



Workshop: Putting the *Grassroots Mechanism* into practice

2nd - 3rd November 2009, Nairobi

Concept Note

The Global Land Tools Network (GLTN), in partnership with the International Land Coalition (ILC), is organizing a one and a half days workshop to be held the 2nd - 3rd November 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya. The theme of the workshop is: *Putting the Grassroots Mechanism into practice: How should we select community-led initiatives for up-scaling?*

Context and Rationale

About the GLTN:

The Global Land Tools Network (GLTN) is a global partnership of over 40 international civil society organizations and networks, international finance institutions, international research and training institutions, donors and professional bodies. It works to develop policy tools for pro-poor and gender-sensitive land management and land tenure reform. Its ultimate aim is to help alleviate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

About ILC

The International Land Coalition is a network of organisations working to promoting secure and equitable access to and control over land for poor women and men. It has over 80 members from around the world, including civil society and United Nations organisations, research institutes and international finance institutions. The ILC seeks to promote a pro-poor land agenda by facilitating global debate and advocacy; by creating space for civil society to engage in national-level dialogue on land issues; by building the capacity of its member organisations and by promoting research, monitoring and innovation, and the sharing and dissemination of knowledge, within and beyond the network. ILC is a Partner of GLTN. The ILC secretariat, along with one of ILC's civil society members, RECONCILE, is working with GLTN to organise the workshop.

GLTN's Grassroots Mechanism

Many land policies are developed and implemented with weak grassroots participation, leading to failures and outcomes that do not assist women or people living in poverty. All of the tools envisaged by GLTN have a clear space and need for grassroots participation in their design and implementation. GLTN is thus developing the Grassroots Mechanism as a way of promoting the

development and up-scaling of land policy tools in a way that allows grassroots groups to play a meaningful guiding role.

Development of the Grassroots Mechanism so far:

2006 - Grassroots Mechanism conceived after consultations with stakeholder.

January 2007 - Workshop held with grassroots participants and professional partners to review, share and learn lessons from experiences of participatory and community-led initiatives.

July 2009 - Publication of *Not About Us Without Us: Working with grassroots organizations in the land field* (see the attached document). This report sets out GLTN's initial thinking on how effective and genuine grassroots participation can be a fundamental element of the development of large-scale land policy tools.

The Grassroots Mechanism has been developing under the guidance of the GLTN Secretariat in conjunction with three main partners, namely the Huairou Commission, Slum Dwellers International and Hakijamii Trust. Both the Huairou Commission and SDI have extensive networks of grassroots based organizations, many of whom have been involved in the GLTN on a consistent basis. Each organization has ensured representation by one grassroots leader and one staff person on the Grassroots Mechanism small group. The group was involved in assisting in the initial workshop, as well as developing the concept for and advising on the publication *Not About Us Without Us*.

The report *Not About Us Without Us* outlines the four key strategies of the Grassroots Mechanism:

1. Ensuring grassroots participation in the development of large-scale land policies.
2. Scaling-up community-led initiatives for improving the tenure security of poor women and men.
3. Building the capacity of the grassroots to engage in land administration and land management.
4. Promoting grassroots participation approaches amongst GLTN partners.

The Grassroots Mechanism should also be able to provide critical guidance on questions such as: Who counts as the “grassroots”? What makes participation meaningful, and not just a token? How can the grassroots be represented when participatory processes are scaled up? How can participatory processes be both affordable and still effective at a large scale? Do grassroots groups already have the capacity to take part effectively in the development of large-scale land policy tools? As a first step, *Not about Us Without Us* suggests twelve criteria for ensuring and assessing quality grassroots participation, which are distilled from various case studies and lessons learned by Partners. According to these criteria, a participatory process should be evaluated according to whether it:

1. gives sufficient control to grassroots participants;
2. builds on existing networks, community processes, customs and norms;
3. initiates new networks to include the most marginalised groups;
4. focuses on community strengths and land systems;
5. uses representative mechanisms as processes are scaled up;
6. is clear on objectives;
7. contains effective information strategies;

8. meets immediate needs and resources to avoid participation fatigue;
9. invests in capacity of grassroots participation at an early stage;
10. addresses need for political support and social transformation;
11. adopts minimum standards for participation process; and
12. contains accountability for participation and includes dispute resolution.

These criteria are intended to be a guide for GLTN and its Partners in increasing grassroots participation in land tool development and up-scaling, as well as in all aspects of land policy, administration and management. These lessons are not seen as rules; grassroots participation processes at their best are highly flexible, and responsive to the local context.

Rationale for the workshop

Looking to the future, the next challenge for the Grassroots Mechanism is to focus on how these plans and principles can be put into practice. In 2010, GLTN intends to begin the selection of community-led initiatives for up-scaling.

Before that point, however, there is a need to work out how the criteria outlined above can best be used as a basis for evaluation of proposals from grassroots groups, and how the selection process can take place in a manner that is fair, transparent and participatory.

