



**Global
Landscapes
Forum**

Rights in the landscape

Maritim Hotel, Bonn, Germany
22 - 23 June 2019

Global Landscapes Forum

The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is the world's largest knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement. The Forum takes a holistic approach to create sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient and considers five cohesive themes of food and livelihood initiatives, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UN Environment and the World Bank and Charter Members.

Charter Members: CIRAD, CIFOR, Climate Focus, Conservation International, Ecoagriculture Partners, EFI, Evergreen Agriculture, FSC, GEF, IPMG, CIAT, ICIMOD, IFOAM - Organics International, INBAR, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, RRI, UN Environment, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, part of Wageningen Research, World Agroforestry, WRI, WWF Germany, Youth in Landscapes Initiative, World Bank Group

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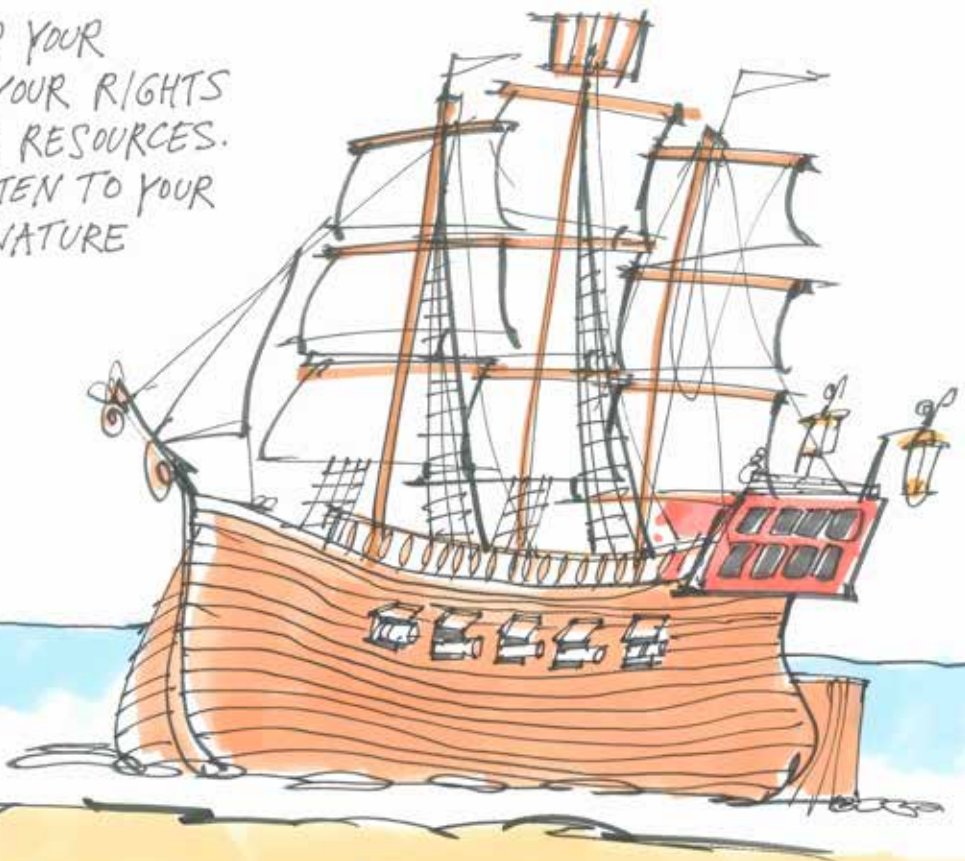
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WE'LL CONQUER YOUR
LAND, IGNORE YOUR RIGHTS
AND STEAL YOUR RESOURCES.
BUT WE'LL LISTEN TO YOUR
IDEAS ABOUT NATURE
IN 2019

HOW
ABOUT
BONN?





“Forest defenders are putting their lives on the line every day to protect our planet.”

– Alec Baldwin
Actor and Environmental Activist





Background

On 22 and 23 June 2019, the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) brought together a diverse range of stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and local community representatives working in global landscapes, at the GLF Bonn 2019 conference to discuss the impact of rights in landscape restoration work.

This event is part of a 2019 series during which the GLF is exploring the essential contributions made by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, rural women and youth towards achieving the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as the targets laid out in the Paris Agreement on climate change. The aim of these GLF events is to highlight the transformative role of rights and rights-based approaches, and how these can contribute to a more just, sustainable and prosperous future for the global community through sustainable landscapes.

“Recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples is critical to achieving the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.”



