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Rural Land tenure And Sustainable Development in the Sahel and West Africa

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STRATEGIC VISION OF LAND TENURE ISSUES FOR THE NEXT DECADE IN WEST AFRICA

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE OF PRAIA 94

The CILSS and the Club du Sahel organized in June 1994, in Praia, a regional conference on land tenure issues and decentralization in the Sahel. This conference clearly pointed to the fact that some land tenure policy options may lead to exclusion, intolerance and, in the long run, to the destruction of Sahelian societies. Thus, the Sahel was invited to adopt, as a matter of urgency, options for an equitable, peaceful and decentralized management of land tenure issues and natural resources. More particularly, the Praia declaration formulated the main guidelines hereafter and invited the CILSS Member States and their partners to effectively implement them:

- formulation, by the Sahelian States, of framework laws in the land tenure and natural resources sector, laying down the basic principles while leaving it to the local level to define the implementation measures;
- need for promoting a decentralized approach to land tenure management while acknowledging the legitimacy of the grassroots communities and transferring to them the powers and competences for natural resources management;
- need for taking into consideration the legitimate rights and interests of all the stakeholders, in particular of those who are excluded from landed property such as the women and pastoralists;
- need for paying special attention to the prevention and management of land tenure related conflicts;
- need for taking the environmental dimension into account in problems connected with land management.

The time has now come to assess the progress achieved towards the implementation of these orientations and to put them in the current context and particularly from the perspective of sub-regional integration which has made considerable progress since then.

NEED FOR FORMULATING LAND TENURE POLICY GUIDELINES ADAPTED TO THE NEW CONTEXT (LONG-TERM VISION)

Nearly ten years after the Praia conference took place, the sub-region is faced with new challenges and issues including the following:

- the Sahelian countries particularly and the West African ones in general have all subscribed to new commitments at the international level (Rio conventions – Climate change, biodiversity and desertification; Summit of Johannesburg on sustainable development, objectives of the millennium...) and have developed new initiatives at the national, sub-regional and regional levels (decentralization policies; revision of land tenure and natural resource management laws, the Sahel 21 process and the food security strategy paper; national and sub-regional action

- programmes to combat desertification; preparation of poverty reduction strategy papers, process of regional integration; NEPAD...).
- the civil society has been consolidated and has confirmed its legitimacy and its capacity to take part in the search for suitable solutions to land tenure problems and decentralization.

All these changes show the importance of defining new policy guidelines for the land tenure and natural resources sector in keeping with the progress made in the area of sub-regional integration, the renewed acuteness of shared resource management problems and the aggravation of potential or latent conflict situations at the national or inter-state levels.

The current challenges posed by the globalisation, the scarce resources, the recurrent droughts and desertification, the fierce economic competition and the spectrum of murderous conflicts shaking up the continent call for West African countries to work even more towards the establishment of viable economic and ecological areas, and to anticipate the explosion of latent conflicts connected with the management of national common resources as well as shared or transboundary resources. In this context, the ambition for the next decade would be: **"to strengthen the process that guarantees secure and equitable access to land resources and the sustainable management of natural resources"**. This process could result, in particular, in the development of ***a regional charter on rural land tenure***.


To help take a decisive move towards fulfilling this ambition while taking into account the current changes affecting the West Africa sub-region, the CILSS - on the basis of its mandate and with the assistance of its partners - wants to give to all the stakeholders concerned the opportunity to assess the Praia orientations and to take part in the formulation of new land tenure policy guidelines in West Africa.

To that effect, CILSS organizes a Forum called "PRAIA+ 9: Rural land tenure and Sustainable Development in West Africa". The conclusions of this forum will be formulated in the form of proposed new land tenure policy guidelines for the next decade. They will be submitted to the relevant sub-regional political authorities for approval, in particular the Summit of Heads of State and Government of CILSS and, if necessary, the Summits of Heads of State and Government of the ECOWAS and UEMOA member countries.

THE PRAIA +9 FORUM

OBJECTIVE AND RESULTS OF THE FORUM

The aim of the forum is:

-  To define, for the next decade, new policy guidelines to strengthen secure and equitable access to land resources and sustainable management of natural resources.

