

REGIONAL SUMMARY

**Monitoring Progress on Land Rights
under SDG 1.4:
Are We on the Right Track?**

THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012 with the objective of producing a set of universal goals to address the urgent environmental, political, and economic challenges facing our world.

On 25 September 2015, the UN's 193 Member States adopted new global goals for the next 15 years (2016 to 2030) at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York. Also known as "The 2030 Agenda," the Declaration "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The SDGs replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000 to 2015), which started a global effort to tackle the indignity of poverty. The MDGs earlier established measurable, universally agreed objectives for tackling extreme poverty and hunger, preventing deadly diseases, and expanding primary education to all children, among other development priorities.

But while the MDGs focused on developing countries, the SDGs are "universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities."

The SDGs mark a major step forward compared to the earlier MDGs. They reflect a wider global commitment to end poverty and hunger everywhere, and to move towards a more equitable and environmentally sustainable path. All 17 SDG Goals interconnect, meaning success in one Goal affects success for others. Dealing with the threat of climate change impacts how we manage our fragile natural resources, achieving gender equality or better health helps eradicate poverty, and fostering peace and inclusive societies will reduce inequalities and help economies prosper. The SDGs seek to make sure "no one is left behind."

SDG 1 and Land Rights. SDG 1: "to end poverty in all its forms" – includes targets related to social protection, land rights and resilience. More specifically, Target 1.4 signifies a new global recognition that secure land tenure and access to natural resources, especially for poor and vulnerable women and men, should be a central strategy in global actions to combat poverty and social exclusion. Land tenure security is also seen as essential to ensure shelter and to enable people and families to access needed services.

As stated in SDG target 1.4: "By 2030, ensure that **all men and women, in particular the poor and vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.**" [*emphasis added*]

The importance of land rights is made more explicit in SDG Indicator 1.4.2, which will measure the progress made towards Target 1.4: "**Proportion of total adult population with secure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure.**" This indicator also provides a globally comparable basis to measure tenure security over land.

Other land-related SDGs and Targets. Other SDG Goals (i.e., Goals 2, 5, 11, and 15) also recognize the role of land in sustaining human development. The need for

secure land rights is specifically mentioned under SDG Goals 2, 5, and 11, and is reflected in their associated targets and indicators:

- Under **Goal 2** – “Zero Hunger” – Target 2.3 seeks to “double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, (and) other productive resources.”
- Under **Goal 5** – “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment” – Target 5a states: “Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws. Indicator 5.a.1 particularly seeks to monitor women’s ownership of agricultural land.
- Under **Goal 11** – “Sustainable Cities and Communities” – Target 11.1 states: “By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums.” Indicator 11.1.1 seeks to monitor the proportion of urban populations living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing.

Overall importance of Indicator 1.4.2. Target 1.4 is the sole focus among land related SDG objectives that specifies the need to provide *vulnerable populations* with control and ownership of land and natural resources. As such, Indicator 1.4.2 remains as the key to monitoring country progress in the achievement of secure land and property rights as an enabling condition for poverty reduction. The data collected for SDG indicator 1.4.2 will likewise be directly relevant to other SDG objectives – specifically to Targets 2.3, 5a, and 11.1, as cited above.

Land tenure security is particularly relevant to Asia, where poverty is largely rural and agricultural. It is home to 70 percent of the world’s indigenous people, and accounts for an estimated 87 percent of the world’s small farms that depend on household labor and cover less than two hectares of land.

Monitoring the SDGs. In 2015, the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) created the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) composed of Member States and including regional and international agencies as observers. The IAEG-SDGs was tasked to develop and implement the global indicator framework for the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

All SDG indicators are classified into *three tiers* according to the availability of suitable data sources and methodologies for data collection and analysis, and the extent to which countries are able to track progress against the indicator. As of the UNSC 51st Session in March 2020, the global indicator framework does not contain any Tier III indicators.

As of March 2021, Indicator 1.4.2. is under Tier II status, meaning that it has an internationally established methodology, but such data are not regularly produced by countries.

Box 1. Classification of SDG Indicators

- *Tier I:* Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 percent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant.
- *Tier II:* Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries.
- *Tier III:* No internationally established methodology or standards are yet available for the indicator, but methodology/standards are being (or will be) developed or tested.

At the global level, the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat) and the World Bank (WB) are the **custodian agencies** for SDG Indicator 1.4.2. The main task of the custodian agencies is to develop the methodology for monitoring this indicator. Given that Indicator 1.4.2 is linked to other Targets and Indicators, partner agencies are the UN Statistics Division (UNSD), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Women, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). FAO is the custodian for Indicator 5.a.1, that focuses on agricultural land for women and 5.a.2 that monitors women’s equal rights to land under a country’s legal (and customary) framework.

At country level, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) are mandated to lead in the collection of data requirements of national governments, including data on land. NSOs are also tasked to report on country progress in the achievement of the SDGs.

CSOs and the SDGs. A range of civil society organizations (CSOs) had influenced the development of the new Agenda 2030, which led to a rights-based agenda for development that goes far beyond the ambitions of the earlier MDGs.

Through SDG 17 – “*Global Partnership for Development*” – the 2030 Agenda recognizes that strong global partnerships and cooperation with all stakeholders are key to the realization of the SDGs. This includes the involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs), due to their direct connection with poor, vulnerable and marginalized communities.

The role of CSOs is often expressed in terms of “*localizing the global goals, and monitoring progress.*” CSOs can support implementation through their on-ground development work, as well as offer advice on concrete SDG implementation based on their field experiences. Monitoring work on the SDGs can spur government action through advocacy and by CSOs acting as watchdogs to hold governments accountable to their commitments. Moreover, through their linkages with local communities, CSOs can contribute to bottom-up SDG monitoring as part of national reporting processes.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This document sets out the findings of a multi-country study undertaken in 2020. It seeks to identify potential gaps in national reporting on land under the SDGs. It gauges the progress made by governments towards addressing land rights

under SDG 1.4, not only through the lens of official data and global indicators, but also through studies and feedback from CSOs and rural communities.

Objectives of the CSO Reports

- Contribute to sustaining the SDG reporting processes of governments, with emphasis on land-related targets (primarily SDG Indicators 1.4.1 and 5.a.1);
- Lobby governments to use the CSO reports as inputs to their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and SDG Country Reports; and,
- Pursue the policy work of CSOs on land rights by optimizing the SDGs as a space for dialogue with various stakeholders in the land sector.

Process. Six country reviews on monitoring SDG 1.4 were conducted in 2020 by CSOs in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, and the Philippines. As in the case of India, the report contains perceptions of community representatives in 12 villages in the States of Jharkhand and Odisha.

The overall research process involved:

- Convened a regional planning meeting in March 2020;
- Country reviews and a case study prepared in seven (7) countries in 2020;
- Multi-stakeholder workshops convened in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, and the Philippines to discuss the respective study findings;
- Conducted focus group discussions in 12 villages in two States in India to validate findings;
- Organized an online regional workshop in October 2021 to present and discuss highlights from the country review studies; and,
- A regional summary report as reviewed and finalized.

Figure 1. Process in the preparation of the study



Methodology. The country reviews and case study used both secondary data and primary data. The main reference materials used and updated by the researchers were the two studies prepared by LWA LMWG in 2018: a) State of Land Rights and Land Governance in Eight Asian Countries, and b) Scoping Paper on the Readiness of National Statistical Offices to Report on SDG Indicator 1.4.2 in Eight Asian Countries.

