

## **Mainstreaming land rights in the narrative of climate change – views from the ground: A Regional Conference**

10-11 October 2023; Six Seasons Hotel, Gulshan, Dhaka, Bangladesh

### **Context**

The Asia and the Pacific region experience the highest frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events. Around 72 percent of the total frequency of intense natural disasters was recorded in Asia and Pacific between 1971 to 2020 (Thomas, et. al., 2013). Further, data from the *Annual Disaster Statistical Review Reports* shows that six of the top ten countries most hit by natural disasters between 2006 to 2015 were in Asia, including China, India, Philippines, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal (Guha-Sapir, et. al., 2016).

Not only are countries in Asia the most hit by natural disasters, they are also considered the most vulnerable. The high frequency and impact of disasters in Asia is largely due to the size of the continent and landscapes that present high risks of natural hazards, such as river basins, flood plains, and seismic fault lines. Additionally, there are high population densities in many disaster-prone areas of the continent.

Many Asian countries also have large growing populations with a high proportion of poor people living with tenure insecurity that lessens their resiliency to the adverse effects of disasters. Coupled with land degradation, poverty reduces the ability of communities to respond to the effects of climate change. In developing countries of Asia, poverty incidences are high and remain prevalently rural and agricultural. Rural poverty is strongly linked to the lack of access to land – due to landlessness and deprivation, insecure tenure, and contested land rights.

Poverty and the lack of tenure security heighten the risks of people to the effects of natural disasters and climate change. To put disaster risk in its proper perspective, approximately an equal number of people are exposed annually to tropical cyclones in Japan and the Philippines. Yet, a cyclone of the same intensity would kill 17 times more Filipinos due to the country's greater level of vulnerability, including poor standards of housing and infrastructure, and the numbers of poor people settled in at-risk areas (IDMC, 2013).

Thus, rural poor who have weak or no land tenure rights are among the most vulnerable to the direct effects of climate change, both because insecure land tenure reduces the incentives and capacities to take good care of the land to mitigate or adapt to the effects of climate change, and because without secure tenure rights, disasters can easily lead to land loss and migration, exacerbated by land grabbing and the loss of documents.

Yet, public understanding of the links between climate change, disasters, and land tenure is still very limited, leading to poor prevention and wrong response, while those without land or are near landless remain voiceless, and are often left out of climate change discussions.

Thus in 2020, the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) prepared a discussion paper as a contribution to this topic (link: <https://angoc.org/portal/no-time-to-waste-climate-action-through-secure-land-rights-and-sustainable-land-use/>).



A major recommendation of the said paper is to build better understanding and appreciation of land tenure issues in climate change discussions by “humanizing” the issue and by amplifying the voice of the marginalized. This can be achieved by collecting more evidence and people’s stories, towards a better understanding and appreciation of land tenure issues in climate change discussions.

In July 2022, ANGOC and the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovations (GFAR) organized a webinar to share the findings and recommendations of the study. The participants committed to pursue the initiative, which led to the development of a pilot program of collective action among GFAR, ANGOC, and the Land Portal Foundation. Such collective action aims to foster better informed and more inclusively designed climate disaster prevention and resilience policies by mainstreaming the land rights of the rural poor in the climate discourse. For more details, see <https://www.gfar.net/content/collective-action-land-tenure-climate-change>.

Part of the current work program of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) is understanding the cross-cutting dimensions of land with climate change. Even with the growing awareness on climate change, there is still limited understanding and response in addressing the nexus of the impacts of climate change, social and policy responses, and need for land tenure security.

It is in this context that case studies have been documented in selected communities in Asia and Africa regions. The Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) and the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) are jointly organizing a regional conference on “*Mainstreaming land rights in the narrative of climate change -- views from the ground*” in partnership with the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR), the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and the Land Portal Foundation on 10-11 October 2023 at Dhaka, Bangladesh. The event aims to create greater understanding and analysis on the importance of land tenure rights in the climate change discourse. A Joint Statement capturing the main conclusions and recommendations of the conference will be produced and disseminated thereafter. It is hoped that such process will increase the visibility of land tenure issues in the narrative of climate change.

