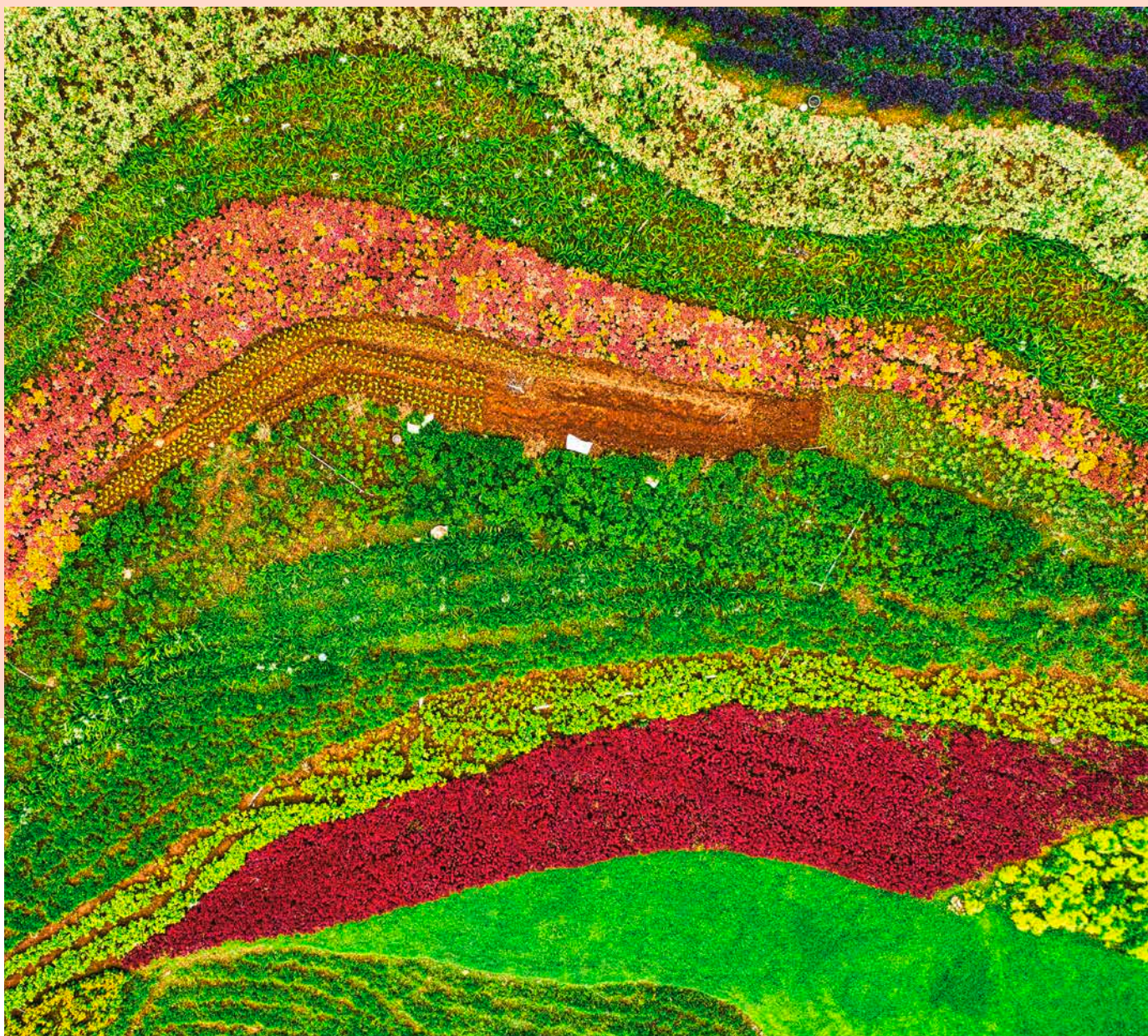


May 2025

Unlocking Land Tenure: Pathways for policy action after the triple COPs of 2024



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Overview

The 2024 triple-COP year presents a key opportunity to elevate land tenure and land rights in global environmental governance. For the first time, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held their Conferences of the Parties (COPs) in the same year. This policy brief provides the first ever cross-Convention synthesis of land tenure-related outcomes, with a focus on the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), women's land rights, and the potential for inter-Convention cooperation. Although the UNCCD continues to be the leading forum for land tenure discussions, the CBD has made important progress through new monitoring indicators and institutional reforms. Meanwhile, the UNFCCC lags behind, raising concerns about fragmented governance and lost opportunities to integrate human rights into climate negotiations. Against a backdrop of shrinking civic space and geopolitical fragmentation, it is vital that entry points for action remain visible and accessible in order to catalyze change. This brief identifies key decisions across the triple-COP year and maps entry points, both direct and indirect, for coordinated advocacy, programming, and policy alignment. It offers timely guidance for decision-makers and stakeholders navigating the complex, and often contested, terrain of multilateral land governance.

