Development Agenda

on

Land and Food Security Nexus

Rural CSO Cluster
Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)
2023

Land and Food Security Nexus
Proposed Development Agenda of GLTN's Rural CSO Cluster

Context

The *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* as reported by the FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO in 2021[1] rings an alarm bell and encourages everyone to act in reversing the worsening trends. Each and everyone's contribution will be decisive in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically the targets of ensuring access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food for all and eradicating all forms of malnutrition.

Close to 12 percent of the global population was severely food insecure in 2020 representing 928 million people. This is 148 million more than in 2019 and may be partly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, the current state of malnutrition is worrisome with around 149.2 million (22.0 percent) of stunted children under five years of age, 45.4 million (6.7 percent) suffering from wasting and 38.9 million (5.7 percent) overweight. It does not bode well for the incoming generations given the long-term impact of malnutrition on health and productivity.

Multiple factors driving this worsening food insecurity and malnutrition have been identified including conflict, climate change and economic slowdowns and downturns. Unfortunately, those hardest hit are the poor and the marginalized. The high cost of healthy diets coupled with persistent high levels of income inequality put healthy diets out of reach for around three billion people, especially the poor, in every region of the world in 2019.[2]

This situation is exacerbated by the increasing corporate concentration and the expanding industrial global food system. The ETC Group[3] disclosed that "In 2020, most of the world's largest food and agriculture giants saw sales and profits surge while almost a billion people went hungry, and crops failed.[4]

In expanding their operations, these corporations restrained the rights of smallholder farmers and indigenous peoples in accessing their lands, ancestral domains, and other resources. This is

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[1] FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2021. *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021. Transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all*. Rome, FAO. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4474en
[2] Ibid
[3] ETC Group is a small, international, research and action collective committed to social and environmental justice, human rights and the defense of just and ecological agri-food systems and the web of life.
[4] ETC Group. Food Barons 2022: Crisis Profiteering, Digitalization and Shifting Power. Full report with citations is available here: https://www.etcgroup.org/content/food-barons-2022.

forbidding, as many developing countries have less than 30 percent cadastral coverage[5] with unsteady land governance systems. With globalization and neo-liberal policies of governments, the intrusion of these corporations is ever-increasing. Thus, it is ironical that in some areas today, the traditional food producers are unable to supply their own household's food needs.

GLTN's Rural CSO Cluster Position on Land and Food Security

The current state of food insecurity and malnutrition beckons the GLTN's Rural CSO Cluster to contribute in reversing the worsening trends. Composed of NGOs, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) and Grassroots Organizations, the Cluster aims to promote, advocate and lobby for enhanced access to, control over, and ownership of land and resources by rural poor communities.

Formulating a development agenda along this direction is strategic given the compounding link of land tenure and food security especially among smallholder food producers. This is in line with the Rural CSO plan, prepared in the context of the GLTN Strategic Plan, to:

o   strengthen the formulation and monitoring of pro-poor land policies and programs through evidence-based advocacy;
o   enhance capacities of CSOs and rural communities in protecting and defending their rights to land and resources through the promotion and development of land tools and approaches;
o   advocate for policies and programs on food systems that are centered on smallholder agriculture; and,
o   broaden the understanding and knowledge on land rights through convening of multi-stakeholder dialogues and learning events.

The importance of articulating the *land-food security nexus* was repeatedly highlighted during the 9th GLTN Partners' Meeting last 2 to 4 May 2023, in Nairobi, Kenya. Questions were raised on GLTN's agenda in promoting such intersect and how can this be mainstreamed in the context of the fourth phase of GLTN's work program.

It is with this perspective that the Rural CSO Cluster has initiated the formulation of a development agenda on the land-food security nexus which shall serve as an input to the group's work program. It also outlined strategic interventions and key result areas that hopefully will contribute to the four strategic objectives of the GLTN Phase IV Strategy (2024 to 2027).

