

Arab Land Initiative – Reference Group Meeting

Reviewing the progress made and paving the way forward

13 – 14 July 2022

Mezzanine Hall, in the UN-ESCWA premises in Beirut, Lebanon or virtual

Version 6.7.2022

The Arab Land Initiative

The [Arab Land Initiative](#) was established in 2016 to address key regional land governance challenges by empowering land governance champions from the region through increased coordination, collaboration, capacity, knowledge and information sharing.

Coordinated by UN-Habitat through the Global Land Tool Network’s Secretariat, since its establishment the Initiative recorded many noticeable achievements, made possible by the active participation and efforts by the many interested partners and experts. The financial support provided by BMZ in 2019 gave momentum to the work being done, the highlights of which are below.

Alignment, coordination and collaboration - A network of over two thousand land governance **champions** was established, over **fifty organisations** have been actively engaged, collaborations with other existing networks¹ took place, strong collaboration with the **fifteen UN-Habitat country offices** with active land portfolio was established, catalyzing the expansion of the land governance portfolio in the region. An active [website](#) is being maintained, along with social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Two major **conferences** were organized. The first Arab Land Conference was hosted by the Dubai Land Department in UAE in February 2018 and was attended by over 250 participants. The [second Arab Land Conference](#) was hosted by the Ministry of Housing in Egypt in February 2021 and was attended by over 870 participants.

Knowledge creation and management - A regional [campaign](#) on women and land was undertaken and it is now being taken to country level in Lebanon and Tunisia. **Four landmark research** projects were undertaken with partners (on land & conflict; land, environment and climate change; socio-economic impact of access to land, with focus on women; role of land professionals in the region). **Assessments** of the land sector in four countries were undertaken (Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, Lebanon), **17 research projects** were completed through a research innovation fund, and 37 additional papers prepared for the Second Arab Land Conference. [Ten² expert group meetings](#) and knowledge exchange events were carried out in collaboration with partners. **Five twinning arrangements** are being facilitated and supported.

Capacity development – Capacity development has been the highlight of the programme, carried out mostly through on the job training for partners, experts and practitioners. Seven training events were undertaken and visiting professors’ arrangements have been set up with few universities. A capacity assessment has been carried out in 11 countries in the Middle East, to assess gaps and opportunities and provide a basis for the enhancement of land curricula in the region. A mapping of the learning offer has also been undertaken.

¹ NELGA North Africa, Arab Group for the Protection of Nature, ILC EMENA platform, Regional Centre for Remote Sensing, Global Land Tool Network, GIZ’s legal experts, etc.

² (1) Land and conflict, with APN / Jordan; (2) Women and land, with NGO / Palestine; (3) Land & climate change, with LCPS / Lebanon; (4) Land degradation & rangelands, with LCPS / Lebanon; (5) Monitoring Land Governance, with Rashid TI / Jordan; (6) Fit for Purpose Land Administration, with CRTEAN / Tunisia; (7) The role of civil society in land governance, with IYCY / Yemen; (8 / 9) Two knowledge exchanges on Capacity Development, with UTI / Egypt; (10) The role of land professionals in land governance, with ISTIDAMA / Sudan.

Support to country-level land initiatives and programme has been provided to countries in the region, including Tunisia, Iraq, Libya, Palestine, Sudan and Lebanon.

The Initiative is delivering specific technical components of work and it is ensuring that the different pieces of land governance work done by partners, organisations and countries are linked, coordinated and shared, maximizing the investments made by donors and contributing to the overall development of knowledge and capacity in the region. The Arab Land Initiative is also availing expertise to other relevant ongoing initiatives including the NELGA North Africa initiative, the regional and national land interventions carried out by UN agencies, such as FAO, UN-Habitat, UNDP, UNHCR, OHCHR, etc., and other land governance networks and partners that are part of the Initiative, such as the International Land Coalition, the Land Portal, Land Matrix, Global Land Alliance, etc.

Maximum care is put in ensuring that every step of the activities' implementation is designed and carried out keeping in mind the needs and priorities of the end beneficiaries: women and men living in the Arab states, with particular focus to youth, women, vulnerable and marginalized groups. The daily work revolves around engaging and supporting the beneficiaries of the programme, including regional and national stakeholders that play the most important and direct role in land management and administration in Arab countries. These include relevant ministries and government departments, professionals and practitioners in land-related disciplines (such as surveyors, notaries, public servants, lawyers, etc.), national statistical offices, champions and opinion makers in academia and civil society organisations.