Highlights

- At UNCCD COP16, Parties adopted significant decisions on land tenure. Similarly, CBD Parties adopted a monitoring framework with land tenure indicators. At UNFCCC COP29, Parties emphasized the rights of IPLCs, offering promising entry points for stronger recognition of land tenure. Moving forward, it will be crucial to ensure coherence and stronger commitments in climate negotiations.
- Equally, at UNCCD COP16, Parties decided to establish National Focal Points for land tenure. These can initiate analyses of opportunities to integrate land tenure into national land restoration initiatives, review governance modalities, and propose land tenure strategies and initiatives. They can also support relevant decisions on gender and rangelands and pastoralists.
- Progress on women's land rights is promising but remains under-resourced. The Conventions supported gender-responsive action, but without sustained funding and political will, women's land rights risk being relegated from implementation.
- New spaces for IPLCs signal a turning point. IPLC representation is strengthened by the creation of distinct caucuses for Indigenous Peoples and for local communities at UNCCD, together with the establishment of a permanent body under the CBD.
- Human rights-based approaches are gaining traction, mainly under the CBD, where Parties took important steps by integrating human rights and safeguards into its frameworks. At UNFCCC COP29, however, progress on human rights lagged, with no substantial commitments. The absence of land rights and human rights in UNFCCC decisions raises concerns about fragmented governance.
- The need for synergies and cooperation among Conventions was emphasized in the triple-COP year. Indeed, the CBD took a step further, moving from discussion to exploration of a joint work programme, with a possible entry point for reinforcing the role of land rights in achieving the objectives of the Conventions.



COP16, Womens's Forum 25 October 2024 © UN Biodiversity, 2024

Introduction

Amid growing challenges to multilateral cooperation and the rise of nationalist and isolationist agendas, the world faces a critical inflection point. The ability to collectively address the triple planetary crisis – climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation – is increasingly jeopardized. Democratic spaces are shrinking, geopolitical fragmentation is deepening, and trust in international processes is waning. Against this backdrop, it is more urgent than ever to ensure that entry points for action remain accessible, visible, and grounded in justice. Land and land tenure systems are not just technical elements of environmental governance; they are political, economic, and cultural pillars that determine who benefits from climate and conservation finance, who participates in decision-making, and who bears the risks of inaction.

Land rights and land tenure security are essential to ensuring that climate and conservation efforts are fair, inclusive, and effective. Secure land tenure is a critical component of climate action, as it empowers Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) and women to participate in decision-making processes and benefit from climate mitigation and adaptation efforts (TMG 2024a). Weak land rights exclude marginalized groups from environmental and economic benefits, undermining global efforts to fight climate change and biodiversity loss. Unclear tenure rights can increase conflicts, reduce incentives for sustainable management, and hamper the effectiveness of conservation, restoration, and sustainability projects (TMG 2024b). Strong land tenure systems are foundational for ensuring that carbon markets, restoration, and conservation initiatives meet equitable and sustainable outcomes (Rights and Resources Initiative & McGill University 2024).

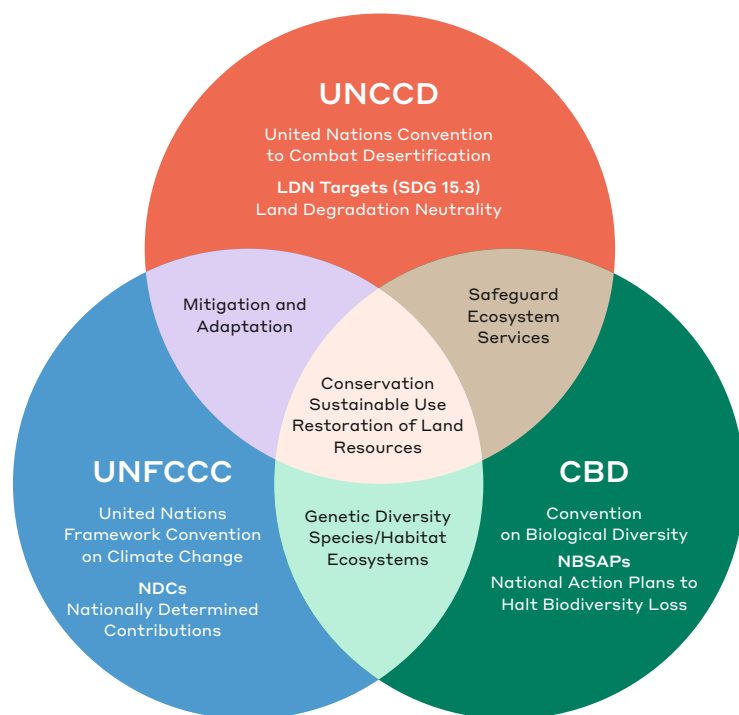
Land tenure also plays a crucial role in closing gender gaps and ensuring women can actively contribute to climate solutions (see Table 2). Women's land rights remain disproportionately weak, with over 70 per cent of women in many countries lacking formal land ownership (Stanley & Lisher 2023). Secure land rights enable women to participate in land use decisions, improving their ability to manage resources sustainably and invest in climate-resilient practices. Without targeted interventions to strengthen women's tenure security, existing gender inequalities will continue to be reinforced (FAO & UNCCD 2022).

The alignment of the 2024 Rio Conventions presented a key opportunity to strengthen global land tenure commitments. For the first time, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held their Conferences of the Parties (COPs) in the same year. This alignment creates opportunities to coordinate policies, integrate land tenure into climate and biodiversity goals, and ensure land governance frameworks to support sustainable development (Rackelmann et al. 2024).

