

REPORT ON LANDNET WEST AFRICA CORE GROUP MEETING 12-13 JANUARY 2001

I- BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

From 12th to 13th January 2001, the core group of Landnet west africa met in Accra at Hotel Bay View. The purpose of the meeting was to prepare the west Africa Landnet workshop.

1.1- IN ATTENDANCE :

Name:

Prof. Kasim Kasanga – Chairman
Prof. Saa Dittoh
Dr Hubert Ouedraogo- Facilitator

Dr W. Odame Larbi

Dr Ibrahim Dia

Mr Ako Amadi

Mahamane D Toure

Alinon Koffi

Somenou Koffi Amenovinyo

Harriso Safiyanu B

J.E.K Dadson - Rapporteur

Country:

Landnet Ghana

Landnet Ghana

GRAF/Landnet Burkina
Faso, interim facilitator

Landnet Ghana

Landnet Senegal

Landnet Nigeria

Landnet Burkina Faso

Landnet Togo

Landnet Togo

Landnet Nigeria

Lands commission Ghana

1.2- Commencement

The meeting commenced at 8.55am with Dr Odame Larbi giving the background to the meeting. He stated that since the Addis Ababa declaration efforts have been put in place to put together the sub regional network. Emphasis is being put on the national networks so as to have a firm foundation for the sub regional network. The economies of West African countries are mainly land (agric) based and land issues are very important for all west African countries. Therefore the network will assist members to share similar experiences in the sub region. He wished members a fruitful meeting.

Members then took turns to introduce themselves. The Chairman in his remarks was hopeful that the meeting would be used for a closer interaction among members. He then proceeded to state the objectives of the meeting.

1.3- Objectives

1. Complete review of the West African process at national and sub-regional level.
2. Exchange of national working plans
3. West African work plan
4. Exchange of draft agenda of national workshops
5. Discussion of East African workshop

II- PRESENTATIONS ON NATIONAL PROCESS

2.1- Ghana

Since the Addis Ababa meeting measures have been put in place to have the Ghana chapter inaugurated. This has received political support with the involvement of the Minister for Lands and Forestry. A national workshop that attracted 44 participants was held on 25th July 2000. In attendance were academic institutions, public institutions and the media among others. The following papers were presented:

1. Overall objectives of landnet.
2. Land issues in Ghana
3. Poverty, gender and land
4. What will landnet Ghana be (membership, funding and structure)

The theme was “ land policy, land administration and good governance.”

A core group of 7 members was selected to work on consolidating landnet in Ghana. It has also been decided to organize a public educational workshop on Ghana’s land policy, which will also include landnet issues. A budget has been drawn for the workshop and donors are being sourced. The workshop will take place in March at Bolgatanga. Landnet Ghana has 3 coordinators namely the national coordinator, the northern sector coordinator and the southern sector coordinator. A critical issue confronting the group is one of funding. It is however hoped that the new political administration will accord it the needed support.

2.2- Nigeria:

Landnet activities are undertaken by an interim secretariat, an informal group made up of committed volunteers. The group has been involved in the dissemination of the Addis declaration. However to date only 18 individuals and groups have responded. They however make occasional publication in the national daily newspapers and also write to specific individuals.

Landnet has been dormant due mainly to the frequent transfers of the personnel involved. Another problem has been that of protectionism and factional interests among the target groups. Efforts are however being made to diffuse all that and to have all factional interests such as NGO’s, academia and all the 36 federal states represented. It is proposed that a national workshop be held before the sub regional meeting at which the Universities, NGO’s and the various Ministries will provide resource persons.

During discussion time concerns were raised about the integration the ideals of landnet in states that have adopted the Sharia law. Members were however assured that this has been taken into due consideration and the activities of the group will attract little or no interference from the law. The traditional and religious rulers themselves will be part of the workshop.

2.3- Togo

Togo is a new comer to the landnet group. The country was not represented at the Addis Ababa meeting. A national workshop was held on 18th December 2000. Attendance was highly encouraging as almost all invitees were present. There were 30 participants from public

institutions, environmental groups, agricultural organizations, planners, administrators, University researchers, the FAO, NGO's and traditional rulers. The workshop made the following recommendation:

1. Steps must be taken to have clearly defined property rights.
2. The Government should equip resource persons working on Togo's land reforms.
3. It should also have representation from landnet.

In attendance was a delegation from Benin.

The activities of landnet has been mainly done by a core team of 4 made up of Lawyers, an Economist and an Urban Planner. They emphasize on informative action for people concerned with land tenure issues. They have also been involved in the distribution of the Addis declaration to public officers, land owners etc. Its future plans include the reinforcement of the existing landnet structure, which is currently being handled by CSCD and the strengthening of the Togo/Benin network.

2.4- Burkina Faso.