Secondary sources included reports and documents from National Statistics Offices (NSOs) and other government agencies, UN agencies, CSOs and partner communities. The reviewed materials included Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), statistical data on land, government regulatory frameworks and policies on land tenure, and reports on the progress of SDGs.

Primary sources included focus group discussions (FGDs) with CSOs and community organizations to obtain perspectives on the meaning and status of “tenure security” in local contexts, as well as key informant interviews (KIIs) and semi-structured interviews (SSIs) to assess progress made on monitoring SDG Indicator 1.4.2.

At country level, participants of multi-stakeholder workshops discussed the initial draft reports and formulated recommendations in response to the findings. At various degrees, these processes involved NSOs, government land and planning agencies, international organizations, representatives of community groups and sectors, and CSOs working on land issues.

With regard to India, through FGDs and KIIs, the perceptions of the villagers in the two States and analysis of specific contexts (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) were used to show the kind of challenges faced in documenting land tenure security (1.4.2) in the country’s context. The case study is supplemented by the status of land data – national context and background of Jharkhand and Odisha States.

Face-to-face meetings were limited due to prevailing restrictions in each country related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the meetings were organized through online and exchanges made through telephone and email. In a few cases, community-level consultation meetings were organized.

Table 1. CSO researchers and reports

Country	CSO Researcher(s)	Title of Report
Bangladesh	Association for Land Reform and Development	CSOs Need to Push for Land Tenure and Security Data
Cambodia	STAR Kampuchea	A Call for Land Tenure Security Inclusion in Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals
India	Foundation for Ecological Security	A look into village-level perceptions on “land tenure security” amidst India’s land data challenges
Indonesia	Bina Desa	Land Rights and Tenure Security of Vulnerable Groups Not Among Reported Data
Kyrgyzstan	National Union of Water Users Associations of the Kyrgyz Republic Kyrgyz Association of Forest and Land Users	Working towards a True and Accurate Land and Resources Tenure Security Report
Nepal	Community Self Reliance Centre	CSOs Have Yet to Make Nepal’s Land Agenda SDG-Accountable
Philippines	Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development People’s Campaign for Agrarian Reform Network, Inc. Philippine Association For Intercultural Development NGOs for Fisheries Reform	Getting a Fuller Picture

Organization of the report. This report provides a summary of the key findings and recommendations of the country studies. It focuses on five main topics:

- Government efforts at pursuing the SDGs, in particular SDG 1.4;
- CSO initiatives at monitoring the SDGs, with focus on SDG 1.4;
- Monitoring of SDG Indicator 1.4.2;
- Summary of Findings; and,
- Key areas to address for pursuing land tenure security under SDG Target 1.4.

GOVERNMENT EFFORTS AT PURSUING THE SDGs, IN PARTICULAR SDG 1.4

Country efforts at pursuing the SDGs are summarized below:

Bangladesh. Land-related SDG Targets and Indicators are reflected in the country's mid-term plan (8th Five Year Plan), long-term plan (Perspective Plan 2041) and in its longer-term plan (Delta Plan 2100).

- The *Eight Five-Year Plan (2020 to 2025)* provides for the distribution of government *khas* land to the landless and marginal farmers and encourages owners of tea gardens to earmark land in their estates where workers can build their own dwellings. It gives importance to land use, zoning, housing reclamation of new land in the coastal zone, and others.
- *Perspective Plan 2041* highlights the need for effective land governance and administration as one of the goals “[in creating] the supportive environment for markets to function efficiently.” Along with approaches to flood control, water storage, irrigation, agriculture, forest resource management, etc., land management is cited as a major element in the policy package for reducing poverty and improving environmental management. The Plan includes proposals to recover lost government *khas* lands, to introduce regulations on the use of agricultural lands, and to digitize land records.
- *Delta Plan 2100* focuses on the management of water, land, ecology, environment, and enhanced resilience to climate change in a country that features the world's largest river delta. It is a comprehensive plan that seeks to eliminate extreme poverty, create more jobs, sustain GDP growth, and reduce river and delta out-migration.

The government has thus far submitted two VNRs (2017 and 2020) on SDG implementation. However, land-related targets and indicators are not reported in both reports. In the 2017 VNR, the government mentioned that metadata related to Indicators 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 were yet to be finalized by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC). In the 2020 VNR, the government kept silent on the status of people's ownership and control over land and property, inheritance, and natural resources.

Cambodia. In 2015, Cambodia adopted all 17 SDGs, and added Goal 18 related to the “clearance of land mines and of explosive remnants of war (ERW).” Thus, the Cambodian SDGs (CSDGs) version has 18 Goals, 88 nationally relevant Targets and 148 (global and locally-defined) indicators under the *CSDG Framework, 2016 to 2030*.

Under the Ministry of Planning (MoP), the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) has been responsible for localizing the SDG Indicators in the CSDGs and in developing the indicators. The CSDGs were approved in 2018.

However, SDG Indicator 1.4.2 is not found in the document “CSDG Framework, 2016 to 2030.” Instead, there is a CSDG Indicator 1.4.1: “Percentage of total members of registered community fisheries and forestry with tenure rights to fishery and forestry resource management through effective community registration and management.” This is different from global SDG Indicator 1.4.1 which states: “Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services.”

Meanwhile, in 2017, the MoP conducted a feasibility study on how to integrate SDG Indicator 1.4.2 into the CSDGs, in alignment with the SDGs. The MoP plans to add this land indicator into the CSDGs in 2023.

The MoP has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation and maintains the CSDG Indicator database. It is tasked to submit annual updates and five-year milestone reports on the CSDGs. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning, and Construction (MLMUPC) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) are responsible for data gathering and preparing reports related to land.

Cambodia’s VNR 2019 reported on the country’s performance on the CSDGs with in-depth reviews of six SDGs (Education, Decent Work and Growth, Reduced Inequality, Climate Action, Peace and Institutions, and SDG Partnerships). CSOs and other sectors were involved in consultative meetings in preparation of the VNR. However, the VNR did not include land-related SDG targets and indicators.

India. The NITI Aayog (Policy Commission, or National Institution for Transforming India) is the agency mandated to oversee the adoption and monitoring of the SDGs in the country. It prepares frameworks for reporting various indicators, compiles the data from various agencies and prepares annual and periodic reports on achievement of various SDGs. SDG India Index and Dashboard measures progress against various goals by various States and Union Territories. Since its launching in 2018, the index has been comprehensively documenting and ranking the progress made by States and Union Territories towards achieving the SDGs. The third edition of the SDG India Index 2020 to 2021 was released in June 2021. From covering 13 Goals with 62 indicators in the first edition in 2018, the third edition in 2021 covers 16 Goals on 115 quantitative indicators, with a qualitative assessment on Goal 17.

India has completed two VNRs, issued in 2017 and in 2020.

Land and land revenue are State subjects under the Constitution of India. State legislatures make laws on all matters pertaining to land, land records, settlement and distribution of lands. Revenue Departments of State governments are the nodal departments for administration and management of lands.

Indonesia. The National Development Planning Agency (or BAPPENAS) is responsible for preparing the roadmap and national action plans for implementing the SDGs. This agency is responsible for coordinating the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of SDG achievements at national and sub-national (region) levels. Two VNRs have been prepared (in 2017 and 2019).

