

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



IN COLLABORATION WITH



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THE VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES ON THE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE OF TENURE (VGGT)

PROMOTING SECURE TENURE RIGHTS AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO LAND AS A MEANS FOR ERADICATING HUNGER AND POVERTY

INTRODUCTION

The eradication of hunger and poverty, and the sustainable use of resources, depend in large measure on how people access land and other natural resources. The livelihoods of many, particularly the rural poor, are based on secure and equitable access to these resources. Because the governance of tenure rights determines fair land, forest and fishery use, the link between secure and equitable tenure rights and reducing food insecurity and poverty is undeniably strong.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Tenure rights, which provide access to land, fisheries and forests, are important for the realization of human rights, such as the right to a standard of living adequate for human health and well-being. Many tenure problems arise from weak governance, which adversely affects social stability, the sustainable use of resources, investment and economic growth. People can be condemned to a life of hunger and poverty if implementing agencies fail to protect their tenure rights. People may even lose their lives when weak tenure governance leads to violent conflict. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT) address these challenges by promoting the responsible governance of tenure.

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE

- * Protects people from the arbitrary loss of tenure rights, including through forced evictions
- * Helps ensure no one is subject to discrimination
- * Leads to more transparent and participatory decision-making
- * Helps ensure that disputes are resolved before they degenerate into conflict

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH THE EU

FAO's programme for supporting the implementation of the VGGTs would not be possible without the strong commitment of the European Union (EU) and other partners.

The EU has been instrumental in:

- * negotiating the original VGGTs, endorsed by the Committee on World Food Security in May 2012;
- * continuing EU-FAO collaboration on national capacity development projects for enacting the VGGTs at the country level; and
- * developing a comprehensive VGGT e-learning curriculum and training materials.

"I am convinced that these land tenure guidelines [...] are essential for achieving efficient, sustainable and inclusive agriculture, and for promoting human rights and peace in society"

*Andris Piebalgs,
Former EU Commissioner
for Development*

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES: POLICY CHANGE THROUGH CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The VGGTs are gaining increasing momentum at the country level.

FAO will continue to act as a capacity enabler - including supporting national VGGT workshops for governments, civil society organizations, private companies and research and academic institutions.

National workshops function as multi-stakeholder platforms for elaborating the implementation of the guidelines for the responsible governance of tenure. FAO and its partners have invested in country-specific capacity development and training. They have been fruitful in transferring tools and know-how to the individuals and institutions working on resolving tenure governance issues. FAO foresees further work with countries through targeted technical assistance. The VGGT workshops will also provide a platform for

future capacity assessments that seek to identify priorities and improve national policies, laws and administration procedures governing the tenure of land, forests and fisheries.

“Improving land tenure management is a key challenge for strengthening family farms, encouraging investments in agriculture and increasing food security.”

*Dacian Cioloș,
Former EU Commissioner
for Agriculture and
Rural Development*

MAP AND EXAMPLES OF COUNTRY-LEVEL VGGT ACTIVITIES

The VGGTs are internationally accepted standards and practices, and serve as a framework that countries can use to develop their own strategies, policies, legislation and programmes. They were developed in a broad, multi-stakeholder and participatory manner.

MORE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

In June 2014, FAO signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNECA, the host of the African Land Policy Initiative, to support the national governance of tenure implementation with guidance from the VGGTs. It is one of several ongoing regional and national dialogues.

SIERRA LEONE - BETTER POLICIES AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

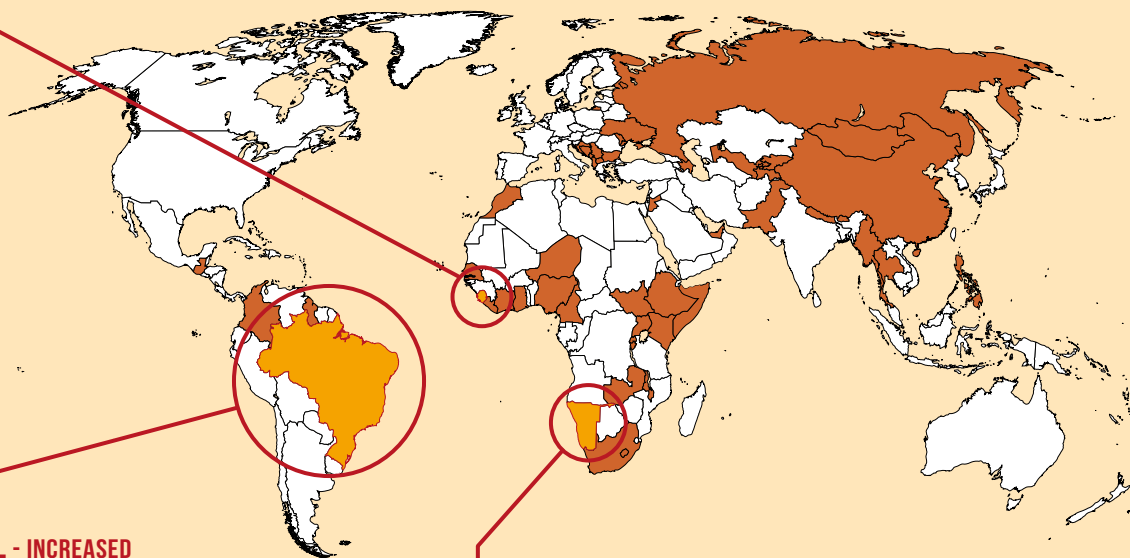
FAO, in partnership with the Government of *Sierra Leone*, is conducting a detailed review of legislation in the context of the VGGTs. The review focuses on cross-cutting issues such as gender-equitable laws and regulations. It also aims to identify where and how capacity supporting the responsible governance of tenure can be developed.

BRAZIL - INCREASED POLITICAL COMMITMENT

Brazil has been one of the first to use the VGGTs as a reference document to frame policy discussions.

NAMIBIA - EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

In *Namibia*, the successful introduction of a property tax on commercial agricultural farms was based on a detailed analysis of the situation and how the proposed changes would affect stakeholders.



Map accurate as of April 2015. © Wikipedia CC/ Camickguy

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Website: www.fao.org/nr/tenure

Email: VG-Tenure@fao.org

VGGTs: www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2801e/i2801e.pdf