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[5] FIG. 2010. The Social Tenure Domain Model: A Pro-Poor Land Tool. Copenhagen, FIG.

Processes undertaken by the Rural CSO Cluster

A concept note was initially prepared by the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) and circulated to the members of the Rural CSO Cluster to initiate the discussion on the framework and process of developing the cluster's agenda on the land-food security nexus. Members provided their feedback and expressed their interest to be part of the formulation process of the agenda. An online meeting was convened on 30 June 2023 that finalized the design and process.

A face-to-face brainstorming meeting was convened by ANGOC on 15-16 August 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand where 16 participants (eight males, six females) from Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Philippines, and Sub-Sahara Africa shared their perspectives on the land-food security nexus. Based on the inputs received, ANGOC prepared a zero draft of the Rural CSO Cluster agenda on the land-food security nexus.

The zero draft was reviewed by the participants of the Bangkok brainstorming meeting. A first draft of the cluster agenda was then prepared by ANGOC and was circulated to the rest of the GLTN Rural CSO cluster for feedback. An online meeting with the cluster members was organized last 25 October 2023.

This final draft has incorporated the inputs received.

Linking Land Tenure, Land Use and Food Security Through a Food Systems Lens

As defined in the 1996 World Food Summit, food security is "*when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.*" It should address the four dimensions of food security: availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability. Given the complexity and diversity of the driving factors, food security is better appreciated using the food systems lens describing all the elements and activities related to producing and consuming food, and their effects, including economic, health, and environmental outcomes (OECD, 2021).

With a food systems lens, access to land emerges as a central concern in the discourse on food security considering that improved tenurial status provides households with an overall security that comes from their independence to make informed decisions over lands, crops, and

livelihoods. They are able to more efficiently allocate their resources to improve their productivity and well-being.

There is growing recognition that secure land or property rights among the smallholder food producers (peasants and smallholder farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, *Dalits*, pastoralists, forest dwellers, other minority communities, grassroots women, youth) can substantially contribute to food security, promote broad-based growth and help expand the rural economy.

Communities start by addressing their concerns for food security and survival. Once this hurdle is overcome, they are able to take on informed choices, like experimenting with new farming systems or growing other crops. If they perceive the benefits to outweigh the risks, some could subsequently take on new challenges such as enterprise development. However, these all start with the indispensable step of securing the poor's access and rights to land.

Unfortunately, access to land and other resources by smallholder producers has been wanting. The level of tenure insecurity has incited political and economic intrusions that had continuously marginalized them and restrained their rights to their land. Indigenous peoples and local communities are estimated to hold 50 percent of the world's total land area but their legal ownership rights extend to only 10% of that land (GLTN P4 Programme Document).

Land Governance Challenges of Smallholder Food Producers

Many governments have recognized the contribution of smallholder producers not only as major sources of food for the home and local market but in ensuring a more inclusive and sustainable national development. They constitute a major section of populations in most countries and provide a major source of employment (self-employment).

Moreover, small farms tend to be more diverse, emphasize agro-ecological practices, and protect local seeds and varieties – that are crucial for long-term food security. They play major roles as "on-farm and in-situ conservators." Pastoralists, forest dwellers and indigenous peoples engage in regenerative practices in production that are sustainable and resilient.

With this recognition, governments have instituted land reforms to strengthen their land rights, redistribution and allocation of ownership, and governance of land and other resources. These are exemplified in the Community Land Act of 2016 in Uganda, Agrarian Reform Law and Indigenous Peoples Rights Act in the Philippines, Forest Rights Act in India, and the Land Reform Act of Nepal with its 8th amendment in 2020.

CSOs have also played major roles in the actual implementation and delivery of these land reform programs. They focused on community empowerment going beyond legal issuance of titles. This is because tenure security is ultimately rooted in governance, not just titles, and thus there has been an emphasis and focus on organizing communities.

Land governance systems in many countries, however, have remained unstable, cadastral coverage low, and lacking in formal recognition of customary land rights and local systems of governance. Majority of the lands of smallholders lie outside official cadasters and are left undocumented, and thus, are not recognized and protected.