Victoria Tauli-Corpuz

U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The GLF is structured as a co-learning movement that aims to catalyze social and environmental transformation. The GLF incorporates the voices, knowledge and priorities of socially, economically and politically marginalized groups in the development of land-based solutions to climate change and to increasing global sustainability. By recognizing Indigenous Peoples and local communities as rights-holders and bearers of solutions – as opposed to simply “beneficiaries” of proposed development and climate interventions in their own landscapes – the GLF aims to foster new forms of collaboration, anchored in a common understanding that justice and equity are essential to sustainable and inclusive development.

This special GLF event in Bonn featured twelve sessions in the Learning Café, exploring topics such as Indigenous governance arrangements, innovative restoration and climate justice tools and an intergenerational dialogue on Indigenous knowledge. Nine plenary sessions, including ‘Voices of the Landscape’, now well established as a GLF feature, probed such topics as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration; the role of finance; inspirational leadership; rights to equality and gender inclusion; and a youth-led discussion on rights to a future. Thirteen interactive sessions involved experts discussing roles and challenges faced by women; growing threats of violence against, and criminalization of, environmental and land rights defenders; rollback of rights previously won; and integrating and mainstreaming traditional knowledge and practices in sustainable landscapes and restoration.

Building on key messages

1. The international community must take urgent action to stop the growing threats of violence against, and criminalization of, Indigenous Peoples and defenders of environmental rights.

Great emphasis was placed during this GLF event on confronting the threats faced by Indigenous Peoples working to defend their lands from encroachment as well as defenders of environmental protection rights. Too often, authorities call Indigenous Peoples criminals, and defenders are harassed, intimidated, assaulted and even killed. At times, this occurs where climate change is already threatening people's guaranteed right to life, health, food, water and housing.

Rural, peasant and Indigenous communities around the world are facing this growing threat of violence, even as existing and emerging political narratives aim to minimize the political space for legitimate civil society engagement.

“In India, 1.5 million claims for Indigenous lands are being rejected and there is a potential for 7.5 million people to be evicted from forests.”



Gladston Dungdung
Indian Activist, Researcher and Writer

“Indigenous Peoples have always been ready and persistent in how we protect our natural environment, But we need security to be able to do that, we need partnerships to be able do that.”



Joan Carling
Co-convener of the Indigenous Peoples' Major Group on the Sustainable Development Goals

Such threats have been documented by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders Michel Forst, and by the U.N. Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples Victoria Tauli-Corpuz. During GLF Bonn's interactive session: 'Getting it right: discussing challenges of a tenure rights-based approach', Brazilian politician and activist Sônia Guajajara reported that Indigenous communities that depend profoundly on access to their lands are finding those lands under attack: "in fact, our very existence is under attack".

Root causes of these threats, including exclusionary conservation, extraction of natural resources and expansion of agribusinesses, were explored in several of the interactive sessions during GLF Bonn 2019.

The session, 'Rights vs Rights: Who decides what is best for all?' discussed the relationship between identity and rights, and the importance for Indigenous Peoples of understanding their rights and how this contributes to identity. A lack of understanding of the importance of culture and identity can spur tensions and conflict, the session



heard. The delicate balance between protecting biodiversity and traditional hunting lifestyles may also contribute to tensions that may occur within some Indigenous groups. When unity is threatened, larger threats from outside can pose serious problems. The Rights vs Rights session also heard reports of cases in which rights of Indigenous Peoples to preserve their environment and sacred places have clashed with what countries have identified as their national interests.

The ability of Indigenous Peoples to continue to ensure their landscapes remain amongst the best conserved is dependent on whether their rights are recognized and respected. The 'Whose Rights' plenary heard that Indigenous Peoples are fighting to protect the world we all share, but are not usually top global investment and cooperation priorities.

Speakers at the 'Voices of the Landscapes' plenary argued that institutions must find new approaches to governance and respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples to live on and conserve their land. During the session 'Defending nature together: Tackling growing threats against rights defenders', speakers said that it's time Indigenous and local communities be viewed as guardians and stewards of the natural world.

Speaker Geovaldis Gonzalez Jimenez, a peasant leader and environmental defender of the Montes de María region in the Colombian Caribbean shared that "one of the biggest problems is that many communities find it difficult to organize themselves and are therefore placed in a disadvantaged and vulnerable position".

