



**ANGOC**

Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform  
and Rural Development



# Land rights for sustainable food systems and climate resilience in Asia

2025 ANGOC Annual Report

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Founded in 1979, the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) is a regional association of national and regional networks of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Asia actively engaged in promoting food sovereignty, land rights and agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture, participatory governance, and rural development. ANGOC network members and partners work in eight Asian countries together with some 3,000 CSOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). ANGOC actively engages in joint field programs and policy discussions with national governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and international financial institutions (IFIs).

The complexity of Asian realities and diversity of CSOs highlight the need for a development leadership to service the poor of Asia — providing a forum for articulation of their needs and aspirations as well as expression of Asian values and perspectives. Thus, the ANGOC network shall advocate and promote land and resource rights, smallholder agriculture, and human rights and civic participation, by serving as a platform for Asian CSOs to generate knowledge, share tools, and conduct constructive policy dialogues.

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## ANGOC Vision Statement

*“Vibrant, peaceful, diverse Asian rural communities, living in harmony with nature as stewards of the earth, whose members are able to realize their full human potentials, collectively chart their path to development, provide for their present and future needs, and share equitably the fruits of their labors in community celebrations of Life”*

## ANGOC Mission Statement

*“ANGOC network shall advocate and promote land and resource rights, smallholder agriculture, and human rights and civic participation, by serving as a platform for Asian CSOs to generate knowledge, share tools, and conduct constructive policy dialogues.”*

## ANGOC Goal Statement

*ANGOC as a resource center shall: a) advocate for land and resource rights of the rural poor; b) promote smallholder agriculture towards sustainable food systems and livelihoods; and, c) collaborate with other like-minded groups and individuals towards the protection of civic and democratic spaces through a broad platform of Asian CSOs, communities, and individuals that challenges the development agenda, reforms institutions, and fosters the exchange of critical lessons, tools, and approaches towards food sovereignty, equitable land and resource rights, effective and responsible governance, and sustainable livelihoods.*



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## Message from Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons, and Executive Director

Land rights for Asia’s marginalized farmers, indigenous peoples, and fisherfolk continues to be at the core of the ANGOC network’s DNA as it enters its 46th year of existence, and justifiably so.

Despite technological leaps and economic advancements, these sectors are still largely left behind due to archaic land governance models. The threats being faced by them grow multifold when the impacts of climate change are factored in.

Thus, ANGOC’s unwavering work towards putting land rights at the forefront of regional and global agenda by empowering advocates and communities on monitoring land conflicts and strengthening alliances with land rights networks and governments, continues to be relevant.

In relation to land and resource rights, among the major interventions include the ongoing land conflict monitoring, enhancing capacities of CSOs and National Human Rights Institution in the Philippines to strengthen the link of land to human rights, and advocacy at global level. These actions contributed to transformative and effective land and resource policies and programs, and to enhanced capacities of Asian CSOs and rural communities in defending their rights to land and resources.

For smallholder agriculture towards sustainable food systems and livelihoods, efforts were undertaken to develop a framework for partnership on agricultural research and innovation, mainstream land rights in biodiversity and climate change discourse, and conduct policy advocacy. These actions contributed to three key result areas: a) pro-poor, equitable, and gender-responsive land use and food security policies, b) enabled smallholder producers to participate and engage in food systems and improve access to nutritious, affordable, and safe food for all; and, c) enhanced capacities of smallholders on agroecology, biodiversity and climate preparedness and resilience practices.



In terms of protecting civic and democratic spaces, the main interventions revolved in advocacy and lobbying as well as organizing reflection sessions within the ANGOC Network. These contributed to promotion of national policy environment that respects and protects civic space and CSOs, and better informed and increased solidarity with the Network in the Asian region.

The Board of Trustees met to prepare for the 17th ANGOC General Assembly (GA). The members then ratified key institutional documents on 26 November 2025.



The year 2025 saw ANGOC members and its partners develop and disseminate 27 knowledge products, in the form of regional and national workshop summary reports; policy papers; information, educational, and communication materials; case studies; and, an annual report.

Despite shrinking democratic space and shifting global development priorities, ANGOC remains steadfast in promoting and defending land rights and governance, food security, and climate resilience for Asia's marginalized sectors dependent on its land and waters.

Dewi Kartika  
Chairperson

Aneesh Thillenkery  
Vice Chair for South Asia

Nhek Sarin  
Vice Chair for Southeast

Nathaniel Don Marquez  
Executive Director



## ANGOC's contribution in ensuring and defending land and resource rights

The Asia-Pacific region has emerged as the largest economic block in the decade leading to 2025. The region accounted for over 70 percent of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the said period (worldeconomics.com). Indeed, Asia is now a global economic powerhouse.

However, the region's robust economic performance does not seem to trickle down to its people, especially the poor and marginalized. A report released by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in 2024 revealed that "more than 260 people in the region could be pushed into poverty in the next decade unless governments step up with robust social protection schemes."

Obviously, one of these schemes is improved land governance. Transparent, accountable, and participatory land and natural resource governance continues to be a challenge in the region, and this is expected to be exacerbated by the continued push of governments for economic growth.

Therefore, the ANGOC network continues to push for the land and resource rights agenda, which remains woefully relevant particularly in the light of ever-increasing land conflicts and the ominous threat of climate change.

In relation to **land and resource rights**, the ANGOC network, through the Land Watch Asia (LWA) campaign, advocates for effective policies to improve rural communities' access, control, and ownership of land. Simultaneously, it also enhances the capacities of Asian CSOs and rural communities to defend their land rights through strategic interventions.