The results hereafter are expected from the forum:

- R1** - Lessons are drawn from the implementation of the Praia orientations
- R2** - Emerging topics are identified
- R3** - A vision and priorities for sustainable management of rural lands in West Africa are defined
- R4** - A new dynamics of partnership among all the stakeholders concerned with rural land tenure issues in West Africa is initiated.

Moreover, the proceedings of the forum will be published in order to contribute to reinforcing the knowledge base of the region and developing the capacities of the stakeholders in the land tenure sector.

To achieve the objective thus defined, CILSS and its partners have agreed to articulate the project around the following three main thrusts:

- review of the status of implementation of the Praia orientations
- survey of emerging land tenure questions
- formulation of strategic orientations

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRAIA ORIENTATIONS

The States, and all the other stakeholders as well as their development partners have had enough time to assess the impact of the orientations laid down in Praia in the field of land tenure and decentralization. The aim is to undertake a critical review of the formulation and implementation process of land tenure policies and legislations in the light of the elements contained in the Praia declaration of 1994 and to draw lessons for the future. The output of the review will form a basis for the definition of the new guidelines.

As far as the CILSS Member States are concerned, the review will be based on a process of self-evaluation based on the participation of and dialogue between the key actors concerned with land tenure management. A national workshop will be organized to that end in each CILSS Member State.

As concerns the West African countries not members of CILSS, the objective will be to get the reaction of these countries to the Praia orientations according to their specific experiences. In this respect, data will be collected on current land policies and legislations. Such data will be gathered via existing networks either by resource persons or institutions, or finally by partner institutions members of the Consultative and Steering Committee of the process operating in these countries.

SURVEY OF EMERGING LAND TENURE QUESTIONS

New land tenure management problems and practices have emerged in West Africa since the Praia conference. In the preparatory phase of the forum, it would be important to

identify, analyse and capitalise these questions through calls for contribution and, if necessary, through one or more regional studies.

The contributions will be focused on case studies or articles already available or in the process of finalization and dealing with topics such as ¹:

1. Land tenure and decentralization;
2. Land security for the marginalized people and groups;
3. Equitable access to natural resources and Poverty Reduction;
4. Regional integration;
5. Communication, information and capacity-building of land tenure sector stakeholders

The persons and institutions eager to present such contributions must show up before 30 March 2003 by sending a summary of their contribution. A Scientific Committee will be set up to select the most relevant papers for incorporation into the process of formulation of new orientations and the forum's documentation.

For each broad topic, an institution will be selected as coordinator of the studies. Such Coordinating or Lead institution will be responsible for producing a synthesis of the strong ideas that emerge from the various papers and case studies related to the topic.

FORMULATION OF STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS: TOWARDS A SUB-REGIONAL CHARTER ON RURAL LAND TENURE

This deals with the holding of the forum itself. The great moments will consist of:

- An introductory plenary session during which the participants, on the basis of a general introductory report centred on the national contributions and the thematic studies, will share their visions of the topic of the forum and will identify the points that need further development;
- thematic workshops during which participants will listen to the most relevant presentations on the topic assigned to the workshop and will formulate orientations and principles that aim to guarantee secure and equitable access to land and natural resources in West Africa.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The whole process must rely on:

¹Non exhaustive list. Subsequent consultations with the thematic leaders and members of the Scientific Committee will make it possible to specify these topics, to reformulate them if necessary and to select those which are really adapted to the current context and needs of the stakeholders.

- participation and ownership, by taking into consideration the points of view of the various categories of stakeholders concerned;
- a collaborative approach involving the key specialized institutions and co-operation agencies operating in the land tenure sector in West Africa with a view to ensuring quality and getting the outcome of the forum endorsed;
- the quest for quality in leading the process and in its results;
- an iterative and flexible approach allowing to adapt the activities to the specific national contexts;

TARGET GROUPS AND PARTIES CONCERNED

The parties to the forum are the CILSS and ECOWAS Member States. Opening this forum to non-CILSS countries is justified especially by the magnitude of the problems of shared resources and the efforts the countries of the sub-region have already exercised jointly within the context of the SRAP-WA and the CSSA (food security strategy paper), the current context and the requirements of regional integration and the opening of the markets, migrations and trans-national transhumance.