Many sessions pointed to a lack of law enforcement as a major cause of conflict. Speakers said that fair law enforcement could have, in many circumstances, prevented violence towards Indigenous Peoples, local communities and frontline rights defenders. Tauli-Corpuz told the opening plenary of GLF Bonn 2019 that many laws and policies at the international and national levels exist to protect Indigenous communities and their land tenure. She added the caveat that governments have often lacked the good will to implement these laws, resulting in poverty, the criminalization of protests, conflicts and threats against the lives of community leaders.

Where there are regulations that favour local communities and Indigenous groups, governments must make greater efforts to enforce these rules, multiple participants said during the GLF event.

“Implementing existing laws in just four countries – Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia and India can improve the livelihoods of 200 million people.”



Victoria Tauli-Corpuz

U.N. Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In the session 'Securing Rights, Securing Landscapes: Boosting the impacts', Abdon Nababan, an Indigenous leader from Indonesia, told the audience about the lack of customary forests approved in Indonesia, despite changes in the legal system years ago to permit this. During the: 'Getting it right: discussing challenges of a tenure rights-based approach' session, Anne Larson – team leader equal opportunities, gender justice & tenure at CIFOR – provided an example from Peru, where approximately 2,000 native communities exist and some 600 are recognized but not yet titled. CIFOR mapped out the titling process and published a book with the step-by-step procedure. The government has simplified some processes, but titling is still onerous overall. The 'Defending Nature Together' session heard that implementation of non-legally binding U.N. resolutions are easily blocked by national regulations that are at least theoretically legally binding and favour development corporations.

Yet, it is increasingly difficult for frontline defenders of rights to publicly oppose harmful developments encroaching on their territories. The conference heard multiple reports of threats these defenders face for speaking out and about risks of taking a public stand on these issues. Threats are making it more difficult to build strong public campaigns that

“Our rights are more important than REDD+, but we raise our rights through REDD+.”



Naw Ei Ei Min

(POINT) Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact

Landscape Learning Café



Throughout GLF Bonn 2019, the *Landscape Learning Café* was the place for people to engage, connect, share and learn. The *Café* program was filled with interactive workshops on Indigenous knowledge, land and water rights, innovative tools for storytelling, mapping and monitoring rights in the landscape. Roughly 500 people participated in the *Café*'s 12 sessions. Highlights included a session by the Indigenous Peoples Major Group (IPMG) with an intergenerational dialogue on Indigenous knowledge. Here, Indigenous elders and youth discussed the value of traditional knowledge and its applicability in today's world. Another highlight was

the session with Martha Julia Tax Sapon, representing the Maya people in Guatemala, who shared her insights on Indigenous governance arrangements that work. Led by the *Land Rights Now!* Coalition, rights defenders shared their experiences on defending human rights safely. Sessions were also held on land rights, water rights and the right to information. In addition, the use of technology, such as apps for tracking trees and open access geo-data, were linked to storytelling and story-mapping. Discussions concerning the right to education were another highlight. Guided by IUFRO, IFSA and Wageningen University, a curriculum on a 'rights-based landscape approach' was collectively designed and is to be transformed into an online course and added to the **GLF Landscape Academy**.

"In this Café, we see diversity of landscapes mirroring the diversity of the people that depend on them," said one participant. "I've learned how to use open data to follow the trends in my landscape, and act upon (these)." Added another participant: "I feel very proud that I had a space to speak about 'The Heartbeat of Mother Earth'. I was happy that I met so many youngsters feeling the responsibility to support our Earth".

can mobilize audiences around securing land rights while protecting the human rights of the defenders themselves. Adding to the threats are social media content used to promote misinformation about rights and rights defenders, exacerbating political and economic marginalization.

Jennifer Morris, President of Conservation International, called for a long-term commitment to collaboration that puts Indigenous communities first and for a willingness to move beyond comfort zones. Speaking at the 'Inspirational Leadership' plenary, Morris emphasized the need for enhanced coordination and collective action through a broad range of stakeholders. Tools and strategies that inspire support for communities are necessary, including those related to good rural governance in support of rights-based approaches.

The 'Voices of the Landscape' plenary heard that for Indigenous youth, the transmission of traditional knowledge is essential, but that the destruction of Mother Earth threatens the right to this transmission. Similarly, the 'Rights vs Rights' session looked at the importance of including traditional knowledge in education programs and curricula and of addressing language barriers. Pathways to education via remote

learning, so youth can remain in their communities and not move to the city for secondary and post-secondary education, were proposed as ways to strengthen and protect communities during the 'Defending Nature Together' session.

