

# Transforming Land Rights and Climate Justice through a Women-led Renegotiated New Social Contract

An Expert Group Meeting Summary Report





Founded in 1979, the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) is a regional association of national and regional networks of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Asia actively engaged in promoting food sovereignty, land rights and agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture, participatory governance, and rural development. ANGOC member networks and partners work in 10 Asian countries together with some 3,000 CSOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). ANGOC actively engages in joint field programs and policy discussions with national governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and international financial institutions (IFIs).

The complexity of Asian realities and diversity of CSOs highlight the need for a development leadership to service the poor of Asia – providing a forum for articulation of their needs and aspirations as well as expression of Asian values and perspectives. Thus, the ANGOC network promotes land and resource rights, smallholder agriculture, and human rights and civic participation, by serving as a platform for Asian CSOs to generate knowledge, share tools, and conduct constructive policy dialogues.

ANGOC is a member of the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR/GFAiR), Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCA) Consortium, the International Land Coalition (ILC), and Fair Finance Asia (FFA).

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The Huairou Commission (HC) is a women-led social movement of grassroots women's groups from poor urban, rural, and indigenous communities, working in over 45 countries. HC members work with technical allies towards transformative change that improves the living conditions, status, and quality of the life of women, their families, communities, and municipalities.

HC envisions a world with balanced power relations and sustainable resilient communities with grassroots women leaders and their groups at the center of decision-making in which people lead lives free from poverty, inequality, violence, insecurity, and all forms of injustice.

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*This summary report was prepared by Adil Sait and Nathaniel Don Marquez, with notes from the organizers, session moderators and panelists.*

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# Acknowledgement

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# Introduction

Climate change-related threats and land insecurities are increasingly impacting upon disadvantaged communities, especially women and girls. In the context of evolving land policy discourse, intertwined priorities of land tenure security, climate justice, and gender equality require reference to global normative human rights and development frameworks as well as localized grassroots actions and approaches.<sup>1</sup> Land tenure security and right to adequate housing remain fundamental to a fair, just, equitable, and sustainable climate action. Initiatives by the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) Partners including on land tenure and climate vulnerability,<sup>2</sup> land rights and climate change,<sup>3</sup> and the process of developing a “climate-resilient land administration tool”<sup>4</sup> have highlighted interconnections between land issues and climate action as well as existing gaps. Gender inequality in ownership and control over land and natural resources makes women and girls move vulnerable to climate impacts, yet less likely to build resilience due to discriminatory social institutions<sup>5</sup> that exist in many parts of the world. As noted by the OXFAM, “Since women are more likely to live below the poverty line, they are also more likely to bear the heaviest impacts of climate change [...] 80 percent of people displaced by climate change are women and girls.”<sup>6</sup>

Currently, global climate responses tend to be State-driven and favoring certain technical, research, and professional stakeholders without adequate listening to women and girls – especially at grassroots level. The concept of a new social contract has gathered momentum as a promising framework for rebalancing stakeholder relationships and redirecting players, principles, priorities, and processes towards monitoring and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), international environmental standards, gender equality, and human rights. Hence, there is a need for transforming land rights and climate justice through a women-led renegotiated new social contract.

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<sup>1</sup> Sait, S., (2021). The Land Rights, Climate Justice and Gender Equality Conundrum: Human Rights Strategies and Practice. *African Journal of Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences*, 4(2), 267-291.

<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, D., and McEvoy, D., (2019). *Land Tenure and Climate Vulnerability*, Global Land Tool Network, [Available at: <https://glt.n.net/2019/05/24/land-tenure-and-climate-vulnerability/>].

<sup>3</sup> Sait, M.A., Siukuta, M., Alexander, L., and Simataa, V., (2021) Land, *Land Rights and Climate Change: A Scoping Study*, Namibia University of Science and Technology & University of East London, Global Land Tool Network: Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell, D., (2021). *Addressing land rights in the context of climate change: A GLTN Climate-resilient land administration tool*, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Global Land Tool Network: Nairobi, Kenya.

<sup>5</sup> OECD (2019), “Restricted access to productive and financial resources”, in SIGI 2019 Global Report: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/6498ea10-en>.

