



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

UNCCD-FAO Webinars for All Stakeholders

Integrating Tenure Security into Land Restoration Initiatives

15 May 2023 <i>registration link</i>	10:00-13:00 CET https://unccd-int.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_QN8CadbJTbO7CPmdrkd3w	Africa/Arab Region	English/French/Arabic
16 May 2023 <i>registration link</i>	15:00-18:00 CET https://unccd-int.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NnerYZraReKu95NselnNhQ	Latin America/Caribbean	English/Spanish
17 May 2023 <i>registration link</i>	08:00-11:00 CET https://unccd-int.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_4HvXHFTSG6WeYNuDedpSg	Central-East Europe/Asia/Pacific	English/Russian/Chinese

DRAFT AGENDA

00:00-00:05	Welcome and Introduction FAO
00:05-00:15	High Level Video Messages UNCCD and FAO
00:15-00:25	Mandate and Background UNCCD
00:25-00:35	Land Tenure Toolbox UNCCD Global Mechanism
00:35-00:50	Technical Guide FAO
00:50-01:00	How to Raise Awareness on Land Rights to Benefit People and the Planet Landesa
01:00-01:20	Data Governance, Indicators and Monitoring Land Portal and International Land Coalition (ILC)
01:20-01:40	Regional Partners presentations on case studies and good practices UN Habitat, TMG Think Tank for Sustainability, FAO and others
01:40-02:10	Open Discussion
02:10-02:20	Request for National Consultations UNCCD
02:20-02:50	Open Discussion
02:50-03:00	Closing Remarks UNCCD and FAO

CONCEPT NOTE

These regional webinars are intended to raise awareness on the value of tenure security and its contribution to biodiversity conservation, sustainable land management, ecosystem restoration, and climate change mitigation and adaptation while improving food security and local livelihoods. The decisions taken by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) encourage country Parties to integrate the principles and practices contained in the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure (VGGT) into the design and implementation of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and other land restoration initiatives.¹ Land restoration initiatives are broadly defined as programmes, projects, or other organized and deliberate actions to avoid, reduce, and reverse land degradation.² They are often supported by national and sub-national policies and regulations that incentivize public and private efforts to promote the protection, sustainable use, and restoration of our soil, water, and biodiversity resources.

Purpose: To provide updated information on the joint UNCCD-FAO work on land tenure to all interested stakeholders, including private sector and civil society. The webinar will help increase awareness on the challenges and opportunities for integrating the principles and practices of the VGGT into a wide range of LDN and land restoration initiatives. By affording more secure land tenure, restoration projects and programmes can benefit in both their efficiency and effectiveness when responding to the interlinked land, biodiversity, and climate emergencies, with the objective of improving local livelihoods, food and water security, and long-term economic and planetary stability.

Objectives: To provide a clearer and more concise understanding of the Technical Guide on the integration of VGGT and LDN, including a discussion on the pathways of action and good practices within the specific regional context. Partners and invited guests will share their experiences and present case examples that demonstrate specific challenges faced in the region as well as potential synergies that can be harnessed to make secure tenure both a means and outcome of LDN and land restoration initiatives at national and project scales. To describe the upcoming request for proposals, criteria, and selection process to support national consultations, in selected countries across regions, to further develop specific guidance, exchange lessons learned, and inform land tenure strategies and action plans.

To organize these regional workshops, UNCCD and FAO joined forces with Landesa, Land Portal, International Land Coalition (ILC), UN Habitat and TMG Think Tank for Sustainability.

Rationale and Background

Poor land governance and management degrades biodiversity habitat as well as the health and productivity of the land and its capacity to help mitigate and adapt to climate change. While the loss of ecosystem functions has serious implications for long-term planetary stability, land degradation disproportionately impacts vulnerable groups who directly depend on land-based goods and services for their basic needs and livelihoods.

As the demand for land and water resources increasingly exceeds supply due to over exploitation or poor management, the documentation and enforcement of legitimate tenure rights remains critical

¹ UNCCD decision 19/COP15. <https://www.unccd.int/cop15/official-documents>

² UNCCD and FAO. 2022. Technical Guide. <https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/technical-guide-integration-voluntary-guidelines-responsible-governance>

for achieving just, equitable, and sustainable development. Tenure security can reduce individual and community vulnerability to poverty and hunger, market and climate shocks, resource conflicts, and land grabs.

For many countries, recognizing and protecting multiple forms of legitimate land rights, both formal and customary, will require fit-for-purpose administrative and institutional capacities, and a genuine commitment to human rights, gender responsiveness, youth engagement, and intergenerational equity.

