



WEBINAR ON SECURING WOMEN'S LAND FOR PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN

Date: 19th November 2020; Time: 3:00pm – 5:00pm EAT/GMT+3

CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA

Background: Land and Peace Building in South Sudan

Land in South Sudan is not only central to nation peace building and recovery, but also a major contributor to poverty reduction, food security, gender equality and empowerment of women and urban development. Recurrent conflict in South Sudan has led to an increase in land-related disputes resulting from extensive secondary occupation, and land grabbing by local elites. Land belonging to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees who fled during conflict has, in many instances, been either grabbed by ex-combatants, political elites or illegally been occupied by other IDPs, returnees or the host communities. Women, specifically widows, divorcees, separated women, older women, and women with disabilities are at high risk of being displaced or even losing their land due to their vulnerable status. Often, conflict result to loss of lives especially that of male members in the community, leaving women as household heads to fend for their families. In other cases, power relations between a widow and other family members expose them to land disputes including disinheritance. In some cases, change of traditional or customary leaders charged with administration of rural land makes it hard for some members of the displaced communities to access and/or return to their land due to new regulations imposed on returnees, gender discrimination and manipulation by those in power. These issues not only present obstacles to the voluntary and safe return of IDPs and returnees especially for women and girls, but also fuel renewed conflict and disputes with host communities.

Studies conducted in South Sudan show that disputes over land often intensifies when IDPs and refugees decide to voluntarily return to their land or resettle within areas of origin. The large-scale destruction of property in Wau resulting from recent conflicts, coupled with reported secondary land occupation, serve as key obstacles to IDPs' safe and voluntary return or resettlement. As peace is restored in South Sudan, at least 40% of households in the Protection of Civilians Adjustment Area (PoCAA) have voiced their intention to leave the area of displacement (IOM, 2019). Female headed households account for 71% of households in the PoCAA in Wau (IOM, 2019).

In most areas in South Sudan, access to ownership and use of land are often governed by customary law, interpreted, and enforced by traditional leaders, most of whom are men. Widowed and unmarried women returnees and IDPs living in (PoCAA) sites and other displacement sites have to negotiate, with traditional leaders to access their land, their late/former husband's home/land or father's land. Despite South Sudan's legal provisions for gender responsive land allocation, and use and access to land (e.g. in the Transitional National Constitution of South Sudan (2011, as amended), the Local Government Act (2009)), women in South Sudan are often unable to access their land rights due to discriminatory customs, norms and traditions. Inadequate access to legal information on gender equality in land rights, and weak formal and informal land dispute resolution continue to challenge women ability to pursue their land rights and access to justice when such rights are violated. In conflict situation, the situation is even worse as most formal and informal institutions often deliver below their capacities in terms of resources, human, financial and technical. Securing land tenure rights for women in South Sudan is key to facilitating voluntary return of IDPs and refugees to their homes, reduce



conflict and violence against women, and contribute to peace building and stability. Securing women's land rights will also set women IDPs and returnees on the path for social, economic, and political empowerment, and ensure no one is left behind

The need to bridge this glaring gender gap in securing women IDPs', returnees' and host communities' land tenure rights in South Sudan led to the development and implementation of a Peace Building Project titled *"Enhancing women's access to land to consolidate peace in South Sudan"* by UN-Habitat and FAO; and in partnership with NRC. This project, funded by the UN Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), is purposed to enhance and secure women's access to land through capacity building of traditional authorities' leaders and communities (female and male) to feel more confident and committed to gender responsive land conflict/dispute resolution. It also seeks to improve land management and administrative systems at state and county level and facilitate/enhance access to land tenure security of most vulnerable women. In addition, Policy makers at national level will be more committed to implement gender responsive land polices. This project is very relevant to South Sudan and timely as it coincided with national efforts in the development of National Land Policy, the signing of the revitalized peace agreement and the establishment of the Government of National Unity.

Objective of the webinar

This webinar will provide critical information on the status of women's land rights for peace building in South Sudan. Specifically, findings from key studies and project outcomes in securing women's land rights for peace and stability in South Sudan as implemented by UN-Habitat and FAO and funded by UN Peace Building Fund (PBF) will be shared and discussed with key stakeholders.

The webinar will bring together stakeholders working on Housing, Land and Property (HLP), gender equality and women's empowerment (women, peace and security) as well as peace and development issues in South Sudan, Africa and globally to engage in a joint reflection on key achievements of this project. Presentation and discussion on the key outcomes, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing women's access to land to consolidate peace in south will be shared by implementing partners; UN-Habitat and FAO; and partner, NRC. The webinar will feature collaboration with the Government of South Sudan including the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management traditional authorities and leaders charged with land administration and conflict resolution; contributions from Civil Society Organizations, the UN and other development agencies, and development sectors in South Sudan. The webinar is expected to create a unique platform for learning and sharing of experiences among national and global partners on key dimensions of securing women's housing, land and property rights especially that of IDPs and returnees for peace building in South Sudan; building synergies and partnerships.

Specifically, the webinar will:

- ❖ Disseminate key research findings on the status of women in relation to land rights in South Sudan,
- ❖ Share the outcomes, challenges and opportunities in the on-going project on *"Enhancing women's access to land to consolidate peace in South Sudan"* and,
- ❖ Explore areas of collaboration, partnerships, and synergies with other actors working on Housing, Land and Property rights in South Sudan.

Target audience



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The webinar is open to policy makers and practitioners from government, CSOs especially and women youth organizations, private sector and professional institutions/groups working on land administration, gender and human rights, land, housing and property rights, peace building and conflict resolution, access to justice,, peace and development, research and academia, UN specialized agencies, , international and local development and humanitarian organizations.

Webinar – Agenda

Introduction and Opening remarks – 25 mins

- UN Resident Coordinator in South Sudan -Benjamin Moore – 5 mins
- GoSS – National Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development –Hon. Michael Chienjiek– a reflection of land governance and administration in South Sudan, judicial system, challenges, and opportunities – 5 min
- GSS – Land Commissioner – Hon. Robert Lokundu – 5 mins
- Governor Western Bahr el Ghazal State– Hon. Sarah Cleto Hassan – 5 mins

Main presentation – 25 mins

- UN-Habitat and FAO – Key findings of the studies conducted and project outcomes

Reflections and discussion 40 mins

- NRC – Strategic partnerships and role of INGO/CSOs in securing women’s land rights for peace in South Sudan – 7 mins
- Woman IDP/Returnee (project participant) – Wau – 5mins
- GoSS - National Ministry for Gender, Child, and Social Welfare -Hon: Ayaa Benjamine Warille- 5 mins
- Traditional chief – 5 mins
- Mayor – Wau Municipal Council - Hon: Julio Emmanuel Mama – 5 mins
- Relief and Rehabilitation Commission - Francis Buola Martine – 5 mins
- One donor representative -5 mins

Interactive session (question and answer) – 20 mins

- Moderator

Conclusions/closing remarks – 10 mins

- FAO -
- UN-Habitat

Moderator – UN-Habitat

Webinar registration here:

<https://unhabitat.webex.com/unhabitat/onstage/g.php?MTID=ef922e077ef5571769c6b79ace05e5856>