The network is between 2-3 years old. It started with informal meetings of a core group. Meetings were characterized by discussion and circulation of research topics among members. The formal launching of the group was held in July 2000. The formal launching of the group was held in July 2000. A constitution has been formulated for GRAF and the group represents landnet Burkina.

GRAF circulates information a bulletin called GRAFinfo. GRAF has a Website, but is facing updating costs. GRAF has prepared a database of land literature in Burkina Faso. A joint research proposal (Burkina, Ivory cost, Senegal) prepared by GRAF on land tenure and migration has been approved for funding by CODESRIA. But the grant offered has been so limited that GRAF has to decide if he can accept it or not. GRAF has recently (December) cooperated with project funded by Italian cooperation in the preparation of a workshop on the implementation of the national land law.

Currently GRAF has a membership of about 40. Members residing outside the country are referred to as associate members. New members are accepted through a system of co-option that is upon introduction by an old member. GRAF members have to pay a contribution.

In the current year the group will hold a national forum with participation from peasant groups, government organizations on land management at the local level.

2.5- Senegal.

The establishment of landnet has undergone a long and slow process. It is composed of an informal network of researchers from the Universities. They have been engaged in seminars on land tenure and land reforms. This core group engages in informal exchanges especially on the government's land reform plan, which started in 1987. discussions are being held to formally launch the network.

The target groups are researchers, farmer's organizations, and consultants. A national workshop was held on 28th September 2000 at which there was exchange of ideas on the following:

- a. The establishment of a database for people involved in land tenure
- b. The creation of a newsletter on needs and training
- c. Developing a database on documentation in land tenure.
- d. A workshop for social mobilization in land tenure issues.

There are plans to organize another national workshop on land conflicts since it is highly prevalent especially in the southern parts of the country. They also hope to act as a pressure group to ensure the early implementation of the national land reform plan.

III- DISCUSSION ON LANDNET PROCESS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Discussions has been targeted on the following points :

- lessons
- successes and good practices
- constraints and risks
- organization at local level
- funding at national and sub regional level
- role of national and sub regional institutions.

3.1- Lessons :

Establishing appropriate linkages between the core group and relevant organizations are effective means for the dissemination of information.

There is diversity of the composition of the target groups, individuals and geographical factors. Such issues ought to be handled with a high level of finesse to ensure success. All stakeholders must be brought on board and adequately consulted. Adequate funding is also essential to put the network on a sound footing.

There is need for a progressive and cautional approach to issues.

Governments must be involved and consulted adequately from the onset in order to have political support and cooperation

Having a strong core groups helps in the promotion of interpersonal relationships.

3.2-Successes and good practice

Formulating a strategy of financial autonomy assists in eliminating interference and promotes independence. The strategy should be able to mobilize a minimum funds to function.

To operate such that the help of the network will be solicited in getting consultants to perform certain tasks. Some fees from the consultancy work could then be paid to the network.

Also using websites to market the network

Establishing rapport with international organizations.

3.3- Constraints and risks

Soliciting for funds and running the risk of being directed by the donors. To avoid this situation the network must have a financial sustainability plan.

Our programs have been geared towards specific activities instead of long-term activities.

3.4- Organization at national level

To be based on ability to strike a rational balance between using a core group which stands the risk of excluding the expertise of many other people and that of a wider group that may have organizational problems. It is good to have a committed core group that will coordinate the activities of a wider group.

A good communication system must be established at the local level and also at the sub regional level.

3.5- Funding at national and sub regional level

Opportunities for financial support must be explored at the national and sub regional level instead of always going global.

Sustainable funding strategies that targets Foundations and endowment funds must be explored. The following methods were also considered:

- Getting a financial expert to draw up fund raising strategies.
- Contributions from members
- Sale of publications of the group
- Corporate sponsorship
- Using a website to market the network
- Assisting consultants to obtain consultancy work and taking a percentage of their fees.

3.6- Role of national and sub regional institutions.

CILSS (Permanent Interstate Comitee for Drought Control in the Sahal) is a permanent interstate organization grouping 9 countries within the sub region. In 1994 it organized a conference on land tenure and decentralization after which a department was set up (PADLOS) to collaborate national land policies. The department has been able to create a colloquium dedicated to land issues. It promoted the idea of Land Observatories in Sahal area. This is a network trying to get together all institutions dealing in land issues. Its objectives include capacity building, exchange of information and training. In Chad the government has assisted in building a national observatory on land issues supported by a Ministerial decree. The observatory is hosted by the University of N'djamena. A core group of 3 supervises research students in land issues. They have also developed a 3-year working plan. A similar program is begining in Senegal.

In further discussions it was suggested that CILSS could integrate the activities of landnet in its programs.

3.7- Identifying Institutions and their activities.

Issues here included how to integrate our activities that is who is doing what and also how landnet can add value to those programs. Also the problems that may arise as a result of having to work too closely with government or national authority.