Previous studies have examined just transitions (Aleksandrova et al. 2024), landscape restoration (Sewell, et al. 2020), and gender equality (UN Women 2024), as well as emphasizing the importance of enhanced synergies among the Rio Conventions (Tsioiumani 2024). However, these analyses have not specifically adopted land tenure and land rights as a central lens. This policy brief examines the outcomes of the 2024 triple-COP year, analyzing decisions relevant to land tenure, land rights, women's land rights, and broader gender and human rights. Rio Convention COP decisions are presented according to broad themes including Land Tenure, Gender, IPLCs, Indicators and Monitoring, Inter-Convention Synergies, and Human Rights. From this analysis, actionable entry points are identified for civil society organizations (CSOs), national focal points (NFPs), women's caucuses, and the Secretariats of the Rio Conventions to create synergies that strengthen the protection and recognition of land rights and integrate land rights into future COP discussions and policies. The policy brief is complemented by an in-depth technical report.

Women's Land Rights Initiative

The **WLRI**, hosted by TMG, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, Huairou Commission, UNCCD, UNFCCC and CBD, is a network of more than 60 partners dedicated to systematically embedding women's land rights within the three UN Rio Conventions on biodiversity, desertification, and climate change. The WLRI aims to enhance coordination across the Conventions to safeguard women's land rights, promote gender-equitable land governance, and support women's active role in climate action. Through strategic collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and advocacy, the WLRI ensures that global decisions are informed by local realities and prioritize women's meaningful contributions to advancing the Conventions' goals. Outcomes from the WLRI workshop were reviewed for this report and were built on to strengthen or identify relevant entry points for synergies.



(Global Land Outlook, 2022)

Outcomes from the triple-COP year

Land Tenure and Rights

The UNCCD is the only Rio Convention with a decision explicitly related to land tenure, first adopted at UNCCD COP14. At COP16, Parties were encouraged to include land tenure in their land restoration plans, improve land data collection and monitoring, and recognize the rights of people who depend on land, such as IPLCs, pastoralists, women, and other vulnerable groups. These decisions give countries a solid foundation for improving land governance. However, there were concerns about whether momentum can be sustained after two consecutive decisions on land tenure. COP16 was overshadowed by difficult negotiations, such as on a global framework for addressing drought, the so called drought protocol. Sustaining the commitment to land tenure at subsequent COPs will require strong focus and political will.

Moreover, UNFCCC COP29 saw no real progress on human rights – and, by extension, on land rights. This may be because other issues, like climate finance, dominated, or because previous negotiations have tended to be hosted by countries with weak human rights records. The elephant in the room is the perceived trade-off between the recognition of land rights and the quantity of land needed to meet national mitigation and adaptation targets. For example, voluntary carbon markets have resulted in “green grabs”, with displacement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (TMG 2024b). Stronger commitment to human rights will be needed if Parties are to make progress on land tenure and align with UNFCCC’s sister Conventions.

Table 1: Summary of key decisions on Land Tenure and Rights¹

Key Decision	Relevance to Land Tenure
UNCCD COP16	
Encourage Parties to integrate land tenure security into UNCCD implementation. (28/COP.16, 1).	► Strengthens policy frameworks for land tenure in the context of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN).
Invite Parties to integrate land tenure into national plans and prioritize data collection (28/COP.16, 2).	► Integrates tenure into national LDN strategies. ► Strengthens monitoring and evaluation frameworks.
Invite Parties to nominate a focal point for land tenure to improve coordination (28/COP.16, 3).	► Provides more capacity to integrate land tenure into national LDN strategies
Encourage stronger tenure security in rangelands (29/COP.16, 3).	► Supports tenure rights for pastoral and communal land users.
CBD COP16	
Include land tenure indicators in Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) monitoring framework (CBD/COP/16/L.26).	► Enables tracking of land use change and inclusive biodiversity governance.
UNFCCC COP29	
Reaffirm IPLC rights (-/CP.29, 9 - IPLC).	► Provides an opportunity to advocate for stronger land tenure recognition in future decisions.

¹ full list of outcomes in the annex

Gender

In the triple-COP year, Parties to the Rio Conventions underscored the need for stronger action and gender-responsive policies, adopting decisions related to strengthening gender equality in land governance, enhancing gender data collection and capacity-building, securing women's land rights through advocacy, and reinforcing partnerships. The UNCCD's "Her Land. Her Rights." campaign aims to raise awareness and build momentum for women's access to land, while the CBD's Gender Plan of Action includes new indicators to help Parties track progress on women's participation and land access. The UNFCCC extended its gender programme for another 10 years, which could support more long-term action, especially if Parties follow through with stronger policies and appoint gender and

climate focal points. However, gender issues have, in the past, been marginalized across the Rio Conventions, often pushed to the end of COP discussions and allocated limited time and focus. There are also concerns about weak funding and a disconnect between external gender research and Convention processes. Changing geopolitical landscapes have resulted in Parties lending little, or only unpredictable, support for dedicated gender programme officers, hindering continuity of processes and negotiations related to gender. To ensure meaningful change, stakeholders must push for stronger coordination, dedicated financing, and full recognition of women's land rights within climate, biodiversity, and land governance frameworks.

