



Responsible Land Governance: Towards an Evidence Based Approach

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EVIDENCE BASED LAND GOVERNANCE TO ACHIEVE AGENDA 2030; EXPERIENCES FROM GLOBAL LAND INDICATORS INITIATIVE

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Introduction to Land Governance

Land is central to ending poverty and inequality. Agriculture is estimated to generate 10% of GDP in low and middle income countries (Steve Lawry, 2014) and employing 45% of the total labour force in formal and informal sectors (FAO, 2015). Secure tenure rights to land are strongly linked to peace and security, prevention of violent conflicts, social cohesion, and mitigation of the negative impact of climate change. Land Governance enables efficient and effective appropriation and use of land, regulating land concentration, fragmentation and expropriation and through this guaranteeing tenure security in rural and urban areas.

Several studies have shown that a more egalitarian distribution of land not only leads to higher economic growth but also helps ensure that growth achieved is more beneficial to the poor (De Janvry et al., 2001). Asia's green revolution demonstrated how agricultural growth that reaches large numbers of small farms could transform rural economies and raise enormous numbers of people out of poverty (Ravallion & Chen, 2007; Rosegrant & Hazell, 2000). In contrast, there was less economic growth in countries that began with an inequitable distribution of land or that failed to recognize legitimate land rights for women, peasant farmers, fishing communities, pastoralists and indigenous peoples (Deininger & Squire, 1998; Ravallion & Datt, 2002).

Land is an important resource for the development of other sectors of the economy. This is in addition to being part of the cultural heritage and social identity of a people. For instance, the African Union (AU) Framework and Guidelines in Land Policy in Africa aims to ensure that the potential of land is fully realized in support of the continent's development agenda. The Framework and Guideline purpose to develop land policies that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all land users, contribute to political stability, promote gender equity, foster the reduction of conflict, enhance the sustainable management of natural resources, and ensure orderly urban development. The Framework puts all stakeholders on the path to higher economic growth and a better quality of life. Despite being voluntary, the Framework and Guidelines nonetheless recognize that most countries regard the proper management of land as an important factor in development, and critical to ensuring or preserving peace and security (African Union, African Development Bank, 2014).

Land Governance Monitoring

Effective global land monitoring is central to ensuring that changes in land governance result in improved conditions and sustainable development opportunities for all, especially for women, vulnerable groups and those living in poverty. In many developing countries, land data is still manually operated and inaccurately recorded, while efforts to put together efficient land information systems are hampered by lack of adequate resources and limited uptake of modern data technology. Where data is available, it is often limited to a small range of tenure types with the prevailing of administrative data, not disaggregated by gender, and only limited to geographical coverage; mainly in urban areas. There has also been lack of globally comparable land indicators and harmonized methodologies and tools for land data collection, including data



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on perception on tenure security. Despite limited availability of gender disaggregated data, studies have shown that women have weaker land rights compared to men (IFPRI, 2013, World Bank, 2012); a situation perpetuated by the dualism of tenure regimes, weak land laws, cultural and traditional barriers that discriminate against women rights to own and inherit land in favor of men. Effective national, regional and global monitoring of land governance issues is central to ensuring that changes in land governance result in improved conditions and sustainable development opportunities for all, especially for women, vulnerable groups and those living in poverty.

Global Land Monitoring and Sustainable Development Goals

For the first time, land targets and indicators are explicitly included in the global Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, under Goal 1, 5, 11 and 15; positioning land as a resource, factor of production and a commodity for which poverty, inequality and land degradation can be fought in rural and urban areas. Specifically, the inclusion of tenure security indicator 1.4.2 '*Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure*' elevated the importance of secure tenure rights to land at global level, paying attention to the need to secure tenure rights for all especially that of the women, indigenous communities and the poor.

Agenda 2030 makes it possible for countries to contribute to global scale monitoring of secure and legitimate tenure rights in rural and urban areas. For instance, land indicator 1.4.2 underscores the complexity of tenure rights to land by recognizing the varying bundle of rights and entitlements to land, allowing the capture of documented tenure rights to land and perception on secure tenure rights to land for men and women, and with a legal recognition for all tenure types. In addition, the indicator for gender equality in land access and ownership of agricultural land is included under SDG5 with the aim to "*Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*", while Goal 11 encompasses indicators on tenure security in urban areas including land and housing rights, informal settlements and land consumption rate; rights that are also promoted in the New Urban Agenda adopted by UN member states in October, 2016.

