

**Working Group on Land**  
**Regular Meeting Global Donor Working Group on Land**  
**25 March 2021**

**Agenda:**

1. Pending issues from last meeting:
  - a. Term of the chairmanship.
  - b. ILC participation in the Group meetings.
2. Update by members..
3. Briefing by the GLTN on the outcome of the Arab Land Conference.
4. Calendar of Events (attached).
5. AOB

**Participants:**

- Javier Molina Cruz (FAO) – Chair of the Global Donor Working Group on Land
- Amy Regas (Place Fund)
- Dominik Wellmann (GIZ)
- Christian Graefen (GIZ)
- Etienne Coyette (EU)
- Francesca Romano (FAO)
- Gemma Betsema (RVO Netherlands)
- Chris Penrose Buckley (FCDO)
- Jennifer Lisher (MCC)
- Mathieu Boche (AFD)
- Ombretta Tempra (GLTN)
- Everlyne Nairesiae (UN Habitat)
- Maurizio Navarra (GDP Secretariat Coordinator)

**Minutes**

**1. Pending issues:**

- a. **Term of the Chairmanship:** The Group decided to keep the current format of the Chairmanship, that is, the Chair's term is for one year after which the Chairmanship is handed over to the Co-Chair.
- b. **ILC participation in the Group meetings:** The Group decided to keep regular meetings (intended to discuss internal issues) closed to members only. However, the Group will also schedule meetings to address specific issues to which partners will be invited to participate.

**2. Update by Members:**

- a. **Everlyne Nairesiae (UN-Habitat):** There is no update yet on how far the drafting of the UN General Comment on Land and Human Rights has advanced. UN-Habitat will follow up and inform the Group of any updates.

- b. **Francesca Romano (FAO):** The FAO land tenure program is undergoing an extensive review to elaborate a new strategy/framework for the coming years. This exercise involves a wide consultation within FAO, including decentralized offices and some partners. A new strategy/framework is expected to be ready by May and FAO looks forward to briefing the GDWGL about it.
- c. **Amy Regas:** Over the past two years, Omidyar Network has invested in two initiatives focused on the ethics around location data -- one called EthicalGEO (<https://ethicalgeo.org/>) out of the American Geographical Society and one called the Benchmark Initiative (<https://benchmarkinitiative.com/>) out of the UK's Ordnance Survey. This week, these two initiatives jointly launched the Locus Charter. The Locus Charter proposes a set of international principles to assist users of geospatial data to make more informed decisions about the ethical uses of location data. Anyone who would like to learn more, or who might want to join the Locus Charter community, can find more information here: <https://ethicalgeo.org/locus-charter/>

### 3. Briefing by the GLTN on the outcome of the Arab Land Conference:

The Second Arab Land Conference took place in Cairo, Egypt on 22-24 February 2021, under the patronage of the Egypt Ministry of Housing and Urban Communities and led by UN-Habitat, Global Land Tool Network and World Bank in partnership with BMZ, GIZ, NELGA, Dubai Land Department and ESRI. The Conference achieved its objectives of increasing the visibility of land governance agenda, promote coordination and collaboration among regional land stakeholders, share lessons, knowledge and capacity.

The Conference had 34 sessions on a diverse range of land governance topics, cutting across the urban-rural and humanitarian-development divides. It benefitted from 184 speakers and was attended by 871 registered participants – including 40 percent women and 6 ministers – and additional 5315 connections directly through the zoom links were recorded. Very good coverage across the region was registered.

Key messages that emerged from the Conference include the following:

- a. Land governance and land management underpin the achievement of inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development, peace, stability and human rights in the Arab region;
- b. Need for scaling-up land-based interventions that do not discriminate based on gender, age, ethnicity or belonging to minority groups;
- c. Urgency of addressing women's land rights and youth land rights in the region;
- d. Need of reliable land data for developing an evidence-based national and regional policy discourse and to promote transparency;
- e. Importance of public-private partnerships & centrality of private sector & engagement of the business community to achieve the SDGs;
- f. Importance of considering transitional land administration mechanisms to enable post-conflict recovery and reconstruction while protecting the housing, land and property rights of displaced people, returnees and vulnerable communities.
- g. Importance of reforming and improving land administration to address current and future challenges: climate change, land degradation, water scarcity, conflicts over land resources, unregulated urbanization;
- h. Technology and smart solutions for land management; electronic and digital archiving systems and block-chain technologies offer opportunities to strengthen land and property rights;

- i. Fit-for-purpose land administration approaches were recommended to speed up process that are slow, expensive and not accessible to most of the people;
- j. Capacity development is crucial to advance the land governance agenda in the region.

The next steps include the dissemination of the Conference's findings and results, the follow up on bilateral commitments made, continue the ongoing work of the Arab Land Initiative and partners, continue the campaign on Women's Land Rights in the Arab states launched at the Conference, and prepare the ground for the next phase of the Arab Land Initiative.

#### **4. Calendar of Events:**

The Calendar of Events was presented and members agreed that they will send their comments or contributions (if any) in writing to the Secretariat, which will update the Calendar accordingly.

#### **5. AOB:**

- a. Amy Regas (Place Fund) informed about an interesting work/initiative in India, concerning a new methodology to register land records, which could be of interest to members of the GDWGL. Briefly, the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has created a "Land Records and Services Index", that includes a methodology to analyze factors such as digitization, ease of procuring records, and quality of land records and services. They measure this across different Indian states and over time enabling them to compare how states are progressing in modernizing their property records. Apparently this initiative is very innovative and GDWGL members may be interested in discussing if this could be adapted/applied to other countries (innovations on land records for instance).
- b. The Chair raised the issue of the land map move from the Secretariat to the Land Portal. In brief, there is a possibility to transfer the land map to the Land Portal, which can be done through a phased process. The first step would be to move the platform to the Land Portal's website for which part of the funds (currently with the Secretariat) may be used. In this connection, the Land Portal has prepared a comprehensive proposal (proposal and budget attached to this message) which envisions the transfer and subsequent maintenance and mainstreaming activities. This require some funding (EUR 47,700, i.e. USD 58,000) which at this time, is not fully available. Consequently the proposal – pending the identification of the necessary funds to cover the financial gap of USD 35.000 – is to proceed just with the move at this time, with a view to mobilize additional funding for those activities afterwards. Members agreed with the first step, that is, to proceed with the transfer.

#### **Follow Up:**

1. Members will send their comments/feedback on the Calendar of Events (if any) to the Secretariat, which will update the Calendar accordingly.
2. The National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) of India will be invited to present its h "Land Records and Services Index" initiative to the Group. This will be an opportunity to learn about this new methodology dealing with issues such as digitization, ease of procuring records, and quality of land records and services.
3. The Group welcome the suggestion by FAO to brief members about its new land tenure program strategy/framework once it is finalized.
4. The Secretariat will inform the ILC about the decision corning its participation in the Group's regular meetings.