

# Making Indigenous and Community Land Rights a Global Conservation Priority

**Workshop 2.8**

**November 14, 2014**

**World Parks Congress**

**Sydney, Australia**



**NATURAL JUSTICE**



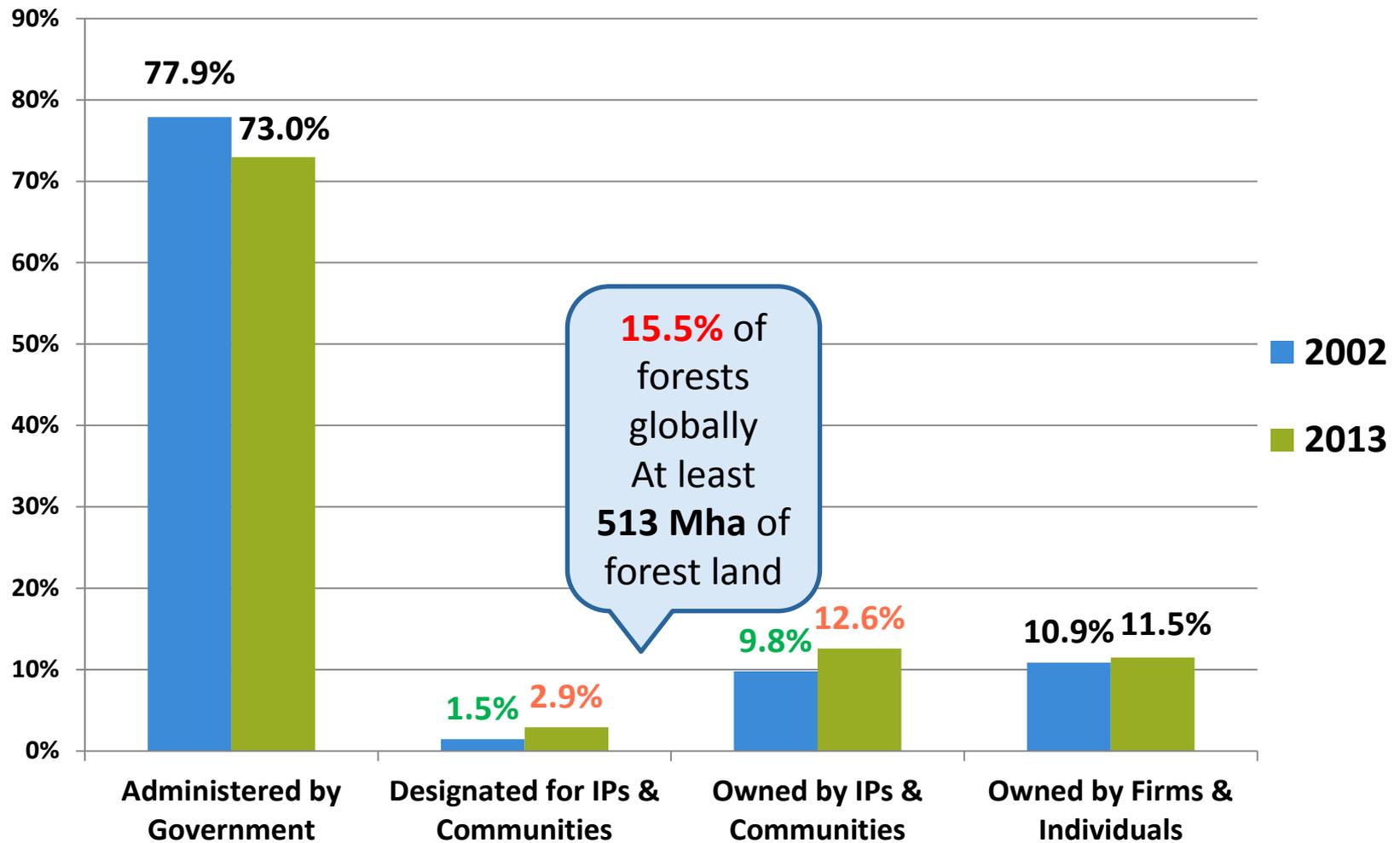
# “Indigenous & community lands”