During the opening plenary, Tauli-Corpus urged international communities, governments and the private sector to follow seven steps to secure rights:

1. Adopt adaptable standards on right-based approaches on conservation and restoration;
2. Recognize lands and forests of Indigenous Peoples and implement international, national and regional norms and standards that protect these rights;
3. Secure free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples, especially of women;
4. Prioritize bilateral, multilateral and private investments in Indigenous and community lands for climate and development initiatives;
5. Stop the criminalization and persecution of Indigenous Peoples and local communities acting to support their rights;
6. Invest in Indigenous livelihoods and economies;
7. Secure Indigenous Peoples' rights over their lands, territories and resources.



2. We must move quickly and together to secure the rights to a healthy life for present and future generations.

People younger than thirty represent more than half of the global population. The youth climate movement is growing, with millions of young people taking to the streets, walking out of classrooms and standing up for their rights and the rights of our planet. The GLF proudly recognizes its role in supporting the global youth movement, with a thriving community representing nearly 50,000 people forming the Youth in Landscapes (YIL) Initiative. These young people are our future leaders, the ‘next generation,’ the optimistic visionaries disrupting systems to change things in their own way. They will share, provoke and inspire ways to change the world and seek environmental and climate justice.

Several sessions during GLF Bonn 2019 focused on supporting youth movements, including an intergenerational dialogue, a dedicated plenary on ‘Rights to a Future’, a ‘Generations of Wisdom’ workshop and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth speaking on numerous panels.

Abdon Nababan, an Indigenous leader from Indonesia, challenged youth during the ‘Rights to a Future’ plenary to act now to replace old systems with something new. Youth are key in the struggle to build a better planet for the future, he said. Rayanne Franca, an Indigenous youth leader of the Baré People from the Brazilian Amazon, affirmed that young Indigenous people are guardians of the landscape during the ‘Voices of the Landscape’ session. She reminded the ‘Rights vs. Rights’ session of the key role youth play in recognizing traditional knowledge as a valuable resource and applying it.

The ‘Generations of Wisdom’ workshop brought together Indigenous leaders –including youth, women and elders – from Latin America and the Caribbean for an interactive exchange. Indigenous leaders and elders shared ways that Indigenous knowledge can strengthen identities, wellbeing and sustainable landscape management, while youth participants shared some of the challenges they face and their aspirations. Participants proposed collaboration, empathy and respect as well as wisdom as vital.

“We need training for the young people to continue our fight to receive our rights.”



Lizardo Cauper Pezo
AIDSEP

The ‘Rights to a Future’ and the ‘Changing the Narrative’ plenaries heard that youth have the knowledge and tools to create change, transmit messages rapidly and enable changes in narratives and behaviours. Mayumi Sato, a YIL representative, said that youth cannot do this work alone. The importance of collaboration was highlighted throughout the event. Hilary Tam, strategic director of the consultancy Futerra, noted that creating change demands collective action and a social movement.

The ‘Generations of Wisdom’ workshop emphasized the value of listening, whether for self-awareness, connection with others or to create collective understanding, and cultivating attitudes of gratitude in the process of cooperation for change. Listening can cultivate mutual respect, strengthen relationships and enable collaboration. In the plenary session ‘Whose Rights’, participants heard that we must become better at listening to one another to understand different perspectives, cultures and priorities.

The rise of global youth has only just begun and is already capturing the hearts and minds of the world. The power of stories that change people’s minds by capturing people’s hearts was emphasised by Paula Caballero, Managing Director of the Climate and Water of NGO Rare, during the ‘Changing the Narrative’ plenary.

“We are the Indigenous youth, we are a team, and we should be (working) on this together.”



Rayanne Cristine Máximo Franca
Indigenous Baré of Brazilian Amazon



Innocent Mukheli and Vuyo Mpantsha speak at GLF Bonn 2019 during the Changing the Narrative plenary.



3. Gender equality must be placed at the core of rights-based approaches to sustainable landscapes management and governance.

Rights-based approaches centred on gender are fundamental for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). GLF Bonn 2019's opening plenary heard that three key principles of a rights-based approach are: ownership; participatory approaches; and fair and equal access to resources. Presentations and participants at the GLF noted that the pathway to achieve these goals is often more challenging for women due to gender inequality.

Gender equality and women's rights are enshrined in a number of global conventions and national legal frameworks. Yet access and control over and benefits from natural resources remain inequitable. Gendered inequalities and power relations influence the vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities of women and men in the face of climate change and environmental degradation. During the 'Right to Equality, Gender Inclusion' plenary, Juan Pablo Sarmiento Barletti, a consultant with CIFOR, identified challenges often found at the intersection of gender and other human rights, including Indigenous Peoples' rights.

