WORKSHOP ON LAND TENURE NETWORKING IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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WORKSHOP ORGANIZATION

The Workshop was sponsored the Department for International Development (DFID) and organized by the Natural Resources Institute (NRI), Greenwich University, UK with assistance, backstopping and hosing by the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA). The workshop was attended by specialists on land tenure issues, consultants, Government and NGO representatives, donor representatives, NRI and OSSREA representatives. The participants were drawn from 18 African countries namely, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe as well as regional, bilateral and multilateral institutions such as Inter State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), DFID, FAO, GTZ, IFAD, IIED, IUCN, NRI, OXFAM, SIDA, UNECA and the World Bank.

OPENING SESSION

Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed, Executive Secretary of OSSREA welcomed participants on behalf of OSSREA. He added that the land tenure networking workshop identified a topical issue in Africa and hoped that experienced people would discuss more on practical issues in the deliberations of the workshop. Prof. Ahmed introduced OSSREA and highlighted OSSREA's special interest in the network. He explained that OSSREA is a network of social scientists primarily engaged in the promotion of social science research in the region and beyond. He also told the participants that OSSREA is currently attracting natural scientists in its network through several specialized research programs on natural resource management in Africa. Finally, he pledged to provide support and work with the network

David Radcliffe, welcomed the participants of the workshop on behalf of the DFID. He mentioned that land is one of the most important resources. According to him, this natural capital could substantially influence livelihoods in Africa. Increasing demand for land as a result of population pressure and land degradation are some of the prevailing features in the region. He also said that because of the importance of land in African economies, poverty reduction in Africa would involve increasing access to land. It was also mentioned that addressing land issues is different in different circumstances. Some countries have started implementation of legislation while others are just formulating policy. Thus one of the purposes of such workshop is to learn form experience and to avoid making mistakes. In this regard, as major focus area of the network, he mentioned the crosscutting issues such as Collaborative Policy Research, Documentation, Training, Public Participation, Gender, Advocacy of Land-rights, Recording of Land-rights and Land Claims, Securing Land and Common Property Rights. He also indicated the situation in some parts of Africa. For instance, in Southern African countries, he said that due to the legacy of apartheid and other political systems, there is high inequality in land possession. Regarding networks, it is said that they are better developed in the Western Africa; among Eastern African countries, Uganda is said to have well

developed networks than Kenya and Tanzania; and in the Horn no specific study was undertaken. Finally, he said that the role of donors was to facilitate the process and raise resources using the existing networks. In relation to this, he indicated that there were several donors interested to support the network.

Julian Quan, from DFID introduced the workshop purpose, background, anticipated outcomes, process, profile of participants, DFID's approach to land issues and DFID's support for networking, as well as its criteria for financial and technical support. The purpose of the workshop was to develop a practical framework for a program of African-driven network activities on land tenure and land policy for continued learning, information exchange, collaborative research and capacity building for policy debate and practical implementation, involving governments and civil society.

Participants' Expectations: Participants were divided among six groups to introduce themselves and summarize their expectations from the workshop. Summaries of the six groups' expectations are attached (see Attachment 1).

THE CASE FOR AN AFRICAN LAND TENURE NETWORK: CONSULTANTS REPORT ON SUB REGIONAL STUDIES

DFID commissioned the study for three sub-regions including East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa. These studies focused on current status of land tenure or land policy issues network, institutions involved, priority areas, anticipated benefits, organizational aspects and the way forward. The consultants' presentations of their studies are summarised here:

Michael Ochieng Odhiambo, presented a sub-regional study for East Africa: *The Case for an African Land Tenure Network: An East African Perspective*. The report setout the findings and recommendations arising out of land tenure networking study conducted in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania in May 1999. Some of the points of this study include the following.

1. Two major scenarios were recommended for regional land tenure networking. First, an Africa-wide network would be established to operate preferably out of an existing networking organization that has regional mandate or the capacity to operate a continental network on land tenure. In the second scenario the establishment of sub-regional networks as East, Horn, Central, West and Southern Africa was recommended.

2. The starting point for the establishment of a regional network must be the strengthening of national networks. In East Africa, some of these networks included the Uganda Land Alliance, National Land Forum in Tanzania, and Kenya Land Alliance, which was in the process of being created.

