

EGM Title

Land governance and climate change

Overview

In collaboration with the UN-Habitat/ Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies (LCPS) is undertaking a desk review study on “land, natural resources, and climate change in the Arab region”. The study is part of the broader BMZ-funded “Arab Region Programme on Good Land Governance in Support to Inclusive Development, Peace and Stability”—a key programme of the Arab Land Initiative.

As part of this study, LCPS is organizing and carrying out an online Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on “land governance and climate change” in the context of the Arab region. Its main purpose is to fill knowledge gaps in existing studies as well as to allow experience exchange among experts and organizations working on the topic. In doing so, it will provide an opportunity to connect experts and partners to each other by way of promoting future collaboration and coordination.

Study purpose

Good land governance is central to dealing with climate vulnerabilities and protecting the livelihoods of those who rely on land resources to survive and improving their tenure security in the face of natural disasters. However, research on understanding the linkages between climate change impacts on land and tenure security in the Arab Region is still preliminary.

Indeed, the social and economic impacts of climate change can be paramount: potential conflict over access to land and natural resources, forced migration and disruption of existing livelihoods and social bonds. These impacts are perhaps more pronounced in the Arab region where inadequate land policies are widening social gaps and inequalities and depriving many people from their right to land. Understanding the modalities of access to land vis-à-vis existing land tenure systems as well as understanding the context specific power structures embedded in land are therefore essential to devising feasible and potentially successful recommendations for climate adaptability in relation to land tenure.

LCPS’s research project on “land, natural resources, and climate change in the Arab region” aims to contribute to filling existing knowledge gaps. It takes a people-centred perspective on climate change and embraces views that see climate change and natural resources scarcity “as multipliers of risks and threats that exacerbate existing societal problems such as poverty, injustice, social insecurity, violence, terrorism, or civil war”.¹ That is because land is an essential element for livelihood for large parts of the populations in the region.

The EGM will bring together experts with different professional backgrounds (academic, civil society, government, etc.) to share knowledge and experience on the relationship between natural,

¹ Froese, Rebecca & Schilling, Janpeter. 2019. The Nexus of Climate Change, Land Use, and Conflicts. In Current Climate Change Reports (2019) 5:24–35 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40641-019-00122-1>.

climate and environmental incidents and land tenure security in different countries of the region. It will particularly focus on existing land governance related challenges, practices, and approaches as well as on policy recommendations to guide Arab governments and concerned organizations on urgent actions that they need to undertake to prevent land pressure and landlessness in context of environmental degradation.

Key topics and questions

With the above in mind, the EGM discussions aim to touch on several aspects related to land governance and climate change in the Arab region: biophysical, social, political, historical, and economic. While the EGM discussions will feed into the research project that LCPS is conducting on the topic, the EGM will also be an opportunity for the LCPS team to share the preliminary findings of the desk review process it carried. More specifically, the EGM discussions will focus on four key topics. Each topic will be discussed in a dedicated panel.

1. Access to land and natural resources

The aim of this first panel is to understand the main impacts of climate change on the ability of people to access land and natural resources in different countries of the Arab region. We will tackle the question from a tenure security perspective, as land access is not only bound to ownership.

- a. What land governance and tenure arrangements ensure people's ability to access land and water resources?
- b. What land governance and tenure arrangements increase people's ability to adapt to climate change impacts on their land and livelihoods?
- c. How is climate change exacerbating conflicts over land and natural resources?
- d. How does the commodification of land and natural resources (especially with large foreign investments) compound the effects of environmental and demographic challenges?

2. Land desertification and deforestation, water scarcity and droughts

Livelihoods of people in the Arab region is threatened by land degradation and depletion of natural resources. Land degradation includes desertification, increased wildfire, vegetation loss, decreased water availability, and soil erosion. The aim of this panel is to understand the main causes and effects of land degradation and risks on natural resources, and discuss ways of mitigation and neutralization of effects and possibly prevention of triggers.

- a. What are the status and triggers of land and natural resources degradation (droughts, floods, agricultural / pasture land loss, deforestation, etc.)?
- b. What are possible land use planning and land management arrangements to improve the tenure security of communities vulnerable to climate change effects in rural contexts?
- c. What possible land use planning and tenure arrangements could halt land degradation and encourage sustainable practices especially in rural areas?
- d. What types of institutions are needed to support land degradation neutrality and adapted tenure arrangements?

3. Urban settlements and climate risks

Climate change increases the risk of extreme weather events such as flooding, landslides, heatwaves and earthquakes. These events affect human settlements leading to loss of shelter and livelihoods and eventual displacement. Urban dwellers are most affected by climate related natural disasters. Also, major economic hubs of the Arab region are port cities with high population densities. These settlements are affected by sea level rise (SLR) and direct inundation .

