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Concept note

Online conference

Gender equality in land ownership and control in the Western Balkans: Looking back, looking ahead

Organisers: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and International Union of Notaries (UINL)

Date: 11 November 2021

Time: 09:30–11:40 CET

Mode: Online, Digital Platform: KUDO

This joint event will showcase the good practices and lessons learned from eight years of collaboration in the Western Balkans region. It will also provide an opportunity for the gender teams based in the region to share their plans for continued action on gender equality in land ownership and control.

In June 2021, a joint FAO-GIZ submission on “[Partnerships for gender equality in land ownership and control. Good Practices from the Western Balkans and beyond](#)” was selected by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) to feature in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) registry of Good Practices. This endorsement demonstrates the potential of this approach for strengthening gender equality in land ownership and control in the Western Balkans, in particular for its replication and scaling up in other regions.

Launched in 2013, the gender and land rights initiative in the Western Balkans aimed to address the disparities that exist between female and male land ownership in the region. For example, in 2013, regional sex disaggregated data showed that female property registration was sometimes as low as 3 percent and did not exceed 30 percent in most administrative divisions.¹ Originally a joint initiative between the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Bank, and supported by UN Women, the initiative later evolved into a partnership between the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), FAO and the International Union of Notaries (IUNL) to address the legal and social barriers that continue to prevent women’s equal access to land ownership.

The collaboration between these organizations has resulted in a range of practical and concrete results at the local and regional levels. For example, a forum initially created in 2015 for local practitioners to share their experiences and solutions, has, over time, helped development partners to target their support, and implement activities that are rooted in local realities and contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. Moreover, legal reform has made the joint registration of marital property compulsory in both Albania and Serbia, while in North

¹ See **FAO and GIZ**. 2020. *Achieving SDG indicator 5.a.2 in the Western Balkans and beyond. Partnerships for gender equality in land ownership and control*. (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/cb0173en/CB0173EN.pdf>).

Macedonia, the number of property registrations with women as owners or co-owners has increased from 16.6 percent in 2013 to 27.3 percent in 2019. Other achievements in the region include the submission of official reports on SDG indicator 5.a.2.

This initiative has become even more important in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has exacerbated the precarious situation of women and girls around the world. For example, secure property rights increase women's resilience in the face of health and environmental crises and are critical to women's empowerment. Additionally, achieving SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) is directly dependent on achieving SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

Expected outcomes

This session will reflect upon and raise awareness of the progress that has been made on gender equality in land ownership and control in Southeast Europe since 2013. In particular, it will offer a new understanding of how regional cooperation among national actors and development partners can support the achievement of the SDG targets. The event will promote the exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices to strengthen women's ownership and control of land; and the lessons learned will inform the development of new partnerships on gender equality in land tenure in other regions.

Questions to the panellists for the session on “Looking back, looking ahead”

- What steps have you taken to strengthen gender equality in land ownership and control? What are the major achievements? What does the gender-disaggregated data show? What are the remaining challenges to gender equality in land ownership and control? Have new obstacles emerged? What steps have been the most effective in overcoming resistance to change towards gender equality?
- What are your key takeaways from the collaboration in the Western Balkans?
- What are your plans for the next 3 to 5 years?

Audience

Stakeholders from the Western Balkans, including government counterparts in the ministries of justice, gender equality, agriculture, social affairs, statistics and land agencies, as well as notaries and other stakeholders. Discussions about good practices and lessons learned will also be of benefit to other countries in the region.

AGENDA

Time CET	Content	Speaker
Opening session Moderator: Benjamin Davis, Director, Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equity, FAO Chair: Jana Schuhmann, Sector Fund Manager, Open Regional Funds South East Europe-Legal Reform, GIZ		
9:30-10:00	Welcome remarks – Economic Empowerment of Women in German Development Cooperation	Dr. Maria Flachsbarth , Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
	Opening remarks - Improving Gender Equality towards achieving the SDGs: Regional perspective.	Mr. Nabil Gangi , Deputy Regional Representative, FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU)
	The role of notaries and legal professionals in improving gender equality in land ownership	Mr. Lionel Galliez , Vice President for Europe, International Union of Notaries (UINL)
	Overview of the Western Balkans initiative to strengthen gender equality towards achieving the SDGs	Mr. Bojan Božović , State Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Right (Montenegro)
National perspectives: Looking back, looking ahead Chair: Jana Schuhmann, GIZ Moderator: Lovro Tomasic, UINL		
10:00 –10:05	Overview of SDG indicator 5.a.2	Naomi Kenney , FAO
10:05–10:30	National perspectives: Looking back, looking ahead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Elona Saliaj, Executive Director of Notary Training Center (Albania) - Ms. Marija Risteska, Gender Legal Expert (North Macedonia) - Ms. Vasilija Živanović, Head of NSDI Standardization Group and Legal Framework, Republic Geodetic Authority (Serbia)
10:30-10:40	Break	
10:40-11:10	National perspectives: Looking back, looking ahead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Ševala Korajčević, Head of Department, Agency for Statistics (Bosnia and Herzegovina) - Ms. Maja Popara, President of the Commission for International Cooperation, Notary Chamber (Republika Srpska)

		- Mr. Aliriza Beshi , President of the Notary Chamber (Kosovo ²) Mr. Bojan Božović , State Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Human and Minority Right (Montenegro)
11:10–11:30	Q&A – input from the audience	
11:30–11:40	Looking ahead Closing remarks	Jana Schuhmann, GIZ Rumyana Tonchovska, FAO

For further information, please see:

- **UNDESA.** 2021. *SDG Good Practice.* (also available <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/partnerships-gender-equality-land-ownership-and-control-good-practices-western-balkans>).
- **FAO and GIZ.** 2020. *Achieving SDG indicator 5.a.2 in the Western Balkans and beyond. Partnerships for gender equality in land ownership and control.* (also available at <http://www.fao.org/3/cb0173en/CB0173EN.pdf>).
- **GIZ and FAO.** 2021. *Rome. Guidelines on Notarial Practices – Strengthening gender equality in land ownership and control.*
 - Notarial practices in Albania
<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb5023b>
 - Notarial practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina
<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb5574b>
 - Notarial practices in Kosovo
<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb5711b>
 - Notarial practices in Montenegro
<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb5704b>
 - Notarial practices in North Macedonia
<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb5715b>
 - Notarial practices in Serbia
<http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cb5717b>
- **GIZ and FAO.** 2021. *Guidelines on Strengthening Gender Equality in Land Registration – Southeast Europe 2021.* Rome. (also available at <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb2857en>).

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² References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).