



The global economy is recovering, with expansion of extractive and agricultural industries into forest areas back on track and booming in many countries. Recent decisions—including the weakening of environmental regulations in Peru and India, plans to open indigenous and protected areas in Brazil to mining, and the proposed dismantling of the World Bank "safeguards"—all show that for many governments and institutions, "development" still means the easy and rapid exploitation of forests and their peoples.

Others, however, are deeply concerned about sustainability and the very real threats of climate change and poverty to human rights and gender justice, and are busy fixing their supply chains, preparing new national strategies and legal reforms, and gearing-up for upcoming global conferences such as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and the UN Climate Summit in September, the World Parks Congress in November, and the UNFCCC COP20 in December. Indeed, these events are major opportunities to demonstrate that the world is finally ready to shift from business as usual.

This newsletter updates you on some of the many steps taken by RRI Partners and Collaborators on this agenda since March, and what they are doing to take advantage of these upcoming international events, including: an unprecedented agreement among Cameroonian traditional chiefs, parliamentarians, civil society and women's networks to push for legal recognition of tenure rights for Indigenous Peoples, local communities and women; commitment by representatives of the Government of Peru to consider the demand from the International Indigenous Women's Forum on Land and Climate Change to prioritize the recognition of collective rights and ensure equal rights and protection for women; major steps in the development of an International Land and Forest Tenure Facility; and a path-breaking new report with the World Resources Institute (WRI) that shows in hard numbers what many of us already know: securing the rights of those who have the greatest stake in safeguarding their lands and forests is a simple yet incredibly powerful strategy to combat climate change.

- Rights and Resources Initiative



## INITIAL SCOPING OF THE INTERNATIONAL LAND AND FOREST TENURE FACILITY

GLOBAL: FEBRUARY - JUNE

INDUFOR completed research in Cameroon, Indonesia and Colombia to identify and validate the need for an international Land and Forest Tenure Facility from the perspective of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and other key stakeholders. The Facility is geared to influence sustainable reform for communal tenure rights as a leading international platform through which governments, Indigenous Peoples, community organizations, and public and private sector institutions could develop strategies to recognize and strengthen tenure rights. The report provides a comprehensive comparative analysis on the costs and benefits of securing land rights in different land tenure contexts in these countries, focusing on communal land tenure right recognition. It includes a study of land use trends and pressures in rural, forest, and dryland areas; key programs for land-use and other Interventions; legal and institutional framework relating to forest land use; gaps and potential niche for the Facility's services; benefits and risks of investments by the Facility and funding sources. It also feeds into the selection of pilot projects to be financed by the Facility, whose successes, challenges and best practices will be used to inform replication and scalability of projects in other countries. [Contact Bryson Ogden.](#)

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## NINTH ANNUAL MEETING OF MEGAFLORESTAIS HIGHLIGHTS FUTURE OF WORLD'S FORESTS

CAMEROON: MAY 5 - 9

The world's forests face mounting pressures, whether from the private sector, from population changes, or from the climate itself. The ninth annual meeting of MegaFlorestais provided a forum for forest agency leaders from around the world to make sense of the complex, swiftly changing state of the world's forests. After five days of discussing land rights, tropical forests, and climate change, MegaFlorestais, leaders unanimously endorsed a think piece authored by eight former forest agency leaders outlining five vital principles to guide forest agencies in the 21st century. This piece has attracted significant attention from actors in the forest sector, particularly from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The seminar also included a field trip to experience local initiatives in Cameroon that preserve wildlife and natural landscapes, their scale and sustainability standing in sharp contrast to large, foreign-owned agribusiness. [Contact Claire Biason.](#)

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## SMALL-SCALE AND COMMUNITY FOREST PRODUCERS: THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF LEGALITY VERIFICATION

UNITED KINGDOM: MAY 19 - 20

How does the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) framework impact the sustainability of small-scale and community forest product producers? This two-day workshop provided a desperately needed space for forest community leaders, industry representatives, policy makers and experts to examine the burdens associated with FLEGT. Forty-five participants from around the world discussed the societal deficiencies that lead to informal and illegal trade, and exchanged practical policy solutions based on success stories in Asia and the Americas. The workshop led to a more nuanced understanding of the type of governance needed to promote economic development for small-scale, local producers, and emphasized the central role these producers play in the success of FLEGT voluntary partnership agreements. [Contact Jenny Springer.](#)



# AFRICA

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## CAMEROON

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### FOREST MANAGEMENT UNITS IN CAMEROON RECLASSIFIED TO RECOGNIZE CUSTOMARY RIGHTS

ORGANIZERS: CamEco

JUNE

Access rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples were taken into account during the reclassification process of five Forest Management Units (Unité Forestière d'Aménagement - UFAs) in Cameroon, thanks to ongoing work by CamEco. As a result, 132 community claims were identified and mapped. Should the Cameroon Ministry of Forest and Wildlife issue a decree agreeing with these findings, local communities' usage and access rights to at least 50,000 hectares will be enshrined in law. Apart from the immediate local impact, the reclassification of these UFAs is a first step for ensuring a stronger bundle of forest and land rights for communities across Cameroon. [Contact Cécile Ndjebet.](#)