BAPPENAS also has a webpage called “SDGs Dashboard” dedicated to reporting available data for SDG official and proxy-indicators, that may be disaggregated into provincial and city/district levels.

The Presidential Regulation 59 of 2017 stipulates that the National Medium-Term and Long-Term Development Plans should be aligned with the SDGs. However, under the 2017 to 2019 Medium-Term Development Plan (or RPJMN) the national target related to SDG Target 1.4 is defined as: “The number of low-income households that can access decent housing in 2019 will increase to 18.6 million for the lowest 40 percent of the population.” It is noted that the national target is focused on housing, not land rights or security of land tenure.

Under the existing 2005 to 2025 Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN), one direction for land management is the formulation of regulations for implementing land reform, so that the economically weak can more easily obtain land rights. For RPJPN 2015 to 2019, the target was land redistribution of nine million hectares, sourced from: a) the release of forest areas [4.1 million hectares]; b) granting of land rights on land with cultivation rights that will expire, abandoned land and uncertified transmigration land [about one million hectares]; and, c) asset legalization of community-owned land with agrarian reform recipient criteria [3.9 million hectares].

Comparing the 2017 to 2019 RPJMN and the 2015 to 2019 RPJPN documents, the targets do not appear to be aligned with each other in terms of implementing the SDGs.

The Indonesia VNR of 2019 mentions land rights issues as a problem of social inclusion, and that a large number of farmers are without land. Thus, there are two parallel programs: a) land certification under agrarian reform which means giving certificates over land that is already possessed and without dispute; and, b) social forestry program. Thus far, about 40 percent of the 126 million land certificates have been distributed from 2017 to 2019, while one hectare of land has been distributed to each farmer under the social forestry program.

However, the VNR of 2019 does not report on progress on access to and control over land for poor people, especially women and farmers facing land conflicts. Rather, it mentions progress made in relation to the percentage of households that have access to proper drinking water, sanitation, and electricity services, as well as the percentage of urban slum households. A number of CSOs have pointed out that such reports do not fully present the actual situation as the government tends to simplify agrarian reform as a matter of legality and land titling, which in certain cases can actually have an impact on depriving the rights of small people and excluding them from their rights.

Kyrgyzstan. In terms of the national policy framework, the SDGs have been incorporated into the country’s long-term National Development Strategy (2018 to 2040) as well as in its medium-term Program of the Government on “Unity, Confidence, Creation” (2018 to 2022).

The National Development Strategy places the quality and standard of living, and the rights and obligations of persons, at the center of State policy. It adheres to the global commitment to “leave no one behind,” with priority focus on vulnerable sectors of the population. It guarantees equal rights and full participation of women at all levels of decision-making.

Land rights are secured through a strategic direction in Public Administration, i.e., the Rule of Law — that describes that the State justice system. By 2040, an independent justice system will be built in Kyrgyzstan, which will comprehensively ensure the protection of a person and his/ her legal rights, guarantee the inviolability of property, and create the best conditions in the region for business development.

Under the Program for 2018 to 2022, land rights are not directly reflected. Instead, the program is focused on providing guarantees of security and justice for all citizens, including landowners and land users. The concept is to protect persons and citizens, which should prevail over protecting the system of power. This requires the continued restructuring of the law enforcement system, despite possible internal resistance.

In 2015, a Coordination Committee for Adaptation, Implementation and Monitoring of the SDGs until 2030 was created under Government Resolution No. 867. This is an advisory body that coordinates the activities of State bodies, regions and local self-government bodies, and CSOs involved in implementing and monitoring the SDGs. The Committee is composed of representatives of State executive authorities, Parliament, the National Council for Sustainable Development, and international organizations. The Committee is chaired by the Prime Minister.

The working body of the Committee (or Secretariat) is the Department of Economics and Investments. Meanwhile, the National Statistical Committee (NSC) is the agency responsible for monitoring the achievement of the SDGs. Kyrgyzstan issued its first VNR in 2020.

Nepal. A progressive new Constitution of 2015 has provided the broad framework for instituting policy reforms and for pursuing the SDGs. The 2015 Constitution provides for equal inheritance and property rights for women and men, housing rights, the right to food, and land rights for landless *Dalits*. Nepal has adopted key policies, such as the Rights to Food and Food Sovereignty Act of 2018, the Right to Housing Act of 2018, the National Land Policy of 2015, the Land Use Act of 2019, the 8th Amendment to the Land Related Act of 1964, and the 18th Amendment to the Land Related Regulation of 1964 (Joshi, Gautam, and Basnet, 2021). In 2020, a Land Issues Resolving Commission (LIRC) was formed to provide land to the landless, including to *Dalits*, and to facilitate land ownership for informal settlers.

The government has also mainstreamed SDG Targets into its 15th Plan (2019/20 to 2023/24) and addresses land-related SDGs through sectoral strategies such as the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS 2015 to 2035).

Under the 15th Plan and the ADS, the government has made several political commitments on land rights and tenure security, i.e., reducing the proportion of landless farmers to zero in 2030, from 26 percent in 2015; increasing women's ownership over property/tangible assets to 40 percent by 2030, from 19.7 percent in 2015; and, increasing the percentage of agricultural land owned by women or in joint ownership to 50 percent by 2030, from 10 percent in 2010.

The Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation (MoLMCPA) reports on SDG progress on land to the National Planning Commission (NPC). The NPC is the national body that facilitates the monitoring and evaluation of provincial SDG targets to track progress, identify problems and issues, and to help solve problems of implementation. The NPC also chairs the SDG Implementation and Monitoring Committee that provides guidance to federal ministries, and provincial and local government units on how to mainstream the SDGs in their respective plans and policies. It prepares periodic national SDG reports for submission to the Steering Committee for Implementation and Monitoring of the SDGs – a national policy body established with the Prime Minister as Chair.

Meanwhile, the Central Bureau Statistics (CBS) is the apex body that collects, standardizes, and assures the quality of national data, including those related to the SDGs. Nepal released its second VNR in June 2020.

A critical problem has been the localization of the SDGs at sub-national levels, considering weak institutional structures and problems related to data availability and quality. The VNR 2020 notes that provinces have not followed the guidelines for localization of SDGs in their medium and long-term plans.

Philippines. The SDGs were identified as a key consideration in the formulation of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP 2017 to 2022), founded on three pillars of: a) enhancing the social fabric; b) increasing the growth potential; and, c) inequality-reducing transformation. The PDP was updated in 2021 to reflect strategies for coping with, and overcoming disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The area of agriculture, forestry and fisheries identifies three sector outcomes: a) sustainable and resilient production; b) increased access to markets of small farmers and fisherfolk; and, c) improved access of consumers to nutritious, affordable and safe food.

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the country's socioeconomic planning agency monitors the achievement of SDG targets and oversees the implementation of the SDGs. In 2019, NEDA launched a website called SDG Watch (<https://psa.gov.ph/tags/sdg-watch>) which provides the local definition of the SDG indicators as well as the baseline data. NEDA works closely with the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) that coordinates with statistical offices in the different government agencies.

