



Land Governance: Building Trust

A training programme on transparency in Land Administration

Organised by: UN-HABITAT and ITC



Land remains a highly complex and contentious issue, involving economic, social, political, cultural and often religious systems. As spelled out in Article 75 of the Habitat Agenda, there is a strong link between land and poverty, stating "legal access to land is a strategic prerequisite for the provision of adequate shelter for all and the development of sustainable human settlements affecting both urban and rural areas. The failure to adopt, at all levels, appropriate rural and urban land policies and land management practices remains a primary cause of inequity and poverty." Land administration is thus a critical element in the wider development agenda.

Transparency in Land Administration

Transparency is a critical component of a functioning land administration, in particular in view of the scarcity of clear and credible information on land availability and transactions, and the poor dissemination of public information on land rights and policies. The risk of corruption and inequalities are very real in land allocation and management. The consequences to the poor often takes the form of difficult access to land assets, unawareness of land policies and legal frameworks, ignorance about land transactions and prices, misallocation of land rights, land grabbing and abuse.

When in place, transparency can encourage civic engagement and stakeholders' accountability by rendering the public decision making arena more accessible. This in turn strengthens confidence in governments and public agencies, and has a positive economic impact, also on GDP. Many of the general governance principles related to transparency thus appear highly relevant to the land administration field.

A capacity building agenda

In the African context, as well as in many other developing regions, there is a vast demand for skills in the land administration area, including competencies to strengthen transparency. Developing tools in these areas, without simultaneously building capacity to implement them, is unlikely to create a sustainable impact.

UN-HABITAT and ITC have agreed on a joint venture to enhance the capacity concerning transparency in land administration through the design and conduct of a training programme. This collaboration falls within the framework of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), which identifies land management/administration as one of five key thematic focuses for attention and land tool development. It also builds on ongoing work by ITC, including the UNU-ITC School for Land Administration Studies effort to promote the role of land administration worldwide for socio-economic development in less developed countries, based on the principles of good governance.

As a first activity, an Expert Group Meeting on 'Transparency in Land Administration: A Capacity Building Agenda for Africa' was held in Nairobi in January 2007. This meeting brought together representatives from Sub-Saharan Africa and internationally to identify issues and priorities in the land administration-transparency area and a road map for the way forward. The meeting validated the lack of existing training programmes in this specific area and provided suggestions for programme content and target groups for the first training programme in Africa.



Pilot programme in Africa 2007-2008

During 2007-2008, a three-day curriculum will be developed and delivered in four regions in Africa as a start, with possible expansion to other regions to follow. In Africa, programmes will be delivered in:

- (1) Eastern Africa (incl. Rwanda and Burundi),
- (2) Southern Africa (incl. Mozambique and Angola),
- (3) Western Africa (Francophone) (incl. Madagascar), and:
- (4) Western Africa (Anglophone).

Four regional partner institutions will act as focal points in organizing the first set of courses: University College of Lands and Architectural Studies, UCLAS (Tanzania), Polytechnic of Namibia (Namibia), Environmental Development Action in the Third World, ENDA (Senegal) and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, KNUST (Ghana).

The target group will be upstream change agents, including top civil servants, local government leaders, civil society



leaders (including religious leaders and chiefs of customary tenure, where applicable), the media, professional organizations (private sector) and academic professionals. Each regional course will have a broad representation by government, civil society, media etc.

The first pilot-course will be delivered in 2007 in Ghana for Anglophone West Africa. The other three partner institutions will be invited to this pilot-course, for further adaptation prior to delivery of the other the courses in early 2008. The course will include core elements relevant to all regions, and more specific modules for particular countries/contextes.

The programme will cover the following key aspects, amongst others:

- (i) Participatory methods and community knowledge on land.
- (ii) Awareness and understanding of transparency, development of indicators, disclosure management, and flow of information.
- (iii) Institutional and organizational ethics, professionalism and audits, development code of ethics, incentive systems, and management systems including regular and independent audits.
- (iv) Innovative tools to achieve/improve tenure security, socio-economic politics of land, and dynamics of land.
- (v) Dispute resolution and conflict management, and effective, speedy, fair, transparent, affordable land dispute resolution.

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