

World Food Day Land Rights Now Mobilization Factsheet

15-26 October 2018

Secure Indigenous and Community Land Rights are Vital for Global Food Security

- **Small-scale producers feed the world.**
 - [70% of the world's food](#) is produced by small-scale producers, many of whom rely on natural resources that are held in common—including farmlands, rangelands, forests, water basins, and shores.
 - Evidence shows that small-scale food production in Africa and Asia is more efficient and has higher crop yields per hectare than larger operations.¹
 - Up to 2.5 billion people worldwide directly depend on indigenous and community lands.
- **Securing community land rights increases food security.**
 - Worldwide, [800 million people](#) are still food-insecure. As we enter the 2019-2028 UN Decade of Family Farming, governments have an opportunity to secure indigenous and community land rights as a proven strategy to eradicate hunger.
 - [Evidence](#) shows that secure land rights help communities manage their land more sustainably, access credit, diversify activities, and invest. Land rights are also a foundation for strong social relations and a safety net during famines and other crises.²
 - [Recognizing land rights](#) can boost farmers' productivity by 60% and more than double family income.
 - As the world's population continues to grow, securing land rights is a [key strategy](#) to increase global food production.
 - Recognizing the rights of [women](#)—including within indigenous and community lands—is particularly important. The FAO estimates that if we close the gender gap in agriculture, production could increase by [20-30%](#). [Research](#) shows that women's land rights are also associated with better health and nutrition outcomes.
 - With secure land rights, Indigenous Peoples and local communities can invest more in their ecosystems. Ignoring these rights undermines their capacity to protect natural resources, preserve soils and water sources.
- **Community land rights are vital to the global struggle against climate change**
 - Indigenous Peoples and local communities manage and protect the forests that underpin global food security.
 - [Research](#) shows that their lands store massive amounts of carbon—at least 300 billion megatons—and that secure rights lead to lower rates of deforestation and higher rates of carbon storage.
 - At least one-third of the carbon stored in community forests in the tropics and sub-tropics is on lands that lack formal legal recognition, leaving them vulnerable to land grabs that can devastate the environment and destroy local food sources.

But failure to recognize community land rights is undermining global food security, human rights, and the struggle against climate change

¹ Hazell P. and Rahman, 2014. New Directions for Smallholder Agriculture, IFAD..

² Maxwell, D. and Wiebe, K. 1998. Land Tenure and Food Security: A Review of Concepts, Evidence and Methods, Research Paper No 129, Madison: University of Wisconsin.

- **Governments largely fail to recognize community land rights**
 - Indigenous Peoples and local communities protect and depend on 50% of the world's land, but [only have legal rights to 10%](#), including [15% of the world's forests](#).
 - This gap leaves community lands vulnerable to expropriation for large-scale agriculture and infrastructure, which typically [benefit fewer people and are more environmentally destructive](#) than land use by local communities.
- **Huge tracts of land have been appropriated for the production of cheap food and commodities**
 - According to the Land Matrix, over the last decade at least 49 million hectares worldwide have been subject to international large-scale land acquisitions.³
 - Land acquisitions are mostly driven by demand for cheap food or energy from consumers from all over the world--oil palm (6million of hectares), jatropha (2.4m ha) and sugar cane (1.9m ha) dominate.
 - Far from delivering shared economic development, these projects typically disenfranchise local peoples, destroy their food sources, and do not provide adequate compensation to make up for the loss.
 - Large-scale food production—particularly meat and dairy—is itself fuelling climate change.

Communities around the world mobilize to secure #LandRightsNow

- **From October 15-26, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, environmental activists, and women's groups around the world are mobilizing to demand land rights now.**
- **Kenya:** 40,000 Ogiek Peoples depend on Kenya's Mau forest for food, income, medicine, shelter, and cultural sites. Yet the government has evicted thousands of Ogiek to make way for exploitative projects and conservation zones. Despite a landmark 2017 ruling by the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights that the Ogiek Peoples are the rightful owners of their land, the government has yet to return their lands to them.
- **Myanmar:** The construction of the Asian Highway through Karen State without the consent of local peoples has already resulted in widespread land confiscations and military clashes that displaced more than 6,000 people. It has also disrupted local food security. Experts fear that the next stage of the highway will cause further damage to lives and livelihoods.
- **Peru:** The Shipibo Peoples are demanding that the government recognize their rights to their customary lands, which have been decimated by an oil palm plantation. Despite challenges in court and a condemnation from the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, palm oil production continues, and new settlers have received title to parts of the Shipibo's lands.
- **Uganda:** A 2017 court case found that the Acholi People are the customary owners of their land, but they are still being evicted from their homes in the name of conservation: over 844 huts have been destroyed and 26,000 people displaced.
- **Australia:** Since 1788, Aboriginal peoples in Australia have been dispossessed of lands and waters they had occupied for 60,000 years. Now, they are being harassed, assaulted, and prosecuted for cultural fishing.

³ Land Matrix. Retrieved on 27-08-2018.