Table 2: Summary of key decisions on Gender relevant to Land Tenure and Rights

Key Decision	Relevance to Land Tenure
UNCCD COP16	
Leverage the "Her Land. Her Rights." campaign and workshops (25/COP.16, 7).	► Calls for advocacy and visibility for women's land rights and tenure security.
Collaborate with Rio Conventions and others to advocate for women's land rights, especially for IPLCs (25/COP.16, 7).	► Increases coordination across Rio Conventions to reduce duplication of efforts and enhance outcomes for women's land rights.
CBD COP16	
Include gender indicators in the KMGBF, including implementation of the Gender Plan of Action (2023–2030) (CBD/COP/DEC/16/7, Targets 22 b & 23 b).	► Tracks national action for inclusive participation and women's equal rights to land and natural resources.
UNFCCC COP29	
Extend Lima Work Programme on Gender for 10 years, with a review in 2029 (-/CP.29, 11-12 - Gender).	► Formalizes a longer-term work programme for gender-responsive climate action, providing opportunities for addressing women's land rights.
Request a technical workshop and urge Parties to appoint national gender and climate focal points (-/CP.29, 11-12 - Gender).	► Provides an opportunity to strengthen women's land and resource rights through improved gender integration in climate policy.

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

Securing land rights for IPLCs is vital for sustainable land governance and biodiversity conservation and restoration. By securing land tenure, strengthening legal protections, and supporting IPLC participation, Parties can promote inclusive conservation and reinforce Indigenous rights in environmental governance.

CBD COP16 was a landmark year for IPLCs, with the establishment of a new permanent body focusing on IPLC-related issues. CBD decisions called for legal recognition of traditional territories and consent for actions affecting their lands – thus creating important safeguards and pathways for secure land tenure – as well as the adoption of a new programme of work. UNCCD Parties made historic progress

by formally recognizing IPLCs as distinct groups with different rights. They also created separate caucuses for each – the first time Parties to a Rio Convention have acknowledged this distinction. These developments give IPLCs more space to participate in decisions and defend their land rights.

Under the UNFCCC, however, progress was slower. References to IPLCs were mostly general, focusing on participation without concrete action on land tenure. Stronger political will is needed, together with a firmer commitment to human rights and climate justice, to ensure that the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the rights of local communities, are sustained in climate action and not just biodiversity and land agendas.

Table 3: Summary of key decisions on IPLCs relevant to Land Tenure and Rights

Key Decision	Relevance to Land Tenure
UNCCD COP16	
Develop terms of reference for the creation of a caucus, ensuring representation and alignment with Convention principles (5/COP.16, b).	► Provides an opportunity to enhance IPLC representation within national and global land governance systems.
CBD COP16	
Strengthen legal frameworks and integrate IPLC lands into planning (CBD/COP/DEC/16/4, 1.1–1.3).	► Aims to promote secure IPLC tenure and recognition of traditional territories in biodiversity and land use planning for conservation, restoration, and sustainability.
Support securing IPLC land tenure for biodiversity conservation (CBD/COP/DEC/16/4, 7.2).	► Links tenure security to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in line with national Policies.
Reinforce free, prior, and informed consent for actions affecting IPLC lands (CBD/COP/DEC/16/6, 3e).	► Safeguards IPLC tenure rights.
UNFCCC COP29	
Enhance IPLC engagement in COP processes and UAE–Belém Work Programme (-/CP.29, 9; -/CMA.6, 9, 15).	► Provides an opportunity to enhance IPLC participation in climate governance, creating space to advance land rights agendas.

Indicators and Monitoring

Parties to the Rio Conventions advanced efforts to improve monitoring frameworks and strengthen indicator systems that track progress on biodiversity commitments, land governance, and social inclusion. At CBD COP16, Parties to the CBD adopted land tenure indicators to help track progress on the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). Parties are urged to disaggregate data by Indigenous and traditional territories, gender, age, disability, and ecosystem type, and to incorporate traditional knowledge and locally relevant data through participatory monitoring systems. This is a positive step, but awareness-raising and technical support will be needed to ensure that the indicators are used to track progress on land rights.

The UNCCD encouraged Parties to explore existing global datasets and indicators on land governance, particularly for IPLC and women's land rights. This builds on growing recognition that inclusive and disaggregated monitoring systems are essential for improving accountability and transparency in tenure reforms and biodiversity protection.

The UNFCCC developed inclusive adaptation indicators focused on social inclusion, Indigenous and human rights, and gender equality. These indicators aim to improve alignment across national and global systems by addressing shared adaptation challenges and implementation bottlenecks. To ensure meaningful monitoring, Parties must prioritize participatory approaches and support national capacities to gather, analyze, and report disaggregated data that reflects diverse land tenure realities and rights.

Table 4: Summary of key decisions on Indicators and Monitoring relevant to Land Tenure and Rights

Key Decision	Relevance to Land Tenure
UNCCD COP16	
Explore existing global indicators and datasets on land governance, including IPLC and women's land rights (28/COP.16, e).	► Encourages leveraging available tools to strengthen accountability and monitor land tenure security.
CBD COP16	
Make technical updates to headline and binary indicators in the KMGBF monitoring framework (CBD/COP/16/L.26, 1; Annex I, Rev.1).	► Includes Target 22 a on land use change and land tenure in IPLC territories and 22 b on inclusive, equitable decision-making and land rights protections.
Integrate KMGBF Section C and disaggregate indicators by group and ecosystem (CBD/COP/16/L.26, 14).	► Enables more inclusive monitoring of land tenure by tracking gender, age, disability, IPLC status, and local contexts.
Emphasize participatory monitoring systems (CBD/COP/16/L.26, 19; 25).	► Calls for involvement of IPLCs, women, youth, and local actors in collecting and analysing tenure-related data.
UNFCCC COP29	
Streamline global indicators for common adaptation challenges (-/CMA.6, 10c, 10d).	► Aligns national and global monitoring efforts to better track land-related outcomes in climate action.