For 2025, the campaign contributed to two key result areas: a) transformative and effective land and resource policies and programs towards enhanced access to, control over, and ownership of land and



resources by rural communities; and b) increased capacities of Asian CSOs and rural communities in defending their rights to land and resources. Among the major interventions include the network's ongoing land conflict monitoring initiative, enhancing capacities of CSOs and National Human Rights Institution in the Philippines and other Asian countries to strengthen the link of land to human rights. The ANGOC Network continues to be active in land rights advocacy at the global level.

As a finite resource, conflicts over land are inevitable. In Asia, land conflicts may be traced to enduring historical injustices, inequitable access to land and resources, faulty and weak implementation of past land and resource reforms, clashes of statutory and customary tenure systems, and the lack of human rights of the disadvantaged and vulnerable sectors (Quizon, 2018).

Land conflict is a critical indicator of land governance. Land conflicts result in loss of livelihoods, violations of human rights, and even loss of lives, and thus signal an urgency for governments and other stakeholders to act.

For 2025, monitoring of land conflicts in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, and the Philippines have been undertaken to: a) describe the *prevalence and types* of land and natural resource conflicts; b) examine the *nature and causes* of said conflicts; c) discuss the *human rights violations* on individuals and communities; and, d) formulate *recommendations* based on the findings of the study and consultations.

Field-based data sources included testimonies and reports from affected communities and families, assisting people's organizations (POs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and CSOs, and field staff researchers. Interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), field visits, and questionnaires (i.e., case profile form) were the tools used for primary data gathering.

Secondary data gathering was mostly conducted at the national level using news reports, stories from CSOs and other POs, Government data, as well as police reports and judicial proceedings. Stories were cross-verified with at least one independent source for veracity.



In 2025, the Land Watch Asia (LWA) partners have gathered 774 land conflict cases contesting 1,752,651 hectares of lands, customary territories, fishing areas, settlements, and livelihoods of at least 337,904 households were recorded in the five Asian countries by the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), STAR Kampuchea (SK), Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria (KPA), Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC), and ANGOC. Approximately 53 percent of the land conflict cases in the five countries involved smallholder agriculture/farming. This was followed by cases affecting Indigenous people/customary land (21 percent), housing and settlements (11 percent). Ranked according to the size of area affected, customary/ancestral lands (mainly in the Philippines, Bangladesh and Nepal) were the most affected (80 percent).

In terms of adversarial claimants, majority of the cases identified private companies (44 percent) and government (33 percent). Thus, it does not come to a surprise that private enterprises accounted most in terms of number of cases with 385 and hectares affected with 1,114,902.

Unfortunately, these cases have led to 488 incidents of human rights violations victimizing at least 690,078 individuals.

### ***Roundtable discussion on land and resource governance in the Philippines***

Despite economic growth in recent years, poverty in the Philippines remains stubbornly rooted in the countryside. Farmers, fisherfolk, rural families, and indigenous peoples continue to bear the heaviest burden, with poverty rates in agricultural and rural areas nearly three times higher than in urban centers. Experts identify insecure land tenure and weak resource governance as critical barriers — factors that entrench poverty, discourage investment, impede agricultural modernization, and fuel conflict in vulnerable regions.

Over the past three decades, the Philippines has pursued landmark reforms, including the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), the Philippine Fisheries Code (PFC), and the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA). These programs sought to redistribute land, strengthen tenure, and improve rural governance. While reforms have, on paper, transferred rights over 13.37 million



hectares — nearly half the country’s land area — implementation remains incomplete. Overlapping claims, fragmented mandates, slow adoption, and persistent disputes continue to undermine their effectiveness.

These challenges were the focus of the Roundtable Discussion on Land and Resource Governance in the Philippines: Towards Modernizing Agriculture and Attaining Peace and Security, held on 11 August 2025 in Manila. The event, organized jointly by ANGOC and Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) with support from Fair Finance Philippines, convened 35 representatives from government, civil society, academe, development partners, and grassroots organizations.

Participants examined key governance challenges, assessed reform gaps, and advanced proposals for the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023 to 2028 and the long-delayed National Land Use Act (NaLUA). Key barriers identified include: a) incomplete reform implementation, leaving millions without secure tenure; b) gender and equity gaps that exclude women and indigenous peoples from full access to land rights; c) weak data and transparency, with tenure maps and public databases largely unavailable; d) fragmented mandates across more than 20 overlapping laws and agencies; g) poor enforcement of land conversion rules, undermining food security; and, h) prolonged conflicts that weaken rural development and peace efforts.

Participants underscored the urgency of strengthening land and resource governance as the foundation for agricultural modernization, inclusive rural development, and sustainable peace. Key recommendations include: a) strengthen national policy and institutions; b) advance agrarian and tenure reforms; c) promote inclusive and modernized agriculture; d) leverage technology and data; d) promote environmental sustainability and climate resilience; e) link land governance with peacebuilding and regional development; f) foster multi-stakeholder partnerships; and, g) promote responsible investments.



