

Measuring the Land Tenure Security of Sub Saharan Africa's Rural Poor

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SUMMARY

The search for more comprehensive land tenure security in developing countries has opened a new land administration paradigm based on pro-poor approaches. However, little is being done to provide governments with proper pro-poor tools and indicators for measuring land tenure security. Land administration agencies lack a comprehensive set of indicators to measure tenure security in a comprehensive and inclusive fashion. More precisely, pro-poor indicators of tenure security are still under-developed. We argue that this helps to explain why many Sub-Saharan African countries lack baseline data or information on the state of tenure security. The overall challenge has been the absence of a theoretical understanding of tenure security: one that captures its complexity and contextual aspects in an inclusive fashion. Recently, a contribution was made that delivers a more holistic conceptualisation of land tenure security of the rural poor in Sub-Saharan African context. However, this new concept still needs to be operationalized. To do so, this paper uses a systems-based approach to derive a comprehensive set of indicators that represents the total land tenure security enjoyed by the rural poor in Sub-Saharan African context. The proposed multi-aspects framework contains baskets of indicators reflecting six key interactions that, within land tenure systems as a whole, emerge into tenure security. The value added by the multi-aspects framework is discussed by comparing proposed indicators to those used for the evaluation of land related interventions in Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Ghana. It was found that the proposed framework provides indicators on institution harmony, legitimacy and trustworthiness, balance of land restrictions and land rights, update and maintenance of land registry and associated spatial information, which are practically missing for the three case studies. Three main applications of the proposed multi-aspects framework are anticipated: (1) evaluating the state of tenure security (baseline data), (2) evaluation of the progress towards national land policy objective achievement, (3) assessment of the contribution of land tenure reform intervention vis a vis national land policy objective.