GLTN Grassroots Partners Group work, next steps:

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| November 2009 | - Workshop: <i>Putting the Grassroots Mechanism into Practice</i> . The main objective is to work with grassroots groups to design the process for selecting community-led initiatives for up-scaling, in preparation for the call for proposals in 2010. |
| Early 2010 | - Call for proposals for support to the up-scaling of community-led initiatives for increasing tenure security of poor women and men. |
| Mid 2010 | - Selection of 1-3 community-led initiatives for up-scaling under the Grassroots Mechanism. |

The criteria outlined in the report are intended to form the basis of the selection process. A draft call for proposals has also been developed on the basis of these criteria. It is important, however, that this process does not proceed in a top-down way, but in a genuinely participatory manner. For this reason, there is a need to open up the process to grassroots groups, in order to discuss, amend and validate the selection process and criteria. GLTN needs to proceed in a way that is fully transparent.

GLTN and its Grassroots main collaborating Partners, Huairou, SDI and Hakijamii are looking forward to expose the work done to a wider grassroots organizations community, integrate their feed-back and have them participate in the next phases of the process.

Challenges for the GLTN of working with grassroots groups have to do with the communication of what GLTN is and how it works. GLTN presents its work as technically-focused, while many grassroots organizations tend to frame their work in more political terms. The success of the Grassroots Mechanism will depend on better outreach to grassroots groups. At present, GLTN and its Partners also want to expand their collaboration with grassroots groups working specifically in the rural sector. There is also a need to foster a grassroots-based community of practice on community-led land tools, in order to facilitate the peer-to-peer exchange of experiences and

lessons, and to build grassroots capacity across the land sector.

It is in order to respond to these needs and challenges that GLTN plans to hold a 1 and half day workshop in Nairobi, 2nd-3rd November 2009. The workshop will thus be held immediately preceding the GLTN Global Partners Meeting which will be held in Nairobi, the 4th -5th November. The Partners Meeting has the theme: *“Enriching Partnerships and Increasing Activities for Land Reform.”* The purpose of the meeting is to learn from the experiences of GLTN's partners to strengthen and enrich the partnerships within GLTN, and to identify what GLTN can do to achieve our common agenda even quicker.

Some participants of the Grassroots Mechanism workshop will also have the opportunity to attend the GLTN Partners meeting, in order to widen and strengthen their networks and to contribute to the strategic thinking of GLTN, while the Partners Meeting will also enable a greater number of organizations to participate in the Grassroots Mechanism workshop. Holding these events back-to-back will thus create synergies and advance the goals of both meetings.

Workshop Objectives

The objectives of the workshop will be to:

- 1. Achieve outreach on the Grassroots Mechanism to a wider grassroots audience both urban and rural.**
- 2. Design a transparent and participatory process for the selection of the project(s) for up-scaling.**
- 3. Facilitate future participation by workshop participants in the call for proposals and obtain in-principle commitment to the process.**
- 4. Build capacities through knowledge-exchange about grassroots initiatives between participants, helping to create a community of practice.**

How the objectives will be achieved:

- 1. Achieving outreach on the Grassroots Mechanism to a wider grassroots audience both urban and rural**

One of the challenges faced by GLTN in establishing greater grassroots participation has been outreach, especially to organizations outside of the three main collaborating civil society partners, Huairou Commission, SDI and Hakijami. The Workshop has been opened to the International Land Coalition (ILC) to broaden the scope of groups involved in the Grassroots Mechanism. ILC, as a mainly civil society network, has contact with rural based groups that can be invited.

At the logistical level, the workshop will be organised in Nairobi by RECONCILE, an ILC member, with support from the ILC secretariat, GLTN, and the existing civil society partners, Huairou Commission, SDI and Hakijami.

A total of 16-20 participants will be invited from the networks of SDI, Huairou Commission, Hakijamii and ILC. A key element of the workshop will be a presentation on the work of GLTN, the Grassroots Partner Group, and the development and future of the Grassroots Mechanism.

2. Designing a transparent and participatory process for the selection of the project(s) for up-scaling

A key aim of the Grassroots Mechanism is that key decisions should not be “top-down” but should themselves be based on meaningful participation from partners at the grassroots level. Thus the selection of initiatives for up-scaling, to be carried out in 2010 as part of GLTN work plan, should be carried out according to a transparent process designed in collaboration with grassroots organizations.

The workshop will include a presentation of the twelve suggested criteria for evaluating the quality of participation in processes to scale-up a grassroots initiative or project. It will discuss how these criteria can best be used as the basis of the selection process.

Participating grassroots organisations will also be required to prepare, in advance, a **2-page draft concept note** describing their initiative, how it could be scaled-up, and how it might or might not fit some of the criteria, on the basis of a draft call for proposals that will be provided. During the workshop, participants will be asked to share and discuss their draft concept note with other participants. This will enable participants to identify, in concrete terms, issues or problems in adapting the criteria to the process of selection of the initiatives to be up-scaled and it will help to focus discussions on how proposals can be critically yet fairly evaluated. A key output of the workshop will be the finalization of the design of the call for proposals and selection process that will take place in 2010.