## ***Land Rights Literacy Training for the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines***

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR), as the National Human Rights Institution of the Philippines, fulfills its constitutional mandate to monitor the State’s compliance with its obligations under the aforementioned human rights instruments, and to investigate cases of human rights violations (HRVs). In line with this, and to enhance the capacity of CHR personnel in addressing land rights issues and deepening their understanding of the concepts and frameworks surrounding such rights, the CHR, through its Center for Social Justice and Humanitarian Protection (CSJHP) and Human Resources Development Division (HRDD), in partnership with ANGOC and Kaisahan tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan (KAISAHAN), jointly organized a ***Land Rights Literacy Training for CHR***, as part of the project titled “Land Justice Initiative: Amplifying Land Rights Defenders’ Access to Justice and Uniting Stakeholders for Land Rights Accountability (LJI)”, funded by the European Union (EU).

Participated by 81 CHR personnel (44 females and 37 males) -- lawyers, special investigators, training specialists, and information officers, the two-day learning event enhanced CHR personnel’s understanding of land rights as a human right; and, strengthened CHR’s role in monitoring and policy engagement on land rights. Among the topics covered: relevance of land in the Philippine context, land rights as human rights, land tenure systems and land governance, markers of land conflicts, and implementation challenges of tenure reforms in agrarian and ancestral domains.

## ***Drafting of Land and Human Rights Investigation and Monitoring Manual for Local CSOs in the Philippines***

Land is essential for the enjoyment of other rights – shelter, food, freedom, human dignity, and security. As land is a source of livelihood, it is central to economic rights. Land is also often linked to peoples’ identities, and is therefore tied to social and cultural rights.

As a limited resource, land often becomes a source of conflict, driven by competing interests, inequitable access, poor governance, and injustice. In many situations, land conflicts are both symptoms and catalysts of human rights violations (HRVs).



However, many cases of land conflicts and HRVs remain unrecognized and unreported.

Currently being drafted, the manual aims to improve how land conflicts and related human rights violations are monitored, documented, and reported. Created for communities affected by land conflicts, the manual intends to empower CSOs and partner communities to seek the truth, build evidence, defend land as a human rights, and demand accountability from duty bearers.

The intended manual has four sections: a) basic concepts of land rights and a framework for identifying land rights issues that affect communities or contribute to HRVs; b) guidelines for conducting interviews and gathering documents and evidence relevant to the case or HRV; c) practical guide to help organize the findings and to present them clearly and systematically in a written report; and, d) guidance on how to deal with families who are grieving, but at the same time seeking justice, through the discussion of issues and conflicts faced.

As a work-in-progress, this manual draws from ANGOC's instruments for land and resource conflict monitoring, focus group discussions with KAISAHAN and their *Dagyaw* Negros case documentation experience, and the tools and experiences of other organizations.

### **Advocacy at global level**

ANGOC acted as a panelist in the *Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening Tenure Security for Adequate Housing for All* convened by the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group on Adequate Housing for All. This group was created by UN-Habitat General Assembly to accelerate global progress towards safe, sustainable, adequate, and affordable housing. Discussions highlighted the importance of tenure security, inclusive land governance, and the recognition of diverse tenure arrangements. The outputs of the meeting fed to the deliberations of *Tenure Security for Housing Intersessional Thematic Meeting* convened by the Working Group, where ANGOC was invited as a reactor. During the thematic meeting where the guidelines for adequate housing were framed, ANGOC recommended to prioritize eliminating forced evictions and other threats to tenure security; engagement of the poor in land





governance; formulation of national land use policies; inclusion of land tenure; and, promote learning exchange on policy and tools development among various stakeholders.

ANGOC prepared an article for the Hidden Iceberg Report of the Alliance for Land, Indigenous and Environmental Defenders (ALLIED). Published annually, the said report contained an analysis on the scale and nature of attacks to indigenous, land and environmental defenders (ILEDs). Focusing on the Philippines, the article discussed the state of human rights violations using a five-year data and analysis of non-lethal attacks to ILEDs.

In a virtual workshop on *Strategies and Approaches to Document Attacks on Human Rights Defenders*, ANGOC shared land conflict monitoring methodology of LWA. Participated by networks of Asian and African CSOs, the presentation highlighted the main objectives, framework and insights on LWA's experiences in generating and using the data.

On a similar note, ANGOC presented the network's initiatives on land conflict resolution – including the development of tools (i.e., Land Conflict Monitoring); evidence-based advocacy; and, facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogues) – in the session on **Formulating New Perspectives in Resolving Agrarian Conflicts**, in conjunction with the *2025 Asia Land Forum: Securing Land Rights for a Sustainable and Equitable Future*, as part of the Forum's panel during the Indonesia Day. Furthermore, ANGOC shared its land data initiatives, particularly on the Review of SDG 1.4.2 Reporting and Land Conflict Monitoring, during the Forum's breakout session on **Partnership for generating people's data to strengthen accountability (towards PCLG) in Asia**.

As a member of the Technical Reference Group for the Global Land Observatory (GLO), ANGOC reviewed the draft chapters of the global report on the state of land tenure, land rights and land governance.

# ANGOC's contribution to enhancing smallholder agriculture towards sustainable food systems and livelihoods

Small-scale farmers and producers, which comprise 80 percent of Asia's households dependent on farming, continue to be hardest hit by worsening food insecurity and malnutrition brought about by armed conflict, climate change, and economic downturns. The poor and marginalized, of which majority of Asia's small-scale farmers are, simply cannot afford healthy diets.

The ANGOC network is steadfast in its belief that improved tenurial status for smallholder farmers equates to food security because independent and informed decisions can be made over lands, crops, and livelihoods. Tenure secure farmers not only contribute to greater food security but to improving the overall economy as well.