Participation at this event will be blended: both face-to-face and virtual. Online participants will have to register in order to be provided access to the zoom link of the conference. See link:

<https://form.jotform.com/232591177639062>

## Provisional Program (as of 25 September 2023)

### Mainstreaming land rights in the narrative of climate change: views from the ground

09 October 2023/ Arrival of Participants

Day 1, 10 October 2023

Time	Session	Who
09:00 AM	<b>Registration</b>	ALRD
09:30	<b>Opening Session</b>	Chair: <b>Ms. Khushi Kabir</b> , Chairperson, ALRD
09:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome Remarks</li> </ul>	<b>Mr. Shamsul Huda</b> , Executive Director, ALRD
09:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Messages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR)</li> <li>Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Ms. Hildegard Lingnau</b> , GFAR Executive Secretary (video message)  <b>Mr. Robert Lewis-Lettington</b> , GLTN Secretary (video message)
09:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to the Conference</li> </ul>	<b>Mr. Nathaniel Don Marquez</b> , Executive Director, ANGOC
10:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Message from the UN Special Rapporteur</li> </ul>	<b>Mr. Ian Fry</b> , UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change (video message)
10:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speech from the Chief Guest</li> </ul>	<b>Mr. Muhammad Abdul Mannan</b> , Honorable Minister, Ministry of Planning, GoB
10:35	Remarks from the Chair	<b>Ms. Khushi Kabir</b> , Chairperson, ALRD
10:40	Group photo	
10:45	Coffee/Tea break	
11:00	<b>Keynote Presentations: Examining the links of land tenure and climate change</b>	Chair: <b>Ms. Khushi Kabir</b> , Chairperson, ALRD
11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An Asian CSO Perspective</li> </ul>	<b>Mr. Antonio Quizon</b> , Former Chair and Executive Director, ANGOC
11:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bangladesh Country Perspective</li> </ul>	<b>Ms. Rowshan Jahan Moni</b> , Deputy Executive Director, ALRD
11:25	<i>Panel Discussants</i> (10 minutes each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panel Discussant #1</li> </ul>	<b>Prof. Saleemul Huq</b> , Director, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panel Discussant #2</li> </ul>	<b>Barrister Raja Devasish Roy</b> , Chakma Circle Chief
11:45	Open discussion	Participants of the conference
12:10 Noon	Concluding Remarks from the Chair	<b>Ms. Khushi Kabir</b> , Chairperson, ALRD
12:20	Lunch break	
	<b>Community Perspectives on Land Tenure Rights and Climate Justice</b>	Chair: <b>Barrister Raja Devasish Roy</b> , Chakma Circle Chief, CHT
02:00 PM	Overview of case studies	<b>Mr. Nathaniel Don Marquez</b> , Executive Director, ANGOC
02:10	<p><b>Case presentations 1: Women, land rights and resiliency</b> (How women's rights, especially over land, improves the capacities of families and communities to implement resilience actions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Navigating Climate Change and Land Tenure Insecurity: A Case Study of Rural Women's Resilience Efforts in Analamanga Region, Madagascar</i></li> <li><i>Climate resilience in Munda Community in South Western Coastal Area of Bangladesh</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Ms. Mino Ramarason</b>, HC, Madagascar</p> <p><b>Mr. A.K.M Bulbul Ahmed</b>, ALRD, Bangladesh</p>
02:40	Question and answer (10 minutes)	
02:50	<p><b>Case presentations 2: Customary tenure, use and governance</b> (How recognizing customary land rights and practices of indigenous communities helps build local capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Beyond Land Titles: Pastoralists Find Security Amid Climate Change in Community Land Governance Mechanisms in Kenya</i></li> </ul>	<b>Mr. Arach David James</b> , NAMATI, Kenya
03:05	Question and answer (10 minutes)	
03:15	<p><b>Case presentations 3: Land rights and sustainable land/resource use</b> (How secure tenure rights encourages sustainable land use by communities in ways that protect and restore their environment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Through Deluge and Drought: A Village Overcomes (Cambodia)</i></li> <li><i>Land tenure-climate change nexus in India</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Mr. Te Sokkhoeun</b>, SK, Cambodia</p> <p><b>Ms. Rohini Reddy</b>, SARRA, India</p>
03:35	Question and answer (10 minutes)	
03:45	Coffee/Tea break	
04:00	<p><b>Case presentations 4: Coping with risks and preventing disputes</b> (How those with secure tenure are less likely to be at risk of land disputes, which may affect their adaptive capacity)</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities face off with a river that swallows lands and homes (Bangladesh)</li> </ul>	Ms. Shanjida Khan Ripa, ALRD, Bangladesh
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land rights security improves sustainable rice farming: Increasing climate mitigation in upland communities in Passi City, Philippines</li> </ul>	Ms. Marie Joy Demaluan, CARRD, Philippines
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sinking island of Ghoramara, West Bengal, India: a case study of community resettlement</li> </ul>	Ms. Jennifer Brown, LANDESA, USA
04:40	Question and answer (10 minutes)	
04:50	Remarks from the Chair	Barrister Raja Devasish Roy, Chakma Circle Chief, CHT
05:00	End of Day 1	