Some have to contend with discriminating laws and policies, unreasonable administrative processes and deceitful resolution of conflicts, among others. Past commitments such as the 2003 Maputo Declaration[6] have not been met. Moreover, there has been a continuing lack of government support for smallholder agriculture and small producers. Thus, it is not surprising that poverty remains largely rural and agricultural, as many food producers are land-poor and resource-poor, with no security of tenure.

Expanding Industrial Global Food System

The precarious governance of land and the increasing neo-liberal policies of governments facilitated the entry of agricultural corporations and expanded the industrial global food system. Governments supported the corporate industrial food system through its development and investment policies, tolerating large-scale land acquisitions, expansion of State-led Food Estates, and investments in contract farming. Government emphasis on corporate-led growth and investments have noticeably increased in several countries, as their main strategy for post-COVID-19 economic recoveries.

In expanding their operations, these corporations displaced smallholder producers and restrained their rights in accessing their lands, ancestral domains, and other resources. The largest one percent of farms in the world operate more than 70 percent of the world's farmland. On the other hand, about 84 percent of farms are smaller than two hectares, operating only about 12 percent of global farmland (GLTN P4 Programme Document).

Moreover, these corporations adopt production systems that are based on monocultures and are heavily dependent on synthetic and chemical external inputs that would have long-term negative environmental impact. Their plantation operations encroach into forest lands that,

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[6] The AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, through the Maputo Declaration in 2003, established the African Union Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) to improve food security and nutrition and increase incomes in Africa's largely agriculture-based economies. CAADP champions reform in the agricultural sector, setting broad targets such as 1) 6% annual growth in agricultural GDP, and 2) an allocation of at least 10% of public expenditures to the agricultural sector.

when not properly managed, would have tremendous bearing on ecosystem services to communities downstream.

Industrial food system products are directed largely for export markets that excludes local communities in the food value chain. While they may employ cheap and seasonal labor in production and processing, the overall shift towards "supermarketization" with new market rules and regulations and changing urban consumer tastes constrains their access to markets. The local food value chain which could have generated local employment are now controlled by the corporations.

Thus, the growing corporate control leads to the irreversible conversion of food production system that would negatively impact on long-term food security. Such conversion takes on several forms and leads to other changes: changes in actual land use, shift from food to cash crops, shift towards production that is heavily dependent on external inputs, shift from local to domestic and export markets, affecting the entire food system.

Exacerbating External Factors

There are also a number of external factors that are affecting land tenure and food security such as pandemic and health, disasters and economic shocks, wars, conflicts and disruptions. Foremost among these factors is the changing climate that affects everyone – e.g., floods and river erosion (Bangladesh), droughts and floods (Kenya), saline intrusion, cyclone, submerging of coastal communities (India and Philippines). These negative impacts highlight the need for resilient systems. Sadly though, it is affecting greatly the poor and those living in marginal areas. After a storm or a disaster, property rights are mistrusted or even nullified.

Moreover, given agriculture's contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions and freshwater withdrawals, adoption of sustainable farming practices and technologies would have to be prioritized. The rapid conversion of the most productive lands (i.e., prime alluvial plains and valleys) to other uses such as animal feeds and fuel production is undermining food security, while the poor are increasingly pushed and forced to eke out livelihoods from fragile ecosystems.

Also, growing populations and increasing population densities heighten the competition for land. The urban and rural distinctions are blurred and there is a need to tighten the links to attain long-term food security. This is crucial as the food chain is increasingly corporatized, and food is commodified. Urban consumers become unaware about the impacts of their buying habits and consumption choices on small producers and on the environment. Changing food diets are primarily influenced by advertising, branding, and regulations leading to unhealthy foods and increasing malnourishment especially those in their vulnerable ages.