In relation to **smallholder agriculture towards sustainable food systems and livelihoods**, the ANGOC network shall: a) strengthen land rights and tenure security, b) facilitate effective participation of the rural food producers in the food value chain, and c) promote sustainable food and agriculture practices. Specifically, the ANGOC network shall:

- advocate the adoption of pro-poor, equitable, and gender-responsive land policies and implementation (e.g., lobbying for national legislation of land use, promote localized food security and land use planning and management, empower women to influence local institutions for improved access to and control over resources);
- enable smallholder producers to participate and engage in food systems and improve access to nutritious, affordable, and safe food for all (increase the recognition and participation of women and youth as food producers, facilitate direct linkages between smallholder producers and consumers); and,
- advocate for and enhance capacities of smallholders on agroecology, biodiversity and climate preparedness and resilience practices (boost recognition of smallholders as on-farm conservators,



protect the farmer seed systems, monitor national plans and strategies on climate change, agroecology and biodiversity.

This program area has three key result areas: a) pro-poor, equitable, and gender-responsive land use and food security policies, b) enabled smallholder producers to participate and engage in food systems and improve access to nutritious, affordable, and safe food for all; and, c) enhanced capacities of smallholders on agroecology, biodiversity and climate preparedness and resilience practices. Among the key interventions in 2025 by ANGOC include: a) developing a framework for partnership on agricultural research and innovation, b) mainstreaming land rights in biodiversity and climate change discourse, and c) policy advocacy.

### ***Developing a partnership framework on agricultural research and innovation***

Research and development on food and agriculture in recent decades have focused on increasing productivity prompted by uncertainties of food supply. These undertakings have secured the food needs of the global population.

With the changing climate and increasing globalization, however, agriculture now faces major challenges. Among others, these developments have resulted to food insecurity and increasing rural poverty as livelihood assets become more exposed to commercial pressures and vulnerable to changes in rainfall and drought patterns.

Given that the problems are complex and multifaceted, an all-inclusive approach of looking at the interplay of climate change, food security and resource governance towards transforming the food systems is recommended. Recognising the social function of land increases the opportunities to emphasize the cultural, as well as the nutritional importance of food systems and provides an important reference point when designing land use.



It is in this context that a Partnership Framework is being formulated by ANGOC for enhancing the research and engagement agenda towards linking land tenure-climate change nexus to agricultural food systems. Such framework shall highlight the challenges faced by small-scale farmers (smallholder farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples) and recommend actionable areas towards building "productive, equitable, and resilient agricultural systems." This will focus on issues of land tenure, climate change and agricultural food systems as faced by small farmers.

### ***Harnessing biodiversity through enhanced land rights of communities***

Biodiversity and community land rights are intrinsically linked. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), Paris Agreement, and other international frameworks highlight the importance of land rights and indigenous and traditional knowledge for reversing biodiversity loss, restoring degraded ecosystems and addressing climate change.

Recognizing the above, the National Land Coalition-Philippines (NLC-Philippines) and the International Land Coalition (ILC), in partnership with the KAISAHAN, Philippine Association for Intercultural Development (PAFID), and the ANGOC, convened a regional Learning Exchange, "*Harnessing biodiversity through enhanced land rights of communities*" on 24 to 26 March 2025 at Lighthouse Marina Resort in Subic, Philippines.

The event gathered 68 representatives from Asian civil society organizations, ILC members, government institutions, and local communities to deepen their understanding on the linkage of land rights and biodiversity; share the initiatives in localizing the Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP); orient participants on key frameworks and practical tools on biodiversity; and, learn from community initiatives on biodiversity protection and conservation.

The connection between tenure security and biodiversity kicked-off the discussions, as secure land tenure underpins the ability of communities to sustainably manage their environments, supporting both biodiversity and cultural community.



The KMGBF's emphasis on the importance of recognizing indigenous land governance was highlighted. Discussions underscored the importance of integrating IPs, women, youth, and local communities into conservation efforts. Initiatives on National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAPs) were shared by delegates from participating countries.

The session on localizing the PBSAP highlighted the traditional practices of IPs, farmers, and fisherfolk in biodiversity conservation. Panelists shared the need to navigate bureaucratic hurdles, build multi-sectoral support, and amplify grassroots voices. The discussion also stressed the critical role of local politicians in integrating the PBSAP into governance systems, as achieved with the passage of a local ordinance supporting biodiversity efforts in Nueva Vizcaya province.

The Learning Exchange also emphasized the vital contributions of women and youth in biodiversity conservation, showcasing initiatives like Nepal's Community Forest User Groups, the Philippines' intergenerational efforts in the Ikalahan Ancestral Domain and inclusive governance in the Dinagat Islands. Community-driven approaches such as Local Conservation areas in the Philippines and Customary Forest Protection in Indonesia were also shared.

The event concluded with site visits to community-led conservation areas that demonstrated the effectiveness of indigenous and community stewardship. At the close of the Learning Exchange, participants reaffirmed their commitment to tenure security and inclusive biodiversity governance and strengthening cross-country solidarity in mainstreaming land tenure in biodiversity policies.

### ***Community stories on land tenure and climate change nexus: challenges and lessons***

While climate change affects everyone, those who are poor and lack land tenure rights are the most vulnerable to the direct effects of climate change. Poverty forces people to cultivate marginal lands that may be too steep, too dry, too wet, or prone to erosion, or else to occupy fragile public lands or areas that are vulnerable to flooding, high tides, and storm surges. Meanwhile, the lack of tenure security limits people's choices and diminishes their capacity to recover and rebuild whenever a disaster strikes.