The 'Are We Gender Blind?' workshop reviewed recent research findings and the potential for gender to be placed at the core of rights-based approaches. Some participants noted that many organizations do not place enough emphasis on creating equality between genders.

A gender-transformative approach could strike at the root of the rights and access gaps women face. Project designers and implementers were encouraged to avoid top-down approaches that did not critically examine and, where possible, deconstruct gender-related norms and rules that are the causes of inequity.

“It is important to see gender equity not as a means to an end, but a process that is to be valued in itself.”



Juan Pablo Sarmiento Barletti
Researcher, CIFOR

Ghanaian TV host and actress Joselyn Dumas recalled during the 'Rights to Equality' session being told when she was child in Ghana that girls were 'only to be seen and not heard'. She described ways in which young men in Ghana are prioritized for education and how families are forced to choose which child they can afford to send to school. Jolene Yazzie, an artist from the Navajo Nation, described the discrimination she and her partner have faced in their community, which refuses to allow same-sex marriage, according to evolving cultural beliefs. Despite this pain and these challenges, women's rights are advancing, Sônia Guajajara said during a session on tenure.

A gender-transformative approach would help to close the rights' access gap for both men and women, participants said, given understanding of the approach

After two successful days full of sharing and learning, the YIL, guided by Donatella Gasparro, closed the *Learning Café* through writing a collective poem:

what matters to you in this landscape?
that is me, that is you, that is
the land you've wanted to escape to
or from, the **dwelling** that has cradled you
in the **elements** in which you were born
where do you feel at **home**?
tell me which trees grow well in your soul
where do you feel as part of a whole?

what matters to you in this landscape?
what matters is the right to choose
to leave, to stay, to farm your land
or go away, to fish the fish
and let it regenerate
what matters is to **re-connect**
to be protected and to protect

what matters is the **freedom** to choose
for your **life**, for your plants
for your people and your heart
what matters is to **include** the small
the huge, the bright and dark
for having **hope** for all
and **equal** space to spark

wherever in this fertile **land** you are
you've got two things with you:
the right to its **life**
and the task to keep it alive.

*Extract from complete poem –
Donatella Gasparro*

as a process rather than a goal. Such openness to learn and adapt requires humility, time and a shift in both practices of planning, implementing or monitoring and narratives to re-engage with the men and women of Indigenous and local communities as rights-holders and project partners.

Experiences from across the world demonstrate that the sustainability of environmental action relies on the contributions of both women and men who directly depend on the landscapes for their livelihoods. It's essential to identify and incorporate best practices for women's inclusion and empowerment in policies, programs, business models and strategies for sustainable landscapes. Unlocking such synergies requires going beyond purely technical aspects of environmental programming to mapping the various, often intersecting social, economic and political structures that influence power imbalances. It's also essential to identify ways in which actions directed at enhancing landscape sustainability can contribute to addressing inequality and discrimination.

4. Traditional knowledge and practices must be mainstreamed and integrated into sustainable landscape management, climate policies and restoration initiatives in ways that neither appropriate these resources nor exploit their holders.

International agreements, such as the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, now emphasize the role of traditional knowledge. Despite this recent progress, Indigenous languages, traditions and cultural practices remain threatened. These threats call for more integration and mainstreaming of traditional knowledge and practices in sustainable landscape management and restoration initiatives.

Just before the GLF Bonn 2019, a workshop organized in cooperation with Institute for Ecology and Action Anthropology (INFOE) focused on 'Indigenous Languages, Knowledge and Rights' in the context of climate change adaptation and mitigation, (forest) landscape restoration

“They say in a lot of Indigenous communities that we're waiting for Western science to catch up with us...I want to work with scientists to see why it is that things we know are going to happen actually come about.”



Howard Thompson
Mohawk Traditional Chief (Big Eagle)

and sustainable development. The GLF Bonn workshop 'Building Traditions' expanded on the earlier discussions, urging creation of more spaces to facilitate critical reflections on the impacts of Western science. The 'Whose Rights' plenary reinforced the value of recognizing that 'experts' should not be limited solely to scientists.

Examples of traditional knowledge and its application were conveyed throughout the event. 'Landscape Talks' sessions heard about the potential for biodiversity conservation that can come from native plant traits combined with traditional knowledge. Following a traditional performance to open the 'Voices of the Landscape' plenary, Candice Pederson, a Canadian Inuit, explained how "our clothing, our food, our traditions and customs are all shaped by our land and our environment." Diel Mochire Mwenge of the Democratic Republic of Congo said evictions from forests has led to loss of traditional knowledge by many Indigenous Peoples.

