Rural development, food security, and land reform are high on the agenda of Indonesia’s new administration. Some development experts argue that resolving land tenure problems can support investment in land, and increase the productivity and the efficiency of resource use. However, Indonesia’s infrastructure development continues to be blighted by unresolved problems of land registration, titling, and formalisation. At the same time, key questions such as how to recognise customary rights and reform the governance of forestry and mining remain. Why has land reform been so difficult in Indonesia? What can we learn from the history of Indonesia’s land-titling programs? What lessons from elsewhere can Indonesia draw on to resolve these problems?

The 2015 Indonesia Update will examine land law and its administration in decentralised Indonesia. From the large-scale land acquisitions in Merauke, Papua, to asset ownership in the villages of Sulawesi and Java, to the tenure conflicts associated with the oil-palm and mining booms in Kalimantan and Sumatra, speakers will consider Indonesia’s many land challenges. Presenters will also examine the environmental implications of land management. How do nature conservation, carbon sequestration, and ecosystem service valuation, for example, lead to land enclosure or how might they accommodate local property rights? And how do land deals overlap with climate-change mitigation strategies? In light of international debates over agrarian reform, tenure formalisation, and ‘land grabbing’, this year’s conference will discuss the many possibilities for progress.