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CONTACT: press@earth-insight.org

New Report Highlights Opportunities to Strengthen Territorial Rights Amid Industrial Pressures One Year After Landmark Land Tenure Commitment

Indigenous Peoples and Local Community Organizations Urge Governments at COP 31 to Protect 160-Million-Hectare Commitment from Oil, Gas, Mining, Agriculture and Other Threats

ANTALYA, Türkiye — One year after governments launched the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment (ILTC) at COP30 in Belém, a new report released today at COP31 highlights a critical opportunity to build on this landmark commitment and translate it into lasting territorial security for Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant Peoples.

From Commitment to Territorial Security through the Intergovernmental Land Tenure Commitment: Strengthening Land Rights and Governance in the Face of Industrial Pressures draws on spatial analysis across the Amazon, Congo Basin, Mesoamerica and Indonesia and case studies from seven countries. The report documents extensive pressures from extractive and large-scale industrial activity affecting the territories of Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant Peoples, including lands where tenure is already legally recognized. It also identifies practical opportunities for governments and partners to advance territorial recognition, strengthen governance and protection, and better align industrial development decisions with territorial rights.

The report was released today by Earth Insight, the Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC), Tenure Facility, Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), Global Land Alliance (GLA), and PINGO's Forum. Downloadable maps from the report can be found here.

Under the ILTC, signatory governments committed to recognize and strengthen tenure rights across 160 million hectares in tropical forest countries by 2030: at least 80 million

hectares of newly recognized tenure, and 80 million hectares where governance and protection are strengthened on lands already recognized. A complementary US$1.8 billion Forest and Land Tenure Pledge for 2026–2030 offers an important opportunity to mobilize resources for implementation. With four years to go, the report underscores the importance of accelerating implementation through territorial recognition, effective governance, financing and protection from industrial threats. It highlights how the ILTC can help governments build on existing progress and strengthen coordination across policies and institutions that affect territorial rights.

The report is grounded in a core principle: Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant Peoples have rights to their lands, territories and resources, including rights to access, use, manage and govern them, in accordance with applicable international human rights standards and legal frameworks. These rights are fundamental and must be respected independently of the environmental benefits their territories provide. At the same time, growing evidence demonstrates the critical contributions of their territorial governance and stewardship to biodiversity conservation, climate stability and ecosystem resilience.

Key Findings:

- **Territorial rights and community governance deliver measurable climate and biodiversity outcomes.** In Peru, forests in established and proposed reserves for Indigenous Peoples living in voluntary isolation and initial contact saw 16 times less forest loss than forests outside them. Recognized Afro-descendant territories in South America were linked to 29–55% less forest loss than comparable areas. In Indonesia, 78% of forest cover in recognized customary forests remains undisturbed. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Boso Asukomo sacred community forest lost less than 0.5% of its forest in 2025, a year even when national non-fire forest loss hit a record high.
- **Indigenous Peoples and communities are leading the response.** Indigenous Peoples organizations in Peru and Brazil have defended the 16-million-hectare Yavarí-Tapiche Territorial Corridor for two decades. In Brazil's Mato Grosso do Sul State, Guarani-Kaiowá communities are reclaiming ancestral lands after losing 99% of them.
- **Recognition must be matched by protection.** In the Ecuadorian Amazon, oil blocks overlap 67% of Indigenous territories, and the new Suroriente licensing round overlaps 1.6 million hectares of titled territories. These activities risk deforestation, river contamination, and the disruption of territorial governance.
- **Industrial pressure is widespread** (findings from our previous report). Across the Amazon, oil and gas blocks overlap 31 million hectares of Indigenous Peoples and local community territories, or 12% of their total area. Mining concessions overlap another 9.8 million hectares, and industrial logging overlaps 2.4 million hectares. Oil and gas blocks overlap 38% of community forests in the Congo Basin. Mining concessions overlap 17% of Indigenous Peoples and community lands in Mesoamerica, and wood concessions 18% of Indigenous

Peoples lands in Indonesia. These figures are likely conservative.
- **Strengthening territorial rights is an investment in people, nature and climate resilience.** Strengthening tenure, territorial governance and community-led economies is a durable, cost-effective investment in conservation, climate action and sustainable development.