However, the links between land tenure and climate change is still not well understood or fully appreciated. Much of current literature focuses on the *macro* and *physical* impacts of climate change on land, with insufficient attention given to the *social* impacts of climate change from the perspective of poor people, and how it affects their access to livelihoods, social relationships, and security of tenure on the land.

Thus, there is a need to build evidences and stories towards a better understanding and appreciation of land tenure issues in climate change discussions. At the same time, there is growing recognition among CSOs and climate rights advocates that tenure rights and security is a key factor that increases the resiliency of people and communities.

For 2025, case studies are being documented in support of public awareness and advocacy on how land rights enhance the capacities of communities to address or cope with the impacts of climate. In most situations, people affected by natural disasters are often treated as a problem rather than an active partner in climate action. The planning and implementation of adaptation and mitigation programs are often top-down, and communities are excluded from discussions and decision-making. In particular, stories on the following themes have been documented:

- *Theme 1:* How do secure tenure rights encourage sustainable land use by communities in ways that restore their environment?
- *Theme 2:* How do land rights, especially for women and youth, contribute to the improved capacities of families and communities to implement resilience actions?
- *Theme 3:* How does securing and recognizing customary tenure for indigenous communities (with legal or policy frameworks) help to reduce deforestation, improve land management, and improve the capacity of indigenous communities to adapt and respond to climate change?



## 2025 World Food Day

With the theme *Food for All: Working Together for Resilient, Equitable, and Sustainable Agrifood Systems*, the ANGO Network demands more than just efficient agricultural production — it calls for a genuine spirit of collaboration on everyone — governments, civil society, research institutions, farmers, and the private sector, to bridge divides, uphold land rights, and innovate sustainably. The magnitude of food shortages and waste reflects the urgent crises of hunger, inequality, climate stress, and land degradation — far too complex for any single actor to solve alone. Collaborative efforts must therefore focus on building agrifood systems that is: a) resilient by ensuring access to nutritious food and secure livelihoods, capable of withstanding shocks and disruptions; b) equitable by guaranteeing access to resources and securing the tenure rights of marginalized groups; and, c) sustainable through food production practices that regenerate soil, conserve water, promote biodiversity, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Agribusiness Venture Arrangements in the Philippines: A Policy Review**

Agribusiness venture arrangements (AVAs) have long been recognized and promoted by the Philippine government since the early years of implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). Essentially, AVAs pave the way for the private sector to assume the State obligation of providing support services to Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries (ARBs).

Given the State's limitations in the area of support services, many ARBs have turned to AVAs as a source of capital for the operation and management of their farming enterprises.

As early as 1988, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) issued guidelines pertaining to the processing, approval and monitoring, validity, execution, and implementation of such agreements. However, despite the existence of these so-called guidelines, many agrarian reform advocates still encounter numerous cases of grossly disadvantageous AVAs between ARBs and national or multinational agribusiness firms and large traders.



At the heart of the issue was that agribusiness investors are taking advantage of ARBs to take away from them control and possession of the lands that have just been awarded to them through grossly disadvantageous AVA contracts and lowballed lease rentals.

As a response, an Administrative Order (AO No. 4, series of 2016) was issued by the DAR to address the mounting concerns on AVAs. However, the implementation of said AO was suspended and the bills filed in Congress did not progress.

Almost a decade later, there have been no developments on the AVA issues. The main body — the National AVA Evaluation Committee (NAEC) – which is supposed to oversee the implementation of the AVAs has not even been convened, and no monitoring of these AVAs has actually been done.

Based on literature review and conduct of two focus group discussions, the following actions were recommended:

- Conduct consultations with IEC campaigns in major AVA areas (i.e. banana, oil palm, pineapple, etc. areas/plantations) to determine the current state (productivity, financial/ economic status, land tenure status, etc.) of ARBs/ARB cooperatives with AVAs.
- Alternative law groups to develop programs/projects for providing assistance to ARBs/ARB cooperatives in reviewing their contracts and determining what appropriate legal actions they can take, and for providing legal assistance/advice during negotiations for their AVA contracts.
- With the enactment of RA 11953 or the New Agrarian Emancipation Act, potential income from leasing their land has increased (if appropriate lease pricing as provided under DAR AO No. 9, series of 2016 is followed) as the amount that used to be for payment of land amortization can now become additional income for ARBs, added capital for inputs of un-leased portions of their land, or new capital for other non-farm businesses.



## ANGOC's contribution to protecting civic and democratic spaces

Asian countries are experiencing varying degrees of shrinking civic spaces and threats to civil society. Fundamental rights are being suppressed while key actors exercising these rights are persecuted.

Democratic space in Asia has long been considered fragile, but it is alarmingly shrinking in recent years. State structures continue to be dominated by elite groups who have been shifting their ideology to the far right, poor and marginalized communities have few opportunities to influence State policies, and globalization and the war on terror increasingly influence government policies.

This affects CSOs and POs who in the course of their work against poverty and helplessness encounter more and more rigid State pushback. In many instances, advocates are harassed, their activities criminalized, and some, are even killed.

It is in this context that CSOs need to strengthen civic participation and continue to actively engage and be relevant in the ongoing dialogue with State and other duty-bearers.

In relation to **civic and democratic space**, the ANGOC Network shall contribute in creating a favorable policy environment for civil society organizations in Asia to broaden the space for voluntary action. This program area has three key result areas: a) promotion of national and regional policy environment that respects and protects civic space and civil society organizations, b) strengthened resilience of civil society to threats and internal challenges affecting the relevance and viability of CSOs in Asia, and c) better informed and increased solidarity among CSOs in Asia.