IV- ACTIVITIES OF INTERIM COORDINATING GROUP FOR WEST AFRICA

4.1- Main activities

The main activities of the interim facilitator were the following:

- organization of contacts with the core group members

- dissemination of the Addis declaration
- development of contacts with potential member countries using contact persons. These countries are: Cote d'ivoir, Guinea, Mali, Togo, Benin, Niger, Cameroun, Congo.
- Assisting member countries to organize national workshops. These were done in Senegal, Ghana, Burkina Faso and Togo. Mali is in the process of organizing one.
- There has been contact and exchange of information with other sub regions such as East Africa and South Africa.

4.2- Lessons:

The real impact of the dissemination. Need to be clarified. We also need to have better and precise targets.

Identification of target groups for corporate membership.

Need to have a website for West Africa. As an interim measure a window can be established on the landnet Burkina website.

Tasks and responsibilities must be shared so as not to overburden any individual or group.

For effective communication it is recommended that each country network should have a computer and e-mail address.

V- DISCUSSION OF THE PREPARATION FOR THE WEST AFRICA WORKSHOP

5.1- Participants:

Core group members are to arrive in Ouagadougou on the 9th of February. Preliminary session for the group on 10th and 11th of February 2001. The session shall nominate a Chairman and a rapporteur for the workshop. All others will arrive on the 10th of February. Due to budget constraints. The number of participants per country is broken down as follows:

Core Group:

Ghana – 4

Nigeria – 5

Senegal – 3

Togo – 3

Mali – 3

Chad – 2

Others:

Cote d ivoir - 1

Niger – 1

Guinea – 1

Benin – 1

East Africa network – 1

Southern Africa network 1

OSSEREA – 1

5.2- Budget :

The coordinator stated that a budget has been prepared for 40 participants. An amount of \$12,000 has been obtained from DFID. Other possible sources of funds are, French Cooperation, CILSS, CNCR, Ford Foundation, and IUCN.

5.3- Objectives: specific objectives :

A- Linking the network activities to broader national and sub regional programs. Organizations considered were:

CILSS, UEMOA, ADB, CODESRIA, WEST AFRICA RESEARCH CENTER-SENEGAL, ECOWAS, IUCN, FAO, WORLD BANK, USAID, GTZ, ILED, DFID, FRENCH COOPERATION, CTA.

There will be a special session with this group at the workshop to discuss areas of their operations that can be beneficial to the network. Issues to be discussed include:

What are their program in West Africa

How landnet can be linked with their programs

What ways they can support landnet.

The above will enable landnet to prepare a database on these groups.

Dr Ibrahim Dia of Senegal was nominated to organize this special session.

B- Extending the Network to all countries of the sub region. Prospecting work to be done on the following countries: Gambia, Cape Verde, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Liberia and Cameroon. Landnet is to cooperate with CILSS to assist with the extension work with the possible involvement of ECOWAS, FAO and UEMOA.

1. Discussion on setting up and maintenance of an efficient communication system among country networks.
2. Devise effective capacity building mechanism to ensure a sustainable network

5.4- Provisional agenda:

DAY 1

Activity :

1. Registration
2. Official Opening
 - a. Welcome by GRAF
 - b. Address by DFID C. Adohers by Minister

Break :

- 3 Chairman's brief Introductory Remarks/ Objectives of workshop
4. Background of the Workshop – Hubert Ouedraogo/ Kasim Kasanga
5. Keynote Address – Prof Foli ?
6. Thematic Presentations:-
 - a. Successful and sustainable networking – Bara
 - b. Funding networking – Ako Amadi
 - c. Role of International Institutions in networking on land issues – IIED
 - d. Structure of the network – Kasim Kasanga

DISCUSSION

- e. Brief presentation of national working plans
- f. Proposal for sub regional working plan - Harrisu Safianu

DISCUSSION

DAY 2

Working Groups:

1. Activities
2. Funding
3. Structure and Communication.

Plenary Session:

1. Presentation of group reports
2. Discussion
3. Official Closing ceremony
 - Final communique
 - Closing speech by Minister

Cocktail

Final Comments :

In his final comments the facilitator stated his delight at being part of a successful meeting. He was hopeful of a similar success at the impending West Africa workshop. On his part Dr Odame Larbi was pleased that Ghana has been able to successfully host the meeting.

CLOSING :

Before bringing proceedings to a close the Chairman expressed his gratitude to all present for a fruitful discussion. The meeting came to a close at 1.00pm.

APPENDIX

TASK	FACILITATOR
Development of funding strategies	Ako Amadi
Preparation of special session with the Organizations	Ibrahim Dia
Structures and Functioning mechanisms of the network	Kasim Kasanga
Activities of the network at the sub regional level	Hubert Ouedraogo/Harrisu
Preparation of Draft Constitution for the network	Kasim Kasanga
Preliminary meeting to prepare terms of reference for the working group	Core group
Soliciting extra funds for the workshop from French cooperation, CILSS, Ford Foundation, RUCF	Hubert Ouedraogo

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