### COORDINATED MAPPING INITIATIVES SECURE COMMUNITIES' RIGHTS IN CAMEROON

ORGANIZERS: CAFT, CED, CNCTC in collaboration with CANAL de Développement

JUNE 3 - 13

As part of an effort to engage in community mapping in Adamawa and the North of Cameroon, local organizations shared information on the mapping initiative with stakeholders—including traditional and administrative authorities—and obtained their consent for participating in the project. These activities will advance arguments for institutionalized participatory mapping, and promote the use of mapping for consideration by policy makers. In addition, they will aid in ensuring land security by promoting the village as a legal entity, the recognition of local communities and their land, and the institutionalization of the free, prior and informed consent principle. In a broader sense, the mapping initiative will act as a tool for more equitable national planning and territorial development. [Contact Solange Bandiaky-Badji.](#)

### CAMEROON REPORTERS TRAVEL TO LOCAL VILLAGES, EXPERIENCE PLIGHT OF COMMUNITIES

ORGANIZERS: IUCN, REFACOF, CED, REPAR

MAY 14 - 16

Journalists, bloggers, TV reporters, and radio commentators were brought together for the first-ever RRI Coalition messaging session in Cameroon. This training workshop educated the journalists on key issues relating to RRI and its Partners, including forest and land tenure rights for local communities, Indigenous Peoples and women. Far from an abstract exercise, the workshop included a field trip to two Pygmy communities—Bissiang and Kilombo—that have been displaced from their land to make way for foreign concessions. While many of the journalists in attendance had covered human rights and environmental issues before, this was the first time many had seen the ruinous impact of insecure land rights firsthand, and what can happen when communities are not consulted during the development of concessions. As a result of their interactions with the Bissiang, Kilombo, and company employees, the journalists showcased the stories of the Pygmy communities in numerous newspaper articles and broadcast programs. These efforts have strengthened the participants' commitment to and understanding of land rights, and will contribute to increased coverage of these rights on a national scale. [Contact Jenna DiPaolo Colley.](#)



# AFRICA

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## MALI

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### GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS COMMIT TO PROMOTING SMALL-SCALE, WOMEN-OWNED ENTERPRISES

ORGANIZERS: CNOP, FAO, USAID, World Vision, TONUS, CMAT

JUNE 9

The Quinzaine de l'Environnement, a two-week event organized by the Ministry of Environment, provided a rare platform for members of the Malian government to learn about small-scale, female-owned enterprises that produce non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as honey and shea butter. The event motivated the government officials to commit to reducing the legal costs and burdens on these enterprises. The Quinzaine de l'Environnement brought together 60 government institutions, CSOs, community leaders, technical and financial partners, women organizations of NTFPs, NGOS, and other concerned actors to exchange ideas about overcoming the difficulties women face in producing and promoting NTFPs. It advances RRI's efforts to promote sustainable NTFP enterprises by helping to trigger tax reform, encouraging funding for these enterprises, and in particular, ensuring that special attention is given to providing credit and tax relief for woman-owned NTFP businesses. This is particularly important in light of the fact that, while Malian woman produce the majority of NTFPs, their lack of education and access to credit means that men often take over ownership and leadership once enterprises grow from small to mid- or large-scale production. [Contact Boubacar Diarra.](#)



# AFRICA

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## SENEGAL

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### RECOGNITION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES' AND VULNERABLE GROUPS' CONCERNS IN SENEGAL'S LAND REFORM PROCESS

ORGANIZERS: State services, NGOs, territorial communities and peasant organizations

APRIL - JUNE

Four new studies from the Agricultural and Rural Prospective Initiative (IPAR) will allow Senegalese civil society organizations to more effectively advocate for collective tenure rights for local communities, women, and pastoralists. These studies will serve as a working basis for the land and forest tenure reform process overseen by Senegal's National Commission of Land Reform (NCLR). Given the high quality of their research, the IPAR researchers who conducted the studies have been selected by NCLR as advising experts in the country's land reform process. Their input on land reform in Senegal will particularly benefit local communities, rural women who often lack legal rights to their land, and nomadic pastoralists in need of mobility rights. [Contact Solange Badiaky-Badji.](#)



# ASIA

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## NEPAL

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### CONSULTATION WITH NEPALESE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ON FOREST POLICIES ADVANCES CAMPAIGN FOR INCLUSIVE NEW CONSTITUTION

ORGANIZERS: Donor agencies, local NGOs, the Government of Nepal

APRIL

Following a landmark three-day workshop in Kathmandu, which included participation from Indigenous Peoples' groups, donors, local NGOs, media, and experts, a formal statement regarding the central importance of Indigenous Peoples to all future forest policy was presented to the Nepalese government. Additionally, participants submitted a position paper to the government calling for recognition of and respect for indigenous traditions in all forest-related policies, including the Forestry Sector Strategy, National REDD+ Strategy, National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and the National Strategic Framework for Nature Conservation. Indigenous concerns regarding forestry are not typically covered by the national media; however, the statement from this workshop was widely disseminated by national TV, radio, and newspapers. The workshop was part of a larger campaign to enshrine the tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as part of ongoing reform processes in Nepal—namely the formulation of a new Constitution and new forest policies. [Contact Guarav Madan.](#)



