



Tirana Declaration

“Securing land access for the poor in times of intensified natural resources competition”

We, over 150 representatives of civil society organisations, social movements, grassroots organisations, international agencies, and governments - including the members and strategic partners of the International Land Coalition (ILC) - from more than 45 countries in Africa, Latin America, North America, Asia and Europe, have gathered in Tirana, Albania, this 24-26 May 2011, the International Year of Forests. We have come together at the invitation of the National Federation of Communal Forests and Pastures of Albania (NFCFPA), (formerly known as NACFPA) and the Government of Albania for an international conference under the theme of “**Securing land access for the poor in times of intensified natural resource competition**”.

We echo the assertions made in the Kathmandu, Lima and Kigali Declarations calling for land governance to better meet the needs of marginalised land users.

- i. In particular, we are struck at this moment in history by the **intensified and increasingly unequal competition** for land, water, forests, rangelands, biodiversity and other natural resources.
- ii. We note that land and other natural resources are increasingly **scarce and under threat** due to a number of factors, including population growth, migration, changes in consumption patterns, climate change, land degradation, corruption and other forms of poor governance. Moreover, this is taking place in a context in which the control of land is increasingly **concentrated** in the hands of a few, while at the same time, a growing number of rural and urban poor are left with small and fragmented lands. This fosters conflict and food insecurity, and exacerbates poverty.
- iii. We believe that **people-centred land governance** is essential to address the needs of land-users and the discrimination of small-scale producers, especially women, and also indigenous peoples, pastoralists, fisher folks, users of common pool resources and holders of shifting and overlapping rights, the land poor and landless workers.

We therefore call on all actors to actively promote pro-poor, people-centred and environmentally sustainable governance of land and other natural resources. To this end, we, members of ILC, take the following commitments, and we urge States to take steps to achieve them:

1. We will work to place **small-scale producers, agricultural labourers, indigenous peoples and landless rural and urban poor** at the centre of efforts to overcome structural food and environmental crises, control their own food systems, and realise the right to food for all. We will work towards innovative solutions for secure and equitable access to land. We will contribute to the empowerment of land users and their organisations to inform decision-making at all levels. In particular, we will recognise and support the key role of women in ensuring the food security of their families and communities, and we will promote gender equality in relation to access to and control over land and other natural resources.
2. We will advocate for a **territorial vision** that recognises the rights of local communities to use, manage and control land and other natural resources as a basis for community-driven development and building equitable and just societies.
3. We will work towards encouraging models of **investment** in agriculture and other rural land-based activities that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable and that reduce poverty and hunger. We will contribute towards strengthening the capacities of local land-users, indigenous peoples, agricultural workers and their organisations, and creating incentives for more investments in and by small-scale producers rather than large-scale land transfers or concessions. We believe that such investments and the fight against poverty must go hand in hand, and must be closely linked to secure and equitable land rights for small-scale producers, who should be recognised as the main investors in land and agriculture.
4. We **denounce all forms of land grabbing**, whether international or national. We denounce local-level land grabs, particularly by powerful local elites, within communities or among family members. We denounce large-scale land grabbing, which has accelerated hugely over the past three years, and which we define as acquisitions or concessions that are one or more of the following:
(i) in violation of human rights, particularly the equal rights of women; (ii) not based on free, prior and informed consent of the affected land-users; (iii) not based on a thorough assessment, or are in disregard of social, economic and environmental impacts, including the way they are gendered; (iv) not based on transparent contracts that specify clear and binding commitments about activities, employment and benefits sharing, and; (v) not based on effective democratic planning, independent oversight and meaningful participation.
5. We urge States to guarantee **transparent** and accessible land-related information. We will **monitor** trends in land governance so as to promote accountability, informed dialogue and policy change. We will work to establish new state-society modalities of engagement for land governance, in which people-led initiatives can contribute to land governance.

6. We reaffirm the relevance of the Final Declaration of the International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD), and the need for its implementation. We urge States to take advantage of the historic opportunity of the **Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests** to adopt much-needed global norms and benchmarks for people-centred land governance, and to implement them.
7. We support the efforts of the people and Government of Albania to fully **decentralise rights to manage and control forest resources** to local communities and households, having noted the important role of forests for the livelihoods of many in our host country. We encourage further multi-stakeholder national policy dialogue, with an emphasis on improving land management to meet the needs of the rural poor, drafting a national plan for land consolidation and modernising the cadastre system.

In conclusion, we strongly reiterate the need to promote secure and equitable access to and control over land for the poor to reduce poverty, promote sustainable development and contribute to identity, dignity and inclusion.

We extend our appreciation and gratitude to ILC member NFCFPA and to the Government of Albania, especially the Prime Minister; the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Water Administration; and the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection for their hospitality and commitment in hosting this conference.

Tirana, 26 May 2011

The International Land Coalition (ILC) is a global alliance of civil society and intergovernmental organisations working together to promote secure and equitable access to and control over land for poor women and men through advocacy, dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity-building. The international conference on "Securing land access for the poor in times of intensified natural resources competition" was organised on the occasion of the fifth biennial ILC Global Assembly of Members and took place in Tirana, Albania, from 24-26 May 2011. The conference was jointly hosted by the National Federation of Communal Forests and Pastures of Albania (NFCFPA), the Government of Albania, and ILC.

This Declaration was endorsed by the ILC Assembly of Members on 27 May 2011