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LAND RELATED HUMAN RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN: IMPROVING LAND TENANCY AS A PATHWAY FOR AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY

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Abstract:

Secure land tenure rights are crucial for the realization of a number of human rights such as the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being, including food and housing. Land is also a key element for food security and well-being of rural people who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. In Sindh Province in Pakistan, land governance issues hamper tenure security and, consequently, food security and equitable social and economic development. Highlighting human rights principles encompassed in the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), this document will outline innovative options for securing rural land access for the poor. Drawing on pilot experiences, the text will elaborate on alternatives to enhance land governance, which has been leading to improved tenure security and agricultural productivity and, ultimately, enjoyment of fundamental human rights.

Key Words:

Human rights, tenure security, agricultural productivity, food security



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1) Introduction

Access to, use of and control over land directly affect the enjoyment of a wide range of human rights. Disputes over land are also often the cause of human rights violations, conflicts and violence. Importantly, the human rights dimensions of land management are directly linked to most aspects of social development, peacebuilding and humanitarian assistance, as well as disaster prevention and recovery¹. Land is also a key element for food security and well-being of rural people who rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. Secure land tenure rights, in this context, is directly linked with the realization of the right to an adequate standard of living, food, health, shelter and well-being. In Sindh province in Pakistan, land governance issues hamper tenure security and, consequently, food security and equitable social and economic development with negative impacts on the enjoyment of fundamental human rights. Land concentration and tenure insecurity are among the most compelling land related issues.

Despite several land reform attempts, land ownership is highly concentrated, and is a root cause of persistent poverty and instability countrywide. Poverty is strongly related to landlessness. Unequal access to land and inefficient and inequitable systems of water and natural resources management have been creating patterns of natural resources use that have been hampering agricultural productivity, contributing to land degradation and perpetuating poverty and social instability².

Landowners who cannot or do not want to cultivate agricultural land frequently lease it out to tenant farmers (*haris*³) or sharecroppers, who are the vast majority of the rural population. Most family farms lack clear and legally enforceable tenure security over the farmland upon which their livelihoods depend. Frequently, *haris* fall into debt through advances they receive from the landlords to meet costs of cultivation or to cover household requirements. The expectation is that the account is settled at the time of the harvest, but in reality, the debt accumulates from one year to the next, as the share of the production is not enough to survive, let alone pay off the loans. *Haris* are not allowed to leave their landlord unless they clear their accumulated debt, and therefore become “bonded”⁴.

¹ OHCHR. 2015. *Land and Human Rights: Standards and Applications*. New York.

² USAID. 2018. *Pakistan Property Rights and Resources Governance Profile*. Washington, DC.

³ The Sindh Tenancy Act of 1950 uses the term *hari* and tenant synonymously defining a tenant as a person who personally cultivates the land of another person (the “landlord”). This document uses the term *hari* for a tenant/sharecropper.

⁴ FAO. 2015. *Project document Improved Land Tenancy in Sindh Province*. Islamabad.



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Statutory law related to land rights is dated and fragmented. Several laws govern a variety of land matters at the national and provincial levels. Even if there are multiple laws that regulate ownership, transfer, acquisition and tenancy there are still gaps to be fulfilled. There is an extensive and vastly varied body of customary law governing land rights creating a pluralistic legal environment. Customary tenure systems of transferring land and dealing with land conflicts are more accessible to the vast majority of the population. However, these systems are not always aligned with statutory law and human rights principles. Governance and uneven land distribution issues remain unaddressed⁵.

In this context of challenges, this publication will demonstrate how pioneering field-work have been contributing to enhanced tenure security among landlords and *haris* in Sindh Province, preventing bonded⁶ work and other kinds of exploitative relations and supporting agriculture productivity and food security.

Applying principles encompassed in the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT)⁷, this document will outline innovative options for securing rural land access for the poor. Drawing on pilot experiences from province and district levels, this document will elaborate on alternatives to improve relationships between *haris* and landlords, which have been leading to improved tenure security and enhanced agricultural productivity. The establishment of guidelines for written informal agreements between landlords and *haris* - aligned with national and international legislation and human rights principles - for instance, will be described as a strategy to establish more balanced relations preventing bounded work. This document will stress how the agreements contributed to transparency and prevented conflicts between landlords and *haris*. Furthermore, it will argue that the enabling environment created in this context paved the way for agricultural development and improved livelihoods.