NEDA also leads the process of reporting on the SDGs, undertaking VNRs in 2016 and 2019, involving regional and sectoral consultations. The 2019 VNR focused on “empowering people” and “ensuring inclusiveness and equality.” The report highlighted Goals 4 (quality education), 8 (decent work), 10 (reduced inequalities), 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), and 17 (partnership for the goals). The government will prepare another VNR in 2022, focusing on SDGs 4, 5, 14, 15, and 17. The VNR will include future-oriented thinking and a scenario planning approach – in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to adversely impact the country's progress towards achieving the SDGs.

CSO INITIATIVES AT MONITORING THE SDGs, WITH FOCUS ON SDG 1.4

In 2018, CSOs undertook eight in-country studies that focused on the capacity of National Statistical Offices and information systems to monitor and report on SDG Indicator 1.4.2. This report was earlier published by ANGOC, Land Watch Asia, and the LWA LMWG under the title “Scoping Paper on the Readiness of National Statistical Offices to Report on SDG Indicator 1.4.2 in Eight Asian Countries” (<https://angoc.org/portal/nso-report-on-sdg-indicator-portal-asian-ngo-coalition/>).

Described below are some of the CSO initiatives at monitoring the SDGs in each country.

Bangladesh. In 2020, through the Citizen’s Platform for SDGs, CSOs published an alternative SDG report titled “*Four Years of SDGs in Bangladesh: Measuring Progress and Charting the Path Forward.*” However, the report does not include a status on SDG land targets.

Also in June 2020, another CSO report was put forward by the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) entitled “*Towards Sustainable Shared Prosperity: SDGs through the Lens of Access to Land and Natural Resources.*” This report focuses on 12 SDG Indicators pertaining to land access and access to/control of natural resources.

Cambodia. Land rights has been a serious issue in Cambodia. Thus, CSOs and human rights defenders have been actively engaged in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) on human rights ever since it was introduced in 2007. In 2013, the Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee (CHRAC), a coalition of 21 CSOs, prepared the UPR which it submitted to the UN Human Rights Council. The report included land, housing rights, and eviction issues.

Cambodia’s 2019 UPR also reports that land ownership remains a prominent area of concern. Current policies have resulted in widespread land grabbing, forced evictions, and crackdowns on protestors and journalists. The UPR recommended that the State ensure the settlement of all pending land disputes, evictions and relocations is a fair, transparent, negotiated and adequately compensated manner.

In terms of monitoring the SDGs, there are two mechanisms under the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) that handle coordination with CSOs for their inputs to the VNR. These are the Statistics Coordination Committee (SCC) that handles government agencies, and the Technical Working Group on Population and Poverty Reduction, a high-level platform of government, development partners and CSOs. The NGO Forum on Cambodia (NGOF) and the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC) are the two umbrella CSO networks that cooperate with these bodies.

In preparation for Cambodia’s VNR of 2019, the NGOF organized a consultation workshop on SDG Goal 13 (Climate Action) in February 2019 with 60 participants. The CCC also organized three sub-regional workshops to collect inputs for the VNR.

In September 2020, NGOF and CCC jointly organized a National Reflection Workshop on the CSDGs: 2016 to 2030” which was attended by 141 participants from State institutions, the academe, communities and CSOs. The workshop focused on three sectors: a) planet and prosperity, b) people, and c) peace and partnership. However, the workshop did not cover Goal 1 (No Poverty) and land related issues under Target 1.4.

Indonesia. The International NGO Forum on Indonesian Development (INFID), a network founded in 1985, has been monitoring implementation of the SDGs. However, its focus has been on the public’s perception of the SDGs. Several CSOs, including the Bina Desa Sadajiwa, monitor the status of land rights, but not for reporting on the status of the SDGs. Current CSO monitoring efforts focus more on agrarian conflicts, and the achievements of agrarian reform and social forestry programs.

Kyrgyzstan. Currently, CSOs in the country do not monitor or compile data in relation to achievement of the SDGs.

Nepal. The SDGs Forum was established in 2016 as a common platform of for CSOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), and international NGOs (INGOs) to advocate for implementation of the SDGs. It is the civil society platform recognized by the government.

Also, the Community Self Reliance Center (CSRC) in coordination with the National Engagement Strategy, a multi-stakeholder platform working on land governance, has been working specifically in monitoring land-related SDGs. In 2021, the group produced a report on “*Nepal: Monitoring progress towards land rights in the SDGs.*”

Since the government has not been closely reporting on land-related SDG indicators, this presents an opportunity for CSOs to contribute to the monitoring of land-related SDG indicators, and to advocate for the inclusion of land indicators in national development plans and policies.

Philippines. In 2019, CSOs convened a consultation on the SDGs, with the objective of providing an alternative lens to government’s reading of the status of SDGs in the country. This was co-organized by Social Watch Philippines (SWP), together with Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), Save the Children, and Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA).

MONITORING OF SDG INDICATOR 1.4.2

The *availability* of national data for Indicator 1.4.2 can be assessed along three research questions, while data *quality* is assessed along two questions related to the scope of its coverage. This is presented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Assessing data availability and quality for SDG 1.4.2

SDG INDICATOR 1.4.2	QUESTIONS on DATA AVAILABILITY
<p>“Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation, and who perceive their rights to land as secure by sex and type of tenure”</p>	Is data on security of tenure rights to land available?
	Is the data based on <i>legally-recognized documentation</i> ?
	Does the data include people’s <i>perceptions on security of tenure</i> ?
	QUESTIONS on DATA QUALITY
	Is there <i>sex disaggregation</i> of data?
	Does the data look into types of tenure – <i>non-formal</i> (slums and informal tenure), and <i>collective</i> and <i>customary systems</i> ?

In other words, the assessment of *data availability* for Indicator 1.4.2 looks into three factors: a) whether the government actually collects data focused on land tenure rights and tenure security; b) whether the collection of data is based on legally-documented rights; and, c) whether perception-based data is generated about one’s security of tenure.

According to FAO, security of tenure is “the certainty that a person’s rights to land will be recognized by others and protected in cases of specific challenges” (FAO, 2002).

For the assessment of *data quality*, one examines whether land data on security of tenure rights is disaggregated by sex, and type of tenure.

For type of tenure, available land data is assessed whether it reports on populations *in slums or under informal tenure* (including those living in public lands and public spaces, pastoralists and indigenous communities) whose tenure rights are not legally-recognized. These poorest sectors are sometimes not visible or are unaccounted for in government surveys, yet they are the focus of SDG Goal 1, and specifically of SDG Target 1.4. Related to this is whether the reporting on land data includes tenure under *collective ownership* like the case of collective or cooperative farms, or *customary rights* like for the case of indigenous people’s lands.

Table 2 below summarizes the status of how SDG Indicator 1.4.2 has been considered and included in the monitoring and reporting on the SDGs in the different countries.

Table 2. Country data and reporting on SDG Indicator 1.4.1

COUNTRY	DATA AND METHODOLOGY
Bangladesh	<p>On availability of land tenure data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) produces some particular, partial, discrete land data through the different official censuses and surveys. Yet no exclusive census or survey on land tenure, access, rights and/or other land issues. <p>On legally-recognized documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government has issued two VNR Reports (2017 and 2020) but avoided making any description of progress made on improving security of land tenure (Indicator 1.4.2). BBS data as of 2018 shows that 68.63 percent of household heads having agricultural land possess legal documents of their land. These data are based on (census) self-declarations, not on legal documentation. Among indigenous peoples who comprise some two percent of the population, an estimated maximum of 30 percent in plains, and 33 percent in the CHT region have some land according to Barkat (2016, as cited in Suhrawardy, et al., 2021). About 10.32 million people are in livelihoods related to water bodies; 61 percent of them live in poverty. Yet only five percent of leased-out <i>khas</i> water bodies have gone to poor fisherfolk (Barkat, 2016, as cited in Suhrawardy, et al., 2021). <p>On gender-disaggregation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No official data reported Women are routinely denied rights to inherit land; women rarely have their names on titles, certificates, leases, and contracts; and, the land registration system is not friendly to rural women, many of whom are illiterate. Independent studies estimate that only 15.8 percent of land at household level in rural areas is owned by women; rural land “effectively owned” by women is even lower (Barkat et al., 2017, as cited in Suhrawardy, et al., 2021).

