



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# Conservation is **PEOPLE**



*An indigenous Surui man participates in a USAID-supported reforestation and sustainable-management project in Rondonia, Brazil. Photo: Surui Reforestation Project/Jose Caladas.*

**One third of the world's poorest people are indigenous** and therefore crucial partners in achieving sustainable development. Indigenous people and rural communities throughout the world depend on nature for income, food, medicine, fuel, and as an important part of their cultural and spiritual identities. USAID's conservation programs encourage the participation of local communities, including indigenous peoples, incorporating traditional knowledge, strengthening institutions, and respecting historic lands.

## WHAT USAID IS DOING

USAID engages local and indigenous peoples through community-based conservation. This approach is at the heart of USAID's work. By increasing the economic returns from conservation, communities are more likely to take care of local ecosystems. Together, USAID and local and indigenous communities are protecting parks, caring for coasts, managing fisheries and forests, improving land use and building conservation enterprises. These partnerships:

- Strengthen indigenous and local institutions for improved resource management and accountability
- Promote economic development and diversify livelihoods
- Gather information about natural systems and support community conservancies and rangers who combat poaching
- Provide health, education, and nutrition services
- Advance gender equality

### DID YOU KNOW?



**Nearly a quarter of the Amazon basin is designated as indigenous territory.**

USAID works with indigenous groups around the world to both secure access and rights and improve their capacity to manage the forests and rivers they call home.

## USAID'S WORK IN ACTION

### CONSERVING AMAZON TERRITORY WITH CARBON CREDITS

When the Pater-Surui, an Amazonian indigenous group of 1,300 people, wanted to generate income from their 625,000-acre territory while maintaining a healthy, standing forest, USAID lent a hand. In 2013, the Surui Forest Carbon Project became the first indigenous-led project to sell credits on the voluntary carbon market. Proceeds from the sale of 120,000 tons of carbon credits will fund forest monitoring and management as well as conservation enterprises such as ecotourism and sustainable harvest of non-timber forest products. The project also protects habitat for threatened and endangered species, including the giant river otter, harpy eagle and jaguar.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The USAID-supported **Global Forest Watch** is an online, satellite-based forest monitoring and alert system that **helps users like the Surui to detect and protect against deforestation.**

### CONSERVING RANGELANDS AND WILDLIFE

By giving communities the rights to manage and benefit from natural resources, community-conservancy projects achieve several goals at once: wildlife protection, economic growth and strengthened democracies. Through USAID's partnership with Northern Rangelands Trust, there are now 26 community conservancies that cover more than 6 million acres in Kenya, that successfully manage livestock, water, pasture and wildlife. Nature-based enterprises and improved management earned about \$1.3 million in 2013.

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Biodiversity,** especially wildlife and productive rangelands, **is important for the livelihoods of more than 30 million Kenyans,** or three quarters of the population.



Families rest in the shade while Northern Rangelands Trust community rangers pass by on patrol in Kenya.  
Photo: Northern Rangelands Trust