



# Land Governance in an Interconnected World

ANNUAL WORLD BANK CONFERENCE ON LAND AND POVERTY  
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## **Land Governance and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Consolidating and Harmonizing Monitoring Initiatives**

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## Abstract

Numerous indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) relate to tenure rights, food security and nutrition, including 1.4.2 on perceptions of land tenure security, 2.4.1 relating to the proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture and 5.a.1 women ownership of agricultural land. This paper describes key actors in the land governance community and beyond who are making significant efforts to ensure land-related SDGs remain part of the 2030 Agenda and are tracked and made widely available to stakeholders in the land governance community and specifically to National Statistical Offices (NSOs). It provides a detailed overview of the initiatives currently underway to monitor and amplify efforts focused on achieving land-related SDGs in the 2030 Agenda through research, advocacy and communications, and explores opportunities to consolidate and harmonize these initiatives and improve their effectiveness vis-à-vis targeted stakeholder groups.

**Key Words:** Sustainable development, 2030 Agenda, land rights, perceptions, tenure security



## Introduction

Secure tenure rights for all can be a source of conflict but can also be an ingredient for peace and stability hence must be promoted and protected. Resilient and sustainable urban development including slum development is also a significant area of exploration. It is related to land use planning, which affects access to housing, infrastructure, water, sanitation and other basic services. Monitoring of land governance issues remains paramount for fighting inequality, poverty and to facilitate policy reforms and programming at country level.

In September 2015, world leaders unanimously approved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>1</sup>, a comprehensive set of 17 goals and 169 targets, referred together as the 2030 agenda. The Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs)<sup>2</sup>, composed of United Nations Member States, developed global indicator framework to track progress towards the achievement of the SDGs, which were adopted by the UN ECOSOC in March 2016.

Among the indicators proposed by the IAEG-SDGs are numerous indicators related to land, advocated for and supported by various global land community actors including the Global Donor Working Group on Land, members of the Global Land Indicators Initiative, FAO, UN SDSN and others. Indicators in the SDGs monitoring framework have been categorized and assigned a ‘tier status,’ meaning that the indicator does not yet have a methodology for tracking it (Tier 3), has a methodology but no regular data (Tier 2), or has both a methodology and regular data (Tier 1). The development of a methodology for measuring respective indicators is assigned by IAEG-SDGs to various UN agencies, in collaboration with other stakeholders as “custodian agencies”.

Secure tenure has strong relationships with social, economic and ecological development around the world, and are hence important for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 5, 11, 15, 16 and other goals. The broad range of land-related data and information needed to effectively monitor the land indicators in the SDGs has been inaccessible, unavailable, or dispersed across various websites and databases. In many parts of the world, there continues to be a general lack of understanding and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

<sup>2</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/members>



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awareness of the land indicators in the SDGs, the framework for monitoring and reporting at the country level and the roles of various actors involved in the SDG process.

Numerous monitoring initiatives have been established that aim to track tenure security, including customary tenure rights provided for by indicator 1.4.2 and in support of continuum of land rights, and secure women's land rights as key components of achieving SDGs indicators 1, 2, 5 and 10, among other goals. In addition, related and complementary initiatives are engaged in land monitoring.

This paper describes these initiatives and their roles in serving complimentary and important purposes in tracking progress towards achievement of land-related SDGs and in establishing framework for their monitoring. It will demonstrate how the multiplication of initiatives shows a great need to consolidate and harmonize approaches in a coherent way that is useful for decision makers, and in particular for the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) throughout the world who are responsible within governments for the long-term implementation of monitoring systems for the SDGs. This paper describes the key actors in the land governance community who are making significant efforts to make to ensure land-related SDGs remain part of the 2030 Agenda and are tracked and made widely available to stakeholders in the land governance community and specifically to National Statistical Offices (NSOs).

## **Land monitoring initiatives**

### **Land and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Platform**

Having identified that the broad range of land-related data and information needed to effectively monitor the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) land indicators were inaccessible, unavailable, or dispersed across various websites and databases, and taking into consideration that there was a general lack of understanding and awareness of the land indicators in the SDGs, the framework for monitoring and reporting at the country level and the roles of various actors involved in the SDG process, the Land Portal



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Foundation<sup>3</sup> and the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)<sup>4</sup> in September 2017 launched a platform on land and the SDGs<sup>5</sup> to make information related to the land indicators in the SDGs widely available.