Traditional knowledge also plays a critical role in the recognition of land rights, whether customary or traditional rights in Indigenous territories. The session 'Securing Rights, Securing Landscapes: Boosting the Impacts' heard that there has been an increasing recognition of community-based forest tenure, with sixteen countries issuing legal frameworks recognizing forests as designated for and owned by Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Technology has enabled cheaper and more transparent mapping processes. Experts in this session urged governments to undertake mapping in a participatory manner with the help of the Indigenous Peoples and local communities. This would provide a strong sense of ownership



and localized verification, building trust as the communities apply their traditional knowledge and map their own territories.

The Learning Café session on mapping identified tools to assist with mapping and landscape management, which discussed the map-and-storytelling platform ‘explorer.land’, developed through the information management company OpenForests, as well as the use of drones for generating high-resolution and updated maps not available from Google.

The SIKU app, discussed in the ‘Keep it cool: fixing the climate with permafrost and peatlands’ session, is an open data platform created by the Arctic Eider Society, and can help integrate traditional knowledge and culturally relevant tools of Inuit people in Iqaluit, in the Canadian territory of Nunavut, by documenting hunting posts and grounds while providing information on sea ice conditions and educational media. ‘No One Left Behind’ session identified approaches including ModelForest, which is based on bottom-up and participatory approaches to stakeholder engagement, and Landscale, based on inclusive, transparent and participatory management of landscapes for food and forest restoration. Questions were raised in the Learning Café concerning access to and compatibility of various technologies with local communities’ practices and knowledge.

Relationship with governments and the strength of political will for change were identified as crucial factors in successful community mapping initiatives. The session ‘Promoting land tenure reform and supportive legal frameworks across levels and sectors’ identified trust, communication and collaboration as key ingredients for success. Communities need to collaborate amongst themselves. In Indonesia, for example, communication with elders to learn Indigenous history prior to commencing with technical processes such as participatory mapping and negotiations with the government has been important to the success of work towards tenure ownership.

Government commitment is still lacking in many countries. Huge gaps between land claims, enactment of laws recognizing community and Indigenous Peoples’ rights and tenure recognition also remain. The ‘Securing Rights, Securing

Landscapes’ session heard that in Indonesia, indicative mapping concluded that there are 84 million hectares of Indigenous Peoples’ territories, but that only 28,000 hectares of this have been formally recognized despite a presidential commitment. Although laws that recognize multiple forms of land ownership and a land authority exist in Liberia, a lack of government resources has hindered progress towards comprehensive formal territory recognition.

Progress seems slow across the world: for example, the ‘Promoting land tenure reform’ session explored acknowledgment of Indigenous rights via the example of recognition of ancestral lands in Peru, which took more than four decades.

During the session ‘Making climate action inclusive in forest landscapes’, Grace Balawag of Tebtebba said that traditional knowledge is a major contribution from Indigenous Peoples towards climate change action. The Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform established at the UNFCCC was recognized during the conference as offering hope for global coordination of Indigenous communities’ actions worldwide. The platform is also seen as a chance for the development of collaborative understanding across these communities of ways to value and protect traditional knowledge.

The ‘Building Traditions’ workshop urged caution, warning of potential exploitation of traditional knowledge on public platforms. Some suggested that Indigenous and local communities establish “tiers” of knowledge to distinguish what should and shouldn’t be widely shared.

“For the first time in our country’s 172-year history, we are recognizing our customary communities’ land rights. We are securing their rights through a formal title and deed process. That is no small feat.”



Hon. Ellen O. Pratt
Liberian Land Authority



Candice Pedersen, an Inuk from Iqaluit, addresses the audience at GLF Bonn 2019.



5. Rights-based approaches to ecosystem restoration are vital to combating the climate crisis and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The ‘Decade on Ecosystem Restoration’, recently declared by the U.N. General Assembly, will run from 2021 to 2030, and aims to massively scale up the restoration of degraded and destroyed ecosystems to fight the climate crisis and enhance food security, water supplies and enhance biodiversity. The resolution recognizes the vital part nature-based solutions play in combating the climate crisis and to achieving the SDGs. Several dedicated sessions were held on this topic during GLF Bonn 2019.

