

## Back to office report

### Travelers

*Romy Sato and Luisa Prior – Donor Platform Secretariat*

### Date

*14 – 18 March 2016*

### Destination

*Washington DC, USA*

### Purpose and expectations

*Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty 2016*

### Persons met/participants

*Marketa Jonasova (World Bank), Lynn Brown (World Bank), Laura Meggiolaro (Land Portal), Terry Parnell (Open Development Mekong), Charlotte Beckh & Elisa Gärtner (IASS) and all participants of the 7<sup>th</sup> physical meeting of the Global Donor Working Group on Land (GDWGL)*

## Meeting with Marketa Jonasova

Marketa informed of a WB event on learning and knowledge sharing at the project level in late March, and that an invitation would be sent to the Secretariat.

Marketa also mentioned the WB's interest in the topics of food quality (including nutrition), inclusive agribusiness, climate-smart agriculture and jobs in agriculture and rural livelihoods. In terms of private sector engagement/inclusive agribusiness, the WB proposed two related activities:

- a. Prepare a handbook on M&E indicators to evaluate projects (updating the Platform's publication "Tracking results in agriculture and rural development in less-than-ideal conditions". Marketa noted that a WB consultant is already collecting materials for such a handbook and a draft version may be sent for comments by Platform members
- b. Organize a donor "deep-dive" workshop in M&E in inclusive agribusiness (possibly in Feb 2017)

Prior to such a workshop, donors would be asked to share a 4-pager paper on their M&E good practices. The papers would cover issues like how to measure nutrition, gender and job creation outcomes in private sector development projects.

### Next steps

Follow up with Marketa on the proposed activities

## Meeting with Lynn Brown (Nutrition)

In a conversation with Lynn Brown about the nutrition work stream of the Global Donor Platform, **three potential focal areas for the Work Plan 2016** were identified, namely: nutrition-sensitive agriculture (NSA), support of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, and food safety (focus on



Aflatoxin & sanitary and phytosanitary or SPS measures).

Lynn Brown also informed about an idea to produce **videos on agriculture and nutrition**. In addition, she currently prepares a **high level breakfast** at the CAADP partners meeting on food safety (12 April). The objectives are to secure high level support for the topic on the continent and high level donor commitment towards no susceptible value chain projects without mitigation.

#### **Next steps**

It was agreed that the secretariat will support the above event as part of the work plan 2016. In addition, the Secretariat will work further on the **Nutrition Work Plan**, adding a roadmap for timeframe and budget. The implementation of most activities under the work plan will depend on members to react/contribute.

### **Meeting with Laura Meggiolaro (Land Portal Foundation)**

Laura Meggiolaro from Land Portal Foundation reiterated the organisation's interest in utilizing country specific information from the [Land Governance Programme Map](#).

The **Land Portal** is the leading online destination for information, resources, innovations and networking on land issues. The Portal allows for the collection, sourcing, and searching of otherwise fragmented and inaccessible data and information on land governance and land use from diverse sources, produced by governments, academia, international organizations, indigenous peoples and NGOs. Besides documenting land rights, the Portal also encourages social information exchange, debate and networking.

#### **Next steps**

Follow up with Land Portal on linking their database to the Land Map's.

### **Meeting with Terry Parnell (Open Development Mekong)**

Terry Parnell expressed keen interest in hyperlinking the Land Governance Programme Map in the new open data website currently being created by Open Development Mekong.

**Open Development Mekong** and related country websites are independent collectors and providers of objective data on development trends in the Mekong region regarding social, economic and environmental development, with a strong focus on land rights and disputes. The Open Development platform facilitates crowd-sourced data-sharing. Anyone may contribute data, which will be published after vetting to check it meets defined open data and metadata standards. All data is publicly available and collected from many sources.

#### **Next steps**

It was agreed to first discuss potential for cooperation within the GDWGL and then get back to the ODM

### **Meeting with Charlotte Beckh & Elisa Gärtner (IASS)**

Prior to the World Bank conference, the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) had provided a short concept note to the GDWGL, outlining a **human-rights based, country-level monitoring approach for VGGT implementation**.



It was informed that the GDWGL would briefly discuss the proposal during its physical meeting on 18 March and inform IASS on any next steps following the WB Conference.

### Opening Ceremony/keynote

The keynote on “urban (land) policies for growth and shared prosperity” at the 2016 Conference was given by **Paul Romer**, Professor of Economics at the Stern School of Business at New York University.