The objectives of this platform are to enhance understanding and awareness of SDG processes while mobilizing the land communities' to support efforts by the custodian agencies to achieve reclassification of land indicators through strategic promotion, campaign and advocacy efforts, to develop and make available communication materials and information that is interoperable and follows consistent, harmonized metadata standards for the SDG land indicators and increasing access and use of relevant data and information on SDG land indicators and Global Property Rights Index indicators by aggregating them into a free, user-friendly, visible, and accessible section of the Land Portal.

This platform now covers indicators 1.4.2 on land tenure security including perception of tenure rights, 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 on smallholder farmers, what they earn and how much they produce, 2.4.1 on agriculture area, 5.a.1 on ownership and share of land rights of women, 5.a.2 on legal frameworks for women's land rights, 11.1.1, 11.3.1 and 11.7.1 relating to sustainable urban tenure and open spaces and 15.1.1, 15.1.2 and 15.3.1 relating to forest areas, biodiversity and degraded lands, respectively.

The platform includes: a timeline featuring important decisions that have been made for land indicators, the latest news and blogs on land and the SDGs; a table outlining the Tier Status of each indicator; the context and essential information related to each indicator, including the method for measuring the indicator, a description of why the indicator is important and who is working on monitoring the indicator; selected Land Portal data visualizations, such as FAO's Gender and Land Rights data<sup>6</sup> as well as LandMark's<sup>7</sup> and RRI's<sup>8</sup> data on the amount of legally recognized indigenous and community land for Indicator 1.4.2; blogs, news, events, debates and library resources relating specifically to each indicator; and key dates for the specific indicators, the custodian agency responsible for the indicator, official partners of the indicator as identified by the UN and indicator-specific links.

## Global Property Rights Index (PRIndex)

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<sup>3</sup> <https://landportal.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://gltm.net/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://landportal.org/book/sdgs>

<sup>6</sup> <https://landportal.org/book/dataset/fao-lg>

<sup>7</sup> <https://landportal.org/book/dataset/lmm-lsic>

<sup>8</sup> <https://landportal.org/book/dataset/rri-ftd>



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The Global Property Rights Index (PRIndex)<sup>9</sup> is a global dataset and index on citizens' perceptions of property rights. PRIndex is a baseline, multi-national dataset measuring how secure people feel about their rights to the land and property on which they live and work. It is hoped that this data will provide the grounding for a global conversation and movement around securing the property rights of billions who currently lack them, with significant the potential to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially indicator 1.4.2, focused on the 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.

It is critical to know how citizens currently understand their rights to land and property so that governments, NGOs, donors and others can build targeted programs tailored to the realities faced by local communities. PRIndex takes a people-first approach to advancing the global property rights movement.

Perceptions of security of tenure have never been collected at the global level, preventing a clear understanding of the magnitude and nature of citizens' experience of security and insecurity. PRIndex addresses this gap, creating a baseline global dataset to support the achievement of secure property rights around the world.

PRIndex is an initiative of the Omidyar Network and the UK Department for International Development (DfID), implemented by Land Alliance and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). A Technical Advisory Group (TAG)<sup>10</sup> of research experts in property rights is providing guidance on the design and methodology of surveys and analysis of data.

PRIndex initially measured tenure security in a 14-state survey in India with 14,000 respondents in 2015. This was followed by qualitative research in 9 countries (Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Greece, Nigeria, Peru and Tanzania) to explore how people think about tenure security in 2016. As a result of this initial research, the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of PRIndex and Gallup collaborated to develop and implement a quantitative study of tenure security in the same 9 countries in 2016. The results from the first two rounds of testing were published in a global convening in collaboration with Gallup in 2017. Based on a review of results, feedback from TAG, and an extensive literature review, measurement approaches were refined. Consequently, several alternative ways of measuring tenure security in India, Tanzania, and

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.prindex.net/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.prindex.net/who-we-are>



Colombia were tested in 2017. In 2018, the 2017 PRIndex test results will be published, and a baseline survey of an additional 36 countries will be made available.

### **Global Donor Working Group on Land Platform on SDG Indicator 1.4.2 and Friends of the Custodians Committee**

The Global Donor Working Group on Land has established a platform<sup>11</sup> devoted to SDG indicator 1.4.2 and tracking donor engagement and investment in these issues. Its objective is to share timely information about the SDG land indicator 1.4.2 and support its reclassification from Tier III to Tier I by October 2018. The page is continuously updated with the key achievements and next milestones towards the reclassification.

