

VGGT 2 Years On: Where We Are and Where We Are Going

14th May 2014, FAO, Rome

Event Summary

May 2014 was the second anniversary of the endorsement by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) of the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT)*. An event was held to share information and showcase progress on the implementation of the VGGT and future plans. In the morning there were two panel discussions moderated by the CFS Chair, Gerda Verburg. The first panel took a look at the implementation from the global level and the second panel was made up of three country case studies from Sierra Leone, Guatemala and the Philippines. Following each panel, comments and questions were taken from the floor and via email.

Global Panel Discussion

The global panel included the following presenters:

- FAO: Paul Munro-Faure
- IFAD: Jean-Maurice Durand
- EU: Bernard Rey
- CFS Civil Society Mechanism: Jorge Stanley, IITC
- CFS Private Sector Mechanism: Ulrike Sapiro, Director Community and Environment, Coca-Cola Europe

Highlights from the global presentations:

Security of tenure is a major incentive for farmers to invest in improved productivity.

The VGGT are a rallying point for all actors involved in agriculture, food security and nutrition.

Although the VGGT are still young, FAO and its partners are very active in disseminating and supporting their implementation through the work of the Rome-based agencies (RBAs) and at country level.

The EU is working closely with technical agencies to provide financing for capacity building and promoting policy dialogue around the VGGT.

While good work has been done in approving and disseminating the VGGT, incidences of land dispossession continue in various places around the globe. The issue is complex and there is the need for resources to promote and apply the VGGT so that legitimate tenure rights are respected and protected.

Private sector enterprises, such as the Coca-Cola Company, support and are making serious efforts to apply the VGGT. However many actors are involved and coordination can be complex. Work is being coordinated between many partners including the World Bank and the Global Compact.

Highlights from the comments and questions:

A number of donors and development agencies last year established the Global Donor Working Group on Land to coordinate their efforts to improve land tenure arrangements. As part of this initiative, they have developed a database and interactive mapping tool which show that more than 220 projects and programmes linked to the implementation of the VGGT are taking place in 103 countries, and with a total value of \$2.9 billion.

France is developing a framework for assessing investments in terms of VGGT compliance.

FAO is working with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) through the Land Policy Initiative (LPI) and NEPAD to promote the integration of the VGGT in national policies across the African continent, and in coordinating lessons learnt from 10 EU-funded country projects. FAO is also piloting interactions with multi-stakeholder groups in a number of countries, where financial support is being provided by

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resource partners. These will include addressing issues of transparency as well as links between land tenure and incentives for youth to take up agriculture.

IFAD also has a range of related programmes and works with governments to ensure implementation of the VGGT through projects. The focus is on improving access (e.g. of women and young people) to resources in general. Young people tend to turn away from farming in part because access to land and resources can be difficult.

The EU has a group working on these issues with programmes designed to address specific situations in countries.

The Coca-Cola Company is not involved directly in agricultural production but rather at the end of the supply chain and therefore its focus is on shared values and principles within its supply chains. Where there are direct field connections, managing such relations is costly and time-consuming but the company is engaging more directly in such relationships.

Brazil is taking the opportunity to analyse its tenure system and what challenges remain after the progress made in recent years. Implementation of the VGGT is complex and broad, thus Brazil has started by focusing on individual sections and is developing a method to incorporate the VGGT in legislation. This involves analysing legal frameworks and state policies and comparing them with the VGGT to identify gaps.

Communication and awareness campaigns for technical staff, including RBA country offices are needed. A series of presentations have been made to the UN in New York and in Geneva, however field offices are more of a challenge to reach.

Country Case Studies

Panellists from Sierra Leone, Guatemala and Thailand presented good practices and lessons learned from their countries.

Sierra Leone: The Honourable Joseph Sam Sesay, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security

The Minister compared the process for foreign investment in agriculture and the status of such investments in Sierra Leone prior to and post the endorsement of the VGGT. Before 2009 there was only one major foreign investment. In 2009 a policy was put in place to give guidance on which sectors could benefit from foreign investment. As a result hundreds of new investments were made and about 25 percent of arable land has been put to use. It has been economically profitable but there are risks for local farmers. Sierra Leone is now working on how to safeguard the interests of local farmers while continuing to incentivise foreign investments. During a multi-stakeholder awareness raising workshop delivered by FAO, participants drafted a communiqué containing recommendations for the implementation of the VGGT in Sierra Leone which was subsequently submitted to Government. In addition, a recent trilateral partnership with Sierra Leone, Germany and FAO aims at implementing the VGGT through a multi-sectoral project implemented by FAO.

Guatemala: Axel Lopez, Secretario de la Secretaria de Asuntos Agrarias

The Ministry is new and has a mandate to follow-up all aspects of land and tenure. A policy has been approved on the basis of which a number of new initiatives are taking place, including a reform of agrarian policy and a charge of unconstitutionality brought against a group of sugar cane growers. The agrarian reform will be rooted in principles of sustainability for rural communities and in particular indigenous

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communities. All this is within the context of the VGGT in an attempt to replicate them at the national level. Farming institutions readily accepted the VGGT but there was certain resistance in other sectors. Guatemala is working on a draft policy based on the VGGT that covers access to land and resources.

Philippines: Emelyne V. Talabis, Assistant Director, Lands Management Bureau (LMB), Department of Environment and Natural Resources

The Philippines has been pursuing reforms even before the VGGT but now can be more focused. The presentation gave a comprehensive account of Philippines land use, tenure arrangements and administrative processes. Only about 68% of total land is covered by land titles and 7% of arable land remains untitled.

Sharefair

The Sharefair in the afternoon provided an opportunity for one-on-one conversations with a variety of VGGT stakeholders including demonstrations of e-learning material, videos and other communication tools. Presenters at the Sharefair included:

- Maryline Darmaun (France): a White Paper of the French Development Cooperation on Land Governance and Security of Tenure in Developing Countries and related material.
- Jeremy Green (USAID): progress report on how USAID is supporting the VGGT.
- Christian Schulze (Secretariat of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development): video and information note on the Land Governance Programme Map and two policy briefs of the Global Donor Working Group on Land.
- Christophe Gironde (Swiss Network for International Studies): video “Rubber in a Rice Bowl” about the right to food and land tenure in Cambodia.
- Michael Taylor (ILC secretariat): publications and communication materials on the work of the ILC in the context of VGGT.
- Nicole Franz and Rebecca Metzner (FAO, FIP): a series of FAO publications related to Fisheries management in the context of VGGT.
- Fred Kafeero (FAO, FOE): a number of Forest Tenure related publications.
- Margret Vidar (FAO, LEG): legal work in VGGT implementation.
- Aurélie Brès (FAO, NRC), in collaboration with IFAD: work undertaken by FAO and IFAD in Senegal and Niger.
- Brad Paterson and Cecile Ravn-Christensen (FAO, NRC): the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* booklet in all official languages and related technical guides.
- Neil Pullar (FAO, NRC): demonstration of SOLA – land administration open source software.
- Leo Florent (FAO, NRL): demonstration of the new Land Portal website.
- Chiara Nicodemi and Francesca Romano (FAO, OPC, NRC): demonstration of the VGGT e-learning modules in English, French and Spanish.
- Rosalud DeLaRosa (FAO, OPC): materials related to FAO’s work on capacity building and other forms of support to countries implementing the VGGT.
- Joelle Kimenga (FAO, OPC): FAO strategy for partnerships with civil society organizations.