We are an international charity that works with indigenous forest peoples and local communities in 20 countries around the tropical forest belt. People who live in tropical forests face poverty, violence and collapse of their cultures if they are cut off from their ancestral lands because of illegal logging, palm oil plantations and mining.

Threats to Rights

Rainforests haven’t just been home to wildlife for thousands of years, they are all inhabited by people. Rainforests such as those in the Congo Basin have been inhabited for 50,000 years but communities often have no official recognition of their rights to the land. People are losing their homes, their lands and sometimes their lives while protecting their forests from devastation.

Rainforests and climate change

It is estimated that forests can deliver 1/3 of the solution for addressing climate change. Yet if deforestation continues at its current rate, all the world’s rainforests will be lost within 100 years.

Conservation and biodiversity

80% of terrestrial biological diversity is found on indigenous people’s lands, which cover 22% of the global land surface.

Palm oil and other commodities

70% of deforestation is linked to the production of agricultural commodities. The continued expansion of industries such as palm oil, timber and mining is directly affecting the forest communities with whom we work.

With the help of allies such as Forest Peoples Programme, we have been able to protect our territory

Shapiom Noningo from the Wampis Nation, Peru

Forests For People

We believe that indigenous peoples and local communities have a right to control and manage the tropical forests that they call home to sustain them for future generations. Our experience over 30 years tells us that change happens when:

- Forest communities can organise, mobilise and represent their interests
- Communities fully understand their rights
- Communities can seek justice through national and international courts and complaints systems
- The systems that undermine the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities can be changed
- Together we can build local, national and global networks for coordinated action
Creating a Positive Future

Key Impacts
Since we began in 1990, we have played a key role, often behind the scenes, in landmark moments. For example:

- The UN Declaration that enshrines the rights of indigenous peoples in international law (2007)
- Successfully challenging the government of Suriname through international courts (2006)
- The creation of the first autonomous indigenous government in Peru to defend 1.3 million hectares of tropical forest (2015)
- Communities halting expansion of palm oil into their forests in Liberia, Cameroon, Indonesia and Colombia (2018)

Working Together
- We build long-lasting relationships with communities and indigenous peoples, often over decades
- We work closely with more than 60 local organisations across the tropical forest belt
- We have consultative status at the UN and partner with UN agencies, certification bodies, global companies and governments to advance international policy

How we work
On the ground
- We train communities to use new technologies to map their lands
- We promote community-based forest management and preserve traditional knowledge
- We provide practical information and train on rights and forest management

Linking communities with decision-makers
- We support forest peoples to directly engage with governments and companies
- We directly take up national and international legal cases on behalf of forest communities

Changing wider systems
- We support and challenge global companies to create fair and sustainable supply chains for timber, palm oil and other industries
- We influence international agreements and unjust national laws

Support Forest Communities
What we do is only made possible by the generosity of individuals and organisations. We are seeking to raise funds to support our £4.5m global programme including new initiatives to:

- Develop technology solutions to significantly reduce the time it takes for communities to map their lands
- Build a rapid legal response fund to support communities under immediate threats

If you are interested in creating a positive future for forest communities please get in touch:

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Germaine Ngo Bebga (pictured) is a volunteer community monitor in Cameroon. Following training her community used GPS technology to collect evidence of illegal logging on their land. As a consequence, her community were able to stop the logging.

“Communities do not want to hear speeches and read long reports, they want concrete action.”

Forest Peoples Programme is registered as a UK Charity, No. 1082158, and a company limited by guarantee in England & Wales, Reg. No 3868836, and a Stichting in the Netherlands, KvK 41265889