Finally, with more balanced and equitable relations established between *haris* and landlords, the document will describe how tenure security and the associated enhanced agriculture productivity contributed to the enjoyment of basic human rights.

⁵ *Op. Cit.* USAID, 2018

⁶ "Bonded labour" refers to a labourer who has forfeited the right to move and to seek employment elsewhere because of debt incurred with a creditor; in agriculture, most often with the landlord.

⁷ FAO. 2012. *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security*. CFS/FAO, Rome.



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2) Pakistan: Population and Agriculture

It is estimated that a quarter of Pakistan's population of 189 million people lives on an income of less than USD 1.25 per day, with half of the population living in "multi-dimensional poverty" (i.e. acute deprivation in health, education and standard of living). According to the Government of Pakistan's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, about 10 percent of the population is chronically poor, 30 percent are poor, and approximately one-third is vulnerable and likely to fall into poverty with any adverse social, climatic or economic shock. Pakistan ranked 150th out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index in 2018⁸, a prospect that may very well be considered dire in terms of sustainable development.

More than 75 percent of Pakistan's poor live in rural areas. Land ownership is highly concentrated and is a root cause of persistent poverty and instability countrywide. Only two percent of households have land holdings larger than 20 hectares, accounting for 30 percent of total land holdings⁹. This has resulted in high chronic rural poverty, which has grown in recent years due to slow agricultural growth as well as the damage and losses to crops and livestock caused by natural disasters over the past decade (i.e. droughts, earthquakes, and floods) which have affected more than 80 percent of the country's 124 districts and some 33 million people. Rural poverty is characterised by uneconomic and fragmented holdings, landlessness, poor skills base, illiteracy, poor access to social and economic services and political disempowerment¹⁰.

The gross domestic product (GDP) per capita for Pakistan was last recorded at USD 1,547 in 2017 – a significant increase from USD 1,025 in 2000, but a sluggish increase from USD 1,214 in 2005. The agriculture sector accounts for almost a quarter of Pakistan's national GDP¹¹ and nearly half of employment – equivalent to 26 million persons of the national workforce in agriculture, i.e. 36.2 percent male and a significant 75.4 percent female. Due to the importance of agriculture sector in the economy, it is estimated that Pakistan cannot achieve its overall growth target of seven to eight percent annual increase in GDP unless agriculture grows by at least four percent per annum.

⁸ UNDP. 2018. *Human Development Report*. New York.

⁹ World Bank. 2014. *The World Bank in Pakistan. Partners in Development*. Islamabad, Pakistan. Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/pakistan/publication/world-bank-in-pakistan-partners-in-development> (accessed 11 February 2019)

¹⁰ *Op. Cit.* FAO, 2015

¹¹ World Bank Development Indicators. Available at: https://databank.worldbank.org/data/country/PAK/556d8fa6/Popular_countries (accessed 11 February 2019)



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Under-nutrition in Pakistan is one of the most serious problems affecting infants, children and women of reproductive age. It is estimated that 44 percent of children under five years of age are stunted, 32 percent are underweight, 15 percent suffer from acute undernutrition and one in five children are born with low birth weight. Pakistan also had the second highest incidence of underweight children in the region¹². Under-nutrition in Pakistan is associated with food insecurity, poor diet quality and quantity, high rates of infection and gender inequality. The National Nutrition Survey¹³ further indicates that 58 percent of households in Pakistan are food insecure, with hunger at nearly 30 percent across the country. Under-nutrition in Pakistan is strongly correlated to poverty: for example, children from households in the lowest income quintile are twice as likely to be underweight than children from the highest income quintile.

3) Sindh Province

3.a) Population and Agriculture

The estimated population of Sindh Province in 2014 was 42.4 million people¹⁴, with half of them living in rural areas. In 2015, the Planning and Development Department of the Government of Sindh considered Sindh as the poorest and most food deprived province of the country, with 71 percent of households suffering food insecurity. Furthermore, the rural areas of Sindh have among the highest incidences of poverty in Pakistan—53 percent of the population in rural Sindh live below the poverty line. In 2012, it was estimated that 7.74 million people were employed in rural areas, the majority of them working as landless sharecroppers (i.e. peasants and tenants/*haris*) and wage workers on farms¹⁵. Agriculture therefore has an important role in reducing poverty and food insecurity because the sector is the backbone of the province in providing half of its revenue.