The workshop on ‘Restoring Our Ecosystems - What’s at Stake?’ identified challenges and opportunities associated with this ambitious U.N. Decade resolution. A global social movement will be needed to empower communities to achieve the scale of restoration being sought. This was reinforced during the ‘Decade of Ecosystem Restoration’ plenary, which heard that identifying champions at every level – global, national, grassroots – will be critical to achieving goals. One participant pointed out that restoration projects are often short-term with no follow-up, monitoring and maintenance, while others argued that emphasis should not only be placed on restoring ecosystems, but also conserving them and keeping existing natural ecosystems intact. Some participants expressed scepticism about restoration solutions coming from private, for-profit businesses given previous and current ecosystem degradation and destruction from this sector’s activities.

The ‘Restoring Our Ecosystems: What’s at Stake?’ workshop questioned how to achieve the goal of massive global ecosystem restoration while

“Restoration of rights needs to be brought into political discussions.”

– Ecosystem Restoration workshop participant

respecting and fulfilling the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities living in these landscapes. During the session ‘Getting it Right: A Rights-Based Approach for Landscapes’, it was recognized that rights were still not included in many ecosystem restoration agendas. Many participants in the workshop called for the formalization of existing customary tenure rights and securing of land rights for Indigenous groups, not only as a way to prevent ongoing degradation, but also as a means of encouraging community-led restoration projects.

To achieve restoration targets and apply landscape approaches, tenure reform will be critical, said some. Initiatives such as the Opportunities Map the World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) are collaboratively preparing aims to identify and prioritize the countries ready for national-scale tenure reform.

The ‘Securing Rights, Securing Landscapes’ session provided research suggesting that lands managed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities with secure rights experience lower rates of deforestation, store more carbon, hold more biodiversity and benefit more people than lands managed by either public or private entities. It was said that scaling-up efforts to close the gap in rights recognition for Indigenous Peoples and local communities represents the world’s single greatest opportunity to advance global climate and development goals in terms of land coverage, number of people affected and contested areas.

Protecting and restoring peatlands and permafrost was the focus of the session ‘Keep It Cool: Fixing the Climate with Permafrost and Peatlands’. In this session, Hans Joosten of the Greifswald Mire Centre pointed out that the physical complexity of permafrost and peatlands and the significant risks of their degradation demand a holistic approach to land use planning and management, requiring integrated knowledge for planners and policymakers. Yannick Beaudoin of the David Suzuki

“We need to restore the planet that gives us our wellbeing.”



Musonda Mumba

Chief, Terrestrial Ecosystems Unit (TEU),
U.N. Environment

Foundation emphasized the potential of traditional knowledge and Indigenous-led conservation in protecting and restoring these carbon sinks.

The 'Landscape Finance' plenary identified several challenges related to financing restoration activities. Metrics to understand impacts, values and trade-offs between ecosystems, conservation and socio-economic development considerations within a landscape are missing, said Eva Mayerhofer, lead environment and biodiversity specialist with the European Investment Bank. Financial evaluations and investment decisions across long timeframes of eight to fifteen years, as required by landscape restoration work, can be a challenge, said Hector Martinez, founder of InverPaisa Impact Fund.

The Tenure Facility demonstrated the speed at which tenure laws can be implemented when funding is provided directly to rights-holder organizations and their allies. During the 'Securing Rights, Securing Landscapes' session, Nonette Royo, Director of the Tenure Facility, pointed out that in just over two years, the Tenure Facility has enabled communities to advance rights recognition over more than 6.5 million hectares of land. Although such progress speaks to the tremendous efforts of local peoples and their allies, this work

“Organizations are more and more aware that restoring landscapes is not just about planting trees and lush grass. There are several other forms of conservation and they need to be acknowledged.”



Tatiana Minayeva
Care for Ecosystems

and the prerequisite conditions they helped to establish were largely achieved in the shadow of global climate and conservation initiatives.

The 'Restoring Ecosystems' workshop heard concerns that very little project funding reaches local communities, raising questions concerning whether problems stem from availability of funding or distribution. Workshop participants suggested behaviour and business practice of donors should change, while the development sector must find new innovative ways to cut transaction costs to ensure that the funds reach restoration activities.



Jeffrey Campbell, Manager of the Forest and Farm Facility at FAO, addresses the panel during the 'Decade on Ecosystem Restoration' plenary.



Setting a race to the top

Launch of the ‘gold standard’ for rights-based approaches

The GLF Bonn 2019 launched a new global effort to develop a best practice ‘gold standard’ for rights-based approaches to sustainable landscapes, in collaboration with a number of organizations and developed by the Indigenous Peoples Major Group on Sustainable Development (IPMG) and Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI).