- Lands & territories traditionally owned & used by Indigenous People and local communities
- Governed under customary systems and/or statutory law – customary tenure often lacks formal legal recognition
- Often include both collective and household land holdings

# Indigenous & community lands are extensive and rich in biodiversity

- Customary, communal lands make up an astounding **8.5 billion hectares of land** out of a global land estate of 13 billion hectares (Alden Wily)
  - roughly two thirds of the world's land area
  - In Africa: 69.25% of land area held under customary tenure
- Estimated that indigenous territories hold **80 percent** of the planet's biodiversity (Sobrevilla)

# Legal recognition increasing– e.g., forests (RRI)



# Examples of Indigenous & Communal Land Rights Recognition

50% of Mexico's area that falls under *ejidos* tenure

80% of land areas in Ghana defined as Customary Lands

69% of Tanzania categorized as Village Lands

3.4% of the Philippines under ancestral lands entitlement

80% of Papua New Guinea under community based tenure

13.3% of Brazil as Indigenous territories

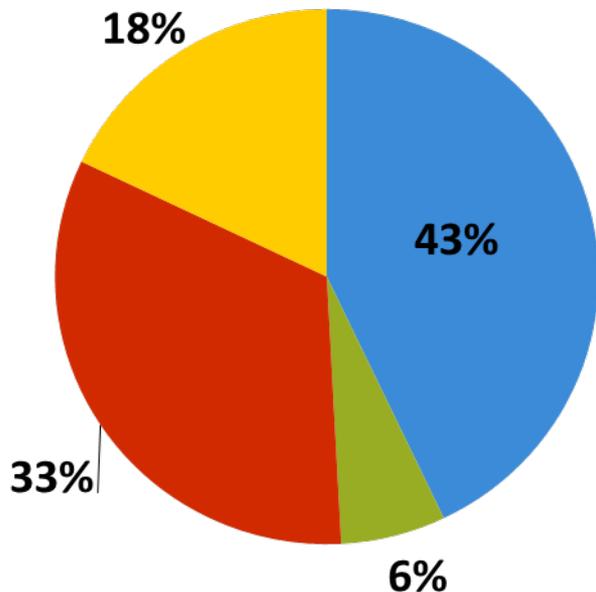
70% of Botswana defined as Tribal Lands

16% of Australia under Native title

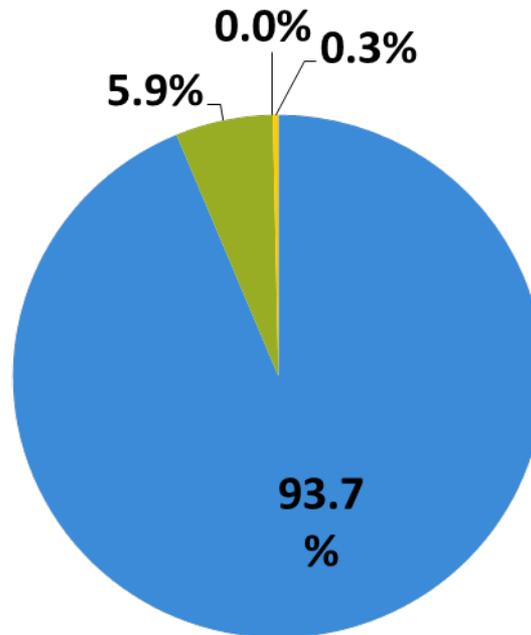
(2011)