Rural society in Sindh Province is heterogeneous and highly complex. The distribution of power is along the lines of ethnicity, religion, gender, political affiliation and origin. It follows traditional rules, which define the relationship between the poor and the ruling class. Stratification along poverty lines is low with the majority of the village population poor or very poor and consists of *haris*, agricultural labourers and marginal owners-cum-tenants. The mobility of women is generally restricted.

¹² World Bank. 2018. *When Water Becomes a Hazard: A Diagnostic Report on The State of Water Supply, Sanitation, and Poverty in Pakistan and Its Impact on Child Stunting*. World Bank, Washington, DC.

¹³ Government of Pakistan. 2011. *National Nutrition Survey*. Islamabad.

¹⁴ Government of Sindh. 2015. Population Welfare Department.

¹⁵ Hari Welfare Association Sindh. 2016. *State of Peasants Rights in Sindh*.



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In Sindh Province, similar to other provinces in Pakistan, farm size distribution is highly skewed – with 85 percent of the land owned by less than two percent of the population. According to 2010 census¹⁶, Sindh Province has 1.12 million farms spread over a farm area of nearly four million hectares (ha), with an average farm size of 3.56 ha. Details are provided below:

Farm Size	Farm Coverage		Farmed Area		
	Number	Percentage	Ha	Average Size (ha)	Percentage
Small (0-5 ha)	926,700	83	1,510,000	1.63	38
Medium (6-20 ha)	161,900	15	1,560,000	9.68	39
Large (more than 20 ha)	26,700	2	917,800	34.41	23
Total	1,115,300	100	3,987,800	3.56	100

Most of the small farm holdings are owner operated, while medium and large-size farms are generally operated by *haris*. The main crops produced in Sindh Province are wheat and fodder (in the *rabi* winter season) and cotton, sugarcane, rice, maize, oil seeds and pulses (in the *kharif* summer season). Homestead fruits and vegetables are produced in both seasons.

3.b) Landlord and *haris* relationship

The vast majority of the rural population are peasants who are tenant farmers/*haris* and sharecroppers. Most farm families lack clear and legally enforceable tenure over the farmland upon which their livelihoods depend, leaving them vulnerable to poverty and exploitation. The existing sharecropping tenancy system is historically deep-rooted and perpetuates the deeply entrenched poverty of tenants and farm labour through unbalanced revenue-sharing and cost-sharing arrangements and a complex system of dependencies. Changes over time, the influx of migrants and the introduction of modern tractor-based technologies have altered the relationship to the disadvantage of the *hari*. The landlords meet the *haris*' needs (i.e. for agriculture inputs, food consumption, social events, emergencies, etc.) through advances. The landlords also keep the accounts, transactions are rarely transparent and landlords often over-value inputs and under-value outputs. Contracts tend to be oral, with a minimum contract period of one year. However, even if these accounts were managed openly, *haris* extremely low literacy rates inhibit their control over any entities.

¹⁶ Government of Pakistan. 2015. *Agricultural Statistics of Pakistan 2013-2014*. Islamabad.



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The predominant sharecropping arrangements between landlords and *haris* is based on equal sharing of cash inputs, except for the costs of seeds, irrigation water, harvesting labour and land revenue charges, which are provided by the landlord. All of the labour required for land and seedbed preparation and crop husbandry is provided by the *haris*. However, crop production is shared equally between the landlords and the *haris*. In reality, and in breach of the Sindh Tenancy Act, *haris* are coerced to share the seed cost as well, and provide free labour (known as *wangar*) to the landlord's own farming operations.

Haris therefore fall into debt through advances they receive from the landlords in cash or in kind to meet costs of cultivation or simply to cover regular household consumption requirements. The expectation is that the account is settled at the time of the harvest, but in reality, the debt accumulates from one year to the next, as the share of the production is not enough to survive, let alone pay off the loans. *Haris* are not allowed to leave their landlord unless they clear their accumulated debt, and therefore become "bonded". If a *hari* is allowed to move, the new landlord pays a cash advance and takes over the accumulated debt. The size of the seasonal loans range from USD 300 to more than USD 1,200. Indebtedness is widespread, ranging from 70 to 100 percent of *hari* households. In many cases, the amount of the debt has doubled or tripled as a result of the 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015 floods and 2013 drought, as *haris* seek further loans to compensate for the loss of crops and purchase household consumables¹⁷.