- a. What are possible land use planning and land management arrangements to improve the tenure security of communities vulnerable to climate change effects in urban contexts?
 - b. In which cases resettlement can be considered as a convenient adaptation mechanism? How can access to shelter be ensured for vulnerable populations, especially in informal settlements?
 - c. How can preventive land use planning increase resilience and provide mitigation for affected populations?
 - d. What social and economic safeguards can be included in land management practices to improve mitigation of SLR effects?
 - e. How can urban-rural linkages be strengthened in land use planning in order to mitigate the impacts of rural migration on stressed urban areas?
4. Agrarian systems and food sovereignty

Climate change impacts (droughts, change of seasons) on agriculture productivity undermine rural livelihoods and accelerate migration to urban areas in some Arab countries leading to increased number of refugee or displaced population and pressure on urban services. Agricultural activity will also be affected by SLR since many fields are located in low-lying coastal areas.

- a. How to manage the shifts in land use and land suitability (between farming, pasture, cultivation and forests) due to climate change?
- b. How are communities whose livelihoods rely on subsistence agriculture affected by change in agrarian tenure?
- c. How can the sustainable traditional knowhow in agriculture be preserved and promoted facing change in agrarian societies?
- d. How can rural development and sustainable land management prevent unsustainable agricultural practices?
- e. How to mitigate the impacts of SLR and water salinity on the vast fertile lands located in coastal areas?

Aim of the presentations

The main objective for LCPS is to frame an expert discussion on land governance and climate change, addressing the above-mentioned key topics. Participants have knowledge and experience in these areas and will present and discuss them, by including materials as well as the following aspects:

- Discuss the **key challenges** facing the region or countries in the region in relation to land governance and climate change, mainly vis-à-vis questions of land use planning and land management
- Examine and discuss existing promising tools and **approaches** related to climate change and land governance (e.g. community-based management, integrated land use planning, sustainable land management, LDN targets, SDGs, VGGT application).
- Present and debate selected **case studies**
- Synthesize **lessons** and articulate specific **recommendations** related to improving the land tenure of populations affected by climate change.

Outputs

LCPS will produce a short report on EGM discussions that will be shared with all EGM participants for review. This short report and the outcomes of the EGM will also contribute to the research report on “land, natural resources, and climate change in the Arab region” that LCPS is preparing.

The meeting report will contribute to improved understanding of the key land challenges related to land degradation and climate change with a repertoire of case studies on related challenges, existing approaches, tools, and recommendations.

Logistics

The meeting will be held on 18 January 2021, from 10:00 am till 2:00 pm Beirut time. It will be hosted online. To register, click [here](#).

Experts are encouraged to share their presentations with the organizers beforehand to ensure a smooth screen sharing of the content. We expect presentations to be 10 minutes long. Each panel is followed by a short Q&A session. A plenary discussion is envisaged at the end for final reflections and recommendations. Discussions will be in English. Instant translation to Arabic is available.

Agenda

Expert Group Meeting on land governance and climate change in the Arab region			
18 January 2021 - Online event			
Introduction			
Time	Activity/Description	Facilitator	
10.00 – 10.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presentation of LCPS' area of work ● Presentation of the overall Programme 	Rania Abi Habib (Program Manager – LCPS) Ombretta Temptra (Human Settlements Officer – UN-Habitat/GLTN)	
10.10 - 10.35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction of the topic Presentation of the area of work on land and climate change in the Arab region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Short Discussion 	Mona Khechen (Independent Development Planner and Senior Fellow – LCPS)	
10.35 – 10.45	Two minute introduction of each presenter/presenting institution	All	
Main Session			
Time	Activity/Topic	Presenters	Moderator
10.45 – 11.15	Access to land and natural resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Changes in land access and impact on sustainability ● Productive landscapes and ecosystem management ● Q&A 	Max Ajl (Development Sociology – University of Cornwall) Rami Zurayk (Professor - Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management - American University of Beirut)	Mona Harb (Professor of Urban Studies and Politics - American University of Beirut)
11.15 – 12:15	Land desertification and climate risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ecosystem restoration and land degradation neutrality ● Urban settlements and climate risks ● Rural and drylands ● Q&A 	Annalisa Mauro (Operations and Network Coordinator – ILC) & Rabie Wahba (Europe Middle east and North Africa Focal Point – ILC) Raji Maasri (Senior Environmental Expert and General Manager - MORES, Lebanon)	TBC

EGM 1 Concept Note

		Heba Allah Khalil (Professor of sustainable urbanism - Cairo University)	
<i>15 minutes break</i>			
12.30 am – 1.15 pm	<p>Agrarian systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural production and food security in Algeria: the incompressible gap • Shifts and changes in agrarian systems • Q&A 	Ali Daoudi (Professor of Agricultural Economics - the National Agronomic School of Algiers) TBC	TBC
1.15 pm – 2:00 pm	<p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final round of comments and reflections • Closing remarks and takeaways 	All + specific invitees	Petra Samaha (PhD Candidate in Urban Sociology - Sciences Po)