	<p>On perception of tenure security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No official data reported; No survey on people’s perception on land tenure • No data on land conflicts • No data on natural disasters affecting land tenure (e.g., river-eroded land, salinity) • No data on land tenure status of climate change induced migrant families • No data on socially excluded communities such as <i>Dalits</i>, <i>Harijan</i>, <i>Bede</i>, and <i>Hijra</i> (transgender) people • “Official data” does not include data from the academe or from CSOs <p>On data regarding other forms of tenure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on landlessness is available at the national level • Data on tenant households (including sharecroppers) is available • No census of forest dwellers
Cambodia	<p>On availability of land tenure data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator 1.4.2 has not yet been included in the Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDGs) <p>On legally-recognized documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land tenure data is usually generated mainly through the ongoing land titling and registration programs • From 1989 to 2020, over six million out of the estimated seven million target plots have been titled (86.8 percent of the total land plots) • There are 33 IP communities who have been registered, and 856 communal land titles (CLTs) with 33,899 hectares for 3,235 families are recognized <p>On gender-disaggregation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No official data reported • In the 2019 report of the MLMUPC, there is no information about received land titles disaggregated by sex. <p>On perception of tenure security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No official data reported • In 2019, the Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI) conducted a perception survey regarding access to land in 20 villages in Northern Cambodia. Results revealed that 62 percent of the 1,129 respondents <i>disagreed</i> with the statement that their current land access was enough to meet their household needs. 47 percent of respondents stated that their future access would not be enough (Beauchamp, et al., 2019).
India	<p>On availability of land tenure data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land is a State-level matter. State legislatures make laws on all matters pertaining to land, land records, settlement and distribution of lands. • Multiple tenure regimes in different States – legal frameworks, unrecorded transactions <p>On legally-recognized documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal documentation is available from the Department of Land Resources (DoLR) and land records of State Revenue Departments. • 92 percent of the lands have some form of legally recognized documentation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87.8 percent of cadastral maps for 10 States are uploaded in websites. • However, there has been 71 percent variation in actual and textual records. • Corrections on the Record of Rights has been done in the case of 41 percent of FRA individual titles, 0.7 percent of community titles. • 78 percent of Bhoodan lands have not been distributed in the State of Odisha. <p>On gender-disaggregation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current data on women’s tenure rights remains inconsistent. • 12 States have issued orders for collecting and maintaining sex-segregated data on landholdings and transactions. • Eight States have introduced tax incentives for registering land in the name of women. • 34 percent of Titles under the Forest Rights Act have names of women recorded. <p>On perception of tenure security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No official data reported; this information is not collected. <p>On data regarding other forms of tenure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large un-surveyed areas remain in tribal and forested areas.
<p>Indonesia</p>	<p>On legally-recognized documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proxy indicator to be used for SDG Indicator 1.4.2 focuses on the use of land for housing and shelter, namely housing that provides secure tenure, consisting of: a) self-owned, b) lease/contract, c) rent, d) free of rent, or e) others, such as jointly owned or traditional house. The SDG Dashboard shows data for percentage of the population who own their houses, or have a rental agreement/contract for their dwellings. Data may be generated from the Population Census, National Socio-Economic Survey, and the Indonesian Demographic and Health Survey. Such data may be disaggregated by location (national, provincial, district/city), urbanity/rurality, and sex of head of household. • The VNR of 2020 includes a brief description of the status of housing under SDG 1. • It also mentions “secure tenure rights to land through the implementation of agrarian reform and social forestry” as one of the policy responses in social protection reform, which aims to eliminate extreme poverty in Indonesia by 2024. <p>On gender-disaggregation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No official data reported in relation to land rights <p>On perception of tenure security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government does not officially report perception. However, there are several studies on this aspect. In 2009, a study on the perceived tenure security of select households in the kampongs of Bandung, revealed that titling and de-facto tenure (ex., length of residence, other related documents), increased perception of tenure security (Reerink and van Gelder, 2010). A study by Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Sumatra and Kalimantan, also showed that village residents may view their tenure to be secure, despite only having customary rights and weak land documents (Resosudarmo, et al., 2014).

Kyrgyzstan	<p>On availability of land tenure data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of the data is available in the database of the Department of Cadastre and Registration of Rights to Real Estate under the State Registration Service, as well as in other relevant State bodies. <p>On legally-recognized documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG Indicator 1.4.2 is measured through a State administrative reporting form No. 22 <i>“On the availability of land in the Kyrgyz Republic and their distribution by categories, owners, land users and lands.”</i> • However, information on the progress on land rights, in particular SDG indicator 1.4.2. was not reported in the first VNR of July 2020. <p>On gender-disaggregation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No official data reported <p>On perception of tenure security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No official data reported
Nepal	<p>On availability of land tenure data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proxy indicator used by government for 1.4.2 is: “Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land [as shown by]: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share of bottom quintile in national consumption (percentage) ○ Households having properly/tangible assets in women’s name (percentage of total)” • Data for this is mostly collected from secondary sources including statistics, survey, and progress reports produced by the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the National Planning Commission and other relevant agencies. • Reported status of accomplishment as of 2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The share of the bottom quintile in national consumption is 12.05 percent [target of 8.8 for 2019]. ○ Households with assets (land and house) in the name of women is 33.9 percent [target of 25.1 for 2019] • However, the indicator used and reported scores cannot provide the basis to measure the progress towards the secure tenure rights to land of adults as indicated in Target 1.4. <p>On legally-recognized documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on legally-recognized documentation is available through the Department of Land Management and Archive at national level. At local level, Land Reform and Revenue offices provide these data. • Total landowners: 11,076,422; total plots registered: 35,065,092; a total of 1,887,009 households own less than 0.5 of a hectare. • Indigenous peoples constitute 35 percent of the population, yet their lands are not officially registered and therefore not formally recognized. <p>On gender-disaggregation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-disaggregated data by the land and tenure type are not readily available. • The CBS provides gender-disaggregated data for land and house. This type of data can be found with land reform and revenue offices and Survey Offices at local level, which are not well incorporated or maintained at the national dataset. • 16 percent of land is under joint land ownership; some 33.9 percent of women have ownership over assets (land and house).

