



## **4.04 Securing Land Tenure Rights for Resilient and Sustainable Food Systems**

### **1. What, in brief, is the solution?**

Secure land tenure rights for and with people, responding to the needs and protecting the rights of those who live on and from the land in achieving and strengthening food security and food systems.

Recognizing the inherent link between secure land for and with people urges respecting, protecting, and strengthening the land rights of women and men and communities particularly of those who are vulnerable and marginalized, to ensure that no one is deprived of the use and control of the land on which secure food systems are built upon.

### **2. What was/were the source(s) from which this solution emerged?**

AT4 Leadership group discussion

### **3. What problem is it trying to address within food systems?**

The unequal land distribution and lack of tenure security of people who live on and from the land face adverse impact to plan, invest, and produce food undermining their productive contribution to balanced and sustainable food systems.

A recent study conducted by the International Land Coalition together with its members reveals that the top 10 percent of the rural population captures 60% of agricultural land value, while the bottom 50% only control 3%. Titled “Uneven Ground”, the study found that land inequality directly threatens the livelihoods of an estimated 2.5 billion people involved in smallholder agriculture, as well the world’s poorest 1.4 billion people, most of whom depend largely on agriculture for their livelihoods. This upward trend of land inequality partly stems from the increased interest from corporate and financial actors, such as investment funds, in agricultural land investments. As corporate and financial investments grow, ownership and control of land becomes more concentrated and increasingly opaque.

Today, the largest 1 percent of farms operate more than 70 percent of the world’s farmland and are integrated into the corporate food system, while over 80 percent are smallholdings of less than two hectares that are generally excluded from global food chains. Despite this growing inequality and marginalisation, smallholder farmers contribute to 70 percent of the world’s food. They often operate in lack of tenure security and recognition for their contribution and are subject to numerous threats and vulnerabilities including land grabbing, force evictions, and adverse effects of climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic brought into the light the reliance on local food systems and role played by small holder farmers in feeding people. The insecure access to land and dispossessions undermines this positive role and contribution that are resilient, equitable, and sustainable in contexts that they operate.

### **4. Why is addressing that problem important for achieving the goal of your working group?**

Competition for land has never been greater. The world faces rising population numbers, rapid urbanization, climate change, declining soil fertility and an increasing demand for food and fuel security. All these build pressure on land. In many jurisdictions, competing land uses and increasing demand are sources of conflicts, debates, harassments, marginalisation, and discrimination. Weak land governance and inefficient management of natural resources compound these issues. Poor rural people – especially women, youth, indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups and local communities – typically have weak or unprotected tenure rights. This means in present circumstances and trends, they risk losing access and control over land, often the only asset they have to secure their livelihoods.



Access to land is key to building sustainable local food systems and tackling poverty. When smallholder farmers have secure land rights, they are more willing to invest in the land and can use it to access credit. Land ownership also gives them more incentives to improve farming techniques and manage their land sustainably with a positive contribution to local food systems. This provides opportunities to diversify their incomes and improve their family's well-being. Secure land tenure is a safeguard against threats of losing their land to any entity claiming a stake over their land.

With secure land rights, rural women and the local communities gain a higher capacity to contribute to local food supply chains. This provides them a significance in society and community matters. Land tenure security makes societies more stable, with less conflict and more opportunities for locally driven investments.

In essence, food security and poverty reduction cannot be achieved unless issues of access to land, security of tenure and the capacity and autonomy to use land are addressed. Recent food security crises in Africa have revived the debate on whether current land tenure systems constrain farmer innovations and investments in agriculture. Both direct and indirect linkages between land tenure and food security are suggested.

