

Securing Land for Rural People

1.0 Introduction

Butana Region is located in central and eastern of Sudan and covering a total area estimated at 81 000 km². Out of this area tree cover represents 9%, grassland 41%, bare land 29% while cropland 21%. It is bounded by River Nile, Blue Nile, River Atabara and mechanized farming in southern part. It falls in 5 states namely; Khartoum; River Nile; Gadarif; Gazeera and Kassala State. In 1904, Butana was declared a General Grazing Area, open to grazing by all tribes but with very strict instructions of avoiding settled and cultivated areas. Over the years, a set of rules were developed and relentlessly applied and monitored to ensure the sustainability of natural resources in the Butana area. The abolition of the native administration and the declaration of all unregistered land as state land in the 1970s in Sudan led to shrinkage of pastoral land and growth of cultivated land specially, in Butana region.

The present land governance structure is inadequate to provide security of access to land resources, conservation of natural resources, equitable and economic use of these resources.

2.0 Main Forms of Land

There are five main forms of land tenure and use which are recognized in the Butana; Inheritance which the most dominant form of land ownership. Through this acquired right of ownership descendants have the right of monopoly and distribution within the family; Aldogondi which rental and crop sharing arrangements, locally known as Aldogondi, and sometimes common in assigning temporary land use; Ukul Goom which another common arrangement, termed as “Ukul Goom”, assigns land for short periods at no cash charges, but in exchange for cleaning the land for 2–5 seasons; Registered land which land registered to individuals by the government can be either free and inherited ownership or public, free of dispute and this form of land tenure is more common along the rivers for small irrigated areas and mechanized rain-fed schemes. Under the latter form, the government rents the lands for a long period aiming to maintain land ownership and; Communal land which either government or tribal land is devoted to communal use such as grazing lands and forested area. Instead rangelands are communally owned by tribal groups, which have rights over specific areas.

3.0 Key Instruments for Securing Land

The abolition of the native administration and the declaration of all unregistered land as state land in the 1970s in Sudan led to shrinkage of pastoral land and growth of cultivated land specially, in Butana region. Key instruments developed by Butana Integrated Rural Development Project which is funded by IFAD and

Government of Sudan to support local communities for securing their land to reduce poverty.

3.1 Good Governance Structure

Securing land for rural people, it requires good land governance structure for the Butana grazing land. In this respect, an interactive process with all relevant stakeholders and actors of the five States under Butana is implemented at different levels through stakeholder consultation conferences. At community level, it has provided space for a wide spectrum of communities and communities' networks to be represented, allowing key developmental issues and concerns to be selected. It covered the project's 140 villages/ communities which divided into 18 "villages clusters". key developmental issues and concerns identified; overgrazing and eradication of natural fodder before its maturity by large number of livestock coming from outside Butana during the rainy season; mushrooming of native gold activity particularly, with weak regulated measures; Encroachment of farming activities in rain fed and irrigated sector at expense of pastoral land and forest. As a result, poor small households suffer from scarcity of fodder during the dry season and persistent decrease of the available land for traditional farming. At local level, the interactive process afforded room to promote sense of ownership of the agreed upon regulations, laws and practices in natural resource management by local communities. At state level included the project's 9 localities in 5 states and 14 conferences were implemented. As a result of that, Gedarif state issued an act towards increase the size of communal land at 5 km radius around village for allowing landless people specially women to cultivate crops and vegetables. At federal level, an inter-states workshop will be conducted to synthesize all practices and regulations at various levels to form a desired coherent and coordinated Governance Framework for natural resources management for Butana.

3.2 Registration of Land

Securing land for rural people, it also entails the registration of pastoral land and forest land under the name of the concerned communities. The forest Act which was issued in 1989, to encourage the ownership of community forest for securing their rights. The community should start the process by formalizing boundaries around the village with neighboring communities, register and certify them with assistance from the local authority. Then community will plan the use of the forestland in order to better facilitate and support land productivity and sustainable management. Again, the users will develop a formal agreement for their sharing and management. This Agreement associated with related rules and regulations need to be approved by the Village Development Committee.

Nearly, 55 000 ha identified to be registered in 77 village's pastoral land and forest land with geographic coordinates using satellite images. Participatory assessment implemented with the users where; 90% explained that solidarity and cooperation in management of the Reserve is built with high willingness; 76% confirmed increase in tree cover due to keeping off animals of outsiders who used to slash tree branches to feed animals; 86% reported local rules and

regulations had been enforced and; 70% illustrated creation of new source of income from chopping and selling of fodder from the reserve.