Calls to Action

The report calls on ILTC signatory governments, donors and technical partners to pursue ambitious, rights-based implementation that advances recognition, governance and protection together, in close collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant Peoples. Specifically:

- **Governments should accelerate recognition of territorial and tenure rights,** including unresolved ancestral land claims and pending reserves for Indigenous Peoples in isolation, while ensuring that recognition processes respect rights-holders' institutions, priorities, and customary governance systems.

- **Governance and protection support should extend to newly recognized territories,** not only the 80 million hectares of already recognized lands under the ILTC's governance commitment.

- **Governments should align industrial licensing, infrastructure and investment decisions with territorial rights**, review existing concessions for conflicts, uphold Free, Prior and Informed Consent, and, where affected peoples and communities decide so, exclude unwanted extractive and large-scale industrial activity from their territories.

- **Progress should be measured not only in hectares, but by whether rights-holders can effectively exercise authority over their lands**, whether funding reaches communities, and whether industrial threats and violence against defenders are being addressed, drawing on Indigenous Peoples- and community-led monitoring.

- **Donors should deliver on the US$1.8 billion Forest and Land Tenure Pledge and expand direct, long-term and flexible finance** to Indigenous Peoples, local communities and Afro-descendant Peoples. Their tenure rights currently receive less than 1% of climate-related philanthropy and official development assistance.

With four years left to meet the ILTC's 2030 target, the report urges leaders at COP31 to build on the momentum generated at COP30 by accelerating recognition, strengthening territorial governance and protection, and mobilizing resources to support rights-holders' priorities.

Spokesperson Quotes

Juan Carlos Jintiach Arcos, Executive Secretary, Global Alliance of Territorial Communities (GATC): "Our territories are not just areas to be recognized on a map. They are the basis of our identity, our governance, our livelihoods and our future. Legal recognition is an important step, but territorial security means being able to exercise our rights and decide what happens in our territories. Governments cannot recognize our rights on paper while authorizing projects that threaten them in practice. The ILTC must help close this gap, ensuring that our rights are respected, our governance is strengthened, and financing reaches our organizations so we can continue protecting our territories."

Florencia Librizzi, Deputy Director, Earth Insight: "The ILTC represents a landmark opportunity to advance territorial rights at scale. Our research shows why recognition must go hand in hand with effective governance and protection, particularly where oil, gas, mining, industrial agriculture and other threats to Indigenous Peoples,' local communities' and Afrodescendent Peoples' territories. Governments can make this commitment transformative by aligning industrial licensing, infrastructure and investment decisions with territorial rights and the priorities of rights-holders."

Darragh Conway, Tenure Facility: "The ILTC has created real political momentum to recognize collective land rights at scale. Now we need to make sure that recognition comes with the institutional and financial support peoples and communities need to govern and protect their lands, both before and after titling."

Alain Frechette, Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI): "The evidence is clear: territories governed by communities with secure tenure rights are essential to land stewardship and the realization of global climate and biodiversity goals. Yet tenure rights receive less than one percent of climate-related philanthropy and development aid. The Forest and Land Tenure Pledge must reach rights-holders directly."

Malcolm Childress, Global Land Alliance (GLA): "Recognition, governance and land-use decisions too often move on separate tracks. The ILTC gives governments a framework to bring tenure agencies and the ministries that issue concessions to the same table, so that development decisions reinforce land rights rather than erode them."

Edward Porokwa, Executive Director, PINGO's Forum: "For pastoralist and hunter-gatherer communities in Tanzania, land is not only where we live. It carries our lives, our identities, and our cultures. It is how we move our herds, find water and grazing, and keep our cultures alive. Infrastructure projects and conservation areas have too often cut communities off from their customary lands without their consent. The ILTC must secure customary tenure for pastoralist communities, ensure direct funding to Indigenous Peoples, and protect our mobility, so that development and conservation decisions respect our rights instead of displacing us."

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