

LANDNET EAST AFRICA: A STRATEGIC VIEW

Presentation made at DFID, London 2nd May 2001

Objectives of Landnet

At the national level, the network seeks to provide support and resources to land policy actors in government and civil society organizations to enable them influence land policy processes in the countries to promote sustainable livelihoods and poverty eradication. At the regional level Landnet seeks to facilitate the exchange of experience, expertise and lessons amongst African countries engaged in land policy reform and implementation, between themselves and with other actors globally. These two objectives are complementary.

Through these objectives, Landnet contributes to the creation of an enabling environment for poverty eradication in the following manner:

- Clarifying the links between access, use and management of land and poverty in the sub-region (making land an important part of the discourse on poverty eradication in the participating countries)
- Getting civil society organization and government agencies involved in land issues and poverty eradication to work together and consult on an ongoing basis
- Advocating for land policies and laws that are pro-poor
- Empowering community groups to engage the policy processes on land that have a bearing on the livelihood opportunities
- Democratizing the policy discourse on land, and democratizing the institutional framework for the management of land and natural resources in the four countries

Approaches

The major activity has to be at the national level, as this is the way to achieve the greatest impact on policy processes, and to ensure the involvement of all major stakeholders in each country. Support has to be provided to national activities related to land policy that have a direct bearing on the enhancement of livelihood opportunities for those who depend on land resources. In each country, Landnet has sought to work through and with a national land network, so as to facilitate processes that are internally generated and to avoid duplication and competition.

Kenya	Kenya Land Alliance
Uganda	Uganda Land Alliance
Tanzania	Tanzania Gender Land Task Force (as the secretariat for the National Land Forum)

Rwanda Rwanda Initiative for Sustainable Development (RISD) as the secretariat for the newly-created Rwanda Land Alliance

In each country the activities of focus are to be decided by the actors within the country consultative process that entails the holding of a national stakeholders workshop and the drafting of a national work-plan. It is envisaged that the national work-plan shall have components that Landnet can support and work with, but there will also be scope for the involvement of other players and other donors.

At the planning workshop in Nairobi last August, the countries were able to identify a "shopping list" of issues that concern them in each country (extract provided). It is expected that in the national work-plans, they shall prioritize these same issues and identify activities to further them. Within the framework of Landnet, it is envisaged that each country shall identify an issue of national relevance from which other countries in the region can learn lessons. This choice is premised on the relevance of the issue to the other countries in the sub-region, and the level of experience within the country. In the result, the country with the greatest level of experience on a specific issue takes the lead. This informs the choice of thematic issues on which different countries are to take the lead.

Thematic Issues

The planning workshop also identified common thematic issues on which Landnet could work. These were:

- documentation and exchange of experiences and lessons from national policy/legislative development and implementation processes in the different countries, with a view to sharing this across the sub-region and with other sub-regions
- documentation by Uganda and Tanzania of their experiences of gender land rights advocacy and the development of proposals to strengthen women's land rights in relation to customary practice and formal land law
- compilation by RECONCILE of an inventory of recent and current research into pastoralist land rights and a summary of the implications for land policy, as a first step towards organizing a regional pastoralist land rights workshop involving government and pastoralist organizations in approximately 12 months time. (this to be done by way of an established partnership with IIED. OSSREA would also be invited to join so as to bring aboard the issues of pastoralism in the Horn of Africa)

The value-added of sub-regional coordination

Each of the national land networks is focused on national activities and pursues a national agenda. They do not have the resources or the capacity to engage in regional processes, eventhough they appreciate the utility of regional experience and expertise sharing. Landnet enables the country land networks to:

