



Global Donor Platform
for Rural Development

Back to office report

Travellers:

Reinhild Ernst, Martina Karaparusheva, Christian Mersmann and Romy Sato

Date

09 Oct – 13 Oct 2017

Destination

CFS 44, Rome, Italy

Purpose and expectations

The purpose of the travel was to use the opportunity created by CFS to meet with several of the members of the Platform to discuss bilaterally and in specially organised events, topics related to the work of the Platform and future activities. There were separate meetings on issues such as inclusive agribusiness and trade and on land. The secretariat reported from several events on rural youth employment and gender empowerment. It established contacts with colleagues and specialists, who can contribute to the AGA and the further development of the topic of gender equality. The secretariat took the opportunity to make several interviews on rural youth employment and the successful advocacy efforts of the Global Donor Working Group on Land to re-classify the land indicator under SDG1 from Tier III to Tier I.

Mailing list

co-chairs, G500 and 03b

Persons met/participants

Ammad Bahalim (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), Karim Hussein (GFRAS), William Cobbett (Cities Alliance), Jesse Coleman (Columbia Center for Sustainable Investment), Milu Muyanga (Michigan State University), Keith Polo (Cultivating New Frontiers in Agriculture), Laurence Coste (Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France), Jesper Ravn Hansen (MFA-Denmark), Melvin Spreij and Marlynne Hopper (STDF/WTO), Jennifer Chow (USAID), Bettina Prato and Zachary Bleicher (SAFIN/IFAD), Carmen Torres (ECDPM), several members of the GDWGL and the GDPRD.

Content

Rural youth employment and entrepreneurship for food and nutrition security

The event organised by the European Commission and BMZ focused on the importance of rural youth employment for development and nutrition and food security. The panelists saw the biggest opportunity for job creation in the food system and along agricultural value chains. The growing urbanisation and the demographic developments put demand pressure on the agricultural sector and food systems. At the same time this pressure creates opportunities for use of new technologies, mechanization, for low- and high-skilled jobs, overall making the sector more attractive to young people.

Germany launched the new rural youth employment initiatives under its G20 presidency. Now that the international community's attention is focused on the young generation, joint efforts targeting youth will help make the difference, promote employment, tackle causes of conflict and forced displacement and ultimately contribute to reducing poverty. [IFAD and the World Bank released a study](#) that looks exactly into the importance of rural youth and explores possible entry points for development assistance. There are 1.2 billion young people in the world with overall unemployment rate of 30%.



Especially in low-income countries, these numbers are most probably going to continue to grow over the next couple of decades. And it is exactly in these countries that agriculture and farming will remain an important employer. Investments along the value chain, especially in off-farm activities will create the biggest opportunities for jobs creation. The report identified several entry points to promote growth and create jobs, including investments in infrastructure and increasing agricultural productivity. Additionally development agencies should focus on upgrading education and training offers to facilitate food systems transformation and match the skills to labour market needs. Another important target of interventions should be to improve rural business climate and facilitate private sector development. Donor agencies should focus their efforts on promoting policies that foster youth employment. Based on the variety of factors that influence jobs creation, higher level of coordination and enhanced partnerships amongst donors and with partner countries will be required. Partnerships should engage youth, private sector, civil society, governments and partners on equal level, ensuring the ownership of reforms and the sustainability of efforts.

The agricultural sector employs 60% of the total workforce in the ACP region and offers the biggest potential and opportunities for women and youth employment. Germany and the European Commission both called for reforms in rural areas to empower women and youth and create environment that supports entrepreneurship. Reforms based on a coherent effort from all stakeholders to harvest the capacities and opportunities arising from the food sector, to employ the young generation and contribute to ensuring stable food systems and food security. Through policy coherence can donors contribute to bridging the gap between value chain development and nutritional demands, between transformation, urbanization and employment opportunities.

Women's rights and role in food crises, conflicts and famine

The Civil Society Mechanism Coordination Committee organised this event to discuss the roles and struggles of women in crises. The panellists all agreed that women face multiple levels of vulnerability in crises and in conflicts. The number of women suffering from malnourishment triples in time of protracted crises, with 50% of women in Afghanistan being iron deficient with special vulnerability of pregnant women. In time of crises, women suddenly become the heads of households. They lead the households with smaller capacities, fewer rights, no recognition and limited access to resources, which often results in food insecurity for the whole family. Regulatory frameworks often do not leave any other choice to women, forcing them to work informally, with no rights, security and under bad conditions. In food crises, when there is no production, they are the first to suffer. Therefore, women issues need to be present in the political, health and economic discussion in order to find a solution.