The relationship between the landlord and the *haris* is far more than an economic arrangement. It is a complex system, with advantages and disadvantages for both sides, but, from a contemporary perspective, it is a highly imbalanced "patron-client" relationship of servitude. The control over major resources (land and water) is in the hands of the landlord, who also decides on the crops to cultivate and on the use of the family labour. The landlord may also ask the *hari* or his family members for labour without payment (locally known as "*begar*"). On the other side, the *hari*-landlord relationship is also one of respect, with the landlord appreciating agricultural knowledge and skills and the commitment of the *hari* for his work. For the *hari*, the landlord provides continuity and stability in the labour arrangement and credit, in cash or in kind, when needed. Trust and confidence have therefore also been characteristics of the relationship in some ways. However, the system also provides numerous opportunities for abuse, with ethnic, political, religious and gender dimensions increasing this likelihood. Moreover, the system breaks down in times of natural

¹⁷ *Op. Cit.* FAO, 2015



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disaster and crop failure (e.g. 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014 and 2015 floods and 2013 drought) when *haris* are not able to repay loans to landlords and become increasingly indebted and “bonded”¹⁸.

The relationship of debt bondage is a politically sensitive issue. Landlords in Sindh Province, government representatives and other power holders are reluctant in recognizing the existence of bonded labour, using a variety of strategies. Some argue that the phenomenon is culturally deep-rooted and cannot be understood by outsiders and discussing it has frequently been interpreted as threatening the existing power structure. Others agree to a limited number of abuses. However, the application of specific legislation against bonded labour – namely the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992 – to agricultural labour has been questioned and is under review.

The weak relationship between landlords and *haris* is also inhibiting the adoption of best practices in farming operations. As *haris* depend on the landlords to invest in inputs on their behalf, it strains the landowner’s investment capacity hence they shy away in adopting the recommended production packages. As in case of crop failure or damage due to extreme weather or natural disasters, the investment on behalf of *haris* is blocked until the next harvest. This also discourages the landlords from making any medium or long-term investment in land and water improvement. Similarly *haris* do not make any efforts to pay back in more than a year as they do not have secure tenure. In pilot projects, FAO has demonstrated that improvements in land tenure security are closely linked to increases in farm productivity and income generation, and the promotion of new and improved climate-smart agriculture, post-harvest management and value chain development.

There are approximately 12 million women home-based workers (HBWs) in Pakistan with the majority operating in Sindh and Punjab Provinces. With the exception of traditional work in the farming sector, women were mostly engaged in employment inside of their homes, where more than 90 percent of adult women are HBWs, of which five percent also work as daily labour and peasants. They are not recognised as workers and, in most cases, are not registered with any social security institution and not protected under any law, which adds to their vulnerability. In recent years natural disasters have devastated women’s livelihoods, whereby poorer women of landless households in Sindh Province have also undertaken home-based work such as stitching and sewing enterprises as one of their risk mitigating strategies. Women

¹⁸ Under the Bonded Labour (Abolition) Act (1992), any cash or inputs advanced to *haris* by landlords is prohibited – both parties would have broken the law.



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HBWs, particularly of *hari* families, therefore urgently need to enhance their access to natural resources, skills development, micro-finance and social security in Sindh Province.

3.c) Land related legal and policy frameworks

In Sindh Province, the main regulatory framework for the relationship between landlord and *haris* is the Sindh Tenancy Act, promulgated in 1950 as a result of civil unrest. The Act guarantees protection of the rights of the weaker party, the *haris*. However, many of its provisions are no longer appropriate to address contemporary issues, due to the socio-economic changes occurred since its promulgation almost 70 years ago. Apart from the Act, the current land regulatory framework is mainly derived from the Land Revenue Act of 1967 and the Registration Act of 1908. The provincial revenue legislation provides for recordkeeping of settlement record by type of land, ownership record, operational status, mutations and inheritance, land transactions under the authority of district and provincial Revenue Department officials. In parallel, Sindh Province has a well-developed and highly diverse body of customary laws governing land and water rights that may differ within the provincial boundary based on tribal affiliation and ethnic groups. In the case of disputes, the aggrieved party can approach for redressal to the established court system or the informal tribunals known as *Jirga* (council of respectable people). If the dispute is resolved at the *Jirga* level, it is generally ratified by the court, or can be contested if one of the parties does not agree with the *Jirga* decision.