PRAIA + 9 is addressed to all stakeholders active in/concerned with rural land tenure issues:

- States;
- civil society;
- elected officials (national and local);
- traditional chiefs;
- farmer and pastoralist organizations;
- the private sector;
- researchers;
- individuals or institutions having some experience in the sector;
- development partners;
- inter-governmental organizations

Special attention will be paid to women's participation.

SUPPORTING MEASURES AND FACTORS OF SUCCESS

The project executing agency, namely CILSS, should strive to get all the stakeholders involved in order to ascertain political ownership of the process as well as of its outcome. To that end, CILSS must develop an institutional and political advocacy campaign with a view to:

- initiating a dialogue with government departments of the countries concerned with land tenure issues, including the departments in charge of regional integration;
- initiating a dialogue with the IGOs that show specific interest in the topic and/or which have parliamentary mechanisms and/or practices in the field;

- ensuring synergy with current major initiatives such as the NEPAD and the CCD;
- mobilizing the development partners to get their institutional, technical and financial support to the process;
- approaching an African personality of international calibre to get him/her provide moral sponsorship to the forum.

ORGANIZATION

The organisational plan is structured around main lines for action. It is based on the organization, upstream, of activities culminating in the Forum itself. The forum will consist of: an opening plenary session, thematic workshops carried out simultaneously and a session devoted to sharing the outputs of the thematic workshops and adopting the proceedings of the forum. Time will be also allowed for experience-sharing between the stakeholders (display of "posters" and "side events").

CILSS is the managing institution of the process. It could be supported by an ad hoc working group composed of resource persons and partner institutions members of the Consultative and Sponsoring Committee based in Ouagadougou. This limitation is dictated by budget constraints.

CILSS is setting up the mechanism hereafter for the institutional and technical management of the process of experience sharing, consultations and strong involvement all the stakeholders:

A CONSULTATIVE AND SPONSORING COMMITTEE

The Praia 1994 process was organized on the basis of a partnership. Praia + 9 will also be organised on the basis of enlarged partnership allowing the full participation of all the stakeholders and partners of this process in order to ensure greater intellectual and institutional transparency. At the same time, an ownership of the process is also pursued upstream in order to strengthen its legitimacy and effectiveness. Each and every member of this committee will be also the sponsor of the exercise.

The role of the consultative and sponsoring committee will be to:

- provide support and advice to CILSS in leading the process;
- validate the preparatory documents;
- mobilise technical and financial resources;

The first meeting of this committee was held January 9 and 10, 2003 in Ouagadougou and gathered the following partner institutions around CILSS: French co-operation, GTZ, CIDA, IIED, IFPRI, IUCN/BRAO, ROPPA, LANDNET.

The committee will meet periodically approximately every 2 months. It remains open to any partner and stakeholder who wish to join it, in particular **THE INTER AFRICAN IGOS**,

THE BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL CO-OPERATION AGENCIES, THE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE ORGANISATIONS OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY

The next meetings of the committee are fixed as follows:

- March 2003 in Ouagadougou;
- May 2003 in Ouagadougou;
- July 2003 in Nouakchott.

FOCAL POINTS IN THE COUNTRIES

A flexible focal point will be set up in the countries according to national contexts. It will be charged with:

- Ensuring effective and efficient participation of the country and all the categories of stakeholders in the national review and giving a feedback on the forum's outcome;
- Preparing and conducting the national review;
- Drafting the report stemming from the national consultations.

A scientific committee

To ensure scientific validity of the whole process and particularly the thematic studies, a scientific committee will be set up in order to:

- Give opinions concerning the preparation and implementation of the themes;
- Appraise and validate the contents of the reports on the themes;
- Re-examine the proceedings of the forum before publication.

VENUE AND DATE: Nouakchott, from 20 to 24 October 2003

CONTACTS AND INFORMATION praia+9@cilss.bf

PLANNING OF ACTIVITIES – YEAR 2003

Month Activities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Consultative and Sponsoring Committee meetings			X		X		X					
Finalization of project document and appendices including the papers to be presented												
Finalization of the technical dossiers (TOR, methodology.)												
Implementation of communication Plan												
Launching of the Reviews and themes *)												
Circular tour												
Conducting the Review												
Regional synthesis												
Finalization of the Forum's documentation												
Holding of the forum												
FOLLOW-UP												

*) Deadline for submission of the summaries of presentations: 31 March 2003.
 Deadline for submission of the final text of the presentations: June 30 2003.