



Land Governance in an Interconnected World

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Land and Poverty Conference 2018 Masterclass on

Session 13-02 | Land in the SDG and the Human Rights Sphere: Links and Opportunities

Friday, March 23, 2018 | 11:00a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Room MC C1-200, World Bank

Instructors:

Beth Roberts, Attorney, Land Tenure and Gender Specialist - Landesa
Katia Araujo, Director of Advocacy - Landesa



Masterclass Summary:

There is unprecedented and increasing global recognition of land rights—especially women’s land rights—in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in international human rights spaces. This creates an unequalled opportunity for practitioners, development partners, governments, and private sector actors to leverage both movements to accelerate progress in alleviating poverty by strengthening rights to land.

The SDG and Human Rights: Synergies. This class will show how developments on land rights in the human rights realm and the SDGs framework create a cycle of incentives, implementation, and enforcement that implicates both movements. Human rights obligations related to land and the SDGs share strong and striking commonalities:

1. The goals of human dignity and well-being, achieved through substantive empowerment and the alleviation of poverty.
2. Treaty obligations and SDGs implementation both seat accountability with national level governments. This creates a strategic opportunity to identify efforts that can satisfy both, or that will help one effort complement the other.
3. Both realms rely on grassroots efforts and aim for grassroots effects. Data collection on rural land rights will require coordination with local level actors in every country if it is to be done in an equitable, inclusive, and gender-responsive way.
4. The success of both endeavors is borne at the local level for individuals and communities, where the deprivation and discrimination these global efforts seek to address is felt.
5. Both realms draw donor interest and require donor involvement, to bolster government and CSO capacity, and because coordination is needed across international stakeholders.
6. Because both realms rely on international level accountability, national level planning, and local level implementation and evaluation, they both require intensive coordination between grassroots, national, and international levels to be effective.

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Recent recognition of land rights in the SDGs and human rights standards. The SDGs include three land-specific, sex-disaggregated indicators: 1.4.2 measures legally recognized documentation of rights to land and perceptions of secure tenure; 5.a.1 measures ownership rights over agricultural land, including the share of women with ownership rights, and 5.a.2 assesses women's equal rights to land under national legal frameworks, both formal and customary. Several other goals are directly related to land (Goal 2: Food and Nutrition Security, Goal 11: Sustainable Cities, Goal 15: Life on Land).

Human rights bodies are increasingly recognizing close ties between land rights and human rights. Two prominent examples showcase the strength and momentum of this movement: the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recently stated that "rural women's rights to land and natural resources are...fundamental human rights" (CEDAW General Recommendation No. 34, at para. 56). And the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), which oversees compliance by 165 states to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, is developing a draft General Comment on the right to access land.

Discussion. The numerous links between these two realms facilitate and call for collaboration between civil society, governments, development partners, and private sector actors that can multiply successes for land rights from both human rights and development perspectives. Civil society is uniquely placed to connect the human rights and development realms for strategic results in both spheres: reminding governments of their incentives through direct advocacy and through advocacy with human rights bodies; working with communities and government agencies at grassroots, regional, and national levels, affording them the opportunity to be both collectors and reporters of data; and sounding the alarm when enforcement falls short or is absent. Governments need increased capacity on the ground to gather data for and report on the SDGs, as well as report to human rights treaty monitoring bodies; partnerships with civil society organizations can help governments extend their reach and build needed rapport with communities. Development partners need accurate ground-level information to create and implement effective programming strategies; partnering with governments and civil society to develop approaches that account for links between the human rights and SDGs can increase effectiveness with fewer resources. Private sector actors can invest in approaches that span both spheres, supporting strategic action and multiplying effects to increase human thriving.

Targeted audience: This class is targeted to civil society practitioners, government officials who may be tasked with or involved in SDGs implementation or reporting for human rights treaty monitoring bodies, and development partners or private sector actors looking for innovative approaches and large-scale and cross-movement impact.

- Actions required: N/A
- Masterclass program: None