Proposed Rural Cluster Agenda on Land and Food Security

Given the alarming state of food insecurity globally and its inherent link to land, the GLTN Rural CSO Cluster formulated a development agenda to strengthen land tenure of smallholder food producers and contribute to enhancing food security for all.

Goal

The Rural Cluster will undertake programs, activities, and interventions in pursuit of the following goal:

> *Secure land tenure for an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable food system built on smallholder production that ensures food security for all.*

The proposed Goal is founded in the Theory of Change that in attaining food security, the food systems should be:

- **Inclusive**
    - Equitable access to land instituted by strengthening smallholder farmers' tenure security.
    - Communal tenure (indigenous peoples, pastoralists, *Dalits*, minority groups) and resource rights of fisherfolks and forest dwellers are recognized.

- **Participatory**
    - Producers and consumers are actively involved in the food value chain.
    - Women and youth playing vital roles in the value chain (processing, storage and management, digital promotion, and marketing).

- **Sustainable and Resilient**
    - Sustainable agricultural practices towards healthy food and clean environment are adopted.

- **Collaborative**
    - Governments supporting smallholder food producers.
    - Partner institutions are building local capacities in the food value chain.

Primary Stakeholders

The GLTN Rural CSO Cluster will focus on smallholder food producers that comprise peasants and smallholder farmers, fisherfolk, marginalized and minority communities (indigenous people, *Dalits*, pastoralists), forest dwellers, grassroots women, and rural youth. It will also partner with those who are involved in the smallholder food value chain: smallholder traders, local sellers, consumers, informal settlers, and differently-abled persons.

Smallholder food producers constitute a major section of populations in most countries. They are the major sources of food for their homes and local markets. They also provide livelihood and self-employment to local households in the local food value chain.

Small farms tend to be more diverse, adopt agro-ecological practices, and protect local seeds and varieties. Thus, smallholder food producers play crucial roles as "on-farm and in-situ conservators" that contribute significantly to long-term food security. Also, they engage in agro-ecological and regenerative practices in production that are sustainable and resilient.

The Rural CSO Cluster will also give due importance to grassroots women in linking food security and land tenure. They contribute significantly to ensuring local food security by playing major roles as food producers, caretakers of the land, users and preservers of traditional knowledge and sustainable farming practices, seed and varietal conservators and food nutritionists of the family.

In some countries, increased outmigration of male population to urban centers resulted to "feminization" of agriculture and yet women do not have control or rights over land and resources. Globally, women constitute less than 15 percent of the world's landholders (GLTN P4 Programme Document). They have minimal legal rights as land policies are skewed in favor of men (e.g. *Khas* land policy in Bangladesh). They are discriminated in their control over land within the family with no or limited inheritance rights. In general, they are not recognized as "farmers" or "fishers" and thus lack access to government programs, services and benefits.

Similarly, the Cluster will need to focus on the youth. Other than the veracity that farmer populations in many countries is maturing, challenges in ensuring food security for all is a cross-generational concern. With the technological and digital innovations in production, processing and marketing, the youth can play a key role in ensuring the sustainability of smallholder production. Unfortunately, the youth are not willing to engage in agriculture because of the perception that farming is "dirty, unattractive, provides low incomes," and is not aligned with their ambitions. Moreover, many ageing farmers also prefer that their children shift out of agriculture. The Cluster will have to initiate innovative ways to involve their services.

Rural CSO Cluster Proposed Development Agenda

The GLTN Rural CSO Cluster will converge on three major Development Agenda in pursuing its concurred goal, namely: 1) Strengthening Land Tenure Security, 2) Effective Participation in Food Value Chain, and 3) Promotion of Sustainable Food and Agriculture Practices.