The STA regulates the individual relationship between landowner and *hari*, their sharecropping arrangements and establishes the rights and obligations of each party, while the administrative regulations at the district level dictate how the different service providers (co-ordinated by the office of the District Co-ordination Officer (DCO)) should engage with them. The STA was amended in 2009, but implementation and enforcement by the Provincial Government is still an issue. Some civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are now using the Amendment to justify their social empowerment initiatives¹⁹.

The current governance system creates linkages between the public service providers and the landlords through the revenue, irrigation and agriculture services. The *haris* have no direct financial obligation to the Government and therefore have little to no formal relationship with any of the land-related line agencies. The provisions of STA (the ones that are still relevant and appropriate) have not been systematically

¹⁹ *Op. Cit.* FAO, 2015



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implemented, leading to a system where the individual landholdings operate in isolation. In the past, all attempts made to improve the *haris*' conditions through land reforms and redistribution have fallen short.

In early 1970's some efforts were made to enforce STA. Hari Committees, consisting of political activists, were constituted in the rural areas as a redressal mechanism to aid the *haris* redress their grievances. To counter this, most landowners started either ejecting the *haris* or not allowing them to cultivate the same parcel of land for more than two years. This led to civil unrest that resulted in widespread conflicts and litigations. The *Hari Committees* were also accused of instigating and inciting the disputes. The large-scale farmers were able to insulate themselves from the *haris*' awareness to seek assistance from the *Hari Committees* owing to their socio-political influence and with the connivance of Revenue Department staff. Nonetheless, most of the small and medium-scale landowners accused *Hari Committee* members of subjecting them to undue harassment. Consequently, under the political pressure the role of the *Hari Committees* was diluted and later discontinued²⁰.

4) Addressing the issues – Improved tenancy

Aiming to address these issues, FAO, together with ILO and UN-Women, implemented an initial project in Sindh (2013-2016) whose overall goal was to restore and protect the livelihoods and empower poor and vulnerable peasants (men, women, boys and girls) dependent on feudal and tribal landholding and farming systems and affected by droughts, floods and tenure insecurity.

A key feature of this project was addressing the tenure insecurity affecting *haris*. At the time, it was clear that the troubled relationships between landlord and *haris*, in addition to prevent the enjoyment of land related human rights, was also hampering agriculture productivity. Without tenure security and in a context of lack of trust, both landlords and *haris* would not undertake any kind of improvement that would make land more productive or enhance resilience. The weak relationship between landlords and *haris* was also inhibiting the adoption of best practices in farming operations. As *haris* depend on the landlords to invest in inputs on their behalf, it strains the landowner's investment capacity hence they shy away in adopting the recommended production packages. As in case of crop failure or damage due to extreme weather or natural disasters, the investment on behalf of *haris* is usually blocked until the next harvest. This also discourages the landlords from making any medium or long-term investments in land and water improvement.

²⁰ *Op. Cit.* FAO, 2015



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Thus, to address these issues the project introduced the use of transparent (written) agreements between *haris* and landlords. The process of negotiation of these in-itself opened the way for more constructive relationship between the parties. The agreements have been implemented through participatory mapping and engagement with the landlords which thus engage all parties. These did not establish new sets of conditions but clarified the conditions that had previously rested on word of mouth and were thus not transparent. The agreements also established a clause clarifying that free compulsory labour was no longer acceptable. This provided clarity for tenancy agreements so that inordinate demands were not made on the *haris*, reducing need for unnecessary negotiation and with it opportunity for conflict.

Through the engagement process and transparency, the tenancy agreements have resulted in the conditions being less abused reducing conflict between landlords and *haris*. In some cases, the agreements have enabled the *hari* to achieve 2 year agreements, giving greater certainty to their livelihoods than seasonal arrangements at the whim of the landlord/owner. This security encouraged men and women *hari* to have interest and apply the improved agricultural practices introduced by the project. This has been conducted with both men (FAO) and women (UN Women) as signatories. Being signatories of the agreements boosted women confidence contributing in practical ways to their security as well as their sense of recognition.