The importance of a global coherent strategy on a single land monitoring framework and a common reporting architecture that produces a single periodic performance report for effective and coordinated implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development is paramount. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015 brought increased attention to the international community on the need to strengthen the statistical capacity of developing countries to measure, monitor and report on the sustainable development goals, targets and indicators, including land. UN member States have committed to the implementation of the goals within a timeframe of 15 years, endorsing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In its report, the Advisory Group on Data Revolution for Sustainable Development established in 2014 by the Secretary-General emphasized that data is a crucial pillar for the implementation of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, as it is the basis for evidence-based decision-making and accountability.



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The Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) agreed on an overarching principle of data disaggregation to accompany the list of indicators, calling for Sustainable Development Goal indicators to be disaggregated in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, and to ensure that no one is left behind (Report of IAEG-SDGs -E/CN.3/2016/2/Rev.1 to the forty-seventh session of the United Nations Statistical Commission). The global indicator framework for the monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development presents a greater opportunity to support and complement national and regional commitments, including fast-tracking the implementation of regional and global framework on land governance with clear mechanisms for measuring progress and ensure accountability. It also presents a tremendous challenge in equal measure to producers of official statistics in all countries, mainly in new statistical areas, such as land, that require global scale monitoring, an area which Global Land Indicator Initiative (GLII) in collaboration with global development partners, including United Nations agencies and Global Donor Working Group in Land have continued to pay attention since 2012. This paper explains the genesis and the experiences of GLII as a global initiative on land monitoring; the successes so far and opportunities for strengthening global land monitoring for transparency, accountably and security of tenure for all, especially women, territorial and indigenous people, the poor and vulnerable communities living in rural and urban areas.

The Global Land Indicator Initiative

The need to step up monitoring of land governance issues saw the start of GLII in 2012. GLII is a collaborative and inclusive process for the development of the Global Land Indicators started by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the World Bank and UN-Habitat through the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)¹ with the aim of making global scale monitoring of land governance a reality by 2021. This initiative has now grown to include over 50 partners around the world, ranging from United Nations agencies, Intergovernmental Organizations, International Non-Governmental organizations (INGOs), farmer organizations and academia. The Land Policy Initiative, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network and the Global Donor Working Group on Land are strategic partners and supporters of the GLII initiative. GLII partners with the support of the Global Donor Working Group on Land, the United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network, NGOs such as Landesa, Oxfam and other development agencies engaged and successfully promoted the inclusion of tenure security indicator 1.4.2 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Since its foundation in 2012, GLII partners have made significant contribution to global land monitoring agenda. These achievements include the development of a set of 15 nationally

¹ Over the last decade, GLTN has been securing land and property rights for all by promoting the adoption and implementation of land policies, tools and approaches that are pro-poor, gender appropriate, effective and sustainable within the continuum of the land rights framework. Through strategic partnerships, GLTN's tools and approaches on "how-to-implement-land-policy" are increasingly being adopted and implemented in select countries in the developing world.



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applicable and global comparable land indicators that go beyond the provisions of land indicators in the SDGs to addresses four key areas of land governance: *land tenure security for all; land conflict and land disputes; land administration services; and sustainable land use management*. Importantly, these indicators embrace the continuum of land rights as an approach that recognizes the bundle of rights that comes with tenure rights in formal and informal tenure regimes. This approach affirms that individuals, groups and communities can hold land and property under a range of tenure regimes, each providing a different set of rights and responsibilities, with systems for recognition and enforcement based on customary/community, administrative or legal institutions. The continuum of land rights is important for rural societies where customary forms of tenure dominate, albeit informally.

The International Federation of Surveyors' (FIG and World Bank, 2014) demonstrated a crucial paradigm shift from titling as the only mode of tenure security to the recognition of a range of rights, for which there is a growing acceptance by the land community that individual titling alone cannot deliver tenure security to the majority of people in developing countries. There is rather the need for a fit-for-purpose approach to land administration (Sietchiping *and others*, 2012; FIG and World Bank, 2014). GLII indicators were developed through highly consultative process that included global land practitioners, statistics and data experts, donors and other agencies working on land governance. The GLII indicators served as a perfect reference point of globally agreed comparable land indicators in advancing debates and influencing the successful inclusion of land indicators in the Agenda2030.

