

Multi-stakeholder Consultation on Land Tenure in Asia-Pacific

Aide Memoire - DRAFT

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1. Background

Land is a fundamental resource for the realization of human rights, poverty reduction, economic prosperity and sustainable development. Nevertheless, due to its scarcity, land is in demand by a wide range of stakeholders for different and often conflicting reasons, for example, shelter and livelihoods, access to credit, investment, cultural heritage, and political power.

Not everybody's right and access to land is secure. Vulnerable groups in rural and urban areas, like people with low incomes, women, older persons as well as young people are frequently facing conditions of unequal access to land, as land management and administration systems, but also customary and religious laws are often biased and ignore realities.

Asia and the Pacific is one of the most diverse regions on earth, in terms of economy, society, culture and environment. The region includes high-, middle- and low-income countries, several with Least Developed Country status, and many Small Island Developing States. However, many of the world's fastest growing economies today are located in Asia. Across the region there is a vast diversity of cultural and ethnic heritage. Its landscape varies from tundra to tropical forests and from the highest mountain to the greatest river delta.

Major challenges in the Asia-Pacific region include rapid urbanization and urban growth, changing consumption patterns that provide challenges to poverty and food security. The region is also one of the most disaster-prone regions on earth. The impacts of climate change will be felt across all parts of the region.

The governance of tenure is a crucial element in determining if and how people, communities and others are able to acquire rights, and associated duties, to use and control land, fisheries and forests. Many tenure problems arise because of weak governance, and attempts to address tenure problems are affected by the quality of governance. Weak governance adversely affects social stability, sustainable use of the environment, investment and economic growth. People can be condemned to a life of hunger and poverty if they lose their tenure rights to their homes, land, fisheries and forests and their livelihoods because of corrupt tenure practices or if implementing agencies fail to protect their tenure rights. People may even lose their lives when weak tenure governance leads to violent conflict. Responsible governance of tenure conversely promotes sustainable social and economic development that can help eradicate poverty and food insecurity, and encourages responsible investment.

In response to growing and widespread interest, FAO and its partners embarked on the development of guidelines on responsible tenure governance. The purpose of these Voluntary Guidelines is to serve as a reference and to provide guidance to improve the governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests with the overarching goal of achieving food security for all and to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security. These Guidelines are intended to contribute to the global and national efforts towards the eradication of hunger and poverty, based on the principles of sustainable development and with the recognition of the centrality of land to development by promoting secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests. National and local governments, international and regional CSOs, development partners, and research institutes have been increasingly engaged in the Asia-Pacific land sector. To support these positive developments in the land sector, the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) as facilitated by UN-Habitat, started the Regional Land Tenure Initiative in the Asia-Pacific (LTIAP) with global and regional partners. To kick off the initiative, a scoping study was undertaken that aims at reviewing the current gaps/challenges, existing programmes/projects and opportunities for partnership and engagement in the Asia-Pacific's land sector. The study further seeks to identify the key issue on land tenure security and land governance in the Asia-Pacific region, based on literature review and consultations with key land stakeholders. Prospectively, it is envisioned to work together with potential partners to promote and implement responsible governance, and appropriate land policies, tools and approaches that are pro-poor, gender appropriate, effective and sustainable.

This meeting is co-organized by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), UN-Habitat, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), with support the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and International Federation of Surveyors (FIG).

2. Objectives/Outputs of the Meeting

The main objectives of the meeting are:

1. Promote sharing of knowledge, experiences, good practices and lessons learnt on land tenure (both rural and urban areas) among the countries and stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific including land policy, governance, regulatory framework and associated interventions with a special attention to pro-poor and gender sensitive approach, and identify gaps and key issues for follow up actions.
2. Share the findings /outcomes of global/regional initiatives on land tenure such as the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure of Land/RAI and GLTN supported scoping study on land challenges and opportunities in Asia Pacific, and identify strategic options to respond to key challenges including the application of the Voluntary Guidelines and the Responsible Agricultural Investment(RAI) at country level, use and application of GLTN's pro-poor land tools and approaches, impact of rapid urbanization and urban expansion to land tenure security and land market, impact of climate change and natural disasters to land tenure and food security, and the influence of Islamic context to land tenure.
3. Identify and agree on priority actions at country/regional level which may include a) land policy reform and regulatory framework, b) land governance, c) multi-stakeholder consultation mechanism at country and regional level, d) knowledge and capacity building, e) land tool development and application, etc.

4. Strengthen regional level collaboration, coordination and networking on land tenure in Asia and the Pacific region among all stakeholders.

Expected outputs are:

1. Knowledge, experiences, good practices and lessons learnt on land tenure among the countries and stakeholders in the region shared, and gaps and key issues identified.
2. The findings /outcomes of global/regional initiatives on land tenure such as the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure of Land/RAI and the GLTN supported scoping on land challenges and opportunities shared among the participants, and the strategic options to respond to key challenges including the application of the Voluntary Guidelines and the Responsible Agricultural Investment(RAI) at country level, use and application of GLTN's pro-poor land tools and approaches, impact of rapid urbanization and urban expansion to land tenure security and land market, impact of climate change and natural disasters to land tenure and food security, and the influence of Islamic context to land tenure identified and agreed.
3. Priority actions at country/regional level which may include a) land policy reform and regulatory framework, b) land governance, c) multi-stakeholder consultation mechanism at country and regional level, d) knowledge and capacity building, e) land tool development and application, etc. identified and agreed.
4. Regional level collaboration, coordination and networking on land tenure in Asia and the Pacific region among the all stakeholders strengthened, and the GLTN Regional Network (or Platform) in Asia and the Pacific formulated .

3. Venue and Process Flow

The meeting will take place in the United Nations Conference Center (UNCC), Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok, Thailand. Non-UN participants will have to register before the meeting at the registration desk at the ground floor of the UNCC.

A small exhibition place will be provided, where participants will have the chance to exhibit relevant publications during the event.