This gold standard is intended to inform national and international policies and landscape-level interventions, and clearly position Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including women, at the forefront of global conservation and climate action.

“Current accountability initiatives are like a stainless-steel standard, where the minimum is “do no harm”. But the gold standard is a shift in perspective towards doing good.”



James Whitehead
Director, Forest Peoples Program

Drawing on lessons learned from some of the most advanced human rights-based approaches to conservation and land and resource governance, key principles to achieve aspirational goals and targets, as opposed to minimum-based standards, were presented during an interactive session. These include:

- strengthen respect, recognition and protection of the distinct and differentiated rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
- encourage all organizations to improve their own standards and certification systems;
- help deliver on the Paris Climate Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2020 conservation agenda; and,
- strengthen partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and local communities and uphold rights-based and sustainable restoration, conservation, and development practices.

The session heard that the proposed ‘gold standard’ clarifies existing legal requirements as required by international law and puts forward best practice standards that should guide all actions and investments in rural landscapes. It is expected to foster genuine partnerships, making Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and women within these groups a central part of the solution. This standard could assist accredited entities participating in the Green Climate Fund in implementation of their projects and programs.

Those leading the effort recognize that companies, conservation organizations and U.N. agencies may face challenges to adopting the standard and recognize that the application and even enforcement of rights-based approaches depends on national legal frameworks. Yet there is hope the standard will create a race to the top. The gold standard can bridge a number of existing gaps, assist with FPIC processes, provide more information to communities and enhance access to justice for communities via local level grievance and redress mechanisms.

A consultation process prioritizing Indigenous Peoples and local communities began soon after GLF Bonn 2019. Some organizations, including CIFOR, ICRAF and the Forest Stewardship Council, expressed an interest in working with the proposed gold standard and similar interest is expected from local government, U.N. agencies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations,

“The gold standard will be prepared together with Indigenous communities and will reflect the rights of Indigenous people’s, which are not negotiable.”



Joan Carling

Co-convenor, Indigenous Peoples Major Group on Sustainable Development

the private sector and governments. Those leading this initiative believe strongly that the eventual adoption of the gold standard by the GLF, its Charter Members, donors and other international institutions and initiatives will encourage others to improve their own standards, certification systems and commitments over time.



Engaging workshops brought together stakeholders from all sectors at GLF Bonn 2019.



Conclusions

In the face of the climate crisis and threats to food security, a safe water supply and biodiversity, GLF Bonn 2019 sought to hear the voices of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth – all of those with the greatest stake in confronting such global challenges. The forum did not avoid identifying hurdles, most of which stem from conflicting rights and interests, that hinder cooperation to rapidly secure the rights to a healthy life for present and future generations. One of the greatest barriers acknowledged is the structural inequalities that have led to a lack of recognition and respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth, especially in rural areas. Particularly egregious are gaps in participation in decision-making, customary tenure and traditional knowledge systems; and forces that have criminalized and perpetuated violence against frontline environmental defenders.

The GLF Bonn 2019 served as a platform for spreading novel ideas to support radical cross-sectoral collaboration, behaviour change and paradigm shifts: all of which we will need to inclusively shape our shared futures. The event brought together Indigenous Peoples and local communities that are shaping the agenda and narrative; fostered the emerging dialogue between Indigenous elders and non-Indigenous youth;

encouraged new thinking around a knowledge creation process that leverages synergies between traditional knowledge and Western science; and supported the unveiling of innovations in technology and finance to accelerate progress. The event offered space for rights defenders, too often under threat, not only to share their experiences, but also an opportunity to gain meaningful support and a resounding call for urgent action from a global audience. With the solidarity reception filling conference halls with the sounds of beating drums and dancing until the late evening, and with the rituals and prayers offered across the two days, the GLF Bonn embodied the optimism needed to fuel transformation and a new paradigm for development cooperation.

The way forward is clear: as we approach the U.N. Decade on Ecosystem Restoration from 2021-2030, the atmosphere of solidarity and optimism this year's GLF conference cultivated can be carried forward through the release of the 'gold standard' for rights-based approaches, set to be publicly launched in the coming months. These guiding principles seek to encourage institutions at all levels to do better and set a race to the top to normalize the true ownership of rights holders over their land, territories and resources.



Youth leaders, Silvia Abruscato and Yemi Adeyeye, perform a poem at the opening of the 'Rights to Equality: Gender Inclusion' plenary.

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