3. Facilitating future participation by workshop participants in the call for proposals and obtain in-principle commitment to the process

The workshop will be an important step in ensuring that a representative and high-quality range of proposals are made to GLTN for the up-scaling of community-led initiatives. This will be achieved through: 1) working through the grassroots focal points for the four Partner networks mentioned above to invite a good range of grassroots groups with the potential to submit proposals, including from exclusively rural-focused organizations; 2) enhancing the capacity of the participants to submit quality proposals through the presentation on the Grassroots Mechanism, the in-depth discussion of the selection criteria, and particularly through the beforehand preparation of 2-page draft concept notes by participants with the support of the civil society partners, on which they will be able to receive peer-feedback; and 3) helping participants understand the Grassroots Mechanism and giving them a meaningful guiding role in the design of selection process, in order to build a sense of ownership over the Mechanism by a group of grassroots organizations, wider than the one that produced the GLTN Grassroots Mechanisms and to achieve in-principle commitments to further participation.

4. Fostering peer exchange on grassroots initiatives between participants, helping to create a community of practice

Beyond the focus on the Grassroots Mechanism, the workshop will be an opportunity for participating organisations to learn from each other through exchanging information on their initiatives and the issues they face in scaling-up. While many of the groups coming from the same networks will know each other, it will still provide an interesting exchange, especially across networks. This exchange of experience and knowledge will be facilitated in particular by small-

group sessions which will give all participants the opportunity to share their experiences and potential strategies for up-scaling, and to learn from the experiences of others. It is hoped that, as well as contributing to peer-to-peer exchange, this will help to build a community of practice on community-led tools across the land sector. The opportunity to attend the GLTN Global Partners meeting will also help organisations to widen their networks and gain exposure to the full range of GLTN initiatives.

Who can attend?

Around 25 participants will be selected to attend the workshop. The majority will be from grassroots organisations. Organizations wishing to apply to attend the workshop should:

- be civil society organizations (non-governmental, community-based, etc.).
- work, with a focus at the community level, to increase access to land and/or tenure security for poor women and men.
- be involved in a strongly participatory community-level initiative with potential for scaling-up.
- be willing to prepare, before the workshop, a 2-page draft concept note based on the draft call for proposals, and to share and discuss this with other workshop participants.

To apply, organizations should submit a 2-page draft concept note, in response to the draft call for proposals (attached), by October 1st. The selection will be made by representatives of the GLTN Grassroots Partners Group (SDI, Huairou Commission, Hakijami, and including now ILC) and the GLTN secretariat, according to the relevance of the work done by the organisations applying, the need for a representative range of organisations, and an assessment of the value to the organizations of attending the workshop and the Partners Meeting. Organisations wishing to attend should contact SDI, Huairou Commission, Hakijami, or ILC.

Provisional programme

Dates: 2nd - November – Midday 3rd November 2009 (1.5 days).

Venue: To be confirmed, Nairobi, Kenya.

Material to be provided to participants before the workshop:

- Workshop concept note and programme
- Report: *Not About Us Without Us: Working with grassroots organisations in the land field*
- Draft call for proposals and instructions for participants on the preparation of 2-page concept note on their initiatives

Day One

Introductory presentation on the work of GLTN, the Grassroots Partners group, the Grassroots Mechanism and the 12 criteria for evaluating participation.

Aim: to familiarize participants with the GLTN and how it how GLTN plans to work with grassroots organisations in the future; to achieve “buy in” for the Grassroots Mechanism from participants.

Sharing the draft concept notes: Participants divide into three groups to present their concept notes to each other, describing their initiatives, their plans for scaling up and their reactions to the call for proposals.

Aim: To facilitate the exchange of experiences and lessons and foster links; to provide a basis in concrete experience and practice for discussing how to design the selection process in 2010.

Evaluating and revising the concept notes: In the same groups, participants choose certain concept notes for discussion, focusing on how they could be improved, and how it would be fair and meaningful to evaluate them based on the criteria.

Aim: To improve the quality of the draft concept notes (which could form the basis for submissions under the 2010 call for proposals) through peer-review and advice; to assess how the criteria can best be used to evaluate proposals in 2010 and to highlight issues and problems in this regard.

Identifying key issues in designing the selection process: Representatives from each group provide feedback on the issues arising during the small group discussions, followed by a moderated whole group discussion.

Aim: To identify and focus discussions on the key issues and problems to be considered in finalizing the 2010 selection process; to discuss how these can be accommodated and overcome, and through this process to determine if the criteria are correct.

Day two

Finalizing the 2010 selection process: Presentation and discussion of a draft blueprint for the selection process, developed by the Grassroots Partners Group focal points, based on the issues identified in Day One, leading to amendment and finalization.

Aim: To discuss and finalize the procedure for selecting community-led initiatives for up-scaling in 2010, fully incorporating or responding as necessary to the issues raised by grassroots participants.

Preparing for the Global Partners Meeting: Discussion of the strategy to be adopted in the Global Partners Meeting to disseminate and mainstream the work done by the group.

Aim: To agree on a common grassroots strategy on the Partners Meeting; to strengthen partnerships and collaboration between grassroots groups.