Inter-Convention Synergies

Decisions from the triple-COP year all highlighted the increased urgency of joint action across Conventions and initiatives to address the planetary crisis. After much debate, CBD Parties adopted a decision to explore a joint Rio Conventions work programme and a technical information exchange. UNCCD Parties discussed national cooperation among Rio Convention focal points and international processes to reduce policy fragmentation. They also called for expanding partnerships with key initiatives, such as the G20 Global Land Initiative, Group on Earth Observations LDN Flagship, and the UN Decade on

Ecosystem Restoration. However, synergies are still difficult to realize in practice because each Convention has different priorities and systems. For example, while efforts have been made to explore coordination of gender caucuses under the CBD and UNCCD, as well as the women and gender constituency under the UNFCCC, these caucuses operate on different governance models and timelines. Nevertheless, the CBD decisions on synergies and collaboration are a promising indicator of moving beyond discussion of joint action and translating this into a possible joint work programme.

Table 5: Summary of key decisions on Inter-Convention Synergies relevant to Land Tenure and Rights

Key Decision	Relevance to Land Tenure
UNCCD COP16	
Acknowledge collaboration with the KMGBF, UNFCCC, UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and Paris Agreement (8/COP.16, preamble).	► Provides an opportunity to strengthen consistency on land conservation, restoration, climate action, and tenure-related goals across Conventions.
CBD COP16	
Continue cooperation with the UNFCCC and UNCCD; explore a joint programme of work (CBD/COP/16/L.30, 24b).	► Provides an opportunity to mainstream land rights across climate, biodiversity, and land agendas.
Collaborate on technical information exchange across Rio Conventions (CBD/COP/DEC/16/22, 19).	► Provides an opportunity to strengthen consistency on goals across Conventions.
UNFCCC COP29	
Enhance collaboration among expert groups to avoid duplication and increase synergies (FCCC/SBI/2024/L.16, 7).	► Offers potential to support integrated strategies, including the participation of experts on land tenure.

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Human Rights

The Rio Conventions have acknowledged the role of human rights and the importance of inclusive governance. The CBD made clear progress in connecting human rights to land and environmental governance. Section C of the KMGBF emphasizes the contribution and rights of IPLCs, diverse value systems, a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, and a human rights-based approach, among other themes on inclusion. CBD Parties adopted several decisions relevant to human rights and safeguards which are closely linked to land tenure and land rights. They also underscored the value of traditional

knowledge and inclusive governance, reinforcing the need for culturally appropriate and locally driven solutions.

By contrast, the UNCCD and UNFCCC have not adopted decisions directly addressing human rights in relation to land. Experts noted ongoing resistance to human rights language in climate negotiations, including efforts to remove such references from key agreements like the Paris Agreement. However, both Conventions have moved forward in strengthening participation. At UNCCD COP16, Parties supported inclusive national dialogues and multi-stakeholder

consultations on land tenure – a key step toward recognizing diverse tenure systems and improving accountability. UNFCCC Parties called for inclusive indicators for climate adaptation covering rights and equality. For these commitments to be effective, Parties must go beyond consultation and ensure that IPLCs, stakeholders, and CSOs are meaningfully involved in shaping and implementing national policies and tenure reforms. Closing the gap on human rights recognition in climate and land governance will require a coordinated approach across the Rio Conventions and the broader UN system.

Table 6: Summary of key decisions on Human Rights relevant to Land Tenure and Rights

Key Decision	Relevance to Land Tenure
UNCCD COP16	
Promote inclusive national dialogues on land tenure with CSOs (28/COP.16, 4).	► Supports inclusive engagement in land tenure policy processes.
Encourage CSO participation, prioritizing IPLCs, women, youth, and others (5/COP.16, 4).	► Provides an opportunity to strengthen representation of tenure-vulnerable groups.
Use multi-stakeholder consultations to address legitimate/customary tenure (28/COP.16, 5).	► Promotes inclusive recognition of diverse tenure systems.
Call for further consultations on tenure in LDN efforts (28/COP.16, 9a).	► Reinforces inclusive planning for tenure integration in LDN targets, plans, and projects.
CBD COP16	
Invite UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop tools for a rights-based approach to KMGBF implementation (CBD/COP/16/L.30, 21).	► Provides an opportunity to support land rights through broader integration of human rights in biodiversity action.
Align Targets 8 and 11 with national priorities and safeguards (CBD/COP/DEC/16/22, 3).	► Provides an opportunity to reinforce tenure protections through environmental and social safeguards.
Request supplement to guidelines on nature-based solutions with safeguards (CBD/COP/DEC/16/22, 17).	► Provides an opportunity to protect land rights through application of safeguards in restoration and adaptation efforts. Recommends safeguards revision before COP 17.
Call for inclusive biodiversity governance with IPLCs, CSOs, women, youth, and others (CBD/COP/DEC/16/1).	► Provides an opportunity to expand participation in land and resource governance in relation to biodiversity.
Recognize traditional knowledge and apply intersectional, rights-based approaches (CBD/COP/DEC/16/6, 3e).	► Provides an opportunity to support tenure through traditional knowledge and inclusive action.
UNFCCC COP29	
Develop inclusive adaptation indicators, addressing social inclusion, Indigenous rights, human rights, and gender equality (-/CMA.6, 19d).	► Supports tracking of land tenure through a rights-based and inclusive adaptation lens.