# LATIN AMERICA

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## PERU

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### LAND TITLING CAMPAIGN TO SECURE COMMUNITY TERRITORIES IN PERU LEAPS FORWARD

ORGANIZERS: The Collective for Secured Territories in Peru

MAY

As a vital step in an ongoing project to reform land titling in Peru, a collective of 15 rural community organizations worked with the Peruvian Ombudsman to develop the report, "Analysis of Public Policy on recognition and titling of Peasant and Native lands." The report is a first for Peru, representing the only time a governmental office has completely analyzed the gaps, overlaps and contradictions in the laws governing land titling for Indigenous and local communities. It is important to note that community based leaders from all over the country have voiced their concerns for years about the current process for recognition and land titling which they find complex, dispersed, and in some cases contradictory.

Now, the Ombudsman's office has become a new and important ally for the land tenure agenda in Peru. By providing the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (MINAGRE) and other key state entities with specific recommendations on the process of land titling and land ownership clarification, the Ombudsman and the collective are helping to lighten Peru's burdensome process of land titling. In the report, the Ombudsman specifically took into account the five year anniversary of the social tensions in the Bagua region, which arose from land titling conflicts, and pointed out that the government would be taking additional steps to avoid such incidents. [Contact Omaira Bolaños.](#)



# LATIN AMERICA

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## GUATEMALA

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### COURT VICTORY SECURES COLLECTIVE TENURE RIGHTS OVER 2,483 HECTARES

ORGANIZERS: RIC, community-based organizations

MARCH - JUNE

A recent court victory signals the Guatemalan government's recognition of communities' rights, thanks to legal and technical support for local communities in an ongoing campaign by loggers to take away their collectively held tenure rights. In Guatemala's Pacalaj community forest in the Baja Verapaz region, local communities hold collective tenure rights over an area of 2,483 hectares. In 2010, following his expulsion from the forest, a logger initiated a lawsuit against eight communities in order to dispense with collective tenure rights and allow individuals such as loggers to negotiate rights to cut timber. Following this lawsuit, Guatemala's Land Registry Institution (RIC) initiated its own campaign to inform loggers about its land measurement processes. However, RIC's technicians ignored existing collective tenure in their measurements. The organization Ut'z Che' provided legal support to the eight communities, and joined the Pacalaj Association which began advocating for preserving the territory's collective tenure. As a result of Ut'z Che' and the Association's efforts, the RIC is now measuring the territories under collective ownership terms. In June, the court ruled in favor of the communities, dismissing the charges and praising the Association for its work in Pacalaj and in maintaining the water sources for the village of Salamá. This victory has set a new precedent for the region of Baja Verapaz, providing a method of recourse to other communities similarly battling external pressures to divide up collective tenure land. [Contact Omaira Bolaños.](#)

### ADVANCING ADVOCACY FOR INCLUSION OF COMMUNITIES IN REDD+ PROJECTS

ORGANIZERS: ACOFOP, CONAP, MARN, Rainforest Alliance

FEBRUARY - JUNE

The Association of Forest Communities of Petén (ACOFOP) implemented a successful advocacy campaign influencing Guatemalan government to allow greater community participation in GuateCarbon negotiations. GuateCarbon is the first REDD+ project in Guatemala, and one of the first worldwide. During the negotiations on implementing the project, Guatemalan government agencies have been reluctant to recognize community forest concessions' role in the project's negotiation process, and local communities' rights to carbon and forests. To influence the agencies, ACOFOP (in collaboration with RRI and the Rainforest Alliance) campaigned for the Ministry of Environment to propose regulations for Guatemala's climate change law. As a result, the National Roundtable on Climate Change was created where communities and Indigenous Peoples will be able to actively participate. ACOFOP also became a part of the REDD+ Safeguards Committee, thereby gaining a more active role in the negotiations and discussions around REDD+ in Guatemala. Additionally, ACOFOP was instrumental in reaching an agreement with the government agency CONAP (Guatemala's National Council of Protected Areas) on defining administrative and financial mechanisms to share GuateCarbon's benefits. [Contact Omaira Bolaños.](#)





STAY CONNECTED

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# PUBLICATIONS & EVENTS

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

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**Securing Rights, Combating Climate Change:** how strengthening community forest rights mitigates climate change

**Public Forest Agencies in the Twenty-First Century**

**Land Rights in the Post-2015 Agenda**

**Lots of Words, Little Action:** will the private sector tip the scales for community land rights?

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

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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**Securing Forest & Community Land Rights: Challenges, Trends and Ways Forward**

This one-day seminar will focus on forests and off-farm areas that constitute vital resources for the food security and livelihoods of the rural poor in many developing countries.

September 10

Gothenburg, Sweden

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