With regard to the need to harmonize monitoring systems the Global Donor Platform recognizes the power of networks and coordination rather than an exclusively technical solutions. Consequently, donors have established a sub-group called “Friends of the Custodians”, composed of donor and non-donor organizations to support the custodian agencies of indicator 1.4.2 (UN-Habitat and the World Bank) in enhancing the methodology for collecting data and in liaising with key actors at the national level. This group has held regular meetings and also makes significant efforts to collaborate and share information with other networks, such as the Land Portal and GLII, which are equally supporting the SDG land indicators.

Donors are tracking their engagement and investment in tenure security issues through its Land Governance Programme Map<sup>12</sup>. Cooperating with the Global Donor Working Group on Land –USAID led a data collection and mapping project that gathered information on donor investments to implement the VGGTs. As a result of this collaboration, the Land Governance Programme Map was developed in 2013, allowing for more transparency of donor investments in land governance. The overall aim of the database is to improve donor coordination and to support implementation of the VGGTs in order to gain a clear understanding of who is doing what and where in the land and resource governance sector. The database contains information on the location, duration, funding and scope of each programme, as well as on the specific aspects of the VGGT chapters it supports. The interactive mapping tool displays where different donors and development agencies are working and what they do with respect to land and

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.donorplatform.org/updates-sdg-land-indicator.html>

<sup>12</sup> <https://landgov.donorplatform.org/>



resource governance. The database allows donors to include links to supplemental resources, such as reports on their programme websites. This information helps various stakeholders identify opportunities to leverage their resources for greater impact. Although this database was conceived to track progress towards implementation of the VGGTs, there are many overlaps with the SDG land-related indicators, and a potential exist to expand this tool to track SDG-related investments by the donor community.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation of Land in Africa (MELA)**

In July 2017, the Land Policy Initiative (LPI) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) and their partner the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), launched the Monitoring and Evaluation of Land in Africa (MELA)<sup>13</sup> project as a pilot study to track progress in the implementation of the African Union Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges.

In 2017, the LPI partnered with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) to facilitate implementation of a pilot study to roll out the implementation of MELA in 12 countries (Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia). The project on Monitoring and Evaluation of Land Governance in Africa (MELA) will track progress in the implementation of the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges and enhance capacity at national level to track and improve performance of the land sector. MELA aims at contributing to the implementation of the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa by supporting member states to track progress in land policy formulation and implementation to improve processes and outcomes of land governance reforms.

The core output areas of MELA including will be: a comprehensive baseline database that will form the basis for tracking of progress in implementing the AU Declaration on land in Africa; a report of progress made in policy development and implementation over the past seven years (since the launch of AU agenda on land in 2010); a compendium of best practices in policy development and implementation to inform policy processes across the continent; and enhanced and sustained capacity of member states to for regular tracking and reporting of progress made in land policy development and implementation.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://melafrica.wordpress.com/about/>



Outputs of the MELA pilot will be: a toolkit/guideline on designing quantifiable indicators/proxies of land governance and methods for collecting data on administrative and survey-based indicators to be used as LPI tool by member states of the African Union Commission (AUC); a database of survey-based and administrative indicators/proxies of land policy formulation and implementation including data on baseline and current status; country and regional study reports on the status and progress in land policy development and implementation from selected African countries; a synthesis report and best-practice notes on land policy development and implementation from selected LPI pilot countries detailing why progress is made at the pace it does looking at the institutional, political and social perspectives; a training manual/module for methods/techniques of tracking land policy development and implementation; and training provided to policy makers, professional/practitioners, service providers and students of higher learning from selected LPI pilot countries on methods/techniques of tracking land policy development and implementation.

## **Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII)**

In 2012, the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII)<sup>14</sup> was launched by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the World Bank and UN-Habitat and is facilitated the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) as a collaborative and inclusive process for developing global land indicator, and partner with more than 50 institutions ranging from UN Agencies, Inter-governmental Organizations, International Nongovernmental organizations, Academia, Private Sector, Researchers and Training Institutions, and Farmer Organizations to facilitate engagement of the global land community in the post-2015 development agenda. GLII was created in response to a perceived need for the monitoring of land governance issues. GLII is intended as a collaborative process for developing land indicators, with the aim of establishing global-scale land governance monitoring tools by 2021.

GLII also engages with regional institutions such as the Land Policy Initiative (LPI), the UN Statistical Commission for Africa, National Statistical Offices and Regional Statistical Training Centers. GLII has served to facilitate engagement of the land community to engage in the post-2015 development agenda. GLII scope of activities includes facilitating dialogues between land governance and data communities on land monitoring and best practices, developing nationally applicable and globally comparable land indicators and data protocols for land monitoring, raising awareness among land and statistical

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<sup>14</sup> <http://mirror.gltm.net/index.php/land-tools/gltm-land-tools/global-land-indicators-initiative-glii>



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institutions to generate gender disaggregated data, promote the use of evidence-based approach to land monitoring and research emerging trends in land monitoring, among other responsibilities.