The key thematic areas of work

The Initiative focus on promoting good land governance and land management in the region. Specific thematic areas of work are:

- **Women's land rights** (for human rights, empowerment, economic growth, peace): advocacy, support to grassroots and women's groups, etc.
- **Land for climate resilience and food security** (land degradation neutrality, desertification, smallholder farmers' rights, regulate large scale land-based investments, food systems & agroecological transformation, support to UNCCD, FAO).
- **Fit-for-purpose land administration** (including recordation, reform and digitalization of the land registration systems to foster transparency, inclusion, efficiency, unlocking investments and infrastructure, evidence-based decision making);
- **Land & conflict, HLP rights** of displaced people for stabilization, prevention of further conflict and migration (Syria, Libya, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan)
- **Monitoring land governance** (with UN-Habitat, FAO, WB, ILC, etc.)

The Arab Land Initiative's Reference Group

The Arab Land Initiative's Reference Group was established in 2016 and its membership has been expanding over time. A planning meeting was held in Beirut in **February 2019**, hosted by UN-ESCWA. The approaches and work of participating organisations were discussed and the progress made by the Initiative in the previous two years was reviewed. Strategic opportunities for further collaboration were identified. A third meeting of the Reference Group was held in Cairo in **February 2020**, in the premises of the Urban Training and Studies Institute. The event was attended by some partners in person and by others remotely. The meeting focused on providing inputs, guidance and feed-back to the partners that were just selected to implement the various streams of work of the Arab Land Initiative. Reference Group's partners also met in **February 2021**, at the Second Arab Land Conference, where a summary of the progress made and the milestones for the way forward were presented. This concept notes prepares the ground for the meeting of the Group for **2022**.

The Group is composed by representatives of UN-Habitat, the World Bank, the Arab Union of Surveyors, the Dubai Land Department, the Urban Training and Studies Institute, UN-ESCWA, BMZ, GIZ, FAO, the Dutch Kadaster, NELGA/IAV Hassan II, the International Land Coalition, the University of East London, the Jordan Department of Land and Survey, the Lebanon Real Estate Directorate, and many other national, regional and international partners.

Objectives of the 2022 Reference Group's meeting

The objectives of the meeting are:

- Present an analysis of the state of land governance in the region;
- Share an overview of the work done and the key highlights of the new content developed;
- Present, discuss and consolidate a vision for the way forward for the Arab Land Initiative and its partners;
- Strengthen the network of the Initiative and mobilize support for the way forward.

Participants

The meeting will be attended by approximately 30 experts from GLTN, UN-Habitat, Arab Land Initiative Partners, Reference Group members and Implementing Partners. A full list of participants and contacts will be provided at the event.

Logistical arrangements for in person attendance

The meeting will take place from the 13th and 14th July in the Mezzanine Hall, in the UN-ESCWA premises in Beirut, Lebanon. Participants are encouraged to attend in person, if possible. Participants attending in person are expected to make arrangements for their visa, accommodation and travel as needed. Participants sponsored by UN-Habitat will be contacted separately. Getting access to the UN-ESCWA building will take time, due to the security protocol. Please ensure you have your passport or ID documents with you and you arrive at least 30 minutes before the start of the meeting.

Contacts

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Agenda outline (Draft 5.7.2022)

Day 1 – 13 July 2022		
Time <i>Beirut time</i>	Agenda item	Notes
9:00	<p>Session 1 - Welcome of participants & Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UN-ESCWA ▪ UN-Habitat ▪ Global Land Tool Network ▪ BMZ ▪ World Bank <p>Objectives of the meeting and agenda</p> <p>Participants' introduction, expectations for the meeting and the work of the Arab Land Initiative</p>	<p>Session's chair: UN-ESCWA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mounir Tabet, 7 min ▪ Erfan Ali, 7 min ▪ Robert Lewis Lettington, 7 min ▪ Maria Wichmann, 7 min ▪ Wael Zakout, 7 min <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ombretta Tempra, 5 min <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All – 3 minutes max for those only attending Session 1. 1 minute max for in person participants attending the whole meeting and those who have other speaking slots.
10:00	<p>Session 2 - The status of land governance in the Arab region</p> <p>Facts and trends, key contributions of the Arab Land Initiative, and paving the way forward – <i>presentation and discussion</i></p>	<p>Session's chair: UN-ESCWA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ombretta Tempra, 20 min ▪ Facilitated discussion, 40 min: all
11:00	<i>Picture & Tea / coffee break</i>	
11:30	<p>Session 3 - Knowledge development</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summary of key areas of work, UN-Habitat / GLTN ▪ Land and Conflict, APN ▪ Land and Climate, LCPS ▪ Twinning arrangements, AUB ▪ Other partners' contributions: DLD, NELGA, AUS <p>Facilitated discussion</p> <p>What does this mean for the way forward?</p>	<p>Session's chair: Erfan Ali, UN-Habitat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ombretta Tempra, 3 min ▪ Mariam Jaja, Arab Group for the Protection of Nature, 10 min ▪ Lebanese Centre for Policy Studies, 10 min ▪ American University of Beirut, 8 min ▪ Dubai Land Department, NELGA, AUS, 3 min each ▪ A facilitated discussion follows the row of of contributions ▪ What does this mean for the way forward? discussant Rafic Khouri Senior Advisor to the Arab Land Initiative
13:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:00	<p>Session 4 - Capacity development</p> <p>Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The land sector assessment in 11 Middle East Countries, presentation by UN-Habitat / GLTN ▪ The mapping of the learning offer on land governance in the Arab States, presentation by UTI ▪ Technical trainings: fit-for-purpose land administration, presentation by CRTEAN ▪ Capacity development for land professionals, presentation by Istadama <p>Facilitated discussion</p> <p>What does this mean for the way forward?</p>	<p>Session's chair: Doaa El Sherif, UTI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ombretta Tempra, 10 min ▪ Doaa El Sherif, 10 min ▪ Hadi Gashut, Regional Centre for Remote Sensing, 10 min ▪ Salah Abukashawa, Istadama, 10 min <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A facilitated discussion follows the row of of contributions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What does this mean for the way forward? discussant Willi Zimmermann, Senior Advisor to the Arab Land Initiative
15:30	<i>Tea / coffee break</i>	