3. In each of the three countries, the challenge was how to involve government officials, due to the sometimes hostile relationship between government and civil society that is more pronounced on lands issues. However, the situation was changing slowly for better.

4. In each of the countries there is a need to share information, experiences and expertise; to build capacity and collaborate training programs through for instance, periodic meetings, exchange visits, creation of an electronic site and discussion group, training programs and publications.

Bara Guèye and **Hubert Ouédraogo** presented the West African study: *The Case for an African Land Tenure Network: A West African Perspective,* prepared by Hubert Ouédraogo with Bara Guèye and Judy Longbottom. The study is based on some West African countries including,

Burkina Faso Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. Issues arising, from this study, are the following.

1. The working networks could provide lessons. To this end, the study identified strengths and weaknesses. Strengths included, among others, members shared affinities, knowledge of local realities and development trends and the existence of efficient communication systems. The existing networks also had weaknesses and constraints including the absence of clear objectives, weak internal interaction, difficulty of mobilizing members, lack of separate logistical resources, absence of permanent coordination unit and funding problems.

2. *Priority themes:* land tenure and decentralization, land security, land markets, relations between local realities and traditional land practices and land regulations in force, conflict management, urban and peri-urban land tenure and methodological approach to land policy analysis.

3. *Priority objectives*: Experience sharing, capacity building and to influence the design and implementation of land tenure policies.

4. *Anticipated benefits:* Providing valuable information to policy makers and researchers; improving quality of research, reducing cost of searching and collecting information; and bridging the gap among policy makers, researchers and practitioners within francophone and anglophone countries.

5. *Organizational Aspects:* Identify a regional facilitator to organise workshops and to undertake electronic conferences prior to the formation of formal network.
   Then, develop working mechanisms at the national levels and contact with some key national and regional institutions. In this regard, the existing national and regional networks such as CILSS, ECOWAS and UEMOA could have roles.

Sue Mbaya, presented the Southern African study: *The Case for an African Land Tenure Network: A Southern African Perspective.* The study undertaken in two phases covered Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe in the first phase and Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland in the second phase. The study identified land tenure and policy issues, networking organizations and land networks, specific needs for and anticipated benefits of networking, focus areas, the role of NGOs, and possible structural arrangements of the proposed network. Issues arising from this study included the following.

1. Land tenure and policy issues that a network to focus on: tenure insecurity, challenges of integrating traditional forms with more modern systems, need to develop comprehensive land policies with the participation of the people and landlessness.

2. Other important issues raised were encouraging power decentralization to local government structures, ensuring the equality of women's land rights and strengthening the capacity of civil societies.

3. Forty organizations, with interest in land tenure and policy issues and with various scale of operation, were identified in the sub-region.

4. Networks should focus on attempting various initiatives in response to existing problems, rather than taking the form of a policy based discussion forum.

5. Issues like, ownership of the network, representation in the network, and risks of limited resources to participate in the net work were identified concerns by different respondents for this study.

6. *Challenges and Constraints:* Attitude of indifference to networking, particularly among some governmental institutions, wide range of expectations from the network, lack of continuity in representation as a result of, for instance, high staff-turn over were some of the challenges identified. In addition, possible constraints identified included NGP-Government relations, resource constraints, limited participation by frontline practitioners, the difficulty and cost of communication between countries, language barriers, and different developmental levels.

7. Electronic methods such as e-mails and websites, etc. were considered the most cost and time effective and most of the institutions would have access to these facilities, which the study also recommended. This however, would exclude some participants.

8. A single networking structure integrating governmental and non-governmental organizations, CBOs, rural and peri-urban institutions was advocated

9. *Next steps:* needs assessment and planning workshop be held in the near future in order to reach a consensus as to the way forward.

PRESENTATIONS BY RESOURCE PERSONS

Michael Powell, DFID Consultant, presented a paper on *Networking, information and communication management* for consideration by regional discussion groups. A network, following Paul Starkey, has been defined as 'a group of individuals or organizations who, on voluntary basis, exchange information or undertake joint activities and who organize themselves in such a way that their individual autonomy remains intact'. He also raised the driving questions of a network including purpose, actors, outputs, tasks, and responsibilities among members and management issues. In his paper he also discussed other issues such as the meaning of 'framework for network activities', use of electronic communications and alternatives and management of information content. Finally he suggested that the establishment of a knowledge group, or contracting of a suitable research institute in each region, to identify, commission, translate, publish and disseminate relevant documentation.