3.3 Establishment of Communities' Networks

Securing land for rural people, it calls for establishment of communities' networks in form of clusters for advocacy and lobby to impede and slow down agricultural expansion in both rain fed and irrigated sectors. Four community networks were formed with 5-8 communities per network, with the objective that to protect their land for sustaining natural resources as their principal source of livelihood and to address non-existent social services. Each network is managed by an executive committee composed of representatives from member communities and supervised by elders who have tribal management capacity to undertake any hot issues, problems or concerns arising amongst the member communities.

The solidarity Network's members had been promoted by many interventions, for instance the establishment of range reserve shared by some communities under the Network. The land for the reserve was carefully selected to ease patrolling and subsequently to reduce management cost (surrounded and bounded by mountains, natural water pond and human settlements). Another intervention, Guar (cluster bean) as fodder crop was introduced by using water harvesting technique inside this reserve as mechanism to guard it as well as a stake to land tenure and usufruct right. The Network success is indicated by the improvement of natural tree cover inside the shared range reserve which increased from 70 to 165 trees per ha due to regular patrolling that organized by motivated volunteers, control of water points to lessen mobility of animals of outsiders and their direct impact on natural resources. Also average dry fodder increased from 1.5 to 2.5 tons per ha which clearly reflected by building of 127 household fodder stores for feeding small ruminants during summer period as no fodder. These improvements are holistically reflected in improved animal productivity (milk and animal weight), which in turn has positive impact on children nutrition and household income.

3.4 Introduction of Water Conservation Structures

Securing land for rural people, it requires construction of water conservation structures -as it is considered permanent landmark- which indicates the ownership of land by the person who utilized it and give him/her the right of ownership over time. Based on this approach the project has supported cultivators to implement this activity for that reason and to be used for growing food crops, fodder and trees. In this regard, the project has assisted producers through training and supporting terrace construction on paid fees. Almost more than 35 000 ha were implemented and resulted in increase of soil moisture retention and alleviation of long dry spell and, improvement of crop yield. Sorghum yields under this activity has increased from 0.43 ton/ha (under non-treated land) to 1.51 ton/ha (under land treated by terraces. Again, cultivation of land under terraces promotes the optimal use of natural resources where no need to remove more trees and bushes or rangelands for growing crops, this in turn support the sustainability of natural resources for rural poor livelihood.

Usually, poor small household of 6 persons cultivate an average of 2 ha and food self-sufficiency for such household could be secured and a herd of 10 dairy goats could be also nourished from Sorghum yields and its residues. Women are likely to benefit from access to this type of communal land which in proximity of the settlements. Some women were managed to cultivate fodder, harvest it and store the dry matter of fodder for animal consumption after the end of the rainy season with focus on the critical dry months before next rains.

3.5 Crop Sharing Arrangements

Securing land for rural people, it necessitates crop sharing arrangements for involving less land people specially women in irrigated sector as they disadvantaged, with restricted access to productive resources to irrigated land. In River Nile state, land owners in more than 9 communities have taken the initiative of involving women and poor household as crop sharer. Each land owner allows 8-10 landless persons to share cultivation of land and irrigation operation cost. Women participation reached 12.5% compared with no participation when start the project in 2009. The average income for each crop sharer arrived at equivalent of 1327 USD per season. This activity assisted in provision of green fodders which in turn had effects on milk increase.

4.0 Challenges

Gold mining and agricultural expansion have led to land grabbing, the violation of community rights and, the devastation of fragile ecosystems. A Resolution from Federal Government is required.

5.0 Conclusion

The abovementioned instruments For Securing land for rural people would end with good govern ance framework for natural resources management in Butana region. This governance framework is adapted to local contexts as it has been formulated from the project experience and involvement of both communities and government which will lead to stronger resource and land security, better management, investment and capacity of communities to handle change.

Involvement of communities gives greater incentives for them to solve problems and find solutions, without depending on external resources. Moreover, their participation encourages them to take responsibility for the resources upon which they depend and to develop mechanisms to sustainably use their natural resources. It is a transformative approach based on longer-term facilitation of change, rather than just short-term project.