	<p>On perception of tenure security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government does not collect data on perception of tenure security. • Sample survey was conducted by PRIndex (2019, released in 2020) which showed that 96 percent of rural men and women have some form of documentation to prove their land rights (1.4.2.a), while 82 percent of rural men and women felt their land rights were secure (1.4.2.b) (Joshi, Gautam, and Basnet, 2021).
Philippines	<p>On availability of land tenure data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proxy indicator used for 1.4.2 is: <i>“Proportion of families which own house and lot or owner-like possession of house and lot; own house, rent lot; own house, rent-free, rent lot; own house, rent-free lot with consent of owner; rent-free house and lot with consent of owner.”</i> This data is generated through the Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS), Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES), Census of Population and Housing (CPH), and the Census of Population (POPCEN). • However, the data is prone to overstatement because it based on self-declarations; it is not based on legal documentation; the definition includes rent and lease. <p>On legally-recognized documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on legally-documented land rights is available through the different administrative agencies that issue different tenure instruments (i.e., the DENR, DAR, NCIP and the Land Registration Authority). • No single agency consolidates data on land tenure; there are overlapping claims; and there is no single map system. <p>On sex-disaggregated data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data disaggregation is done by several government agencies for specific sectors (i.e., DAR for farmer sector, DA for farmer and fisherfolk sectors, etc.). • Disaggregated data is not consistently collected or applied (e.g., NCIP does not provide gender disaggregated data on land tenure of indigenous peoples). <p>On perception of tenure security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some factors that may affect perception on tenure security include the occurrence of land and resource conflicts, overlapping claims, impacts of climate change and natural disasters, and issues of peace and order – currently there is no official data on these in the context of land tenure. <p>On data regarding other forms of tenure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data is available on lands under collective tenure (DAR) and on customary lands of indigenous peoples (NCIP). • There is no data on landlessness; no reliable data on populations in slums, informal settlements, or in forestlands.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

SDGs and land tenure rights

- SDG 1.4 states: “By 2030, ensure that **all men and women, in particular the poor and vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources**, as well as access to basic services, **ownership and control over land and other forms**

of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.”

- Through SDG 1.4, land rights are now seen as a central strategy and a global commitment towards “ending poverty.”
- While land issues were previously seen as primarily “local” concerns within the exclusive purview of “Sovereign States,” SDG 1.4 now recognizes “equal rights for all men and women, in particular the poor and vulnerable” to “ownership and control over land and other forms of property” as a *global mandate*.
- Land is recognized as an important element in the achievement of human rights (OHCHR, n.d.). It has been recognized that land tenure rights are essential to the enjoyment of other rights — shelter, food and livelihood, water, space and movement, health, access to basic services, personal security, right to shelter and assistance in cases of disaster, and in some cases, citizenship and the enjoyment of political rights. However, land rights are still not as well recognized in the Universal Periodic Review process of the UN Human Rights Council. Thus, there is a clear role for CSOs in strengthening data generation on SDG 1.4 and 1.4.2.
- Under SDG 1.4, land is viewed mainly as an “economic resource,” and thus, CSOs point out that other functions and values of land should not be overlooked. In the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), it has been recognized that indigenous peoples have a special relationship with their land and therefore, land is intrinsically linked to their cultural rights. Moreover, as some CSOs have pointed out: “The targets under SDG Goal 1 do not fully reflect the special situations of Indigenous Peoples...” (Indigenous Major Group in DeLuca, 2017).
- SDG 1.4 also mentions ownership and control over “natural resources,” which should include tenure over water bodies and water resources. In Bangladesh, about 10.32 million people are in livelihoods related to water bodies; 61 percent of them live in poverty. In the Philippines and Indonesia, fisherfolk households consistently rank among the poorest sectors. Discussions on fisherfolk are often subsumed under SDG 14 (Life Below Water), particularly Target 14.B (support small-scale fishers).

Country efforts in mainstreaming the SDGs

- In all seven countries, the SDGs have been mainstreamed in the national development agenda through the enactment of policies adopting the SDGs; the incorporation of SDGs into the Long-Term and Medium-Term Development Plans of governments; and, in the establishment of coordinating mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring, and reporting of the SDGs.
- Cambodia has adopted all 17 SDGs and has added Goal 18 related to the “clearance of land mines and of explosive remnants of war (ERW).” This reflects the unique situation of Cambodia which remains as one of the world’s most heavily mined and ERW-contaminated nations, even after two decades following the end of war and internal conflict.
- National development planning agencies are often designated as the lead agencies for coordinating work on the SDGs. Meanwhile, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) are tasked with the development of country-level indicators, collection of data requirements, and reporting on country progress in the achievement of the SDGs.

- Most NSOs are still in the process of developing and further refining country SDG indicators that are incorporated into the statistical system of NSOs. The metadata for SDG indicators at country level are presented in documents such as the CSDG Framework, 2016 to 2030 (Cambodia), the SDG Index and Dashboard (India), the Metadata for Indicators of Sustainable Development Goals (Indonesia). In the Philippines, the PSA publishes SDG Watch online (see <http://psa.gov.ph/sdg>), which provides the local definition of the SDG indicators for the country. Similarly, Indonesia publishes local SDG indicators and data related to such on the SDGs Dashboard online (see <https://sdgs.bappenas.go.id/dashboard/>).
- All seven countries have submitted Voluntary National Reviews to the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), as follows: Bangladesh (2017, 2020), Cambodia (2019), India (2017, 2020), Indonesia (2017, 2019, 2021), Kyrgyzstan (2020), Nepal (2017, 2020), and the Philippines (2016, 2019).
- Interestingly, Indonesia's latest VNR for 2021 is on the theme of "Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic for the Achievement of the 2030 Agenda." As the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the incidence of poverty in most countries in Asia, it is critical that economic recovery efforts in the coming years should ensure that the lives of the poor and vulnerable are improved, and they are not left behind.

Limited CSO engagement

- Most countries have established mechanisms for constructive engagement with CSOs, such participation in consultation-workshops for the preparation of VNRs. Cambodia and Nepal have included CSO membership in SDG-related consultative bodies. However, the level of engagement of CSOs in the government's SDG monitoring and reporting process remains very limited.
- Instead, parallel processes on SDG monitoring and reporting are being undertaken by CSOs within countries, with potential for future engagement with respective governments. These include:
 - o Preparation and publication of parallel CSO reports on the status of SDGs in the country. These usually cover one or several themes, such as on climate action, equal rights for women and land rights;
 - o Multi-stakeholder consultations and workshops that cover several themes; and,
 - o Sectoral and thematic research.

Monitoring and reporting on Target 1.4 and Indicator 1.4.2

- SDG Target 1.4 and SDG Indicator 1.4.2 are specifically focused on land rights and security of tenure. As a measure of Target 1.4, indicator 1.4.2 looks into the **"Proportion of total adult population with secure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure."**
- It is noted that all seven countries have **not yet** fully reported on the status of land rights and security of tenure under Target 1.4 in their SDG Country Reports and Voluntary National Reviews. However, Nepal's VNR of 2020 includes a report on land and housing assets in the name of women.