Entry points

The 2024 Rio Convention COP outcomes provide several opportunities for CSOs, NFPs, women's caucuses, and the Secretariats of the Rio Conventions to create synergies that strengthen the protection and recognition of land rights. Entry points are summarized here in two sets. The first comprises the most critical and time-sensitive entry points with a direct focus on land rights. The second lists indirect entry points for land rights, which may be achieved through interaction with rights-holders, stakeholders, and civil society via various processes and initiatives.

Direct entry points

- **UNCCD Land Tenure Decision (28):** Land tenure focal points can support the development of data management strategies regarding land tenure rights that inform national land restoration plans. CSOs can engage in multistakeholder dialogues to advocate for strengthened land rights.
- **CBD Biodiversity and Climate Change Decision (CBD/COP/DEC/16/22):** Parties were requested to develop a supplement to the previously adopted Voluntary Guidelines for the Design and Effective Implementation of Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction – specifically on mitigation and with fit-for-purpose social and environmental safeguards. This provides a key opportunity to ensure that:
 - and rights and human rights-based approaches are considered and integrated into nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches
 - fit-for-purpose safeguards encourage recognition of free, prior, and informed consent, and of forest, land, and carbon rights
 - benefit-sharing and grievance redress mechanisms are established.



COP29, 23 November Closing Plenary
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- **Coordinated approaches to monitoring:** The Conventions should have coordinated or aligned language on monitoring human rights, including land rights, in the respective frameworks of the Conventions (UNCCD Strategic Plan, KMGBF, and Global Stocktake to review collective progress on the Paris Agreement). It will be important to socialize the FAO/UNCCD Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Land Governance to CBD Parties and stakeholders so that relevant guidance and tools are available to measure progress in the land tenure indicator, while aligning with key Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and land tenure.
- **CBD Decision 16/22 on Climate Change and Biodiversity:** Parties to the Rio Conventions, observers, and stakeholders were invited to submit views on enhanced policy coherence for biodiversity and climate change. Supporters of land rights initiatives should jointly submit views on human rights-based approaches and securing land rights as key enablers of achieving national biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation commitments.

Indirect entry points

- **CBD Article 8(j):** The new subsidiary body will need to define its agenda and prioritize tasks, with a likely focus on the development of voluntary guidelines for area-based conservation to be considered by Parties at CBD COP17. These guidelines will be open for expert comments, providing an entry point for an emphasis on land tenure, women's land rights, and human rights in the context of meeting national targets for area-based conservation.
- **UNFCCC Article 6.4 Supervisory Body:** Environmental and human rights safeguards have been agreed on by a supervisory body under the [Paris Agreement Crediting Mechanism](#) (also known as Article 6.4), a carbon crediting mechanism established under the Paris Agreement. The supervisory body has mechanisms for stakeholder engagement, which provides an entry point to advocate for stronger land rights and women's land rights in the context of the UN carbon market.
- **Call for Inclusive and Gender-Just Outcomes:** The call was prepared by the **CBD Women's Caucus**, the CSO representatives of the **UNCCD Gender Caucus**, and the **Women and Gender Constituency of the UNFCCC** to "develop a holistic, integrated, and gender-responsive approach to addressing the planetary crisis". A focal area is capitalizing on the convergence of the three COPs in the 2024 triple-COP year to ensure greater coordination for gender considerations, enhance ambition, and avoid policy fragmentations. Parties, CSOs, and stakeholders should reference and support this call in policy advocacy for land rights.
- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs):** Under the UNFCCC, NDCs and NAPs are due to be revised in 2025, which presents an important opportunity for advocacy to Parties to integrate secure land tenure, women's land rights, and rights of IPLCs. Parties also agreed to establish a support programme for the implementation of NAPs for Least Developed Countries. This provides an opportunity to advocate for gender-responsive adaptation policies and the strengthening of land tenure and women's land rights.
- **The Bern III Conference on Cooperation:** This conference gathered the biodiversity-related conventions together for a collaborative approach to the implementation of the GBF. It was hosted in biodiversity-related conventions for the implementation of the KMGBF and was hosted in January 2024 by the Government of Switzerland in collaboration with the CBD and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) World Conservation Monitoring Centre. Its aims included recommending further steps to strengthen cooperation and collaboration among biodiversity-related conventions and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements. The Bern Process and its future meetings should be monitored for opportunities for engagement and advocacy on land tenure.
- **Human Rights and Biodiversity Human Rights and Biodiversity Dialogue Process:** This collaborative effort across multiple organizations (including SwedBio, Soka Gakkai International, the Climate and Development Knowledge Network, and BES-Net) seeks to strengthen human rights-based approaches to biodiversity and climate action. A series of publications a series of workshops, dialogues, and [publications](#) have been released. Key advocacy events have also been targeted at Parties and decision-makers at the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice in 2025, in the lead-up to UNFCCC COP30, together with other strategic events related to the Rio Conventions. This initiative presents an opportunity for collaboration, information-sharing, and synergies with the work of the Women's Land Rights Initiative and other efforts to promote land rights.

