Land Tenure and Food Security

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Food security defined

“When all people at all times have both physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life.”

– Is adequate food available?
– Do people have access to food?
– Knowledge of basic nutrition and access to complementary resources?
Land-related risks contribute directly to...

- Food price volatility/strong demand for farmland
- Population growth/urbanization
- Climate change pressures
- Conflict
- Competing uses of rural lands (extractives/conservation)
How land tenure impacts food security...

- Tenure rules/norms impact access
  - To land, water, pastures, forests

- Tenure rules/norms impact productivity/availability
  - By creating incentives

- Tenure rules/norms can impact poverty
  - By creating/limiting economic opportunities
It’s not just about inputs, institutions matter

Food security is intimately tied to the institutional environment, land governance systems are part of that environment.

– If these systems are weak access/productivity/poverty alleviation are negatively impacted
– Smallholders may, or may not, have tenure security
– Legal pluralism can compound problems
– As does lack of capacity
Linkages

- Secure rights create incentives to invest/conserve
- Investment can increase productivity
- Can improve/expand market opportunities
- Can improve opportunities to trade rights
- Can improve resilience & reduce vulnerability
Women face particular constraints

- Substantial gender asset gaps persist
- Unique role producing food; unique role supporting families
- Improving access to land (credit, inputs) can have powerful, positive impact
- Working with & within customary systems, with men & boys is critical
Why integrate land tenure into food security programming?

- Create a stronger foundation: land governance is an important part of the enabling environment
- Number of households w/ formalized land (rights) is a common FTF indicator tracked annually
- Locally appropriate efforts to formalizing rights for women and men and can help achieve FTF objectives
- But formalizing alone isn’t enough …
Other important considerations

• Sometimes customary systems are secure enough
• Private sector investors can bring benefits, but they (and you) need to understand tenure risks
• Land rights violations may be new human rights frontier
• Communities can partner with investors, resource rights can be their assets
• Participatory processes need to be strengthened
Some questions to ask

• When land is identified for a project, ask who traditionally has been living on & using these resources (land, water, pastures, forests)
• Which rights have groups & individuals traditionally held?
• Are these rights recognized/formalized?
• If not, how will local be affected by project?
• If so, are they adequately enforced?
• Who may oppose formalization?
• Has the host government acceded to the VGGT?