The project's final independent evaluation noted that its activities were "*generally quite effective and in some cases impressively and ground breaking (...) as in the case of achieving written tenancy agreements*"²¹. The evaluation flagged the agreements potential to pave the way to more constructive favourable terms for both parties in a long-term perspective. Moreover, it was noted that a social dialogue was started between the agriculture employers and the workers. Finally, the evaluation concluded that in connection with the more constructive environment created by the agreements, "improvements in production were substantial and thus compelling". Improved agricultural practices introduced by farmer field schools showed the greatest uptake with 50-100 percent additional households applying improved practices within a single year. This included mainly improved practices (e.g. ridging seeding, multiple cropping) as well as interventions that required cash investment (e.g. laser-levelling), which normally would not expect to see further uptake.

²¹ International Labour Organization. 2016. Final independent evaluation of Livelihood Restoration and Protection and Sustainable Empowerment of Vulnerable Peasant Communities in Sindh Province (OSRO/PAK/206/UNO). Islamabad.



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Independent Evaluation Key Remarks

Tenancy: this is long regarded as an intractable obstacle to livelihood development in the area. The ‘transparent tenancy agreements were achieved for 2414 (1200 households, by FAO and 1214 by UN Women) directly provided security of land access to vulnerable farmers. At a more profound level provided an entry point to begin to address the inequitable tenancy system.

Emerging good practices: (...) 2. The project has made a start on addressing an untouchable issue of sharecropper tenancy by (a) including activities that would engage the landlords/owner constructively (e.g. farmer field schools) so gaining their inclusion, and (b) not confronting the unfavourable conditions directly, but working on the framework conditions (written tenancy agreements) that would create transparency and later a framework for further dialogue.

Source: *Op. Cit.* ILO, 2016

4.a) Project: Improved Land Tenancy in Sindh Province

Aiming to upscale and expand the positive results achieved by the above-mentioned project, FAO in support to the Government of Sindh developed a follow-up project with financial support from the European Union. The Improved Land Tenancy in Sindh Province (ILTS) is a 48 months projects started in 2017, aiming to improve livelihoods and promote poverty alleviation in Pakistan, as well as sound management of natural resources, in particular for female and male smallholder farmers and other users of natural resources through improved land tenure and governance.

ILTS goes a step further in comparison to the previous one. The project will expand geographical coverage and upscale the use of informal tenancy agreements while gathering best practices and lessons learned, engaging with a wide range of stakeholders and promoting policy dialogue. In the context of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), the project aims at influencing improvements in legal and policy frameworks. In relation to rights and responsibilities related to tenure, the VGGT refers that ‘*States should strive to ensure responsible governance of tenure because land, fisheries and forests are central for the realization of human rights, food security, poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods, social stability, housing security, rural development, and social and economic growth*’ (VGGT, par. 4.1). Furthermore, the VGGT states that ‘*(...) all forms of tenure should provide all persons with a degree of tenure security which guarantees legal protection against forced evictions that are inconsistent with States’ existing obligations under national and international law, and against harassment and other threats*’ (VGGT, par. 4.4), which



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reinforces the importance of tenure security for the *haris* and suppression of detrimental practices such as “bounded” work.

An important part of ensuring responsible governance of tenure in Sindh’s is working on tenure security among *haris*. Thus, the positive environment created by the agreements between *haris* and landlords can be replicated while lessons learned and best practices eventually embedded within provincial and local regulations. In this sense, the project will demonstrate the merits of “responsible governance of tenure” by creating an enabling environments for enhanced farming operations – and make the necessary recommendations to the Government of Sindh so best practices are mainstreamed in relevant regulations.

In a context of more balanced relationships between landlords and *haris*, ILTS will provide support to enhance agricultural practices through farmer field schools and rural extension, which will lead to enhance productivity and food security. Additional information about ILTS is provided in the annex.

5) Conclusion

Access to land and land distribution are deeply rooted issues that have not been addressed in Pakistan so far, despite considerable efforts throughout different land reform attempts. The approach established by the initial FAO-ILO-UN Women project, which is now being expanded and upscaled throughout ILTS is an instance of good practices that can partially address the issues leading to enhanced tenure security.

Enhancing tenure security and creating an enabling environment for collaboration between landlords and *haris* contributed to improve agricultural productivity as it was demonstrated earlier in this document. Even if it was not possible to address the underlining political issues causing tenure insecurity, which was/is beyond the scope of the projects – by using alternative methods like the informal tenure agreements it was possible to ensure more balanced and equitable relationships at ground level, which in turn resulted in improved agricultural productivity. The impact of these agreements may also have far-reaching effects that cannot be quantified. Namely, the agreements became a basis for a social dialogue and understanding between the involved parties. Over time, the good practices they promote may become embedded in the fabric of the society changing dynamics on a positive way.