- Land tenure rights is a sensitive subject. Indicator 1.4.2 belongs to Tier II meaning that it has an internationally established methodology, but the data is not regularly produced by countries. Given the multiple sources of data on land tenure security, and the diversity of land tenure systems among countries, it is difficult to establish comparability of data across countries.
- The current state of development of specific indicators and methodologies for reporting on SDG 1.4.2 currently varies among countries:
 - *Bangladesh*: The 2017 VNR stated that metadata related to Indicators 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 were yet to be finalized; however, there was no report or mention of Indicator 1.4.2 in the subsequent 2019 VNR.
 - *Cambodia*: Indicator 1.4.2 is not included in the current list of the country's SDG indicators.
 - *Indonesia*: The proxy indicator to be used for Indicator 1.4.2 is focused on the use of land for housing and shelter. The VNR of 2020 has one paragraph on the status of housing under SDG 1. It also mentions "secure tenure rights to land through the implementation of agrarian reform and social forestry" as one of 11 policy responses in social protection reform, which aims to eliminate extreme poverty in Indonesia by 2024.
 - *Kyrgyzstan*: Indicator 1.4.2 is to be measured through a State administrative reporting form No. 22 "On the availability of land in the Kyrgyz Republic and their distribution by categories, owners, land users and lands."
 - *Nepal*: Proxy indicator used by government for 1.4.2 is: "Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land [as shown by]: a) Share of bottom quintile in national consumption [percentage]; and, b) Households having properly/tangible assets in women's name [percentage of total]"
 - *Philippines*: The proxy indicator used for 1.4.2 is: "Proportion of families which own house and lot or owner-like possession of house and lot."
- In summary, Indicator 1.4.2 is not included in the monitoring of SDGs in Bangladesh and Cambodia, proxy indicators have been adopted in Indonesia, Nepal, and Philippines, while data from the land registry will be used for reporting in Kyrgyzstan.

On availability of data on land tenure

- All countries collect data on land tenure rights. Land tenure data may come from National Censuses and Surveys and from data of government land agencies.
- Most NSOs and land agencies collect land tenure data at the household level. However, in Nepal and Kyrgyzstan, agencies collect ownership and tenure data at the level of each land or farm plot.
- In Cambodia and Kyrgyzstan, which have active land titling programs, comprehensive land tenure data can be generated from the country's land registration and land titling offices. It should be noted that Cambodia and Kyrgyzstan come from unique historical contexts where all lands were previously taken over by the Central State. These countries instituted private property only in the past 25 years and are still currently in the process of registering and redistributing lands to private households. As such, land monitoring is conducted by their governments through data generated from titling and registration programs.

- Both the Philippines and Indonesia have adopted proxy indicators for Indicator 1.4.2, focusing on security of land for housing. Such data are likely to be generated from nationally-representative surveys. However, the proxy indicator used does not cover security of land used for livelihoods, given that poverty in both countries is largely rural and agricultural. Meanwhile, there is available but unconsolidated land tenure data generated by multiple land agencies.
- In Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, land tenure data are available from Land Revenue Offices, Ministries of Land Reform and Land Management, Land Registration Agencies, and others. The NSOs in each country face unique challenges in relation to gathering and consolidating land tenure data. In India, land is a State-level matter, and State legislatures make laws on all matters pertaining to land, land records, settlement, and distribution of lands. There are multiple tenure regimes in different States. In Nepal, while data is consolidated at central level, the state of land records at local level is not easily accessible. In Nepal and Bangladesh, records of land registration are maintained manually and not yet fully digitized, and hence, not easily accessible.

On whether data on land is based on legally-documented rights

- For countries that collect data on legally documented rights, the data is mainly sourced from the administrative records on land tenure instruments issued and/or registered by land agencies.
- Some countries (Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines) will rely on household surveys and *self-declarations* for documenting land rights, without having to validate such results with land documents. The surveys often ask household respondents about their tenure status over their homelots and farm plots, but do not require them to show documentary proof (e.g., titles, registration papers, contracts, etc.) to support their self-declarations.
- In addition, legal documentation of land rights is not a guarantee of security of tenure since there are many cases of overlapping claims and tenure instruments over common plots of land. This phenomenon was reported in the Philippines where there are overlapping tenure systems among farmers being awarded plots of land in legally-documented territories of indigenous peoples.

On whether data includes peoples' perceptions

- NONE of the countries collects or reports perception data on tenure security.
- Rather, CSOs have conducted some community-level focus group discussions (FGDs), interviews, or surveys on local perceptions of security of land tenure. These have yielded some interesting insights.
- The Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) conducted 24 FGDs plus interviews in 12 villages in two States (Jharkhand and Odisha) involving 251 persons (tribals and non-tribals), with separate FGDs among women and men. *Some findings* were:
 - While homesteads and agricultural lands were perceived by 98 percent to have tenure security, barely 11 percent felt secure that common lands will not be alienated by various means, including encroachments by local elites, earmarking of common lands for industrial and compensatory afforestation, and for government Land Banks.

- Also, while perceptions on access to forest lands varied widely among study villages, Dalits felt most insecure while accessing forest lands for various livelihood needs (FES, 2021).
- Tenure security over land must be seen within the broader societal context wherein threats to the enjoyment of tenure rights are now more than ever taking on many forms – land disputes, development aggression, State expropriation, armed conflict, natural disasters, climate change, etc. As such, it must be emphasized that *perception* of security of tenure is a crucial indicator – i.e., how do people really feel about their tenure over their land?

On disaggregation of land tenure data by sex

- Most countries do not disaggregate land tenure rights by sex. If data are generated through censuses and household surveys, it is the sex of the “household head” that is usually recorded. As such, women’s land rights are usually recognized when ownership of land or housing by “female-headed households” are recorded.
- In the Kyrgyz Republic, Nepal, and the Philippines, land agencies are able to disaggregate land tenure instruments (titles, land certificates) issued and registered by sex of holder. However, this is not always the case especially where multiple agencies are involved in the issuance of different types of tenure documents.
- The governments of India and Nepal have introduced incentives (lower costs, tax incentives, simplified systems) in order to encourage the registration of lands in the name of women as owners or co-owners.
- Women’s land rights should also be examined in the context of *collective* land rights, where communities or groups are recognized as having legal ownership or rights to land. As within households, the question is whether men and women exercise **equal** decision-making and control rights over land.

On data regarding other forms of tenure

- All countries are able to disaggregate data by type of tenure. However, it is important that data gathering methods are able to capture actual tenure systems accurately, and to disaggregate data on land tenure security by the type of tenure. They should give due recognition to the diversity of tenure systems that exist within a country.
- There are questions and challenges about monitoring rights to land in cases where people hold *secondary rights* (lands under rent, lease, tenancy, or contract) or when land is held *collectively*, such as collective farms under cooperatives, common pasture lands, or indigenous lands.
- In most cases, holders of secondary rights are not documented or registered. There are also some countries that do not provide for collective or communal land ownership, especially when the owning entities are communities, rather than corporations, registered groups or associations.
- In three countries (Cambodia, India, and Philippines), there are legal provisions on collective land ownership and communal land tenure. These countries have provisions for collective titling systems for indigenous peoples.
 - Cambodia provides legal recognition for land rights of indigenous peoples under the 2001 Land Law, and issues *communal titles* under Sub-Decree 83 on Communal Land Titling. Records for these are readily available and are gathered by the NIS.

- o The Philippines has *collectively transferred* lands under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program and legally recognizes *indigenous people's communal lands* under the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA).
- o India provides ownership and land-use rights to forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers at the individual and community level under the Forest Rights Act of 2006.

Challenges for CSOs in pursuing land rights in the SDGs

While land tenure security has been included in the SDGs, it can only be realized if governments will continue to report land rights in the SDGs, particularly the operationalization of SDG 1.4.2. The pursuit of land rights is an ongoing political act. For the land agenda to remain high and visible, CSOs have to present in a sustained basis, clear evidence on the importance of tenure security and how far the countries have come in reaching this target.