Mr. Romer emphasized that the current transition from rural to urban land is filled with economic, social, and political challenges but can also create many opportunities for socio-economic progress. In order to strengthen and utilize the positive potential of urbanization, creating new urban area requires a minimum plan/grid for the public space. He recommended rapidly growing cities in developing countries need to set aside a substantial amount of public space now in order to be prepared to support a high population density in the future. Such considerations are essential because if formal development is preceded by disorganized and informal development, urban areas will never have enough public space to allow successful urban development.

### Conference Day 1, 15 March 2016

On Day 1 of the Conference, we attended various sessions focusing on 1. Women’s awareness of their legal rights and 2. Implementation of the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (VGGT).

The **sessions on the VGGTs** revealed that four years after their endorsement, global implementation of the VGGTs is going quite well. FAO and its bilateral partners are steadily creating a global awareness amongst governments and other stakeholders of the need for a more inclusive and participatory form of land governance. Even previously reluctant governments now seem prepared to consider the VGGT and similar instruments like the Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI) as a reference point as they move to improve existing or develop new land-related interventions. Frequent reference was made to Sierra Leone as a particularly promising country example in terms of VGGT implementation. In addition, many groups working at grassroots level make use of the VGGTs to reinforce their arguments for change. In order to push governments further to improve land administration, suggestions were made to provide specific capacities at country level, strengthen accountability, apply participatory approaches using VGGT principles and implement the guidelines in linkage with human rights and business agendas.

In contrast to good progress made with overall VGGT implementation, more efforts need to be made to get women into VGGT implementation and **women’s land rights remain insecure** at the global level. Although impressive examples of activism and courage around the world were presented, underlining the growing power of informed and empowered women to transform entrenched gender roles and systems of ownership, a marked policy vs. practice gap continues to confine women’s secure access to land. While strong legal provisions on gender equality and women’s land rights have been introduced in many national frameworks, these are oftentimes not translated into practice. In order to close this gap, a number of suggestions recurred, such as developing robust indicators for implementation in future programmes and policies, harmonizing competing formal, customary and religious legal systems, targeting public awareness of women’s land rights and engaging key actors and duty bearers towards gender sensitive land tenure.

## Conference Day 2, 16 March 2016

The sessions attended by the secretariat on 16 March mainly related to community and collective land rights, transparency and expropriation.

The sessions underlined how the issue of identifying and **registering collective land rights** has become mainstream in many countries, as a basic building block of good land governance and a more inclusive and participatory form of development. Giving local communities a greater role in land management and land administration processes is gaining ground across the globe. Working with local communities to prove and protect their land rights can contribute to a forward-looking vision of their own development which can then feed into wider development planning processes and community-facilitated titling programmes. The campaign [landrightsnow](#) –a global call to action on indigenous and community land rights launched by over 80 organizations from around the globe in March 2016– received particular attention during the conference. Recommendations to further improve recognition of community and collective land rights included the strengthening of participatory practices, awareness building among governments, grassroots legal empowerment, and long-term engagement and support from developing partners.

Another topic repeatedly highlighted in relation to collective land rights was **land transparency**, a subject that receives increasing attention since the G8 summit in 2013. The common denominator in this regard was that lack of transparency in land-related processes leads to inherent tenure insecurity, specifically for those most vulnerable; hence promoting transparency and open development in land governance was deemed crucial for tenure security and informed decision-making. Many open development and open data representatives, but also donors and civil society actors advocated for free sharing and re-using of data for an improved global awareness and accountability.

With regard to **expropriation**, a legal analysis of the public purpose requirement as a potential source of safeguards against arbitrary expropriation was followed by a presentation on the implementation of Rwanda's proactive expropriation law and its outcomes on the population.

## Session by the Global Donor Working Group on Land

On 17 March 2016, the Global Donor Working Group on Land hosted a session on “Good Land Governance in Public and Private Domains: Setting Donors’ Priorities”. The objective was to share and discuss results of [four studies](#) commissioned by the Group in 2015 to guide donors in prioritizing activities and investments in land governance in the next years.

The authors presented their findings and recommendations in highly interlinked areas: open data technologies, multi-stakeholder partnerships, donor coherence and private sector engagement in responsible land investments. A full coverage of this session can be found [here](#).

## 7<sup>th</sup> Physical meeting of the Global Donor Working Group on Land

See [minutes](#) published on the Donor Platform website.

## Further Links, annexes

- Donor Platform Land Conference coverage on [website](#) and [twitter](#)