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## **Apeldoorn Declaration on Land Consolidation and Land Readjustment for Sustainable Development**

We, participants of the International Symposium on Land Consolidation and Land Readjustment, organised in Apeldoorn, The Netherlands, 9 to 11 November 2016, hereby issue the *Apeldoorn Declaration on Land Consolidation and Land Readjustment for Sustainable Development*.

Land consolidation involves according to FAO: “(...) measures to adjust the structure of property rights through co-ordination between owners and users. Land consolidation involves the reallocation of parcels to remove the effects of fragmentation but the term goes well beyond these actions. Land consolidation has been associated with broad economic and social reforms from the time of its earliest applications”. This definition does not exclude any objectives of land consolidation nor does it promote specific approaches.

Land readjustment involves according to UN Habitat/GLTN: “the pooling of all the land parcels in a particular area and planning them as a unit – putting in roads, sewerage and other infrastructure –, and then dividing up the land again to the original land owner or user”. A proportion of the land is used for roads and public space. Each landowner and land user gets a plot back which is usually smaller than the area he or she originally contributed to the common pool. But the plot is now more valuable: it has infrastructure and services, and has formal documentation; the area has been re-zoned, and different types of use are permitted.

Land consolidation and land readjustment are both umbrella concepts about the exchange of land rights that can be adapted according to context. Comprehensive, fit-for-purpose, participatory, and inclusive approaches in land consolidation and land readjustment are promoted and should be followed.

### **The participants declare:**

#### **The Voluntary Guidelines, the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda should guide the application of Land Consolidation and Land Readjustment**

The VGGTs reflect to a plurality of tenure types that are relevant in negotiations around and planning for land consolidation and land readjustment: ‘States should recognize and respect all legitimate tenure right holders and their rights. They should take reasonable measures to identify, record and respect legitimate tenure right holders and their rights, whether formally recorded or not; to refrain from infringement of tenure rights of others; and to meet the duties associated with tenure rights’. In this respect the participants also refer to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the ‘Sustainable Development Goals’ – SDGs) where it is stated that ‘Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure’. Also the New Urban Agenda refers to this: ‘We commit to promote, at the appropriate level of government, including sub-national and local government, increased security of tenure for all, recognizing the plurality of tenure types, and to

develop fit-for-purpose, and age-, gender-, and environment-responsive solutions within the continuum of land and property rights, with particular attention to security of land tenure for women as key to their empowerment, including through effective administrative systems.’ The participants make a further reference to the ‘Environmental and Social Performance Standards and Guidance Notes’ of the International Finance Cooperation from the World Bank Group.

### **Many practical experiences exist – they should be used**

Land consolidation and land readjustment have a long tradition in many countries. These practices showed that it can improve the livelihood and housing in rural and urban areas, improve infrastructure, increase food production, and improve the natural environment. It may facilitate land acquisition for public purposes based on local requirements. All this was well embedded in legal, institutional and technical frameworks as a foundation for the management of the interdependency between rural and urban areas and between the diverse developments. Also, lessons have been learnt, such as unintended and undesired social, economic and environmental impact of land consolidation and land readjustment.

### **No one-size-fits-all-solutions of land consolidation and land readjustment exist**

A comprehensive approach in land consolidation and land readjustment favours a sustainable development in the way that it benefits the people, planet and economic profit. The spatial component of these instruments is a very powerful asset of land consolidation and land readjustment to manage land use. The spatial rearrangement of land rights can help mitigate the negative effects of for example climate change, such as extreme rainfall or drought, rising sea levels, global warming, salination, and the decline of suitable habitat for species (biodiversity). However, it becomes even more powerful when it is combined with additional policies and measures to address the causes of unsustainable development.

Rearrangement of land rights and land use can take place from micro-level (local) till macro-level (national or cross-border) and it can address different spatial needs. Given the wide variety of applications, we acknowledge that no one-size-fits-all solution exists. There is a need to tailor the form and type of land consolidation and land readjustment to the specific context in which it takes place.

### **Land consolidation and land readjustment need land administration**

A solid land administration contributes to the development and implementation of land consolidation and land readjustment and vice versa. A strong integration between land consolidation and land administration can solve land registration problems as an integrated part of land consolidation practises. If tenure, in all its forms, is not clarified up front, it may block the consolidation process. A successful implementation of land consolidation and land readjustment contributes to good land administration and land governance.

### **Land acquisition for public purposes**

A full range of instruments is available for land acquisition for public purposes: voluntary and mandatory land purchase, pre-emption rights, and expropriation. Land consolidation and land readjustment are proven to be effective in relation to land acquisition for public purposes by their comprehensive and participatory approach, because they may use systematic reduction and land banking. Land acquisition for public purposes should be applied in line with the principles of good governance.



## **The participants call upon**

### ***Governments: to align land administration, consolidation and management***

Governments at all levels should further develop the approach in the context of the global agenda and to share knowledge and experience with other countries on strategic and operational level. Land consolidation is often needed to appropriately respond to contemporary challenges such as climate change, sustainable food production and a growing population while the classical objectives such as agricultural and rural development remain valid in many countries. Land consolidation needs a worldwide scope in order to answer the question on how to use our land in the most sustainable way, not only from a local or regional point of view, but also from a global one. Governments should adhere to the general “good governance” principles.

### ***Land owners and land users: to have a say in these processes***

Land owners and users should ask for and can initiate participatory forms of land consolidation and land readjustment. The people to whom it concerns, need the possibility to have a say in these processes to capture all viewpoints, expertise and needs regarding a sustainable development of the area.

### ***Academia: to develop your curricula including land consolidation***

Academia should support the inclusion of land consolidation and land readjustment approaches into their curricula for spatial planning, land management, land administration, agricultural and survey engineering programmes; to support research on the use of the approach to defend humanity to climate change and in provision of food security at local levels; to support research in land information management in support to land consolidation and land readjustment for sustainable development.

### ***Cadastres: to use the data and let your systems evolve***

Land Administration organisations – Land Registries and Cadastre agencies should develop interfaces between the available land data with land consolidation and land readjustment projects at all required levels. Today’s land administration systems are mainly used in ‘registration’ mode. With all the information available within these systems, and in related data sets within the spatial data infrastructure, it may be well situated to be used in ‘design’ mode.

### ***Spatial Planners: to use land consolidation and readjustment as implementation tool***

Spatial planners should recognise the benefits of and apply land consolidation and land readjustment for the implementation of spatial plans to optimise land use.

### ***Professionals: to develop and disseminate knowledge***

Professionals should further develop and promote a comprehensive approach in support to urban and rural development. They may establish a reliable and stable governance framework to allow that involved stakeholders can participate and can benefit from land consolidation and land readjustment.

### ***International development agencies and non-government organisation: to act as intermediary***

International development agencies and international or local non-government organisations could play the role of intermediary between the government and land owners and land user and facilitate cooperation among stakeholders. They could provide financial and technical support to the piloting

and scaling up of land consolidation and land readjustment projects, and use their convening power to organise knowledge exchange activities and disseminate lessons learned.