

# Property Rights – Exploring Their Role in Natural Resource Management

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## SUMMARY

There have been many calls for rights and restrictions over property to be clear and enforceable in order to achieve more sustainable land use outcomes. The 2002UNDP/UNEP/WB/WRI publication *World Resources 2002-2004: Decisions for the Earth: Balance, Voice and Power* provided a blueprint for assessing effective environmental governance and argued that “Insecurity of ownership, mismatches between state and indigenous forms of ownership, and unequal distribution of ownership are frequent sources of conflict and poor environmental decisions”. This paper provides an overview of the arguments put forward for more certainty in property rights and explores the manner in which these rights may benefit natural resource management. The benefits that secure and certain property rights may have for natural resource management in developed and developing countries are also considered and an argument is made that these benefits provide a strong case for public investment in land reform.