GLII in collaboration with its partners have developed five working papers, serving as technical reference documents and guides to understanding global land indicators, data collection and reporting requirements. These are:

1. **Options for Global Reporting on GLII Land Indicators in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals** -GLII Working Paper Number 1. GLTN/ UN HABITAT, Nairobi. Drafted October 2014
2. **Conceptual Framework for the Development of Global Land Indicators.** –GLII Working Paper Number 2. UN HABITAT / GLTN Nairobi. Drafted April 2015
3. **Proposed Global Land Indicators: Status report on GLII indicator formulation, disaggregation, data sources and methodology.** GLII Working Paper Number 3. UN HABITAT / GLTN Nairobi. Drafted October 2015
4. **Sourcebook for Operationalisation of Global Land Indicators** GLII Working Paper Number 4. UN HABITAT / GLTN Nairobi. Drafted November 2015
5. **Training Curriculum Sourcebook: Methodologies for data collection and reporting on land indicators, for data producers and users.** GLII Working Paper No. 5. UN HABITAT / GLTN Nairobi. Drafted March 2016.

The above working papers, have contributed new knowledge on comparable land indicators for global scale land monitoring, helped defined key concepts on land monitoring with clear guidelines on ways to operationalize land indicators monitoring linking country to global



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monitoring processes. These working papers have also spurred positive action towards land monitoring at various levels including inclusion of GLII indicators in research, land programming and monitoring by GLII partners including INGOs.

To test the application of the GLII indicators, GLII partners developed comparable methodology and tools for data collection of land tenure security which were further tested in urban and peri-urban areas in partnership with *Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographiques in Cameroon*, and with technical support from UN-Habitat, GLII Technical Reference Group on Data and Statistics, Africa Centre for Statistics (ACS) and external consultants. The methodology and tools for data collection were successfully piloted in urban and peri-urban areas in Cameroon, Nigeria and Kenya through a process that involved closer partnership with national statistics offices, the Ministry of Land and Property Rights, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and other land sector actors in Africa and globally. Data collection modules developed from this process will be used by land and, national statistical offices, and international survey agencies and other data agencies. The modules are currently being published and will soon be made available. The developed methodology on measuring tenure security and land data collection modules are expected to greatly contribute to the development of methodological guidance and tools for data collection on tenure security for indicator 1.4.2 in the SDGs; under the custodianship of World Bank and UN-Habitat; as well as land indicators under SDG 11.

GLII partners have developed a Training Curriculum on Methodology for Data Collection and Reporting on Land Indicators, for data producers and users, in partnership with the *East Africa Statistical Training Centre, based in the United Republic of Tanzania*. This is seen as a major development in fostering global learning and knowledge sharing on land indicators linked to the role of statistics and data institutions. The curriculum is now available and expected to contribute new knowledge to the work of national and regional statistical centers. . Other GLII working papers mentioned above provide a deep technical analysis on the feasibility for global reporting on land indicators; a conceptual framework for land indicators monitoring and sound approaches to the application of land indicators while linking country and global monitoring.

These are major GLII achievements that are anchored on practical processes that foster global coordination for land monitoring, learning and knowledge sharing, anchored in country level land monitoring and reporting. As knowledge pieces developed by its partners, GLII platform continues to convene, coordinate and facilitate land and data communities to reflect on global land monitoring indicators and data architecture at country level linked to SDGs reporting, regional and global frameworks including Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure (FAO, 2012), while strengthening capacity for data generation with a focus on practical application of land monitoring tools, standards and protocols for comparability.

Drawing on the rich experiences of GLII partners, success underscored here demonstrate the power of global coordination for land monitoring agenda through comparable land indicators, harmonized data protocols and reporting architecture at scale from a technical and operation stand point. The inclusion of a tenure security indicator and other land indicators in the SDGs



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underscores the importance of sustainable land governance in ending poverty and inequality. It also demonstrates commitment of policy makers to apply comparable land indicators to track progress on land governance issues at scale for decision making and accountability. GLII platform and its partners are committed to ensuring land indicators in the SDGs are monitored and progress tracked to ensure that no one is left behind.