For 2025, the main interventions revolved in advocacy and lobbying as well as organizing reflection session within the ANGOC Network. These contributed to: a) promotion of national policy environment that respects and protects civic space and CSOs in the Philippines, and b) better informed and increased solidarity with the Network.



## ***Lobbying for the passage of Human Rights Defenders Protection in the Philippines***

Human rights defenders (HRDs) in the Philippines continue to face daily challenges, including persistent harassment, false accusations, and threats that jeopardize their safety. Tragically, many are victims of extrajudicial killings, intensifying fears within the community. A common tactic — red-tagging — falsely labels activists as insurgents or terrorists, further increasing their risk of violence and societal vilification. To protect HRDs effectively, it is essential to strengthen legal safeguards, ensure robust accountability for abuses, and raise public awareness about their vital role. Enacting dedicated laws based on international standards such as the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders is critical to creating a safer environment for these defenders.

ANGOC undertook an initial review of the pending Human Rights Defenders (HRD) bills filed in the 19th Congress. The review highlighted potential constitutional issues related to the proposed legislation, such as equal protection guarantees, possible jurisdictional overlap with the Commission of Human Rights (CHR), risks posed by vague or overly broad provisions. Henceforth, in partnership with the CHR, a focus group discussion (FGD) was organized to generate feedback from CSOs to improve the bills, and sharing ongoing CSO efforts and advocacy strategies for the passage of an HRD Law.

CHR convened a writeshop with legislative staff of legislators from both the Senate and the House of Representatives and CSOs to contribute to the enhancement of the present versions of the HRD bills, building on the results of the earlier FGD.

## ***Towards the formulation of a Philippine National Action Plan of UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights***

The Philippine government is currently formulating a sector-specific National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP- BHR) to operationalize the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). The NAP-BHR is intended to provide a strategic framework for the State to fulfill its duty to protect human rights from business-related impacts, ensure corporate respect for human rights, and enhance access to effective remedy for those affected.



A critical dimension of the Philippine NAP-BHR is addressing the unique and often complex challenges faced by indigenous peoples (IPs) concerning business operations within or impacting their ancestral lands. These challenges frequently involve issues related to land rights, cultural preservation, environmental protection, and the effective implementation of the right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC).

Currently, the Fourth Philippine Human Rights Plan (PHRP4) 2024 to 2028 identifies the protection and empowerment of Indigenous Cultural Communities (ICCs) and IPs as a distinct thematic priority. Consistent with this policy direction, the NAP-BHR is designed to focus on safeguarding the rights of IPs and their ancestral lands, particularly in contexts involving business activities.

The development of a comprehensive and effective NAP-BHR requires both enhanced government capacity and inclusive multi-stakeholder engagement. Thus, in 15 July 2025, the Presidential Committee on Human Rights Secretariat (PHRCS) and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) in partnership with the ANGOC and KAISAHAN organized the workshop “*Towards a Philippine National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP-BHR): Strengthening Protection for Indigenous Peoples and Ancestral Domains (Part 1)*.”

Some 85 representatives from various government agencies were reintroduced to the BHR principles and the UNGP-BHR Framework. Participants recognized the critical role that land rights play in land use and in business enterprises. Secure tenure protects traditional livelihoods, cultural heritage, and biodiversity; and also has a direct link to the indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination, which is crucial for their way of life. Lack of tenure security leads to conflict, displacement, and human rights abuses. Therefore, land rights especially from the perspective of ICCs/IPs, is essential in the development of the NAP-BHR.

Planned for 2026, the second part of the NAP-BHR formulation process shall gather representatives from government agencies, Indigenous Peoples’ organizations (IPOs), CSOs, and the business sector.



## Understanding Indonesia's and Nepal's Politics Today

ANGOC organized a reflection session within the network on the social unrest that happened in Indonesia and Nepal during the third quarter of 2025. Iwan Nurdin (former Secretary General of KPA) and Jagat Deuja (Executive Director of CSRC) provided their insights on the turmoil that beset their countries. In both situations, it is the un-organized youth who were in the forefront in the mobilizations. Fed up by excesses and seeming callousness of government officials, young people in these countries took to the streets to demand accountability and change. Government cracked down on these demonstrations but eventually backed down; Nepal had a government change while Indonesian lawmakers rescinded their request for additional remuneration.



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## Institutional Updates

### *37th ANGOC Board of Trustees Meeting*

In relation to **institutional updates**, the 37th ANGOC Board of Trustees (BoT) Meeting was convened virtually on 30 October 2025. The BoT deliberated and approved the proposed process, objectives and agenda for the 17th ANGOC General Assembly (GA). As such, a two-part process of convening the GA will be undertaken: (a) Part 1 as an online meeting to present, discuss, and decide on business matters; and, (b) Part 2 as a face-to-face meeting to reflect and discuss on strategic issues, which will input in crafting the next ANGOC Strategic Action Plan (ASAP).

### *17th ANGOC General Assembly Meeting*

On 26 November 2025, the first part of the 17th ANGOC General Assembly was convened online, with 16 out of the 19 network members joining. Among the key agreements reached were as follows:

- Ratified Minutes of 16th ANGOC General Assembly
- Approved the Annotated Minutes and Actions Taken based on Decisions of 16th ANGOC General Assembly
- Ratified 2022, 2023, and 2024 ANGOC Annual Reports
- Ratified the 2022 and 2023 ANGOC Financial Audit Reports, and Approved the 2024 Draft ANGOC Financial Audit Report

The second part of the General Assembly will be conducted in February 2026.