Furthermore, considering that land issues are closely linked to a wide range of human rights, enhancing tenure security as described earlier paved the way for better enjoyment of human rights such as the right to freedom, shelter, food and adequate standard of living.



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Mainstreaming the successful strategies and methodologies designed by the project into policy and legal frameworks is an alternative to enhance tenure security in a more sustainable and systematic way, which can lead to agriculture development and food security throughout the whole province. More importantly, that is an alternative to promote the enjoyment of land related human rights by the most poor and vulnerable in rural areas – leaving no one behind. FAO and the EU are committed to keep supporting the Government of Pakistan in this important endeavour.



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Annex: ILTS at a Glance

Output 1: Legal, institutional and administrative framework for responsible land and water governance, including environmental aspects, is implemented by considering local requirements.

Given that land governance is of high political sensitivity in Sindh Province, Output 1 will focus on the development of an institutional and administrative framework for responsible land and water governance through the implementation of the VGGT. By developing a VGGT implementation strategy, it will support enforcement of STA “to regulate relationships between landowners and sharecroppers, their sharecropping arrangements and establish the rights and obligations of each party”. The strategy will aim at promoting the progressive realisation of land related human rights of vulnerable and marginalised people such as peasant farmers and *haris* to adequate nutritious food, poverty reduction, sustainable livelihoods, rural development, environmental protection and sustainable social and economic development.

Output 2: Enhanced capacity of stakeholders in land management from Sindh Province and targeted districts in order to promote VGGT and improve landholding security of men and women peasant farmers and *haris*.

Output 2 will foster an enabling environment for improved tenure governance by strengthening public administration and civil society capacity to better fulfil their respective roles in supporting the development, implementation and monitoring of landlord - *hari* tenancy agreements. By working on strengthening different aspects of the land tenure governance system – instead of focusing exclusively on the tenants – the project is anticipated to result in more predictable and sustainable access to land and irrigated water supplies by tenants, improved and more transparent services for both landlords and tenants and better planning capacity leading to increased farm productivity, food and nutrition security and income generation and better prospects for rural development.

The conditions of the tenants in the target areas are expected to progress due to the improvement and increased predictability of their relationships with their landlords, to the increased productivity of the land and to the enhanced capacity to understand their rights and responsibilities.

Furthermore, landlords and *haris* face similar problems with regard to agricultural production in Sindh Province, i.e. lack of access to quality inputs, irrigation water, government extension services and markets and low farm-gate prices. However, *haris* are more vulnerable to low productivity and natural disasters given their share-cropping relationship with landlords. They are disproportionately affected because landlords are now tending to invest in off-farm enterprises (and neglecting the seasonal needs



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of tenants) and seasonal loans to *haris* are not related to production levels, their farm-gate prices are often exploited by landlords and traders, their debts are accumulating and their “bonded” situation is worsening.

Output 2 will, therefore, also focus on the transfer of knowledge and skills to 12,600 vulnerable peasant farm families and progressive landlords in VGGT and nutrition-sensitive climate smart agriculture – through group-based and market-led applied research and participatory extension approaches such as farmer field schools (FFSs) and women open schools (WOSs) – in order to grow and protect their farm production capacities and to strengthen the land tenancy/share cropping relationships between both parties on a sustainable basis.

Output 3: Enhanced capacity of district authorities, local institutions, FOs and CSOs to promote and contribute to transparent and rights-based land governance (i.e. VGGT and community-based NRM and DRR).

Output 3 focuses on strengthening the institutional and technical capacity of CSOs and farmers’ organisations to promote and adopt community-level VGGT sensitive community-based natural resources management and disaster risk reduction approaches to protect equitable access to land and rural infrastructure.

The Project’s goals will not only improve the relationships between landlords and their tenants and labourers but build partnerships between government line departments/agencies (i.e. agriculture, livestock, irrigation, labour, women’s development and vocational training), landowners’ associations (e.g. Sindh Chamber of Agriculture and Sindh Abadgar Association), peasant and farmer organisations, CSOs and NGOs.