

PRESS RELEASE: Dr. Solange Bandiaky-Badji to serve as next Coordinator of RRI and President of RRG

WASHINGTON (July 16, 2021)—The Rights and Resources Group (RRG) Board of Directors has named Dr. Solange Bandiaky-Badji as the next Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) Coordinator and President of the Rights and Resources Group (RRG), which serves as RRI’s coordinating mechanism.

Bandiaky-Badji previously led RRI’s Africa and Gender Justice Programs, and most recently served as Senior Director for Africa and Women, Peace and Security at PartnersGlobal. She takes the helm from Andy White, who co-founded RRI in 2005 and has served as Coordinator and President for the past 16 years.

“This is a remarkable moment, not just for RRG and RRI, but for the Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendent Peoples they serve through their global Coalition. We are thrilled that Solange has agreed to lead our Coalition into its next chapter,” said Peggy Smith, RRG Board member and Chair of the Search and Leadership Transition Committee. Smith is of Cree ancestry in Canada, Professor Emerita at Lakehead University, and a senior advisor to the National Aboriginal Forestry Association.

“RRI has grown into a truly global network with strong partnerships and a unique ability to create systemic change,” said the departing President, Andy White. “With more rightsholders joining our Coalition, and more opportunities to advance their rights than ever before, Solange brings the right ideas, enthusiasm, and deep personal commitment to take on RRI’s leadership in this moment of change.”

As RRI Coordinator, Bandiaky-Badji will support the global coalition of over 150 rights-holders’ organizations and their allies dedicated to advancing the land, forest and resource rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and Afro-descendant Peoples, particularly the women within them. As RRG President, she will lead staff in Washington, D.C. and Montreal as well as regional facilitators in Africa, Latin America and Asia to amplify RRI members’ voices. In her role, she will proactively engage governments, multilateral institutions, and the private sector to adopt institutional and market reforms for local peoples’ rights and self-determined development.

“I am deeply honored to return to RRI and grateful to the Board and staff for their vote of confidence,” said Bandiaky-Badji. “As our constituencies across the world face multiple crises with pandemic recovery, deforestation, climate change and rollback of rights, I am counting on working closely with all of our Partners and Collaborators to collectively lead RRI into a new era of growth and impact.”

Bandiaky-Badji is deeply familiar with the Coalition’s mission, having previously led RRI’s strategy for engagement in Africa with a focus on tenure rights reform. She built synergies around new strategic analyses by RRI, giving local and global actors a more strategic understanding of trends, issues, options, and gender in Africa. She also spearheaded RRI’s Gender Justice thematic program and ensured the implementation of a global gender strategy on women’s tenure rights. In the last three years, at PartnersGlobal, she led programs on access to justice, security sector reform, and peacebuilding. She has also worked as a regional expert on gender and climate change for the Africa Adaptation Programme (AAP) and the UNDP/ BDP Gender Team in New York.

Bandiaky-Badji holds a PhD in Women’s and Gender Studies from Clark University, Massachusetts and an MA in Environmental Sciences and in Philosophy from Cheikh Anta Diop University, Senegal. She has published and contributed extensively to research in relation to natural resource management,

decentralization, local forest tenure reforms, and women's participation in climate solutions and peacebuilding. She formally begins her new role on August 1, 2021.

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About the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI)

RRI is a global Coalition of 21 Partners and over 150 rightsholders' organizations and their allies dedicated to advancing the land rights and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples and local communities – and particularly the women within these communities. RRI leverages the power of its global Coalition to amplify the voices of local peoples, and proactively engages governments, multilateral institutions and private sector actors to adopt institutional and market reforms that support the realization of their rights and self-determined development. By advancing understanding of the global threats and opportunities that result from insecure land and resource rights, RRI develops and promotes rights-based approaches to business and development and catalyzes effective rural tenure reform and sustainable governance of natural resources.

RRI is coordinated by the Rights and Resources Group, a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC. For more information, please visit www.rightsandresources.org.