## 2025 Knowledge Products

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ANGOC, LWA members, and partners have developed and continue to disseminate these 27 knowledge products:

### *Workshop Summary Reports*

Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), International Land Coalition (ILC), Kaisahan Tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan (KAISAHAN), National Land Coalition-Philippines (NLC-Philippines), and Philippine Association For Intercultural Development (PAFID). (2025). *Harnessing biodiversity through enhanced land rights of communities: A learning exchange*. ANGOC, ILC, KAISAHAN, NLC- Philippines, and PAFID. [Proceedings]

Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC). (2025). *Focus Group Discussion on the Agribusiness Venture Arrangements Issue Paper*. 10 October 2025. Sotogrande Hotel Katipunan, Quezon City. ANGOC. [Summary Report].

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### IECs

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Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Campaign for Land Use Policy Now (CLUP Now), Center for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (CARRD), National Land Coalition (NLC). (2025). *A Primer on the National Land Use Act*. [Primer prepared with support from International Land Coalition (ILC), Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and We Effect].



## Video

ANGOC. (2025). *ANGOC's strategic impact on land and human rights: 2022 to 2024*. ANGOC. [Video].

## Posters

Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC). (2025). *2025 ANGOC World Food Day: Food for All — Working Together for Resilient, Equitable, and Sustainable Agrifood Systems*. ANGOC. [Poster]

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## Publications

Quizon, A. and Sandoval, G. (2025). *Fact finders and truth tellers: A manual on land rights monitoring. Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development(ANGOC)*. [Prepared by ANGOC for the project “Land Justice Initiative” jointly implemented by ANGOC and the Kaisahan tungo sa Kaunlaran sa Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan (KAISAHAN) with financial contribution from the European Commission (EC)]. [Draft Manuscript]

## Papers

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Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC). (2025). *Contested lands: incidence, drivers, and impacts of conflict - A monitoring report of land conflicts in four Asian countries, 2025. In Defense of Land Rights: Fourth Edition*. ANGOC.





Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development. (ANGOC). (2025). *Land Governance: Towards Modernizing Agriculture and Attaining Peace*. ANGOC and Fair Finance Philippines (FFPh). [Communique]

Deuja, J. and Gautam, A. (2025). *Pathways to Sustainable Land Use through Secured Land Rights: A case study on Riverbed Restoration in Deukhuri, Dang District*. Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC). [Case study prepared by the Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC) for the project “*Inclusive and integrated partnerships for sustainable agri-food systems transformation – GFAiR*” with financial support by the European Commission (EC) through the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). [Manuscript]

Lama, S. and Deuja, J. (2025). *2025 Nepal Land Conflict Monitoring Report*. Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC). [Draft Manuscript].

Lim, Jr. E. (2025). *Agribusiness Arrangements (AVAs) in Agrarian Reform Areas*. [Policy paper prepared for the project “*Land Justice Initiative*” jointly implemented by Kaisahan tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan (KAISAHAN) and Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), with financial support by the European Commission (EC). [Policy Paper].

Moni, R. J., Neo, M., and Islam, M. (2025). *From insecurity to resilience: The role of land rights in climate change adaptation*. Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC). [Case study prepared by the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD) for the project “*Inclusive and integrated partnerships for sustainable agri-food systems transformation — GFAiR*” with financial support by the European Commission (EC) through the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)]. [Manuscript]

Naungayan, M. J. E. and Marquez, N. D. E. (2025). *Hidden Iceberg Report 2025: Five-Year Retrospective Analysis of Non-Lethal Attacks on Indigenous, Land, and Environmental Defenders in the Philippines (2020–2024)*. Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC). [Paper]

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Nhek, S. (2025). *2025 Cambodia Land Conflict Monitoring Report*. STAR Kampuchea. [Draft Manuscript].

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Reddy, R. (2025). *Land Tenure: The Missing Link in a Climate-Resilient and Environmentally Sustainable Future*. Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC). [Case study prepared by the South Asia Rural Reconstruction Association (SARRA) for the project “*Inclusive and integrated partnerships for sustainable agri-food systems transformation – GFAiR*” with financial support by the European Commission (EC) through the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). [Manuscript]

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## **Annual Report**

Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC). (2025). *2024 ANGOC Annual Report: Enhancing capacities and forging partnerships for a stronger and sustained land rights campaign*. ANGOC.





## 2025 Calendar of Major Activities

### JANUARY

- 10 ALF 2025 Core Group Meeting – ILC Asia, *Online*
- 21 UN-CSO Forum, *Novotel Hotel, Quezon City, Philippines*
- 30 LEAD Coordination Group Meeting, *Online*

### FEBRUARY

- 10 Inception Meeting on “Land Justice Initiative”, *PARDEC A, Commission of Human Rights, Quezon City, Philippines*
- 10 ALF 2025 Core Group Meeting – ILC Asia, *Online*
- 11-12 NLC-Philippines Strategic Planning, *Microtel, Quezon City, Philippines*
- 12 Deep Dive Discussion with CSOs from Southeast Asia and Pacific on ADB’s Draft CM2CET Approach, *Online*
- 14 ANGOC’s 46th Anniversary
- 17-20 Third Arab Land Conference, *Rabat, Morocco*
- 17-19 Asia Land Forum, *Mercury Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia*
- 19 GLTN Steering Committee Meeting, *Rabat, Morocco*
- 20 ILC Asia Regional Assembly, *Mercury Hotel, Jakarta, Indonesia*