UNCCD COP16, 4 December 2024 © Anastasia Rodopoulou



- **The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration:** Led by the UNEP and FAO, the Decade has a mission of halting the degradation of ecosystems and creating political momentum and on-the-ground initiatives to advance ecosystem restoration. Ensuring land tenure security is essential for motivating land users to engage in activities with long-term benefits that protect and increase the land's productivity and ecological value. The Decade's task forces provide an entry point for engagement in monitoring and sharing of best practices for integrating land rights and gender equality into restoration initiatives.
- **The Baku Adaptation Roadmap:** Established at UNFCCC COP29, the Roadmap includes a Baku high-level dialogue on adaptation to be convened at each COP regarding the [UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience](#). A two-year UAE–Belém work programme was established to develop more specific and standardized indicators for measuring progress. At COP29, Parties decided that indicators should capture information pertaining to social inclusion, Indigenous Peoples, participatory processes, human rights, gender equality, migrants, and children and young people, among other areas. The indicators should be developed transparently, with participation and inclusion of diverse rights-holders and stakeholders.
- **Update of the IUCN Nature-based Solutions Global Standard:** Ensuring land tenure security is The NbS Global Standard is a widely referenced and used framework to guide nature-based solutions implementation. In updates to the Standard, it is critical to ensure prominent references to human rights-based approaches and land tenure security
- **Climate and peace: The Baku Call on Climate Action for Peace, Relief, and Recovery** references sustainable land management and LDN. However, there is no mention of land rights, human rights, or gender. UNFCCC Parties and non-Party stakeholders are invited to formalize their support by note verbale, letter, or email to the COP29 Presidency. Through close monitoring and participation in the activities under the Baku Call, there may be opportunities to advocate for stronger land rights and women's land rights in climate and peace initiatives through advocacy, education, and outreach to NFPs.



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Annex I:

Summary of 2024 Rio Conventions Decisions relevant to Land Rights

Table 1: Reference table of key COP16 decisions corresponding to the UNCCD

UNCCD	
Land Tenure and Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Promote inclusive national dialogues on land tenure with CSOs to advance past decisions (28/COP.16, 4). ▶ Refine consultation methodologies using multi-stakeholder formats, ensuring dialogues at all levels and addressing legitimate and customary land tenure rights (28/COP.16, 5).
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Collect sex-disaggregated data on income, poverty, land ownership, migration, and other indicators through national statistics offices (25/COP.16, 2). ▶ Leverage the “Her Land. Her Rights.” campaign and recent workshops to enhance advocacy (25/COP.16, 7). ▶ Convene the Gender Caucus annually as part of COP and Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention programmes (25/COP.16, 8). ▶ Collaborate with Rio Conventions and international organizations to advocate for women’s land rights, especially for IPLCs (25/COP.16, 7).
IPLCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encourage Parties to integrate land tenure security into UNCCD implementation, aligning with the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) (28/COP.16, 1). ▶ Invite Parties to integrate land tenure into national plans and prioritize data collection on legitimate tenure rights for voluntary LDN (28/COP.16, 2). ▶ Invite Parties to nominate a focal point for land tenure to improve coordination in national plans and activities (28/COP.16, 3). ▶ Utilize digital mapping to document legitimate and customary land tenure rights within national legal frameworks (28/COP.16, 7). ▶ Support initiatives restoring degraded land, improving land tenure, and creating rural jobs for IPLCs, women, and youth (23/COP.16, 1d). ▶ Strengthen tenure security in rangelands under the VGGT (29/COP.16, 3). ▶ Support General Mechanism efforts on a business case and checklist for sustainable land tenure investments (28/COP.16, preamble). ▶ Align efforts with the VGGT, ensuring safeguards and inclusion of IPLCs, women, and youth (28/COP.16, 9b).
Indicators and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explore existing global indicators and datasets on land governance, including IPLC and women’s land rights (28/COP.16, e).
Inter-Convention Synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Foster national cooperation among Rio Convention focal points and international processes to reduce policy fragmentation (8/COP.16, 3). ▶ Support coordination among NFPs and stakeholders, developing engagement plans with awareness strategies for policymakers, CSOs, IPLCs, farmers, and the private sector (8/COP.16, 7c). ▶ Raise awareness of land tenure grievance mechanisms through the Secretariat, Global Mechanism, and Global Environment Facility, while encouraging Parties to strengthen national mechanisms for desertification, land degradation, and drought and LDN (28/COP.16, 10). ▶ Work with Rio Conventions, UN Women, and others to implement the Gender Action Plan, focusing on resource access, capacity-building, and sustainable land management (25/COP.16, 6).