- link up with the other national networks in the region and in the other parts of Africa. It also provides them with access to global discussions and experiences from which they can learn (Linking Rwanda and Kenya with the experience of Uganda and Tanzania in developing a national land law and policy)
- Address regional cross-cutting themes that have a bearing on trans-boundary resources (e.g., pastoral land rights, pastoral conflicts, the management of Lake Victoria and its resources, the management of trans-boundary river basins, biodiversity, etc.) members of the Kenya and Uganda Land Alliances are looking at how to work jointly on cross-border conflict, using the work that RECONCILE is doing in the two countries)
- To collaborate in designing responses and strategies for engagement with emerging global initiatives for rural development and poverty eradication, and which have a bearing on land and natural resources in all the four countries (PRSPs,) Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania are considering holding a regional civil society consultation on land in the PRSP processes as well as land and constitutional reforms, to which Rwanda will be invited
- Coordinate and design regional perspectives on issues relating to land and natural resources within the framework of the East African community that brings together Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, and which Rwanda has applied to join Landnet has been requested by the four countries to link up with the secretariat of the EAC to open up space for civil society engagement on issues of natural resource management in the region

By linking up with other Landnet sub-regional networks in West and Southern Africa, opportunities are provided for the sharing of experiences with other sub-regions in Africa. In particular, the members of the network in East Africa are keen to have access to and learn from the experiences of Francophone West Africa on the management of natural resources. In this connection, opportunities exist for the sharing of experiences between the two regions in:

- Pastoral land rights and the management of conflicts over pastoral resources
pastoral codes and laws on pastoral resources;
- Establishment and operation of community-based resource management associations
- Management of trans-boundary biodiversity and other natural resources
- Decentralization of the governance of natural resources
- The management of conflicts over land and natural resources

Measuring Impact

Because Landnet seeks to contribute to the discourse on land and natural resource management policy, the impact of the work of Landnet has to be perceived in process terms. Policy processing has a longer maturation and impact time frame, and this is a major constraint in measuring its impact. This is an argument for a longer-term perspective, and keeping the focus on the long term. But in the short term, the following can be indicators of impact of what Landnet is doing in the region:

- Greater and more informed involvement of civil society organizations and community groups in the policy dialogue at the national level
- Increased linkages between the national land alliances in Kenya Uganda and Tanzania, and the establishment of a Landnet Rwanda
- Bringing Rwanda into the fold in so far as discussions of natural resource management in East Africa are concerned
- Closer interaction between experts in government, civil society and academic institutions in the discussion of land policy formulation and implementation (providing forums at the regional level that allow government and civil society actors to interact more freely than is always possible at the national level
- Closer linkages between land policy practitioners in the sub-region and between them and other sub-regions in Africa and globally

How this translates into benefits for communities who depend on land for their livelihoods shall have to be measured in the long term; but this boils down to the formulation and enforcement of pro poor land and natural resource policies that secure access by these communities to the land.

Sustainability of Landnet

The sustainability of the network depends on three things:

- Continuing relevance to the membership at the national level in each of the countries and sub-regionally
- An efficient framework for coordination and information
- Financial support on a sustained basis, however generated (locally, regionally and globally)

Relevance is borne out of the answer to the questions, "what does a member get out of the network, and what does the network get out of the member?". This relates to the issue of both the networking as a process and the content and quality of the information exchanged. Both a process and substance question (the 'net' and the 'work' make the network).

Coordination is important, but the coordinating work should not become an end in itself. The objective in East Africa is to keep the coordination outfit lean and spread

out the activities to the members. It is however, important to create capacity within the coordinating outfit for generating, processing and disseminating information.

Financial support must be spread out with sources at the local level being sought out deliberately and interested in the activities of Landnet. Plan to consult more closely with the regional office and the national offices for Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania on the ways in which they can support Landnet.

Work-plan

Activities	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
National Stakeholder Workshop for Kenya	X							
Completion of national workshop reports and work-plans (K,U,T,R)	X	X						
Dissemination of national workshop reports			X					
Sub-regional steering committee meeting			X					
Publication of Network Papers (one paper every month)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fundraising and contacts by RECONCILE for thematic meeting	X	X						
Preparing for conference and networking meeting	X	X	X					
Conference and Networking meeting				X				
Regional Coordinators meeting				X				
Workshop report and compilation of conference papers					X	X		
Dissemination of workshop report						X		
Publication of conference papers							X	
Preparation of Proposal and Business Plan for the next three years					X	X	X	
Presentation of Proposal to donors and fundraising								X