

Rights and Resources for Rio

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Land tenure has been increasingly implicated in the preservation of natural capital and local rural livelihoods. [A new report by the Rights and Resources Institute](#) examines the current state of land tenure and resource rights, and what progress has been made in the twenty years since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. According to the report, there has been “a flurry of laws, but slow steps toward full recognition” of indigenous peoples’ rights to land and resources. And particularly with the recent spike in large-scale land acquisitions, the issue of secure rights is one of great concern. These major land deals often ignore the claims of those who depend on the land for their livelihoods.

According to the report, “The recognition of such rights enables governments to secure the ecological functions of rural landscapes, achieve social and political stability, and attract sound investment.” While the report primarily focuses on forests and the drivers of deforestation in relation to tenure, the same principles hold for smallholder agriculture. In particular, there is the notion that secure land rights enables long-term stewardship of the landscape, including more sustainable agricultural practices. For more on this intersection of forests, agriculture, and rights, Rights and Resources Institute and EcoAgriculture Partners produced a [discussion paper](#) on the topic last fall.

Rio+20 is seen as an important venue at which to raise the issue of land tenure, and indigenous rights in particular. And this report stresses how essential the recognition of claims to land and resources and customary rights are to supporting rural livelihoods, reducing poverty, and ensuring sustainable development pathways. See [original post](#) on the Landscapes Blog for People, Food and Nature.

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