Some of the structural inequalities women have to deal with include the often-missing land administration that recognizes women's land rights. In crises women are often the victims of land grabbing, which leaves them with no land, no livestock, no food, no income, thus, leading to severe food insecurity. Such issues of women's rights and vulnerability to food security do not occur only in situations of emergency and conflict. Therefore, policy interventions should aim at root causes such as empowering women and educating, not only women of their land rights, but also men. The international community needs to focus on raising the conciseness that women's rights are connected to the right to food.

The priorities identified by the panel included disaggregating data, breaking down the definition of households to focus on women, measure access to inputs and information, facilitate women organisations, implement the international agreements, especially the ones from CFS relating directly to food security, support the civil society and help governments, cultures transition to equality.



Specifically, the panellists called for reforming trade systems to facilitate the implementation of rights to food.

Women's empowerment – advancing SDG5 and SDG2 by focusing on interconnections

The event was organised by the European Commission and the Private Sector Mechanism to discuss efforts on delivering the SDGs. The inputs focused on interconnections between gender equality and women's empowerment for better food security and nutrition.

The panellists agreed that to have a successful implementation of the Agenda2030 women need to be recognised as agents of change and as an active contributor to economic development. To support this vision, experts from different areas offered their insights. On the one hand side they looked into best examples for empowerment – through education, market access facilitation and active presence of other women as role models. On the other, they reported about hurdles that limit the impact of donor interventions – missing recognition for women's rights and their contribution to economic development, limited access to services, due to informal work and work in the households, just to name a few.

All panellists agreed that the SDGs could be used to facilitate more examples and advertisements of successful women. Interventions should involve the private sector, actively aiming at using the industries to depict women in their power and to create equal working places. Efforts should address governance structures – reforming land administration and facilitating easier access to land rights, promoting organisations of women farmers and providing capacity development efforts with the private sector adapted to the time and role the women have.

FAO-EC Technical Thematic Forum to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the VGGT

The secretariat took part at the FAO-EC Technical Thematic Forum to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the VGGT. The meeting was a great occasion for the land community to stake stock of how the Voluntary Guidelines are being implemented across countries and types of tenure (land, fisheries and forests). Many members of the GDWGL were present and organizing specific sessions where the achievements and future plans of the Group were mentioned. The outcomes of the Forum have been published by FAO here: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7993e.pdf>

In the beginning of the session, a video was presented summarizing the achievements in the implementation of the VGGT and followed by introductory remarks by FAO's Director General. Both the video and the DG made reference to the Global Donor Working Group on Land and to data coming from the Platform's Land Governance Programme Map: ca. 200 ongoing projects to support tenure rights.

Global Donor Working Group on Land Workshop to design the new Work Plan 2018

The GDWGL held a full-day workshop to design their new Work Plan 2018. The initial objective was to design a 3-year roadmap, but the Group decided that priorities are changing very quickly and that an annual work plan would be more helpful. A consultant (Babette Wehrmann) was hired to prepare this workshop and moderate the full-day meeting. By the end of the day, the Group had managed to agree on an advanced draft of the work plan, including a new language for their Vision statement, namely, including references to the VGGTs and women's land rights. Please contact Romy Sato to have access to the advanced draft of the work plan. The final version shall be uploaded to the Group's webpage in January 2018.



Global Donor Working Group on Land - Physical Meeting

The GDWGL organised on this day their second physical meeting of the year, which always takes place during the CFS week. This half-day meeting included a discussion on the achievements in 2017, getting additional feedback on the work plan 2018, and electing the new co-chair (Chris Penrose-Buckley, from DFID, was elected). The minutes will soon be uploaded in the Group's webpage.

The Impact of Increasing Capital Flows to Rural Areas: Experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa

As the world becomes increasingly urban policy makers need to embrace more integrated planning. Recognizing and investing in the urban-rural continuum is globally the cheapest way out of poverty. The experience of Cities Alliance shows that the non-function of urban environments is a consistent feature facing the poorest countries. Several challenges must be addressed: lack of decentralized authority, which prevent more efficient, local-based solutions; the development community operating in silos; and the lack of disaggregated data to compare cities and the impact of urban growth on property rights.