Development Agenda # 1: Strengthening Tenure Security

Key Result Area: Strengthened tenure security of smallholder food producers	
Objective	**Interventions**
Obj. #1: Advocate the adoption of pro-poor, equitable, and gender-responsive land policies and implementation	- Protect and conserve agricultural lands to ensure food supply and security. - Lobby governments to institute responsible land use planning and management. - Integrate land rights in Action Plans on Food Security and Climate Change. - Empower women and marginalized groups ~~agencies~~ to influence local institutions for improved access ~~to~~ and control over resources. - Support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP) and other related resolutions.
Obj. #2: Improve existing GLTN land tools to respond to the challenges of food security and climate change	- Review and strengthen land tools to address food security and climate change. - Use existing global frameworks to develop guidelines on collective rights and governance of land, water, and forest.

Development Agenda # 2: Participation in Food Value Chain

Key Result Area: Facilitated participation and influence in food value chain	
Objective	**Interventions**
Obj. # 1: Enable smallholder producers to participate and engage in food systems and	Promote localized land use and food security planning.

improve access to nutritious, affordable, and safe food for all	▪ Increase the recognition and participation of women and youth as food producers. ▪ Facilitate access by smallholder producers to technology, infrastructure, formal agricultural credits, and extension services.
Obj. # 2: Facilitate direct linkages between smallholder producers and consumers	▪ Establish food hubs[7] (e.g., weekly markets, cultivator-consumer connectivity) to facilitate closer connection between producers and consumers.

Development Agenda # 3:   Promote Sustainable Food and Agriculture Practices

Key Result Area: Strengthened smallholder food production system based on sustainable agriculture towards healthy food and environment	
Objective	**Interventions**
Obj. # 1: Boost recognition of smallholders as on-farm conservators	▪ Build capacities of smallholders on sustainable agriculture practices. ▪ Protect the farmer seed systems and recognize women in genetic conservation. ▪ Enhance on-farm diversity, improve cultivation practices and local processing of products.
Obj. # 2: Enhance the capacities of smallholder producers to cope with external shocks (environmental and economic shocks, climate change, land grabbing, pandemic, etc.)	▪ Enhance capacities of smallholder producers on climate preparedness and resilience. ▪ Enable smallholder producers to access climate-related funding.

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[7] Food hubs are local entities being used to facilitate a closer connection between producers and consumers (Matson, et al., 2013). Through the food hubs, engaging and connecting the producers and consumers not only satisfy the supply and demand in the global food chain, but also ensure local food security and nutrition.

Cross-Cutting Strategy

In support of the three-development agenda, the Rural CSO Cluster will coordinate and collaborate in implementing a Cross-Cutting Strategy on:

o   *Build multi-stakeholder partnerships*
    Joint forums and webinars, establishing collaborative mechanisms, and fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships will be initiated in support of program activities.

o   *Experience-based learning and exchanges*
    Facilitate a broader understanding and appreciation of the food systems through learning exchanges between producers and consumers, rural and urban communities and among civil society organizations.

o   *Evidence-based Advocacy*
    Institute data-driven knowledge production and advocacy using GLTN land tools and other instruments in relating with governments and relevant institutions (local, regional, global).

o   *Participatory monitoring*
    Engage local communities and partners in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of activities and programs.

Along this collaborative mode of implementation, the Cluster will coordinate and partner with farmer organizations, CSOs at the national level, and regional NGO networks. It will give priority working with women, youth, indigenous peoples, and vulnerable groups.

Interface/Link to GLTN's Phase 4 Strategic Outcomes

In phase 4, GLTN will continue its goal for 2030 of "improved tenure security for all, with a focus on women, youth and vulnerable groups." Its activities will build upon its earlier accomplishments with some additions one of which is to focus on selected priority themes in the multilateral system.

Food security with its corollary influences on poverty, access to basic services, environmental degradation, access to agricultural land for women and other multilateral concerns emerges as a priority theme. This will directly contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – particularly Goals 1, 2, 5, 10, 11, 15, and 16.

Given the inherent link of land tenure to food security, the GLTN Rural CSO Cluster will facilitate the development of more focused land tools through research and tool development, monitoring, and capacity building (including learning sessions) of GLTN implementation partners. It will enhance its effort in policy integration and advocacy at the global, regional, and national levels on these issues and concerns. These interventions will also contribute to GLTN's plan of information sharing, promoting intra- and inter-cluster exchanges and connecting with partners.

