Towards Actualizing the Continuum of Land Rights in Support of Sustainable Development Goals

John Gitau
john.gitau@unhabitat.org
Website: www.unhabitat.org
The continuum of land rights is a powerful concept, or metaphor, for understanding the diversity of existing land tenure arrangements. There exists different tenure arrangements in between the conventionally recognized ‘formal and informal’ tenure.
• Only about 30 per cent of land ownership units are formally registered or accounted for.

• Most of the urban and rural poor, pastoralists, indigenous people, and the marginalized including women, are part of the 70% who have no legal, documented and registered land rights.

• What they have are informal, customary, unwritten and over-lapping land rights and claims.
Land and Sustainable Development Goals

Strengthening land rights is central to ending extreme poverty and promoting resilient societies. Clear, secure land rights create incentives that enhance food security, economic growth, and sustainable development.

- Worldwide, 32% of farms are held by women, compared with 68% for men.
- 50% of forests in the developing world have insecure tenure, which is often a key driver of deforestation.
- 70% of land in developing countries is unregistered - leaving residents more vulnerable to displacement.
- In many countries, land rights and land governance systems are weak. Rights and claims to land are often undocumented and overlapping. Demand for land is rising, fueling competition, conflict, and increasing barriers to access for some groups.

Land issues have played a major role in 27 conflicts in Africa since 1990.
Globally, land use rights of informal settlement residents, families and groups living under customary tenure, indigenous people, pastoralists, refugees etc. are not capable of being integrated into a conventional land administration system.
• Within four prominent goals in the SDGs lie several land related sub-goals and targets with the potential to effect change for sustainable development. (Goals 1, 2, 5, 11)

• Land is indeed one of the most essential pillars of human existence.

• Secure land tenure is a key determinant for human development.
SDGs and the Continuum of Land Rights

- The continuum concept is inclusive in nature.

- Tenure can take a variety of forms along the continuum, including: documented as well as undocumented, formal as well as informal, for individuals as well as groups, including pastoralists and residents of slums and other settlements, which may be legal or extra-legal.
Purpose of the Paper

- The paper presents different experiences on how the use of GLTN land tools such as: the Social Tenure Domain Model, Participatory Enumerations, the Gender Evaluation Criteria, Fit for Purpose Land Administration, among are implemented in Africa, Asia and Latin America towards the actualization of continuum of land rights concept.
GLTN interventions
GLTN interventions Cont’d

“Bottom-up” approaches have been adopted to prove the continuum of land rights concept.
The Continuum of Land Rights Concept at Work

The diagram shows how the continuum of land rights approach is providing opportunity to include the lower income groups to incremental access and improvement of tenure. Through the different interventions, these groups' land rights are incrementally recognized making future formal land registration easier.
Thank You!

www.gltn.net