16:00	Session 5 - New flagship reports on land in the Arab region Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land Matters, by World Bank ▪ Land Tenure Systems in North Africa: a Scoping Study, by NELGA Facilitated discussion What does this mean for the way forward?	Session's chair: Robert Lewis Lettington, GLTN / UN-Habitat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anna Corsi and Haris Selod, World Bank, 20 min ▪ Moha ElAyachi, Hassan II / NELGA North Africa, 20 min ▪ A facilitated discussion follows the presentations ▪ What does this mean for the way forward? discussant Wael Zakout, Global Lead on Land, World Bank
17:15	Closing	
19:00	<i>Dinner in town (location TBC)</i>	

Day 2 – 14 July 2022		
Time <i>Beirut time</i>	Agenda item	Notes
9:00	Recap of day 1 and programme for day 2	
9:15	Session 6 – Empowerment, coordination & collaboration: improve in the land sector to achieve sustainable development and peace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Arab Land Initiative's change model ▪ Expanding the space for civil society engagement: the way forward from the Global Land Forum, by ILC ▪ The national land registration actors ▪ The land professionals ▪ Private sector Facilitated discussion What does this mean for the way forward?	Session's chair: Ombretta Temptra, UN-Habitat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ombretta Temptra, 8 min ▪ Rabie Morsy, International Land Coalition, 15 min ▪ Dubai Land Department, Department of Land Survey Jordan, etc. ▪ Istadama, Arab Union of Surveyors, etc. ▪ ESRI, FIABCI
10:15	Session 7 – Achieving change at country level: catalyzing and increasing momentum of national land programmes and reforms Facilitated discussion	Session's chair: UN-ESCWA
10:45	<i>Tea / coffee break</i>	
11:15	Session 8 – Group discussions on priority themes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land and conflict ▪ Women and land ▪ Land and climate change ▪ Fit for purpose land administration ▪ Monitoring land governance Report back and facilitated discussion	Session's chair: Doaa El Sherif, UTI Divided into groups, participants will reflect and discuss on the way forward on the themes proposed. A short report-back to plenary will follow. Supporting materials will be made available.
13:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:00	Session 9 – Panel discussion Draft questions (to be refined in the course of Day 1) From your experience from the region / outside the region and in light of what was discussed in the past two days, please provide your perspective on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the land governance priorities in the Arab region? 2. What has proven most effective to introduce positive reforms in the land sector? 3. Improving land recordation emerged as an important focus area; how can national land recordation efforts be supported by the Arab Land Initiative and by the international community? 4. What countries should be prioritized for national engagement? 	Session's chair: UN-Habitat or UN-ESCWA Six panelists among the in person participants will constitute a panel and will provide, through a facilitated discussion, their perspective on the way forward on land governance in the Arab region. Questions and inputs from other participants will also be allowed.

	<p>5. Give one advice to the secretariat of the Arab Land Initiative for the way forward?</p> <p>6. Any last remarks and recommendations?</p>	
15:30	<p>Session 10 – Recap, Next steps and Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UN-ESCWA ▪ BMZ and GIZ ▪ GLTN and Arab Land Initiative ▪ UN-Habitat 	
16:30	<i>Tea / coffee break</i>	