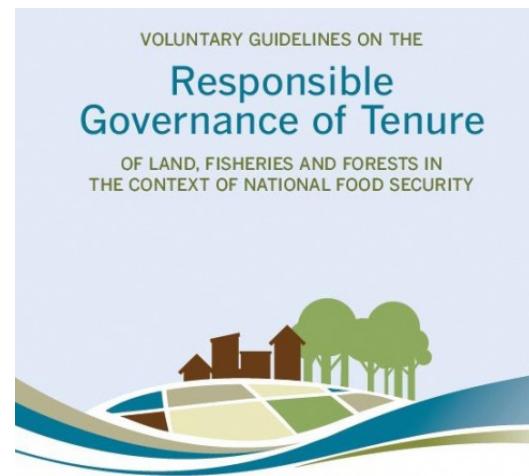


# Promoting the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure

FAO conducts an awareness campaign to support the uptake and integration of the Voluntary Guidelines

Since December 2012, eleven regional workshops have been held around the world to raise awareness of the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*. Some 640 people from 140 countries have taken part, with representatives from a wide range of sectors, including governments, civil society organizations, private sector, academia and international institutions. Together, participants explored ways to integrate the Guidelines in their home countries as well as discuss priority governance of tenure issues at the regional level.



The Climate, Energy and Tenure Division (NRC) is working closely with colleagues right across the Organization in this; with the Fisheries, Forestry and Technical Cooperation departments; the Legal Office; the Office for Partnerships, Advocacy and Capacity Development; the Social Protection Division; and the Right to Food Team in the Agricultural Development Economics Division. Regional, sub-Regional, Liaison and Country offices have all been instrumental in the preparation, execution and follow-up of the regional meetings. These efforts are truly in the spirit of 'one FAO' and the results of this collaboration are evident in the quality of product and support provided to Members and other partners.

Endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security in May 2012 and hailed as a landmark decision, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure promote food security and sustainable development by improving secure access to land, fisheries and forests and protecting the legitimate tenure rights of millions of people, many of whom are poor and food insecure. FAO's work on these Guidelines particularly contributes to **Strategic Objective 1** – the eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

Overall, participant feedback has been very positive. "These Guidelines showcase a people-centred approach to tenure, putting a human face on the issue," said a workshop participant from the meeting held in Guyana. A participant from the meeting in Colombia stated that "the value of the Guidelines is not only in their content but also what they can initiate."

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In addition to the workshops, over 23 000 printed copies of the Guidelines have been requested and distributed to people in 140 countries in the past year and a half. Major technical guides are now on-stream, currently addressing *Governing Land for Women and Men*; *Improving Governance of Forest Tenure*; and *Respecting Free, Prior and Informed Consent*, together with e-learning programmes.

Activities at the country level are starting in earnest and are due to commence in South Sudan to provide, at the request of the government, technical and institutional support to develop an Agricultural Land Tenure Policy. Brazil has also undertaken a number of activities to implement the Guidelines, including using them as a key technical tool in high-level policy discussions on sustainable rural development. In Lao PDR, the Guidelines are being used as a reference in the development of a new Land Policy.

FAO and the UN Economic Commission for Africa are in the closing stages of signing a Memorandum of Understanding that strengthens linkages and realizes synergies between the Guidelines and the Africa Land Policy Initiative across the whole region.

"These Guidelines are one of the key products that FAO has provided and will continue to be a priority activity of the Organization for years to come," said Ms Xiangjun Yao, Director of NRC. "Their development and rollout has been a truly interdepartmental process."

The Guidelines have achieved a remarkable momentum globally across key stakeholder groups. Their implementation is encouraged by the United Nations General Assembly, the Rio +20 meeting in June 2012, *L'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie*, the G20 in Mexico, the G8 and the Ministers at the 5th Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Summit.

Working on and resolving tenure issues is politically sensitive and often a long term effort, so the full impacts of the Guidelines can only expect to be realized further down the road. That has not, however, deterred FAO from starting to support implementation of the Guidelines on the ground. As part of the follow up to the regional workshops, a programme of national-level workshops and country activities are now being planned following requests from countries across the regions. Eight more technical guides are being resourced and in the pipeline, and major strategic support following country requests is already in detailed planning in a smaller number of countries – in line with the expectation that the tangible effects of the Guidelines will predominantly impact at the national and sub-national levels.