found [here](#), and more information about the September workshop can be found [here](#). Contact [Omaira Bolaños](#), [Iliana Monterroso](#), or [Ceferino Wilson](#).
- CEDLA hosted an event to exchange experiences in defense of collective indigenous, campesino, and afro-descendant territories in **Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia** in La Paz, Bolivia, on September 27-28. More information about the event can be found [here](#). Contact [Javier Gómez](#) or [Omaira Bolaños](#).
- In **Peru**, Instituto del Bien Común (Institute for the Common Good, IBC), launched a communications campaign in favor of the collective titling for the local communities of Peru, via a collective effort with other Peruvian organizations. The campaign specifically demands that the national government take concrete action to address pending territorial demands. Watch the video about the campaign, and sign the petition [here](#). ([English subtitled video available here](#).) Contact [Richard Smith](#) or [Omaira Bolaños](#).
- IPHAE and NITLAPAN hosted the [Regional Workshop on Land Tenure and Collective Forests in Latin America: A Gender Perspective](#) in La Paz, Bolivia on September 20-21. The workshop analyzed lessons learned in RRI projects on gender and forest tenure in Latin America in order to define common challenges to strengthen the strategic gender focus in RRI activities in the region. Participants from **Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and the United States** attended. Results will be published as soon as they are available. Contact [Aymara Llanque](#), [Ceferino Wilson](#), or [Omaira Bolaños](#).

## **New Publications**

- **Gender and Forest Tenure in West and Central Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Four Country Cases** - Policy Briefs. [English](#); [French](#)
- **Deeper Roots of Historical Injustice: Trends and Challenges in the Forests of India.** *To request a copy of the book, please contact [Madiha Qureshi](#).*

- **Territorialidad y Gobernanza:** Tejiendo Retos en los Territorios Indígenas de la RAAN, Nicaragua. Produced and published by RRI Collaborators in **Nicaragua**. [Spanish](#). Contact [Omaira Bolaños](#).

### Recent and Upcoming Events

- **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](#).
- **November 5:** Twelfth RRI Dialogue on Forests, Governance and Climate Change: Scaling-Up Strategies to Reduce Emissions and Deliver Development in Forest Areas – **Washington, D.C., US**. [Event Details](#).
- **November 21-23:** International Conference on Forest Tenure Reform: Status and review of forest tenure reforms in China and a global perspective on the way forward – **Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China**. Contact [Naomi Basik](#).
- **January 23-25:** Thirteenth Dialogue on Forests, Governance and Climate Change: Status of Tenure Reforms in West and Central Africa and Impacts of Large Scale Land Acquisitions, Extractive and Infrastructure Sectors – **Yaoundé, Cameroon**. Contact [Marina France](#).

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