



## Rural and Urban Linkage: Imperatives and Possibilities for Collaboration

To identify issues on land administration and management common in both rural and urban areas, and explore possible areas of collaboration to address such issues, the participants were divided into three workshop groups. Below are the highlights of the discussions:

### On Rural and Urban Linkages:

- *Urban-Rural distinction.* There are issues on the identification or criteria for determining urban, rural and peri-urban areas.
- *The vulnerable are marginalized, especially the women.* The poor and vulnerable have little access to tenure security, especially women who are often excluded from decision-making processes in land affairs and economic transactions. Both rural and urban lands are controlled by investors or vested non-transparent interests.
- *Land information systems are inadequate.* Oftentimes, different government agencies with different mandates on land administration and management lack coordination resulting to duplication of incorrect and inadequate land records, wasting resources on generating unreliable instruments. In addition to this, land records are often inaccessible, incomplete, and difficult to understand, hindering resolution of land conflicts and disputes.
- *Lack of implementation, strategy and political will in land use policies.* Often, policies are created but not implemented. Lack of coordination can also be observed in land use planning. City flooding brought by upland deforestation and increasing informal settlements are evidences that land use should be approached holistically as both rural and urban areas are vulnerable to climate change and disasters.
- *Land conversion and fragmentation.* Plots are becoming too small for sustaining livelihood and generating incomes in rural areas. Urban areas are expanding, but they are not owned by people migrating there.
- *Land Grabbing.* This phenomenon is not exclusive to rural areas. Informal settlements in urban areas often result from land grabbing in rural areas, driven by corporations and supported by the government. These areas also experience population displacement, as lands are “grabbed” under the premise of an environmental initiative, called “green grabbing.” In this type of land grabbing, occupants are not recognized, converting rural landscapes into conservation sites, and urban areas to green spaces or for tourism uses.



- *Lack of enforcement of land ceilings.* Increasing accumulation of wealth often with land being acquired and held for speculative purposes rather than productive use, limited restrictions or ceilings on individual or family land holdings, and poor enforcement of ceilings specified by policy or legislation increasingly results in tenure insecurity and fear of displacement. There are too many loopholes in land ceilings for military, state and elites. Loopholes may arise in the form of land that is designated for “public purpose”.
- *Little or no opportunity in public lands and non-recognition of customary land rights.* Occupants of public purpose lands have significantly diminished opportunities with respect to land. Once land is converted to public purpose land, customary tenure is no longer recognized. Inhabitants are often denied basic services, have no protection from eviction, and have limited opportunities to gain formal recognition of their rights in the future.
- *Migration from rural to urban areas.* Majority of the rural population, especially the youth, ventures to sacrifice tenure for better economic opportunities expected to be in the urban areas. The movement of the youth to urban areas to seek for better employment opportunities because of unavailability of secure lands, threats of industrial expansion and difficulty to acquire lands through inheritance customs leaving productive lands to be worked by the very old or very young.
- *Informal contracts are rife in both rural and urban areas.* Tenants rarely have formal contracts in place that protect their rights.

#### **On Areas of Collaboration:**

- *Providing support to marginalized groups* such as the women, elderly, indigenous peoples and the poor, ensuring that they are involved in land affairs and economic transactions. CSOs need to promote pro-poor land administration systems. CSOs must play as watchdogs in terms of ensuring that people have, support and basic services, access to accurate land records and sufficient knowledge about their rights. Moreover, CSOs must also coordinate with state actors to inform them about the land administration and management issues raised.
- *Advocate for the implementation of land use and spatial planning.*
- *Identify mechanisms and strategies to ensure accountable and transparent economic concessions.*
- *Develop a set of effective alternative land dispute mechanism to mediate land conflicts.*
- *Develop a mapping or land use planning toolkit.*
- *Conduct studies on the value or critical role of land holdings in household livelihoods across rural, urban and peri-urban areas.*
- *Conduct studies on the factors that result to rural to urban migration.*
- *Conduct studies on peri-urban areas, where they are and why they are characterized as such.* ■