Responsible Governance and the Land Restoration Agenda

Land governance, use, and management practices are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Secure land tenure is a core element of inclusive and responsible land governance. It is also a critical enabling factor for halting biodiversity loss, adopting climate-smart land management, scaling up ecosystem restoration, and implementing other nature-based solutions to combat desertification, land degradation, and drought.

Access to and control of land resources contributes to many facets of ‘human security’ especially during periods of crises and to the success of policies, projects, and programmes that promote and ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of land uses and management practices.³ Recognizing, documenting, and enforcing a continuum of legitimate tenure rights for all encourages long-term regenerative land and water management practices that improve food security and rural livelihoods, reduce poverty and malnutrition, empower women and youth, and which can potentially reduce natural resource conflicts, forced migration, and displacement.

Realizing more secure tenure for all requires policy, legal, and institutional frameworks that mobilize stakeholders and finance, create partnerships, and harness synergies to support a more sustainable and virtuous cycle of land governance, use, and management.

Transforming Commitments into Action

Integrating the principles and practices contained in the VGGT into LDN and other land restoration initiatives could help leverage new donors, partnerships, and synergies that did not exist or were only marginally explored during the initial roll out of the VGGT in 2012. Working within country-specific land policies and national action plans (e.g., under the Rio conventions) would deliver substantial gains in efficiency and effectiveness through joint resource mobilization, capacity development, and other supporting processes that boost intra-national cooperation leading to greater tenure security for their citizens.

Setting LDN and other land restoration targets (e.g., NDCs, NBSAPs, and the Bonn Challenge) is an important first step towards mobilizing and aligning the human, social, and financial capital needed to transform these commitments into action on the ground. To realize the full suite of benefits from land restoration initiatives, (i) the root causes or drivers of land degradation should be fully understood and addressed, (ii) data and evidence on the impacts of degradation and the costs and benefits of restoration should be readily available to inform decision-making, and (iii) individual tenure and communal land rights should be integrated into their design, implementation, and monitoring protocols.

³ UNCCD. 2022. Global Land Outlook, 2nd edition. <https://www.unccd.int/resources/global-land-outlook/glo2>

*Evidence shows that land restoration projects and programmes which strengthen land rights, improve infrastructure and access to markets, and increase both the biological and economic productivity of the land are the most efficient, effective, and engaging.*⁴

Putting People Front and Center

In addition to essential global public goods, LDN and other land restoration initiatives must reward indigenous peoples and local communities, farmers and pastoralists, wildlife and protected area managers to name a few who responsibly steward land resources -- our soil, water, and biodiversity. For many countries, this will involve the dedication of time and resources to engage with vulnerable and disenfranchised groups and continue to work on indigenous, women, and youth land access issues.⁵

Women, comprising half of the population, are often at the forefront of community-based restoration initiatives yet frequently do not have equal rights and access to the land when compared to men. Fundamental to the success of the land restoration agenda are gender-responsive design and implementation approaches that enhance tenure security for all by documenting legitimate land rights in a culturally appropriate, cost-effective, transparent, and accessible manner -- sometimes referred to as fit-for-purpose land administration.⁶

Indigenous, traditional, or customary land governance arrangements can often be reconciled or blended with modern approaches and innovative tools that improve tenure security for those engaged in restoration in both our working and natural landscapes. Open-source data sets (e.g., Landex, Prindex) can be useful tools to support evidence-based policy and legal frameworks, including the provision of dispute and conflict resolution mechanisms to help protect those generally excluded from current law enforcement and justice systems.

Multi-stakeholder platforms are often the best first step to bring together diverse actors and experts to exchange information and collaborate to establish pathways that generate more secure tenure for their families and communities. To begin, an assessment of administrative capacities and context-specific actions that enhance tenure security should be led by local actors and administrations with the support of national, regional, and international stakeholders. As part of the knowledge sharing component of any platform, case studies and good practices can be documented and disseminated to help promote implementation at various scales.

Suggested Reading

Technical guide on the Integration of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security into the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation Neutrality.

<https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/technical-guide-integration-voluntary-guidelines-responsible-governance>

Land rights matter for people and the planet - An options paper for raising awareness on responsible land governance for combatting desertification, land degradation, and drought.

<https://www.unccd.int/resources/publications/land-rights-matter-people-and-planet>

⁴ UNCCD. 2022. Global Land Outlook, 2nd edition. <https://www.unccd.int/resources/global-land-outlook/glo2>

⁵ FAO. 2021. Evaluation of VGGT Projects. <https://www.fao.org/3/cb4876en/cb4876en.pdf>

⁶ Legitimate tenure rights encompass the continuum of tenure rights (e.g., access, use, management, lease, ownership) and does not refer only to individual ownership or property rights.