Richard Trenchard, IFAD, introduced ARNET. He said that ARNET is a Global Knowledge Network. It networks 23 countries in 8 regions. The objective of the Network is to empower civil society. The empowerment process involves voice, visibility, credibility and opportunity. The presenter noted its value and said that ARNET would be useful to the extent that it led to change.

Other resource persons were invited to comment on the importance of the theme of the workshop to Africa:

Prof. M. O. El Sammani, Sudan, noted the variable importance of land tenure issues and the need to prioritise, based on assessment of the state of knowledge in-country. He also stressed the importance of donor attention to tenure issues, especially in relation to irrigation and resettlement projects, displaced population and pastoralist groups. Immense transformations in land relations are underway within the Horn of Africa, but little is known about these processes. Although there is no need to interfere with indigenous systems if there are no problems, land tenure is used as a political tool by governments. Networking should work with government, to provide information and influence. It should build on existing institutions

and provide opportunities to explore how land tenure relates to other development issues such as health, shelter and basic needs.

Prof. Sam Moyo, Zimbabwe, commented that a focus on land tenure alone was to narrow, and that a wider range of land and natural resource rights and power relations needs to be considered, at micro and macro levels. He pointed out that since the state is the dominant force in land policy formulation, networks should work with and very close to the state. In order to influence the policy process, however, research needs to understand the complexity and variation within the state, across different sectors. It should also be recognised that NGOs in the region tend to be [middle] class-based and not acting at the roots of struggles for land rights and reform. Moreover, donor institutions exercise significant influence over African land policy formulation, at least at macro-level.

Dr. Mitiku Haile, Ethiopia, commented that the priorities in Ethiopia were to address poverty, livelihood and security issues. Land tenure issues are very important because a substantial part of the livelihood of the country's population is based on agriculture, and priority should be given to the needs of poor smallholder farmers in policy formulation. The marginalisation of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists is also a critical issue, and this provides a good starting point for networking. Government has a legitimate stake in lands issues and at the regional level, within the IGAD framework, networking should also link up NGO and research institutions. As an agency with a regional mandate, OSSREA is well placed to take up this role.

Prof. H. W. O. Okoth-Ogendo, Kenya, said that the presentations reflected his own thinking on the importance eof both land and of networking in Africa. In the last 10 years almost every African nation has examined its land policy, although the problems have existed for much longer.   Countries need to develop national land policies on the basis of consensus, and assess how best to legislate for reform, incrementally or comprehensively. African expertise in policy and law making is much more relevant to Africa than northern expertise, and international support should enable the development of African skills data bases, exchange mechanisms, and rigorous comparative analysis. Despite diversity, the similarities within Africa are more important than the differences: everyone is asking similar questions about land issues, and common responses are emerging, about the importance of democratising land rights administration, empowering individuals and communities, and harmonising tenure and property systems. Anglo - francophone language barriers are less significant than language barriers within countries. Networking should facilitate interaction and provide resources for translation. Tenure issues are one important aspect but land issues go wider - production systems and support services also need to be considered. Shared interests and commitment are essential for effective networking; logistical issues must be carefully thought out and "turf wars" should be avoided.

GROUP SESSIONS

Participants were divided into five. Four groups dealt with sub-regional networks and the fifth group comprised donors and other international organizations. Based on the consultants' presentations, the four group identified priority themes, organizational aspects, and work-plan for their respective sub-region.

MISSION STATEMENT

Based on the consultants' report on sub-regional studies and plenary discussions, the workshop drafted its mission statement. The statement summarized the discussion and agreed actions for next steps.

CLOSING REMARKS

Finally, workshop organizers and some representatives of regional and international organizations made closing remarks. Mr. Julian Quan told that all the DFID expectations of the workshop were met. GTZ representative told that his organization was willing to support the process. FAO, IFAD, IUCN and World Bank representatives also said that the land issue was central to them and hence very much willing to collaborate. Prof. Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed, Executive Secretary of OSSREA, thanked consultants and all participants on behalf of OSSREA and said that OSSREA was willing and grateful to accept the responsibility it was given by the workshop.