### 5. How can this solution address that problem (theory of change)?

*The following table visualises how actions towards strengthening land tenure and equitable access to land can lead to sustainable and resilient food systems.*

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
<p>Including local communities and vulnerable and marginalised groups in decision making processes and taking their input on board in relation to the land that they live on and from.</p> <p>Investments into identifying drivers of land inequality</p> <p>Investing on well-functioning land registries</p> <p>Raising awareness among key</p>	<p>People-centered land policies, frameworks, and governance structures</p> <p>Land Policies addressing causes of land inequality</p> <p>Laws and regulations to improve greater transparency of the actions of powerful players</p> <p>Enactment of laws and regulations to make large scale land investors accountable</p>	<p>Strengthened land ownership and control over land by women, men, IPs, and local communities including pastoralists and fisherfolks</p> <p>Secure and transparent land distribution</p> <p>Increased productivity from the land contributing to food security</p> <p>Protection for national agricultural production from international</p>	<p>Sustainable food systems contributing to food security among local communities</p> <p>Reduced conflicts</p> <p>Higher degree of public trust among local communities</p>



<p>stakeholders on the important role that local communities play in food systems and building consensus</p> <p>Action to enact right to information laws and/or their effective implementation</p> <p>Building social and political pressure to support resilient and sustainable food production particularly focusing on small scale producers and family farmers</p> <p>Creating space for CSOs to operate independently</p>	<p>Increased contribution from women, IPs and local communities in land governance</p> <p>Facilitated dialogues between local communities and corporations</p> <p>Open democratic approach to land governance and administration</p> <p>Use of the knowledge of local communities in food production</p> <p>Increased accountability in land investment and locally driven investment in seed and genetic stock, appropriate storage and processing technologies</p>	<p>markets and commodity prices</p> <p>Higher productivity from land investments</p> <p>Equal power relationship and higher bargaining power among vulnerable community to secure their land rights</p> <p>Increased access to local markets</p> <p>Greater autonomy for local communities in land and food reliance independent from corporate production systems</p>	
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The impact mentioned in the above table could only happen under the following assumption:

- Democratic governance framework of a country which facilitates transparent and accountable processes
- Adequate investment (financial, human etc.) by key stakeholders recognising the importance of secure land tenure in building sustainable food systems
- There is a political will to act
- Barriers for effective participation of local communities and CSOs are addressed

Further the trajectory of inputs to impact is subject to the following risks:

- Public officers working in collusion with private sector to undermine the right to land of IPs and local communities
- Government not recognising the role the civil society play in development
- Increased corruption in the public sector



- Inadequate investment on issues relating to land and food systems
- Increased conflicts in societies which close avenues for constructive engagement of communities in development work
- Unaddressed and unmitigated risks of climate change
- Development processes followed by governments only heeding to the interests of corporations and other business entities

## 6. Why does this solution align to the definition and criteria for a ‘game changing solution’ developed by the Summit?

Small scale farmers contribute to 70% of food in the world today. These farmers evidently played a significant role during the COVID-19 pandemic, as a key source of the local food supply chain. Nevertheless, worldwide, women, IPs, and local communities often face threats in accessing, having ownership, and claiming rights of the land they live on and with. For example, according to the Global Witness, the international anti-corruption organization, 212 people were killed in 2019 for peacefully defending land and standing up to the destruction of nature.

Recognizing the right to land and its inextricable links in building food security and sustainable food systems is a key pillar in achieving a number of sustainable development goals in the 2030 Agenda including eradicating poverty and hunger, achieving gender parity, combating climate change, and building peaceful and sustainable societies. Securing peoples’ land is the foundation of building equitable livelihoods opportunities of people securing their human dignity and respecting their human rights. The Voluntary Guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (VGGT) promote responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests, with respect to all forms of tenure to achieve food security. They serve as a reference and set of principles for country level strategies and policies. The CFS Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems – known as RAI – acknowledge that the starting point for defining how responsible investment in agriculture and food systems can contribute to food security and nutrition is the recognition and respect for human rights. They are a set of ten principles that apply to all types and sizes of agricultural investment including fisheries, forests and livestock.

## 7. What is the existing evidence supporting the argument that this solution will work, or at least that it will achieve the initial outcomes described above?

