

Facing the Post-2015 Global Agenda



The global agenda as set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expired at the end of last year. Designed to reduce poverty and improve the lives of poor people, that agenda has served the world well as a focal point for governments. The progress in meeting the goals has been monitored and published yearly as a global incentive. For example, the 2014 progress report shows that the extreme poverty rate has been halved. Hence, Goal 1 has been met at a global scale, albeit with huge regional deviations. For example, the Sub-Saharan Africa region is lagging far behind. The MDGs have now been replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a new, universal set of 17 goals and 169 targets that UN member states are committed to use to frame their agenda and policies over the next 15 years.

The SDGs are action-oriented, global in nature and universally applicable. Targets are defined as aspirational global targets, with each government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. The goals and targets integrate economic, social and environmental aspects and recognise their interlinkages in achieving sustainable development in all its dimensions.

While the MDGs did not mention land directly, the new SDGs include six goals with a significant land component. In Goal 1, For example, which calls for ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, Target 4 states that by 2030 all men and women will have equal rights to ownership and control over land and other forms of property. Similarly the land component is clearly referred to in Goal 2 on ending hunger, Goal 5 on gender equity, Goal 11 on sustainable cities, Goal 15 on life on land, and Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

These goals and targets will never be achieved without good land governance and well-functioning, countrywide land administration systems. Land governance and administration is basically about people – it is about the relationship between people and land and about the policies, institutions and regulations that govern this relationship.

Against this backdrop there is a strong requirement for basic and fit-for-purpose land administration systems in developing countries, where often less than 10 percent of the land is included in the formal systems. There is a need for reliable and robust data for devising appropriate policies and interventions for the achievement of the SDGs and for holding governments and the international community accountable through monitoring and assessment. This calls for a 'data revolution' for sustainable development to empower people with information on the progress towards meeting the targets.

The continuing challenge will be innovation in the mindset of land professionals to cope with new, integrated approaches and a demand for interaction across generations of land professionals to ensure implementation of a holistic approach to sustainable development over time.

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