GLII supports the recommendation by the IAEG-SDGs on the need to adopt a coherent strategy for a single monitoring and evaluation framework and a common reporting architecture that will produce a single periodic performance report on SDGs, linking country to global level. Presently, GLII is providing convening and coordinating support to custodian agencies responsible for land indicators in the SDGs; World Bank, FAO, UN Women and UN-Habitat. These agencies are in the process of developing metadata and methodological guidance for country level monitoring and reporting on land indicators in the SDGs to the UN High Level Political Forum; a process that calls for harmonization and clear coordination for synergy and complementarity for greater success.

Opportunities for Strengthening Global Scale Land Monitoring

The Sustainable Development Agenda promotes global partnership as a means to strengthen implementation, data monitoring and accountability. Two targets under goal 17 explicitly underscore global partnerships. Target 17.18 envisions capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to significantly increase by 2020 the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. Target 17.19 aims to build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries by 2030. UN member States have emphasized the importance of developing a robust national statistical and data system. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators explicitly recognizes the strategic role of national statistical system and regional bodies in data collection, analysis, coordination and reporting annual progress of Sustainable Development Goals.

Strategic partnerships involving national land institutions and statistical offices, regional statistical training centres, regional land and statistical agencies, networks and coalition working on land governance, civil society organization, private sector, academia and United Nations agencies are important in raising awareness of land data demand and availability of nationally applicable and global comparable methodology and data protocols to meet Agenda2030 for Sustainable Development. The application of harmonized methodologies and data protocols that streamline data production including gender disaggregation land data in rural and urban areas is paramount. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing, as part of the post-2015 development agenda, arrived at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015, and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/313, recognized the central role of national statistical systems in generating, disseminating and



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administering data, while noting that such data needed to be supplemented with data from other sources, including civil society, academia and the private sector.

The Space of Global Land Indicator Initiative Moving Forward

The GLII platform remains a strategic global platform for multi-stakeholders engagement; facilitating closer collaboration among NSOs, regional statistics and land institutions, CSOs and Geospatial data Agencies, donors and other policy makers. Coordination and convening role of GLII is key in enabling and supporting capacity strengthening of various data and statistical agencies including updating national strategies for the development of land data to respond to regional and global data demands and uptake of harmonized methodologies for measuring land indicators and data protocols for comparability, new data technologies, innovation, use of geospatial referencing, and leveraging resource mobilization. These will strengthen institutional and technical capacities in the production of high-quality, timely, disaggregated, reliable and comparable land data which can assist policymakers in shaping evidence-based policies that fully integrate land in economic, social and environmental considerations.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for enhanced efforts by the international community working together to augment its capacity development efforts, particularly in the domain of statistics and data, so that developing member States will be able to accurately measure progress against the Sustainable Development Goals targets and determine where gaps remain (Report of IAEG-SDGs, E/CN.3/2016/2/Rev.1 to the forty-seventh session of the United Nations Statistical Commission). GLII is well positioned in facilitating capacity building process building on partners' experiences and the commitment already made by governments to implement and report on the SDGs.

Conclusion

Members of the GLII platform continue to explore innovative means for global land monitoring, including steering land community consultations on comparable land indicators, harmonized methodologies for data collection; facilitating development of tools and guidelines for data collection and analysis; accompanying national statistics offices' capacity strengthening in collaboration with the Centers for Statistics, land institutions including registries and surveyors and other national and regional agencies; and coordination of the data community, linking the country to regional and global processes.

GLII partners recently developed a roadmap to guide GLII's work for the next 3 years. The roadmap was developed at a global expert group meeting held in January 2017, in Cape Town, South Africa. The roadmap builds on partners' consensus on key areas of focus and re-affirmed commitments to contribute to monitoring SDGs, VGGTs and other global and regional frameworks. Partners' commitment to use GLII set of 15 land indicators for comprehensive land monitoring at country level will enable policy makers and relevant stakeholders to look beyond the SDGs to identify additional opportunities for capturing critical data and measuring progress on land governance issues linked to regional and global frameworks like VGGT. Effective



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monitoring of land governance in the context of SDGs is expected to contribute to tracking progress assess on the implementation of Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Tenure (VGGT), the global New Urban Agenda, and contribute to the monitoring of the implementation of regional frameworks including Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa and Africa Agenda2063. The GLII roadmap will be implemented and delivered in partnership with the platform members and with the support of strategic actors at country, regional and global level.

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