

Contents

Development, Human Rights, Security and Democracy

– Four Pillars that Support Access to Land 1

Policy and Advocacy

Land and Conflict 2-6

Communications and Information 7-9

News from Coalition Partners

Español – Bolivia, Nicaragua, Perú, Ecuador, Guatemala 9-13

Français – Madagascar 13

India 14

Land Coalition News, Announcements and Publications 14-16

Expert Workshop on Land Tenure for Drylands Development 16

Development, Human Rights Security and Democracy:

Four Pillars that Support Access to Land

Earlier this year, the UN Secretary-General released the report *In Larger Freedom — Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*, emphasizing that sustainable development, human rights, security and democracy are firmly interdependent. As part of the five-year review of progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the report reminds us that it is necessary not only to focus on the goals and indicators offered by the MDGs, but also on the importance of building consensus around key priorities and translating this into action.

Land is linked to many complex social, economic, cultural and political issues, which is why land policy is so often a priority concern of citizens and their governments. Access to land and secure rights over natural resources is fundamentally linked to the central pillars set out in the Secretary-General's report:

- **Development.** Seventy-five percent of the world's poor live

and work in rural areas where their current and future needs depend on agriculture. With few, if any, assets they have little command over their livelihoods and are among the first to suffer the environmental shocks of drought and land degradation or the economic shocks caused by global price fluctuations. The search for solutions has raised agrarian issues and has positioned secure access to land higher on the poverty eradication agenda.

- **Human Rights.** Poverty is also linked closely to exclusion from political processes and the lack of recognition of basic human rights. Secure access to land and respect for the land rights of the poor is central to the internationally agreed right to development. Land rights, in which the equal rights of women and the rights of indigenous peoples are embedded, need to be protected within the various internationally agreed rights that are today shaping a global vision for sustainable human development.
- **Security.** Conflicts around the world are increasingly linked to the control of surface and sub-

surface use of land and other natural resources. Resource-based conflicts reduce economic opportunities, generate environmental damage and, at their most extreme, lead to loss of human life. Poor households and communities often bear the heaviest burdens of land-related conflicts.

- **Democracy.** More equitable resource distribution generally leads to more inclusive social processes and improved governance, characterized by public policies responsive to the wider needs of all sectors of society; public consultation; and, reduced abuse of public power and funding. These societies enjoy improved levels of peace and security and attract more direct foreign investment.

These four pillars, being generic, will have very different meanings to different people and groups who occupy the same territorial space. Indeed, the theme of the Land Coalition's recent global assembly – *La Tierra Es Vida* (Land is Life) – reflects the idea that land is more than a productive asset or locus for investment, just as there is more to life than economic production.

For these reasons, access to land by poor men and women should be seen as one – though by no means the only – measurement of progress toward the MDGs. The Land Coalition encourages its civil-society, government and intergovernmental partners engaged in this year's MDG review process and the Millennium +5 Summit in September, to bring attention to examples where progress on land access has been made, and to continue to advocate for change where it has not.