



## News

# RRI Reviews Forest Tenure Rights of Indigenous Peoples

30 May 2012: Ahead of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20), the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) has released two new analyses relating to forest tenure rights and indigenous peoples, which focus on tenure reform and impacts since the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, or Rio Earth Summit).

The first analysis, titled “What Rights? A Comparative Analysis of Developing Countries' National Legislation on Community and Indigenous People's Forest Tenure Rights,” studies 27 countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. It considers whether their legal systems recognize the forest tenure rights of indigenous peoples and communities, and the duration and extinguishability of those rights. The study identifies a total of 59 forest tenure regimes in these countries that recognize or allocate forest tenure rights to indigenous peoples and communities. It concludes that although there has been significant legal progress on this issue since 1992, there is still a need for better recognition and enjoyment of legal tenure rights by indigenous peoples and communities.

The second analysis, titled “Respecting Rights, Delivering Development: Forest Tenure Reform Since Rio 1992,” takes stock of progress made on the issue of indigenous peoples and communities, and the local community management of forests, in the 20 years since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The study uses examples from China, Brazil, India, Nepal, Cameroon and Mexico, and concludes that although there has been some progress in the recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and communities, most of this progress has been in just a few countries, mostly in Latin America.

It highlights that most governments continue to resist the large-scale recognition of community land rights and to deny indigenous peoples' claim to their customary lands. In addition, it shows that forests that are managed by local communities outperform those run by the government, and that indigenous peoples and communities with secure land rights deliver on sustainable development goals. [Publication: [What Rights? A Comparative Analysis of Developing Countries' National Legislation on Community and Indigenous People's Forest Tenure Rights](#)]

[Publication: [Respecting Rights, Delivering Development: Forest Tenure Reform Since Rio 1992](#)] [[RRI Website](#)]