# Legal recognition very uneven across regions

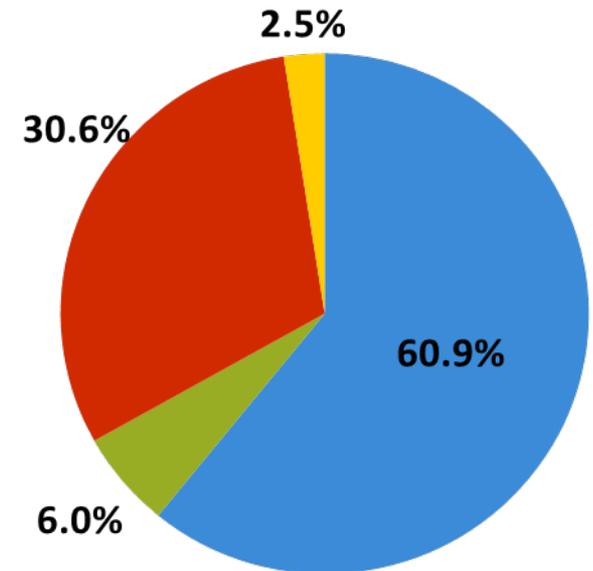
## Latin America



## Africa



## Asia



- Administered by Government
- Designated for IPs & Communities

- Owned by IPs & Communities
- Owned by Firms & Individuals

# Land tenure insecurity and failure to recognize indigenous & community rights is a global crisis

- Estimated to affect 2 billion people
- Large-scale land acquisitions
- Extractive industry concessions
  - ❑ Mining overlaps indigenous/community land and protected areas in Cameroon, Philippines, Indonesia
  - ❑ Covering almost all statutorily recognized Indigenous territories in Peru
- State protected areas overlapping customary lands

# Protected Areas – Land Rights conflicts

- Durban WPC outcomes – “new paradigm”
  - Full respect for rights
  - Appropriate management authority
  - Restitution
- National laws still fall far short of respecting customary rights to lands and resources
  - Only 8 of 21 countries have passed relevant new laws since Durban
  - 10 of 21 enable restitution, but implementation is weak
- Serious, persistent conflicts – evictions, restrictions on use of vital resource

## Protected Areas and the Land Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Current Issues and Future Agenda

Rights and Resources Initiative  
November 2014

# Secure land & resource rights are a foundation for rights-based conservation

- Broader land rights recognition provides a foundation for restitution of rights in protected areas
- Broader land rights recognition provides a foundation for voluntary collaboration in protected areas management
- Need to move beyond weak “participation” and “co-management” frameworks that have often remained highly centralized – recognition of land and resource rights is a basis for this

# Secure land & resource rights support community-led conservation at scale

Evidence base for links between indigenous and community land rights and positive conservation outcomes

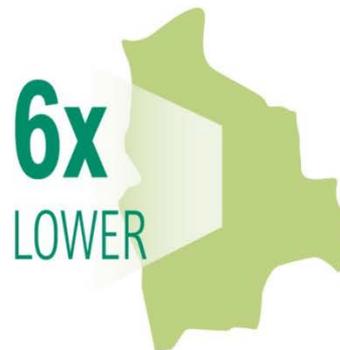
- Legal **forest** rights for communities and government protection of their rights tend to lower deforestation and carbon dioxide emissions (WRI-RRI study)
- Dramatic increases in **wildlife** populations where communities have rights to manage and benefit (Namibia CBNRM)
- Extensive **coastal/marine** areas under community tenure across 15 Pacific Islands, leading to documented increases in marine species (LMMA Network)

Deforestation rates inside indigenous & community forests with legal recognition and strong government protection are significantly lower than in forests outside these areas

BRAZILIAN  
AMAZON



BOLIVIAN  
AMAZON



GUATEMALA  
(PETÉN)



WRI-RRI 2014

# Towards a Reform Agenda

- Need more active financial, political, program support from conservation actors for indigenous & community land rights (legal recognition, implementation)
- Need strong accountability mechanisms for government and conservation organizations to prevent violations of human rights
- Need stronger collaboration among conservation, human rights, governance reform agendas – including to address industry impacts
- CANNOT achieve global conservation goals without this shift

Thank you!



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