

BRIEFING NOTE ON THE HIGH-LEVEL EVENT ON FOLLOW-UP AND REVIEW OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A High-Level Event on Follow-up and Review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was held at the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)'s 6th Partners Meeting convened in Nairobi, Kenya on 2 November 2015. Organized by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in collaboration with the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Landesa, the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII) and the GLTN, and with the support of the German Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture, the meeting was the one of the first on follow-up and review focusing on natural resources, land and soils since the adoption of the SDGs.

Attended by 80 representatives of government, the UN system, civil society and academia, the event discussed strategies for engagement in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a focus on natural resources, land and soil.

Ivonne Lobos Alva, IASS, facilitated the half-day event, which included opening remarks, a keynote presentation, two interactive panel discussions and delivery of the meeting's five high-level messages.

OPENING REMARKS AND SETTING THE STAGE

Joan Clos, Executive Director, UN-Habitat, welcomed delegates and provided opening remarks. He noted 2015 as being a "development year" with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the anticipated outcomes of the upcoming UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) in Paris. He highlighted land as being particularly relevant in these global agendas, linked to development, power imbalances and conflict, and described land's important role in the context of urbanization. He stated it is important for the UN as a global family to move from "declarations and good will" towards a specific approach that is pragmatic and goal oriented, recognizing GLTN and its partners' work in this thus far while calling for continued and expanded efforts. On follow-up and review, Clos described the need to think about facts and figures, measureable targets and actions, working with partners in this process including local authorities who often have an important role in urbanization and land issues.

Alexander Müller, IASS, then "set the stage" framing the context of the meeting and main issues to be discussed. Noting the recent approval of the SDGs, he outlined the need to identify next steps for immediate action. He described the SDGs as ambitious, especially with their overarching interconnected



A view of the room during the opening keynote

framework, calling for innovative, integrated approaches and new alliances so that "some SDGs are not achieved at the expense of others." Drawing on the inter-linkages of the SDGs, he proposed putting forward thematic reviews of natural resources, land and soils at the national scale and global reviews under the umbrella of the High-Level Political Forum in 2016 or 2017. He suggested using the integrated, participatory and inclusive methodology applied in the development of the SDGs in this process.

Müller outlined the universal and inclusive nature of the SDGs makes them distinctly different from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), calling for action in both developed and developing countries. He noted the need for multilateral agreements and an attitude that everyone needs "to do better." He highlighted the opportunity to work in collaborative partnerships between developing and developed countries to learn from each other in implementing the SDGs. He closed stating "we cannot shy away from the challenge on the table" and underscored the need to start implementation of the SDGs with a new mindset.

KEYNOTE AND DISCUSSION

Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the UN, in a keynote address, described the significant achievement of negotiating and agreeing upon the SDGs. He noted the innovative shift in the way of doing business required in this process which included working with a range of stakeholders to ensure consensus in a global agreement. He said "stumbling blocks" in this process included moving from the MDGs to the more inclusive and cross-cutting SDGs, and understanding what sustainability meant and encompassed. Kamau said this requires moving away from silos and institutionalized mentalities, to drawing on partnerships and collaborations.

Stating that the success of the MDGs has demonstrated that meeting the SDGs is possible, Kamau cautioned it is important to ensure the territory gained around sustainable development issues in the SDGs is not lost, particularly around land and natural resources. Outlining the interconnected, networked





A view of the dais during the first panel discussion.

nature of the SDGs with land as one of the cross-cutting issues, Kamau underscored the need to keep people at the center saying prosperity remains fundamental in sustainable development and this links to issues of land tenure and land management. In the process of internalizing sustainable development he emphasized changing the way of doing business both conceptually and operationally and building new linkages and alliances especially, non-traditional ones. He described the monitoring and review framework as crucial in providing credibility and validity of the 2030 Agenda, highlighting the role of indicators and financing.

Delegates then posed questions framing the ensuing discussion which covered: land implications for rights to access infrastructure and resources and the need to address land issues beyond its soil and physical properties; how to ensure the global south is not marginalized and has the resources for implementation; the youth's role in achieving the SDGs; a shift from official development assistance to innovative approaches for finance mobilization and investment; Agenda 2063 driven by the African Union (AU) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA); the need to use a network approach, as opposed to putting land at the center, thereby avoiding fragmentation and unintended consequences; and recognition of the work that needs to be done in developed countries to do things differently.

INTERACTIVE PANEL DISCUSSIONS

FROM THE SETTING OF GLOBAL GOALS TO COUNTRY-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION, SETTING THEMATIC FOCI AND STRATEGIES FOR COLLABORATION:

Aida Opoku-Mensah, ECA, outlined ECA's role in the follow-up and review process and described the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as part of the roadmap for the AU's Agenda 2063 referencing plans for instituting a set of African Development Goals (ADGs). She called for: developing institutional systems and mechanisms; conducting thematic reviews; strengthening national capacity for implementation; strengthening regional and national linkages; applying integrated approaches; and placing data, indicators and targets at the center of follow-up and review.