The Rural CSO Cluster's project interventions have been crafted based on the general framework of land tenure, land use and food security connections and their interface with GLTN's Strategic Outcomes for Phase 4 (see table below).

Summary of the interface between the proposed Land and Food Security interventions and GLTN's Strategic Outcomes for Phase 4.

GLTN Strategic Outcome 1: Reforms of the land sector accelerated across organizations, regions and countries		
Output	**Key areas of intervention**	**Possible Land-FS Interventions**
1.1 Strengthened national land laws and policies that take into consideration the needs of women, youth, and vulnerable groups	• Technical assistance in the implementation of multistakeholder approaches to land law and policy formulation and implementation planning	• Lobbying on laws on land use and promotion of Tenure-Responsive Land Use Planning • Policy on land use conversion protecting areas for agriculture
	• Comparative analysis of land law and policy at sub-regional and regional levels	• Mapping of policies on smallholder agriculture, including rural-urban connection focusing on youth
	• Case studies, methods and other materials on land law and policy elements and themes	• Case studies on women as food producers and seed conservators • Water rights and food security
	• Mapping and promotion of coordination among land institutions and actors	• Localized food security planning and establishment of food hubs linking rural-urban communities
1.4 Improved awareness of international and national actors of the contribution of	• Research and policy analysis linking land and international and regional trends and themes	• Documentation of smallholder agriculture contribution to healthy people and planet

land tenure security to sustainable development outcomes	• Awareness raising and discourse on land tenure in international forums through in person and remote events as well as digital information sharing	• Workshops and forums to present studies • Capacity building of CSOs to promote land-food security nexus
GLTN Strategic Outcome 2: Inclusive, gender responsive and fit- for-purpose land tools and approaches institutionalized by international and national land actors to scale up tenure security interventions		
2.1 Priority land tools maintained, adapted and piloted for relevance at the national and local levels	• Piloting of relevant land tools still under development	• Localization of Tenure Responsive Land-Use Planning
	• New land tools to address specific needs in delivering land tenure security for all	• Develop community-based food security and land tenure monitoring tool
GLTN Strategic Outcome 3: Improved monitoring of land-related commitments for planning and policy decisions		
3.1 Enhanced capacity of relevant national and international organizations to collect, disaggregate and analyze data on tenure security and land governance	• Training and capacity development on land monitoring tools (indicators and methodologies for data collection) at country level	• Initiate training on community-based food security–land tenure indicators and monitoring tool
3.3 Global reporting mechanism on tenure security and land governance established and mainstreamed	• Continued support to the work of custodian agencies of the SDG indicators on land governance and tenure security (1.4.2, 5.a.1, 5.a.2)	• Policy analysis of linking land, poverty, hunger, and the environment (relevant SDGs)
Outcome 4: Capacities, knowledge, and resources on land tenure security shared and developed among international and national actors		
4.2 Strengthened capacity of international partners to transfer the knowledge and awareness of the GLTN agenda to other national and international land actors	• Developing and teaching of relevant academic courses on tenure security, responsible land governance and application of innovative tools	• Develop Land-Food Security curriculum and teaching materials

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Presentations from the Brainstorming Meeting

BANGLADESH:	Shanjida Khan Ripa and AKM Bulbul Ahmed Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD)
CAMBODIA:	Nhek Sarin and Chea Cheysovanna STAR Kampuchea
INDIA:	Rohini Reddy South Asia Rural Reconstruction Association (SARRA)
INDONESIA:	Dewi Kartika and Bennie Wijaya Consortium of Agrarian Reform (KPA)
KENYA:	Arach David James NAMATI
NEPAL:	Jagat Deuja and Jagat Basnet Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC)
PHILIPPINES:	Asian NGO Coalition Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
Sub-Saharan AFRICA:	Mino Ramaroson Huairou Commission