Evidence	Sources
Better land tenure, among other things, has proven to improve food security and increase investment in children education and health.	Meinzen-Dick R. (2009) Property Rights for Poverty Reduction?'. DESA Working Paper No. 91, December 2009. <i>DESA Working Paper No. 91</i> . New York, USA: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
Only 19% of the arable lands are occupied by smallholder farmers, but smallholder farmers make up 94% of the world’s farmers, preserving	<a href="http://www.agrowingculture.org/home/efficient-agricultural-system/">http://www.agrowingculture.org/home/efficient-agricultural-system/</a>



95% of agricultural biodiversity and producing 70% of the world's food.	
90 percent of fishers are small-scale operators, which account for half of the capture fisheries production in developing countries.	<a href="http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1195811/icode/">http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1195811/icode/</a>
Forests managed by Indigenous Peoples and local communities store 37.7 billion tonnes of carbon - more than the world's 2013 emissions of CO2 from fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes.	<a href="https://www.int-res.com/abstracts/cr/v77/n2/p91-97/">https://www.int-res.com/abstracts/cr/v77/n2/p91-97/</a>
Countries where women lack any right to own land have on average 60% more malnourished children.	OECD Development Centre, At Issue: Do Discriminatory Social Institutions Matter for Food Security? 2012
In Nepal, the devolvement of state forests into community control in the 1970s slowed deforestation and led many local communities to safeguard and restore communal forests and watersheds.	<a href="https://www.iccaconsortium.org/">https://www.iccaconsortium.org/</a>

### 8. What is the current and/or likely political support for this idea?

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, where all member states to the UN have agreed to achieve by 2030, includes four key land targets and indicators. (and many more on a broader scale). Followings are the key land related targets and indicators in the Sustainable Development Goals:

Goal	Target/Indicator
Goal 1: Eradicating Poverty	1.4: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, <b>ownership and control over land</b> , and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.
Goal 2: Zero Hunger	2.3: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in



	<p>particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers,</p> <p>pastoralists and fishers, <b><u>including through secure and equal access to land</u></b>, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.</p>
Goal 5: Achieving Gender Equality	<p>5.a:</p> <p>Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as <b><u>access to ownership and control over land</u></b> and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.</p>
Goal 15: Life on Land	<p>15.3:</p> <p>By 2030, combat desertification, <b><u>restore degraded land</u></b> and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and <b><u>strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world</u></b></p>

State parties are expected to report on these land related targets in their voluntary national reviews to the SDG High Level Political Forum.

### 9. Are there certain contexts for which this solution is particularly well suited, or, not well-suited.

This solution particularly focuses on recognizing the individual land tenure rights of women, IPs, local communities, pastoralists and fisher folks. It has a global application in relation to land rights of women and territorial focus running across the globe in relation to the other categories. Majority of these communities live in developing countries or least developed nations and in areas with high burden of foodborne disease in relation to sub-Saharan Africa.

[1] Family farmers, small-scale farmers, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, rural communities

[2] [https://d3o3cb4w253x5q.cloudfront.net/media/documents/2020\\_11\\_land\\_inequality\\_synthesis\\_report\\_uneven\\_ground\\_final\\_en\\_spread\\_low\\_res\\_2.pdf](https://d3o3cb4w253x5q.cloudfront.net/media/documents/2020_11_land_inequality_synthesis_report_uneven_ground_final_en_spread_low_res_2.pdf)

[3] <https://www.landcoalition.org/es/newsroom/new-report-reveals-land-inequality-worse-we-thought-and-fueling-other-inequalities/>

[4] <https://www.ifad.org/en/land>



[5] <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=465&menu=35>

[6] International Land Coalition and Oxfam: *Uneven Ground: Land Inequality at the heart of unequal societies*,

[https://d3o3cb4w253x5q.cloudfront.net/media/documents/2020\\_11\\_land\\_inequality\\_synthesis\\_report\\_uneven\\_ground\\_final\\_en\\_spread\\_low\\_res\\_2.pdf](https://d3o3cb4w253x5q.cloudfront.net/media/documents/2020_11_land_inequality_synthesis_report_uneven_ground_final_en_spread_low_res_2.pdf)

[7] *Does not necessarily imply a single large intervention as opposed to enabling multiple small actions*

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