



Governance of Tenure From Finding Common Ground to Making it Happen

Land, fisheries and forests - Our most valuable resources

Land, fisheries, forests and other natural resources provide a platform for livelihoods and a basis for social, cultural and religious practices. Pressure on these resources is increasing as areas are sought for cultivation, are occupied by urban expansion and are abandoned because of degradation, climate change and conflicts.

In response, FAO and its partners initiated the preparation of internationally accepted guidelines to enhance governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests (*Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*). After their endorsement, the Voluntary Guidelines will promote secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests as a means of eradicating hunger and poverty, supporting sustainable development and enhancing the environment.

Framework for governance of tenure

International soft law instrument. The Voluntary Guidelines will represent a global consensus on internationally accepted principles and standards for responsible practices. They will provide a framework that States can use when developing their own policies, legislation and programmes.

Human rights based approach. The Voluntary Guidelines will place tenure rights in the context of human rights. Tenure rights and their governance are important for the realization of human rights, such as the rights to adequate food and to adequate housing.

Guidance for a variety of actors. With the help of the Voluntary Guidelines actors will be able to determine whether their proposed actions and the actions of others constitute acceptable practices.

Finding common ground

Inclusive consultation process. The Voluntary Guidelines were developed through a global multi-stakeholder consultation process. Government officials, civil society organizations, private sector representatives and academia were consulted in fifteen meetings that assessed issues and actions to be included in the guidelines.

Intergovernmental negotiations. The Voluntary Guidelines are being finalized through CFS-led intergovernmental negotiations that have been held in a positive and constructive atmosphere, and included participation by civil society and the private sector.

Endorsement. The Voluntary Guidelines have been endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) on 11 May 2012.

Making it happen

Building on the consensus. When improving governance of tenure all parties will be encouraged to consider interconnected uses of natural resources, recognise rural and urban linkages and integrate safeguards for vulnerable groups. Activities will be developed in the fields of:

- Awareness raising
- Capacity development
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Technical facilitation.

Institutions involved in the administration and management of tenure of land, fisheries and forests will be encouraged to use the Voluntary Guidelines at all levels. Regional initiatives that address access to resources, such as the African Union Land Policy Initiative, will be areas of natural synergy with the Voluntary Guidelines.

Working together. Strong, open and transparent partnerships have already been established with countries, civil society, private sector, academia, international organizations and other United Nations agencies. These partnerships are the basis for achieving global changes in the governance of tenure.

Join the process!



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Contact

Voluntary Guidelines Secretariat
Climate, Energy and Tenure Division (NRC)
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Email: VG-tenure@fao.org