Table 2: Reference table of key COP16 decisions corresponding to the CBD

CBD	
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Emphasize gender equality in KMGBF implementation, ensuring women and girls have equal opportunities in biodiversity efforts (CBD/COP/DEC/16/7, Targets 22 & 23).
IPLCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Call for guidelines with IPLC participation to strengthen legal and policy frameworks for land tenure, Indigenous territories, and restoration efforts (CBD/COP/DEC/16/4, 1.1). ▶ Promote best practices for securing IPLC land tenure and integrating traditional lands into spatial planning and environmental impact assessments (CBD/COP/DEC/16/4, 1.2). ▶ Advocate for IPLC rights, including for those without formal land access, and their role in biodiversity conservation, restoration, and urban green spaces (CBD/COP/DEC/16/4, 1.3). ▶ Support securing IPLC land tenure to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in line with national laws (CBD/COP/DEC/16/4, 7.2). ▶ Reinforce free, prior, and informed consent for actions affecting IPLC lands and resources, ensuring compliance with national and international law (CBD/COP/DEC/16/6, 3e).
Indicators and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Endorse technical updates to headline and binary indicators for tracking biodiversity commitments (CBD/COP/16/L.26, 1), including Target 22 key land tenure indicators, to track land use change in IPLC territories and countries and ensure inclusive biodiversity decision-making (CBD/COP/16/L.26, 22). ▶ Urge integration of KMGBF Section C into implementation, disaggregating indicators by IPLC, gender, age, disability, and ecosystem type (CBD/COP/16/L.26, 14).
Inter-Convention Synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Urge national, regional, and subregional coordination among CBD focal points and other Conventions while respecting their mandates (CBD/COP/16/L.30, 18). ▶ Call for continued cooperation with the UNFCCC and UNCCD through the Joint Liaison Group, exploring a joint programme of work (CBD/COP/16/L.30, 24b). ▶ Request collaboration among Rio Conventions for a technical information exchange in 2025 to enhance policy coherence in the CBD, KMGBF, UNFCCC, and Paris Agreement (CBD/COP/DEC/16/22, 19).
Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensure inclusive participation, engaging women, youth, IPLCs, CSOs, and stakeholders while aligning with national and international regulations (CBD/COP/DEC/16/13, 2). ▶ Request a supplement to the Voluntary Guidelines for the Design and Effective Implementation of Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction, ensuring safeguards are fit for purpose and reviewed before COP17 (CBD/COP/DEC/16/22, 17). ▶ Strengthen cooperation with global agreements, ensuring alignment with human rights law and SDGs (CBD/COP/DEC/16/17, 12c). ▶ Invite the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop tools for a human rights-based approach in KMGBF implementation (CBD/COP/16/L.30, 21). ▶ Ensure KMGBF implementation aligns with IPLC rights, complying with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and human rights law (CBD/COP/DEC/16/8).

Table 3: Reference table of key COP29 decisions corresponding to the UNFCCC

UNFCCC	
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reaffirm gender mainstreaming across climate targets and policies, emphasizing fairness and sustainability, and addressing gender disparities in climate impact, particularly for women, IPLCs, and developing countries (-/CP.29, preamble - Gender). ▶ Extend the Lima Work Programme on Gender for 10 years with a review in 2029 (-/CP.29, 11-12 - Gender). ▶ Maintain a senior gender focal point to oversee gender mainstreaming (-/CP.29, 22 - Gender). ▶ Enhance gender inclusion, requesting a technical workshop and urging Parties to appoint gender and climate focal points (-/CP.29, 14, 17 - Gender).
IPLCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Strengthen IPLC engagement, continuing the Facilitative Working Group (FWG) of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) and integrating Indigenous voices in climate action (-/CP.29, 3 - IPLC). ▶ Reaffirm commitment to Indigenous rights under the Paris Agreement and UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (-/CP.29, Preamble - IPLC). ▶ Strengthen IPLC participation, requesting mechanisms for FWG members to engage in COPs and subsidiary bodies (-/CP.29, 9 - IPLC). ▶ Expand IPLC engagement in climate governance, maintaining open access to LCIPP events and encouraging stronger participation (-/CP.29, 15 - IPLC).
Indicators and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop inclusive adaptation indicators, addressing social inclusion, Indigenous rights, human rights, and gender equality (-/CMA.6, 19d). ▶ Streamline global indicators, focusing on common adaptation challenges and implementation factors (-/CMA.6, 10c, 10d).
Inter-Convention Synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enhance collaboration among expert groups, avoiding duplication and maximizing synergies in climate governance (FCCC/SBI/2024/L.16, 7).
Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensure diverse representation in the UAE–Belém Work Programme, incorporating Indigenous and local knowledge into adaptation tracking (-/CMA.6, 9, 15). ▶ Develop inclusive adaptation indicators, addressing social inclusion, Indigenous rights, human rights, and gender equality (-/CMA.6, 19d). ▶ Expand IPLC engagement in climate governance, maintaining open access to LCIPP events and encouraging stronger participation (-/CP.29, 15 - IPLC).



Disclaimer

This discussion paper was developed as part of the Land Governance Programme of TMG Research. It reflects the collaborative efforts of the following team. The lead authors are Veronica Lo and Gabriela Barragán Altamirano (University of British Columbia, Department of Forest & Conservation Sciences), with coordination and additional contributions by Frederike Klümper and Daniel Montas, TMG Research (Lo, V., Barragán, G., Klümper, F. and Montas, D. 2025.

“Unlocking Land Tenure: Pathways for policy action after the triple COPs of 2024.” Policy Brief, Land Governance Series. Berlin: TMG Think Tank for Sustainability. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15516811>

Veronica Lo is supported in part by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

We gratefully acknowledge the valuable contributions of the following experts: Karen Elizabeth Bernard (UNCCD), Antonio Q'Apaj Conde Choque (CBD), Teresa Mazza (CBD), Marcos Montoiro (UNCCD), and Dr. Lynn Wagner (IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin).

Their input significantly shaped the analysis and findings of this work. The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the participating experts.

Funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ).

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This publication was made possible with the financial support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)