1. Introductory Background

1.1 Brief History
- Under Ottoman Turkish (1557-1857) & Egyptian rule (1857-1880s)
- Italian colonialism 1890-1941
- British protectorate 1941-1952
- Federation with Ethiopia 1952-1962
- Ethiopian occupation 1962-1991
- 30 years war for liberation came to end in May 1991, formal independence May 1993 after a referendum
1.2 Brief Geography

- Location: North East-Africa – Horn of Africa
- Area: 124,320 sq km
- Population: About 4 million
- Administrative regions: six (6)

1.3 Colonial Period: Cadastre system

- Cadastre system first established- end of 19thc during Italian occupation
- Objective: guaranteeing security of property ownership for Italian settlers
- Registration system: voluntary & mainly confined in urban centres
- Registered property had simple survey plan, plot No, area, owner details
1.4 Cadastre & Notary Offices

- Cadastral Office & Notary Public worked in close collaboration
- During the Ethiopian military rule (1970s) all extra houses were confiscated
- Legal private owners lost security of property ownership
- Registration of private houses discouraged as a bourgeoisie practice
- Both Offices, the Cadastre & Notary narrowly escaped elimination

1.4 Cadastre: Post independence (1991…)

- Nationalized houses returned to rightful original owners
- Cadastre Office served as reliable source of evidence
- New land policy, land & registration laws proclaimed
- Land policy goals: economic development, social justice and equity, security of tenure, political stability, etc.
- Registration of property declared mandatory
1.6 Main features of the land Law

- State ownership of land
- Eritrean citizens have equal right to ‘tiesha’ land (village residence)
- Agricultural plots of land accessed on usufruct basis
- Usufruct rights given for life-time of the individual

Cont’d

- But, usufruct land rights not fully enforced
- Leaseholds are provided for housing, commercial, other social services
- Women have equal rights to land as men
2. Global Overview-Cadastre systems

2.1 General
• Purposes of cadastre systems vary
• Modern cadastre systems multi-purpose

2.2 Western Europe
• Cadastre & land registry systems in W. Europe closely linked
• French cadastre as pioneer not progressed in the link

Cont’d

• French cadastre influence also seen in former African colonies
• Spanish & Italian cadastre systems also partially developed

2.3 British & former colonies
• Compulsory registration in Anglo-Saxon of recent phenomenon
• Torrens system influenced by English law & practices
• Impact OF Torrens System seen in E. Africa & W. Canada
2.4 Northern Europe

- Cadastre system of Denmark integrated like Western Europe
- Swedish & Finish cadastre systems also closely linked; ‘title registration’
- Both systems developed through ‘progressive cadastre’
- Swedish system: automated, online, integrated system of cadastral, land register, land taxation and population census

2.5 Africa

- French & Anglo-Saxon influences
- African countries introducing land register systems
  - Land is primary asset for survival & development
  - But, still poor land governance
- Eritrean Cadastre still mainly traditional & incomprehensive
• Informal settlements present major cadastral challenge to developing countries, e.g. 360 separate settlements around Johannesburg
• Upgrading squatter settlements, a challenge in terms of resources for construction & titling

2.6 Lessons
• Lessons: Cadastral systems not uniform in applications & objectives depending on tradition, policies, etc.

3. The Eritrean Cadastre System

- Mission: ‘To protect & guarantee security of property ownership & rights over land’

3.1 Main mandate of the Office
• Register all land, rights over land, & immovable property & issue license
• As necessary register all tieshe land (village residential land), agricultural usufruct, leasehold, land utilized and unutilized by the state
Cont’d

• Give information on transfer of immovable property for any encumbrances
• Register right holders together with immovable property erected
  - **Vision**: Making registration of immovable property speedy, & easier for all clients’
  - **Core values & Guiding principles**: Objectivity, integrity, team work, innovation, etc.

3.2 Data in the ECO

• Property description: zip code, property address, land use, land plot & building size, building purpose, license No, boundaries, etc
• Proprietorship section: Owners/right holders name, address, personal Id No, spouse name, date of purchase/construction, vendor’s name, address, etc
• Encumbrances: mortgage, pledge, & their release
3.3 Objectives & Strategies

Goals/objectives
• Strengthen capacity to develop & manage modern cadastre system
• Apply mandatory registration of immovable property

Strategies
• Establish and consolidate regional offices
• Develop institutional infrastructure and capacities

Cont’d
• Introduce and utilize up-to-date technology
• Develop awareness within the public about cadastral benefits
• Register land rights, transfers & mortgages in time
• Make the process simple, transparent & less costly
• Charge appropriate fees to ensure self-sustainability
4. Challenges

- Long Liberation wars & ruined economy
- Currently, ‘no peace, no war’ situation diverting resources to national security
- Incomprehensive cadastre: textual & spatial data not integrated
- Inadequate human capacities & limited resources
- Inadequate capacities of regional technical offices
- Absence of Notary at regional levels: No credible & fast transfer of property

5. Lessons Learned & Prospects

- Progressive cadastre - from simple cadastre & land registers to highly developed operating systems; future oriented
- German adaptation of flexible approach- developing system of titles, instead of deeds
- Poor land governance in many African countries, but recognition of rights for women & stakeholder involvement in land policies
- Learning others’ experiences demand insight & skilful application
- Need for comprehensive capacity building efforts
6. Concluding Remarks

- Modern cadastre prerequisite for sustainable development
- Hence not a choice, but a must to develop
- Developing modern cadastre needs serious consideration at the highest level
- Progressive cadastre looks more appropriate

Thank you!

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