Jaime Webbe, UNEP, described land reform as a cross-cutting issue and highlighted the potential of integrated landscape management to address many of the SDGs drawing on examples of UNEP projects and initiatives. She outlined how UNEP is developing partnerships with NGOs and other UN bodies, citing the challenge of consolidating partnerships to have a common goal.

Emphasizing, "partnerships are essential to survive," Frits van der Wal, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands, described the Netherlands' involvement in land-related

partnerships such as the GLTN and GLII. He described the way forward as including: facilitating collective action at home and abroad; using national processes to place sustainable development within the local context; investing in networks and being explicit about their role and added value; and building upon the work of the GLTN.

Recognizing the importance of land in the 2030 Agenda, Oumar Sylla, UN-Habitat, stated it is important from the beginning that "land is not an end in itself." He described the need to: create an enabling environment for participation; guide investment; see the broader picture in terms of security and value chains; ensure people have access to land; work at the global level, but draw on learning by doing from the ground; and to work collaboratively to break silos.

Jes Weigelt, IASS, stated holistic perspectives are needed to address land and soil issues in the SDGs. While recognizing the importance of indicators, he said indicators alone will not effectively address land governance suggesting a "data+" approach. He described the need to address underlying power relations and proposed publication of civil society reports in addition to government reports. Recognizing not all stakeholders in multi-stakeholder processes have the same legitimate rights, Weigelt called for creating an enabling environment for right holders and civil society to have meaningful participation in land and soil reviews by providing them with the resources and capacity to do so.

WHAT ROLE WILL THE UN SYSTEM, GOVERNMENTS, CIVIL SOCIETY, OTHERS PLAY IN THE REVIEW OF THE 2030 AGENDA?: Louisa Jansen, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), outlined how the work of the FAO relates to, and aligns itself with, the SDGs. Referencing guidelines developed by the FAO on land tenure, she spoke on how the guidelines can be used to bring different actors to the table to discuss issues that can often be highly emotive. She underscored the importance of addressing issues around legitimate rights and who holds tenure.

David O'Connor, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), described the 2030 Agenda as a "meta-agenda," acting as a framework to view multiple agendas side-by-side and identify inter-linkages to establish ways of addressing them together. Recognizing the lack of a goal around land and therefore the need to draw on inter-linkages, he outlined the role of coalitions, alliances and networks and how they provide the opportunity to build upon the energy of others to advance and harmonize agendas. He further suggested that land and soil could be reviewed as a cross-cutting issue, and could be included in the Global Sustainable Development Report framework.



Gertrude Kenyangi, Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment (SWAGEN)

Gertrude Kenyangi, Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment (SWAGEN), noted the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in keeping all partners “on their toes,” to ensure that no one is left behind. She outlined the how CSOs can make contributions

to the SDGs, by providing data and science, taking action and implementing, and providing input into follow-up and review. Calling for member states to view CSOs as “allies not obstacles,” she said resources are required to enable effective CSO participation at the same level of other partners.

Focusing on Goal 11 on cities and human settlements, Raf Tuts, UN-Habitat, said meeting this goal requires policy coherence within the UN system, so that activities are not fragmented. He further stated UN-Habitat can contribute to the SDGs by: leading specific targets, some which relate to land; contributing to other goals and targets that link to, but fall outside, UN-Habitat’s core mandates; and continuing its support of the localization of the SDGs through strengthening relationships with governments and other actors.

Clarissa Augustinus, UN-Habitat, discussed GLTN and GLII, saying the GLTN has done a good job so far at the technical level, but now the hard part is implementation. She described the need for a “chain of accountability” to keep actors involved in implementation accountable. Stating, “collaboration is needed now even more for sustainability,” Augustinus described UN-Habitat’s involvement in the GLTN and GLII highlighting UN-Habitat’s activities to test the GLII methodologies in African countries.

Ensuing discussions covered: how to implement the SDGs in remote areas and diverse cultures; achievability of the 2030

Agenda’s goals and targets; CSOs roles in achieving the SDGs; how to ensure integration within policies across ministries; and links between inequality and land rights.

CLOSING REMARKS AND KEY MESSAGES

Alexander Müller provided closing remarks summarizing the meeting’s discussion in five high-level messages. These included: the start of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda needs to be done in a new, innovative way requiring a shift in mindset and drawing on integrated approaches, coalitions, alliances and networks; national-level multi-stakeholder



Alexander Müller, IASS

and right holder processes are key for follow-up and review mechanisms and need to facilitate a “level playing field,” in particular to include meaningful participation of the civil society; thematic reviews on natural resources, land and soil can support follow-up and review, but more work is needed to define

how this will be done; integrated approaches require support from national governments and civil society in the north and south and the multilateral system; and to support integrated, participatory and inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda national reviews need to be linked to the global level. Müller further emphasized the need to build upon the momentum of the adoption of the SDGs to “kick start” implementation.

In closing, Facilitator Ivonne Lobos Alva, described the event as an important platform and moment to highlight the role natural resources, land and soil will play in contributing to the 2030 Agenda and invited participants to continue working with IASS on the follow-up and review of natural resources, land and soils. She thanked colleagues and participants for their contributions and closed the meeting at 6:05 pm.



Delegates enjoyed an outdoor lunch before the event.