

# LANDESA IN INDONESIA



**Indonesian farmers steward 80 million plots of rural land across the largest country in Southeast Asia.**

**Only one quarter of these plots have a legal title documenting their owner.**

Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world, has a rural population of more than 115 million—nearly half of the nation’s total residents. For these communities, land is central their livelihoods, whether through farming, fishing, or forests.

Tens of millions of families in rural Indonesia live and work on extremely insecure land:

- Smallholder farmers are reluctant to make long-term investments necessary to increase yields.
- Communities face threats to their fisheries from external development.
- Tens of millions of Indigenous residents lack formal rights to steward the forests they call home.

Strong land rights are the bedrock of food security, gender equality, and climate resilience. Strengthening the land rights of Indonesia’s rural residents requires both a legal framework that protects these rights and implementation that extends these rights to protect individual and community livelihoods.

Indonesia is home to the **largest and most diverse mangrove forest in the world.**

These 3.5 million hectares of mangroves sequester 733.2 million metric tons of carbon and offer livelihoods and weather protection to 48.8 million coastal residents. Protecting communities’ land rights is vital to protecting this tremendous resource.

After years of research and periodic assistance to the government of Indonesia, Landesa began working full time in Indonesia in 2021, collaborating with the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs to advise on law and policy. Our efforts are now led by a locally registered organization working in close partnership with the presidentially-appointed Agrarian Reforms Task Force, and span national and regional policy advocacy, provincial land titling support, and collaboration with local civil society organizations.

## SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

### Customary Land Titling

A systematic land titling program in the provinces of Papua threatened Indigenous forest and coastal mangrove communities in its initial design. Landesa advised the Government of Indonesia to instead implement customary land registration and communal land titling carefully, in accordance with the identification and inventory of the province's six million residents, recognizing their customary land and protecting their livelihoods. This initiative has the potential to protect up to 100 million acres of some of the most pristine upland and coastal forests in the world.

### Wakatobi Declaration

Landesa worked closely with the presidentially appointed Agrarian Reform Task Force to draft the 2022 Wakatobi Declaration, a policy intended to address land issues through collaboration among national government, local governments, and institutions. Landesa's contributions included points on mangrove conservation, Indigenous community participation, and gender-responsive programming.

### Karimun Declaration

After steady years of Landesa advocacy, in 2023 the Agrarian Reforms Task Force named mangrove conservation, and coastal land rights to protect these mangrove forests, as the government's top policy priorities.



## ON THE HORIZON

### Local

- Support local civil society organizations and government offices to carry out communal land titling on Papua and Flores Islands
- Collaborate to analyze mangrove forest cover change satellite and ground data and disseminate findings to guide policy advocacy
- Support the government of the new Capital City of Nusantara to prepare a regulation for coastal ecosystems protection through securing communities' land rights

### National

- Advise the Ministry of Agrarian Affairs in its drafting of new regulations, including a presidential decree, to secure coastal tenure rights and conserve mangrove forests
- Continue to advise ministries on mangrove forest protection with a gender perspective
- Build on the momentum of the Wakatobi and Karimun Declarations to extend protections for coastal mangrove ecosystems into the legal framework

### Regional

- Participate in a working group of other international NGO partners to combine advocacy efforts
- Continue a longstanding collaboration with the World Bank to advise on their Mangroves for Coastal Resilience Project
- Advocate for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to adopt policies protecting coastal mangrove areas across the region



LANDESA is an international non-governmental organization that fights rural poverty and provides opportunity and security for women and men through the power of land rights.

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