Understanding the structure of domestic investments, that tend to originate from urban-based elites, is difficult and the distinction between domestic and international investment is often blurred. Most available contracts involve a domestic subsidiary owned by an international parent. Some have suggested that domestic investors face less pressure from NGOs regarding compliance with international standards and best practices. And, communities affected by the project may receive less support from civil society in, for example, challenging violations of land-related rights, and the corporate structures may help to veil beneficial ownership.

Milu Muyanga presented evidence of the rise of medium-size farms in different Sub-Saharan countries. The data shows that the areas under small farms are declining, and the number and area coverage of medium-scale farms is growing rapidly (and these farms tend to be held by men and more productive than small farms). The major challenges are how to effectively strengthen land use planning to identify surplus agricultural land; how to encourage access to unutilized land to those who can raise agricultural productivity; and how to provide stronger land rights for women.

The last speaker, Keith Polo, provided the perspective of an organization that works directly with the private sector. He talked about the strong role of SMEs to national economies (51-52% contribution according to the World Bank) and mentioned three main areas where the alignment of the development community and investors are paramount. They include: finance; technical assistance; and infrastructure.

High-Level meeting on the 5th Anniversary of the VGGT

This meeting was meant to present the results of the FAO-EC Technical Thematic Forum (5-6 October) to high-level managers of donor and international organisations. The panel was composed of: José Graziano da Silva (FAO's Director General), Pio Wennbust (Assistant Director General of SDC), Maya Moiwo Kaikai (Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Republic of Sierra Leone), Amira Daoud Hassan Gornass (CFS Chair) and Roberto Ridolfi (EC's Director of the Directorate for Planet and Prosperity, International Cooperation and Development). The high-level panellists emphasized the achievements in the implementation of the VGGT, but also stressed the remaining challenges and priorities such as the need for monitoring, better engagement with the private sector and grassroots movements going beyond the land sector, the inclusion of women, the use of digital technology to improve land governance, as well as the need to make land available for responsible investments, which could benefit particularly the young rural population.



Trade and inclusive agribusiness working group meeting

The Secretariat shared the draft work plan 2017-2018 and asked for feedback; they explained that, despite the interest to have separate groups for the two topics, there was little feedback to communications following the Brighton workshop on IAB on March 2017. For this reason, it has been decided to continue the work of the two work streams connected to each other as much as possible. Christian Mersmann would still cater for needs regarding trade, while Romy Sato would continue supporting the inclusive agribusiness-related activities.

Participants from WTO mentioned that the lack of evidence in the area of inclusive agribusiness is still a major constraint to further engage the private sector in such initiatives. They talked about a case in Malawi where data is missing to make a case for investors to further invest in small farms. The secretariat started engaging with the Smallholder and Agri-Food SME Finance and Investment Network (SAFIN). They suggested to the IAB & Trade work stream to address the issue of “What is inclusive”, which is still not clear. They also offered to be added to the work plan as a source of knowledge & exchange regarding finance for smallholder farmers.

The Secretariat is engaging in the network and will share information with the IAB & Trade Work Stream whenever relevant. Additionally, SAFIN suggested the following initiatives and resources which could be a good source of knowledge for the work stream on inclusive agribusiness:

- Council on Smallholder Agricultural Finance (CSAF) – they have large experience with Monitoring & Evaluation against impact, including a guide on standards for reporting and harmonizing M&E systems.
- G20 Platform on inclusive business – could be helpful precisely because the perspectives are not restricted to those of donors; they also have a segment on agriculture
- Explore all kinds of voluntary standards for inclusive business and how does that relate to agriculture

With regard to the trade topic, SAFIN suggested the Platform to develop a roadmap for taking the Paul Engel’s work to an actionable stage once concluded (not just a PPT or dialogue process). Representatives from USAID mentioned ongoing changes in the New Alliance, particularly that they are strengthening their work on encouraging responsible business conduct. ECDPM offered to be a focal point for knowledge regarding trade issues as well as smallholder agricultural schemes. They have a lot of knowledge particularly on West Africa and on policy (in-)coherences. Carmen Torres pointed out that research shows that trade has not fully supported African countries to improve poverty levels, so it is essential to be more “smart” about how to support trade in the continent.

For more information on the CFS and the secretariat activities, please visit our website <https://www.donorplatform.org/cfs.html>