

Fit-For-Purpose Land Administration; Guiding Principles for Country Level Implementation

Danilo Antonio (Kenya)

SUMMARY

Solutions to the overall global land issues relate to the alleviation of poverty, social inclusion and stability, investments and economic development, and environmental protection and natural resource management. These land matters are now embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals that form a blueprint for a sustainable future agreed to by world leaders. This new agenda presents a historic and unprecedented opportunity to bring the countries and citizens of the world together to decide and embark on new paths to improve the lives of people everywhere (United Nations, 2015).

Also, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure set out principles and internationally accepted standards for the responsible governance of tenure: public, private, communal, indigenous, customary and informal (FAO, 2012).

This agenda cannot be achieved without having good land governance in place, including the operational component of land administration systems. The Fit-For-Purpose Land Administration should be seen as an enabler for implementing these global standards in developing countries. Even though security of tenure is now at the top of the global agenda, there is a “security of tenure gap” between countries that have efficient and effective land administration systems in place and those that do not. On a global scale, the distribution is currently about 30 per cent that have and 70 per cent that do not have systems in place.

Attempts have been made for many decades to establish land administration systems in developing countries without much success. Constraints relate to a range of legal, institutional and political issues, but also to the fact that the implementation of traditional, Western-style land administration systems is simply too costly, time consuming and capacity demanding. It is estimated that with

current rates and methods it will take many decades, probably centuries, to achieve global coverage.

The Fit-For-Purpose Land Administration: Guiding Principles for Country Implementation. A joint publication of Global Land Tool Network and Kadaster International provides guidance for closing the security of tenure gap that exists in most developing countries, where often up to 90 per cent of the land and the population are outside the formal land administration systems. However, the guide also relates to more developed countries that do not have complete land registration/cadastral coverage or where the maintenance of land information has failed. The guide focuses on providing security of tenure for all. However, it is recognized that by providing the spatial, legal and institutional frameworks for this purpose, the frameworks also provide the basis for building land valuation and taxation systems, as well as systems for land-use planning and control. These principles should not be interpreted as prescriptive, but rather as providing direction and guidance for designing a country specific strategy for implementation. It is hoped that this guide will be instrumental in paving the way to implementing sustainable and affordable land administration systems in developing countries, enabling security of tenure for all and effective management of land use and natural resources. This, in turn, will facilitate economic growth, social equity and environmental sustainability.

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