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*At an event sponsored by the Netherlands, held at the COP22 in Marrakech on 15 November 2016, the Kingdom of the Netherlands' Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Ms Lilianne Ploumen, discussed ways in which climate change can be effectively fought through securing indigenous and community land rights.*

## Learning from indigenous communities

Evidence shows that securing indigenous and community land rights is one of the key actions to fighting climate change, said Lilianne Ploumen. Local communities—specifically, indigenous communities—have been key in governing land in a way that's sustainable. "There are a couple of reasons for this," she said. "They know that their land not only belongs to them, but their kids. Not only do they have a lot of knowledge about the land, but look at it from the potential that it has for everyone."

Protection of the forest is a large part of the climate change agenda. Statistically, land governed by indigenous communities shows much slower deforestation—indicating the deployment of practices that could be studied and learned from. **Interestingly, worldwide, some 50 per cent of land is protected by local and indigenous communities, despite the fact that this group only owns 10 per cent of the land.** "People don't own the land, but they still take responsibility for it," she said. "This is also something we can learn from."

Certainly, said Ms Mina Setra, the indigenous approach to land management is defined by long-term thinking. In the forest in West Kalimantan, one elder in the community said, "We have to protect the land. To indigenous people, land is mother. Land is owned by the ancestors. We are only guardians, and we have to protect it for future generations."

*Read the full story on the IFAD blog [here](#).*

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