GLII has facilitated the development and piloting of methodology and tools for data collection on tenure security in a number of countries and facilitated the developed a Training Curriculum on Methodology for Data Collection and Reporting on Land Indicators fostering global learning and knowledge sharing. GLII and its partners hope to build stronger national processes for comparable and comprehensive land governance monitoring at scale linked to global and regional frameworks on land governance, as well as to support the efforts of custodian agencies in the development of the methodologies for land indicators in the SDGs and their reclassification efforts to enable immediate country level data collection and reporting to the High Level Political Forum by National Statistical Organisations, Part of GLII's efforts will include strengthening access to information, communication and advocacy relating to SDG indicators, as well as local, national and regional capacity strengthening initiatives for regular data collection and reporting on land governance issues.

With a comprehensive work program, GLII aims to work in a coordinated manner with various partner institutions while acknowledging their own institutional strengths, needs and interests as its guiding principle.

## **International Land Coalition (ILC) Dashboard**

The International Land Coalition (ILC)<sup>15</sup> is developing a dashboard for what it refers to as a 'people-led' monitoring tool aimed to monitor the overall status of land governance at national level, based on 'people-centered' approaches and indicators. The dashboard was conceptualized in 2016 at the Civicus International Civil Society Week in Bogotá, Colombia. At the meeting, a group of land monitoring experts from different parts of the world envisioned a tool that would allow for the overall monitoring of land governance from a people-centered approach that relies upon a common set of indicators defined by the people that would use them in an effort to directly reflect the needs and priorities of civil society. In addition to monitoring the activities of the International Land Coalition (ILC), the dashboard aims to inform national-level advocacy efforts, policy dialogue, and existing local efforts to improve land governance. It will feature ongoing national engagement strategies, and in doing so it is hope that this will contribute directly to global monitoring frameworks such as the SDGs and the VGGTs. It is expected that the ILC dashboard will be

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.landcoalition.org/>



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implemented in partnership with other initiatives and build off of indicators used by GLII, PRIndex and others.

The stated purpose of the dashboard is to overcome fragmentation between the numerous land governance and rights-oriented monitoring frameworks. Rather than competing with existing initiatives, it will provide an opportunity for harmonization, the amplification of existing tools, and the creation of a common platform that members can use to build their own capacity to monitor the issues that matter the most. As such, the dashboard may eventually respond directly to concerns that existing land monitoring frameworks risk portraying a limited perspective on land governance represented by available national statistical data. It must be noted that the dashboard is conceived of as a monitoring tool based on ILC's Ten Commitments to people-centered land governance, which prioritizes underrepresented populations and create space for alternative, people-centered data generated by those working closest to affected communities and most familiar with current priorities and challenges in land governance, and also will be implemented by ILC members themselves.

In order to ensure that the dashboard is people-centered, a broad survey was carried out to identify the principal ongoing land monitoring initiatives by member organizations, which also compiled an extensive list of the indicators being used to monitor land governance throughout the ILCs priority regions. Through a series of consultations with ILC members in Latin America, Asia, Africa, these indicators have been shaped to reflect member needs and priorities. It is hoped that this will result in a universal 'core' indicators that will be used for people-centered land governance monitoring.

It is envisioned that the dashboard will be based on people-centered data generation and that its indicators can be used as a framework to further develop member capacity to generate, organize, and utilize data for global monitoring as well as evidence-based advocacy on the local level. Although it is not yet certain when the dashboard will be made available to the public, it should provide open access to complete datasets disaggregated by country, theme, and indicator.

## **Conclusion**

These initiatives serve complimentary and important purposes in tracking progress towards achievement of land-related SDGs and in establishing framework for their monitoring. Yet, the multiplication of initiatives has demonstrated a great need to consolidate and harmonize approaches in a coherent way that is useful for



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decision makers, and in particular for the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) throughout the world who are responsible within governments for the long-term implementation of monitoring systems for the SDGs.

Some initiatives described in this paper remain aspirational, while others already are practically serving their stated aims and objectives. There is an inherent need to better coordinate these initiatives, to eliminate overlap and duplication, and to better resource those initiatives that demonstrate timely results that prove useful to the land government community, NSOs and other stakeholder groups.