Day 2: 11 October 2023

Time	Session	Who
09:00 AM	Recap of the Day 1 and Overview of Day 2	ALRD
09:05	<b>Community Perspectives on Land Tenure Rights and Climate Justice</b> (continuation)	Chair: Ms. Mino Ramaroson, Regional Coordinator, Africa & Global Land Specialist, Huairou Commission
09:05	<b>Case presentations 5: Rebuilding after disasters</b> (How tenure security/insecurity affects the post-disaster capacity of people to recover and rebuild)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drowning in despair: The story of a dream washed away by a flood (Nepal)</li> </ul>	Mr. Jagat Deuja, CSRC, Nepal
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate response and tenure rights in Char Bangla, a riverine char land in the coastal region</li> </ul>	Mr. Rafique Ahamed Sherajee, ALRD, Bangladesh
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land Rights Take Center Stage in Asia's Fight for Climate Resilience/Capturing human stories on climate-induced loss and damage to land (Stories from South Asia)</li> </ul>	Ms. Rashmini de Silva, OXFAM, Sri Lanka
09:45	Question and answer (10 minutes)	
09:55	Remarks from the Chair	Ms. Mino Ramaroson, HC, Madagascar
10:05	Coffee/Tea break	
10:35	<b>Raising the visibility of land tenure in the climate change discourse through social media campaign</b> (presentation and discussion)	Chair: Mr. Nathaniel Don Marquez, ANGOC  Presenter: Ms. Romy Sato, Land Portal Foundation (online)
11:00	<b>Sharing the Conference Declaration</b>	Chair: Ms. Syeda Rizwana Hasan

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Presentation and discussion of draft conference declaration</li> </ul>	<b>Drafting Committee</b>
12:00 Noon	Lunch break	
02:30 PM	Video presentations	ALRD, ANGOC
03:00	<b>Presentation and adoption of final conference statement</b>	Chair: <b>Ms. Syeda Rizwana Hasan</b> , Chief Executive, BELA  <b>Drafting Committee</b>
04:00	Speech from the Guest of Honor	<b>Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed</b> , Chairman, National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh (TBC)
04:10	Speech from the Chief Guest	<b>Mr. Saber Hossain Chowdhury</b> , MP, Honorable Chair, Parliamentary Standing Committee on MoEFCC and Special Envoy to Honorable Prime Minister for Climate Change
04:25	Vote of Thanks	<b>ALRD</b> <b>GFAR</b> <b>GLTN</b> <b>ANGOC</b>
04:45	Closing Remarks of the Chair	<b>Ms. Syeda Rizwana Hasan</b> , Chief Executive, BELA
05:20	Solidarity/Brief cultural program	Participants and local artists
06:00	End of the Conference	

12 October 2023/ Departure of Participants