The indicators and methodologies used by the NSOs indicate that further discourse is needed to arrive at consensus at the country level. Tenure security is viewed differently by the rural poor, and hence the current indicator used in measuring SDG 1.4 needs to be enhanced. This is an area that can be further explored with NSOs and the custodian agencies. Using the experience of the Philippines as a starting point, CSOs and rural poor organizations have identified a partial enumeration of conditions needed to ensure tenure security according to specific sectors in the rural areas. (See Box 2)

Box 2. Conditions to ensure tenure security according to rural sectors in the Philippines (work-in-progress)

For farmers:

- has own agricultural land
- physically tilling the land distributed under agrarian reform program
- able to pay amortization of land distributed under agrarian reform program
- has adequate support services
- no threat of displacement
- no competing claims over the same land

For fisherfolk:

- has secured preferential rights to municipal waters
- delineated municipal waters
- has fisherfolk settlements
- has adequate support services
- no threat of displacement due to reclamation projects
- no encroachment from commercial and foreign fishers

For indigenous peoples:

- secured ancestral domain
- able to exercise customary governance over ancestral domains
- formulated community plans
- has adequate support services
- respect for FPIC (free, prior, and informed consent)
- no threat of displacement from mega projects
- no threat of militarization and criminalization

On the other hand, while there is openness of NSOs and national planning ministries/commissions to engage CSOs in the discourse of land agenda in the SDGs, the spaces for engagement are still limited.

Other land data issues include:

- data sets within and among government agencies are inconsistent with one another;
- lack of official data on land conflicts; for agencies that collect them, different methodologies are used and they come in different formats;
- in most of the countries included in this study, there is no data on landlessness;
- access to land data remains an issue – either they are difficult to access despite follow-ups or they are not updated; and,
- agency websites in most countries included in the study are at times slow, and do not contain updated information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In response to the challenges faced by CSOs in pursuing land rights in the SDGs, in particular in SDG 1.4, a major intervention revolves around the formulation and effective implementation of policies and programs in securing and protecting the land rights of the rural poor. CSOs shall continue to advocate for policy agendas and reforms – within and outside the SDGs – as indicated in the respective country reports. As increased and sustained civil society participation in governance is needed to effect these changes, CSOs shall continually to scale-up their research to inform their advocacy as well as to find effective ways to share knowledge and lessons with others.

At the same time, ANGOC and the LWA campaign shall pursue the twin-approach of: a) optimizing SDGs as platform for joint learning; and, b) monitoring the actions, data and methodologies of governments in implementing SDG 1.4 towards more truthful and accurate reporting.

In relation to SDGs as a Platform for Joint Learning:

The SDGs, and in particular SDG 1.4 provides extra space to discuss and advocate land rights in national and regional policy agendas. However, the SDGs by themselves will not lead to any major shifts in land policy and governance without strong moral and political pressure from citizens and civil society. Thus, it is recommended that CSOs continue to engage the NSOs in terms of:

- utilizing existing or setting up new coordination mechanisms between NSOs and CSOs;
- increasing understanding of NSOs on land issues; and,
- refining the methodology and indicators in collecting data for SDG Indicator 1.4.2 and discussing how to produce nationally consolidated tenure security data.

In particular, the national planning ministries/commissions/departments, NSOs and CSOs can discuss the appropriateness and feasibility of

implementing at the national level the methodology for producing data on 1.4.2 as proposed by the global custodian agencies.

At the same time, CSOs can be the bridge in organizing activities where national planning ministries/commissions/departments and NSOs can present land data with the sectors of civil society, government land agencies, and the global SDG custodian agencies. This will be a challenging process involving many consultations and discussions; however, since SDG 1.4 is part of Goal 1, securing land rights is seen as a major intervention in reducing global poverty by various stakeholders.

Thus, CSOs shall use the SDGs as a venue as learning exchange to discuss matters such as:

- illustrative cases demonstrating the centrality of land tenure issues in addressing the country's problems of poverty and disempowerment;
- COVID-19 impacts on poverty, violations of land rights; importance of transparency and CSO engagement in COVID recovery plans; and,
- links of tenure rights with climate change.

In relation to Monitoring SDG 1.4:

There are two tracks related to this intervention. First is CSO participation in the official SDG reporting mechanisms and processes. This can be undertaken by participating in national committees mandated to prepare the SDG Country Reports and VNRs. To the extent possible, CSOs can become members of the country's official delegation to the High-Level Political Forum. At the same time, CSOs can join in governments' inter-agency meetings on data convergence and reconciliation.

The second track is external monitoring. As part of its watchdog role, CSOs shall continue to examine *public availability of, and public access to data* of the NSOs and related government agencies in relation to SDG monitoring and reporting, and more specifically, to land data as required under Goal 1.4.

At the same time, using official data and community-generated data, CSOs shall prepare reports on SDG 1.4.2 with focus on:

- reporting on informal and customary rights;
- reporting on tenurial security for women;
- reporting on land distribution;
- transparency in land administration, management and data;
- reporting on disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (*Dalits, harijans*, excluded communities);
- reporting on the landless; and,
- land conflicts and disputes, and land rights defenders.

As governments do not produce data on perception of tenure security, CSOs can develop proxy indicators and generate data through focus group discussions and key informant interviews with partner communities. These will help not just in the collection of data, but as a guide for the actions of government in implementing Target 1.4.

CONCLUSION

The SDGs have emphasized the importance of secure land rights in eradicating poverty. These global goals and their associated indicators on access and control over resources serve as good starting points to assess countries' progress. However, as exemplified by global and country experiences with land rights indicators, data is a complicated and potentially divisive subject matter. The larger task is to work towards tenure security for those who deeply depend on land and natural resources, until *and beyond* 2030. This entails close and constant cooperation between and among communities, CSOs, government land agencies, NSOs, and global custodian agencies in order to identify the present status of land rights, come up with achievable targets, and work jointly towards common goals. □

Acronyms

ALRD	Association for Land Reform and Development
ADS	Agriculture Development Strategy (Nepal)
ANGOC	Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
BAPPENAS	National Development Planning Agency (Indonesia)
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
CBS	Central Bureau Statistics (Nepal)
CCC	Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
CHRAC	Cambodian Human Rights Action Committee
CSDGs	Cambodian SDGs
CSRC	Community Self Reliance Centre
CSO	civil society organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FES	Foundation for Ecological Security
FGD	focus group discussion
GCAP	Global Call to Action Against Poverty
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
IAEG-SDGs	Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators
INFID	International NGO Forum on <i>Indonesian</i> Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
KII	key informant interview
LIRC	Land Issues Resolving Commission
LWA	Land Watch Asia
LWA LMWG	Land Watch Asia Land Monitoring Working Group
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoLMCPA	Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation (Nepal)
MoP	Ministry of Planning (Cambodia)
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority (Philippines)
NGOF	NGO Forum on Cambodia
NIS	National Institute of Statistics (Cambodia)
NITI Aayog	National Institution for Transforming India
NPC	National Planning Commission (Nepal)
NSC	National Statistical Committee (Kyrgyzstan)
NSO	National Statistics Office
PAHRA	Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates
PDP	Philippine Development Plan
PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
SCC	Statistics Coordination Committee (Cambodia)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSI	semi-structured interview
SWP	Social Watch Philippines

UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNOHCHR	UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNSC	United Nations Statistical Commission
UNSD	UN Statistics Division
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WB	World Bank

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