### MARCH

- 3 Presentation of CSO Consultations’ Outputs on the National Human Rights Action Plan, *Tribute Hotel, Quezon City, Philippines*
- 6 Online preparatory meeting with Asia Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Associations (APAARI)
- 13 Global Land Observatory Technical Working Group Meeting, *Online*
- 18 Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) Lead Clusters Meeting, *Online*
- 19 Launch of Land Justice Initiative, *The B Hotel, Quezon City, Philippines*
- 19 APAARI Quarterly UN Members Meeting, *Online*

24-26 Harnessing biodiversity through enhanced land rights of communities: A learning exchange, *Lighthouse Hotel, SBMA, Zambales, Philippines*

## APRIL

- 4 Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) Lead Clusters Meeting, *Online*
- 10 First Semestral Meeting of SDG Stakeholders Chamber, *ACE Hotel, Pasig City, Philippines*
- 21-26 ICCA Southeast Asia Regional Assembly, *Lombok, Indonesia*
- 24-26 Closing Meeting for the Grow Together Program, *Anilao, Batangas, Philippines*

## MAY

- 2 Memorandum of Understanding Signing between ANGOC and Polytechnic University of the Philippines, *ANGOC Office, Quezon City, Philippines*
- 5-6 Updating People-Centered Land and Resource Data and Driving Action on Agricultural Land Reclassification and Conversion, *Harolds Evotel, Quezon City, Philippines*
- 14 Global Land Observatory Technical Working Group Meeting, *Online*
- 21 Right to Food: The 2025 Forum on Food Security, *CHR Office, Quezon City, Philippines*
- 23 Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) Clusters Meeting with UN Habitat Director, *Online*
- 27 ICCA General Assembly Part 1, *Online*
- 29 ICCA General Assembly Part 2, *Online*

## JUNE

- 1 Preparatory meeting for Land and Youth Conference with Land Portal, *Online*
- 6 Mid-term review evaluation of Fair Finance Asia, *Online*
- 10 37 Years of CARP: Gains, Gaps, and the Need for Reform: A Roundtable Discussion, *Talisay Garden, UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City*
- 10 Recognition of Agrarian Reform Champions, *Talisay Garden, UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City*
- 11 Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening Tenure Security for Adequate Housing for All, *Online*
- 16-20 Global Land Forum, *Bogota, Colombia*
- 24 ICCA General Assembly Part 3, *Online*





- 25 UN Habitat Open Ended Working Group Intersessional meeting on Tenure Security, *Online*  
 26 ICCA General Assembly Part 4, *Online*

## JULY

- 15 Workshop Towards a Philippine National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights: Strengthening Protection for Indigenous Peoples and Ancestral Domains (Part 1)  
 22-23 Writeshop on Land and Human Rights Investigation and Monitoring Manual, *Ibis Style Hotel, Quezon City, Philippines*

## AUGUST

- 11 Roundtable Discussion on Land and Resource Governance: Towards Modernizing Agriculture and Attaining Peace and Security, *Joy-Nostalg Hotel & Suites, Pasig City, Philippines*  
 22 Preparatory meeting with case writers on land tenure-climate change nexus, *Online*  
 26 Preparatory for Digital Conference on Land and Youth, *Online*  
 27 Global Land Tool Network Steering Committee Meeting, *Online*

## SEPTEMBER

- 4 GLTN Cluster Leads Meeting, *Online*  
 9-11 Digital Conference on Land and Youth, *Online*  
 10 Learning session: Understanding Indonesia's and Nepal's Politic Today, *Online*  
 16-17 Land Rights Literacy Training for the Commission on Human Rights, *SotoGrande Hotel, Quezon City, Philippines*  
 18 Agrarian Reform and Beyond: A Rural Development Forum, *Novotel, Quezon City, Philippines*  
 29 Workshop on Strategies and Approaches to Document Attacks on Human Rights Defenders, *Online*

## OCTOBER

- 2 Assessment and Recommendations on the Proposed Human Rights Defenders Protection Law: A Roundtable Discussion, *Commission of Human Rights, Quezon City, Philippines*

- 10 Focus Group Discussion on Agribusiness Venture Arrangements Issue Paper, *Sotogrande Hotel, Quezon City, Philippines*
- 15 Second Semestral Meeting of SDG Stakeholders Chamber, *Pasig City, Philippines*
- 16 World Food Day: Food for All – Working Together for Resilient, Equitable, and Sustainable Agrifood Systems
- 21-23 Bantay Lupa, Bantay Karapatan: A Training on the Land and Human Rights Investigative Monitoring Tool, *The Ambassador Hotel, Tacloban, Leyte, Philippines*
- 30 37th ANGOC Board of Trustees Meeting, *Online*

**NOVEMBER**

- 13 Writeshop on HRD Biil, *Commission on Human Rights, Quezon City, Philippines*
- 18-20 Bantay Lupa, Bantay Karapatan: A Training on the Land and Human Rights Investigative Monitoring Tool, *Bacolod, Negros, Philippines*
- 26 17th ANGOC General Assembly (Part 1), *Online*

**DECEMBER**

- 1-2 Writeshop on Completing the Agriculture- PBSAP Targets and Commitment Matrix, *Tomas Morato, Quezon City, Philippines*
- 4 GLTN Steering Committee Meeting, *Online*
- 12 PDAP Annual Membership Meeting, *Ortigas, Pasig City, Philippines*



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