<sup>6</sup> Oxfam. (2023). Demand Climate Justice for Women and Girls: We need care of our communities over carbon consumption, [Available at: <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/take-action/demand-climate-justice-for-women-and-girls/> - :~:text=The UN indicates that 80,to violence and food insecurity].

It is in this context that the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on *“Transforming Land Rights and Climate Justice through a Women-Led Renegotiated New Social Contract”* was jointly co-organized by the GLTN Rural Civil Society Organizations Cluster (through Huairou Commission [HC] and the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development [ANGOC]), in partnership with the GLTN Research and Training Cluster (through the University of East London [UEL] and the Namibia University of Science and Technology [NUST]), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and GLTN. The EGM was attended by 19 representatives from across the GLTN Rural, Urban, Professional, and Research and Training clusters, including partners, and secretariat, with the following objectives:

- developing a common understanding on emerging challenges in relation to land rights, climate justice and gender equality, and how to respond to them effectively;
- contributing to the formulation of a new social contract to facilitate women’s climate justice using the experience of women-led land rights initiatives for inclusive and embedded multi-stakeholder partnerships;
- recalibrating existing GLTN land tools to deal with the multi-faceted aspects of climate justice, gender equality, and human rights; and,
- determining how to adopt an affordable, effective, and inclusive climate monitoring system in the context of land insecurities and effectively land administration and other responses.

The main outcome from the EGM is *“The Quezon City Framework for Developing a Women-Led New Social Contract to Enhance Land Rights and Climate Justice.”*



## Opening Session

Following introductions from participants, the session was opened by **Nathaniel Don Marquez** (ANGOC) and **Mino Ramaroson** (HC) on the context of recent meetings in London, United Kingdom<sup>7</sup> (June 2023) and Dhaka, Bangladesh<sup>8</sup> (October 2023) related to the EGM in the Philippines, and the need to create an effective dialogue on women's leadership in addressing climate change and how grassroots women and community perspectives on land rights could inform new perspectives framed through the idea of the new social contract (NSC). The agenda for the EGM was noted as being action- and solution-oriented to address the role of grassroots women in climate action.

Opening remarks by **Violet Shivutse** (HC) centred on the relationship between women's situations, land rights, and climate change, with the example of women farmers' livelihoods and the daily struggle to "put food on the table." It highlighted the interconnections between land and climate issues, and how the challenge of climate change undermines women's role and also affects women through experiences such as drought, flooding, and disease which produce loss and damage and require solutions. In the context of women's coping, collective and peer learning, and the need to see women as partners rather than simply beneficiaries were highlighted, as was creating knowledge sharing across communities. It also tied together questions of the role of women's leadership, partners, and climate justice.

Opening comments by **Siraj Sait** (UEL) focused on the EGM's agenda and the objective of developing a renegotiated NSC. It discussed the background to the discussions being the UN-Habitat Assembly event on "Developing a New Social Contract" (2023), the East London "Consensus on Gender and Youth Land Rights" (2023), and the Dhaka Declaration on "Mainstreaming land rights in the narrative of climate change" (2023), which highlighted a gap in how to apply prior knowledge and tools for strengthening land rights in the context of climate change. Sait's comments recognized the need for women's leadership, climate justice, and human rights as the three main pillars, with need for tangible actions. The EGM was highlighted as a platform for peer learning, and bringing together new thinking based on experiences, case studies, and evidence from participants and their networks.

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<sup>7</sup> EGM on "Gender Strategy and Youth Participation on land rights", London, UK [Available at: <https://gltn.net/2023/07/25/expert-group-meeting-gender-strategy-and-youth-participation-on-land-rights-15-17-june-2023-london-uk/>]

<sup>8</sup> Regional conference on "Mainstreaming land rights in the narrative of climate change", Dhaka, Bangladesh, [Available at: <https://gltn.net/2023/10/26/mainstreaming-land-rights-in-the-narrative-of-climate-change-views-from-the-ground/>]

The **plenary discussion** focused on UN-Habitat's role in shaping global land rights and climate change debate, the need to recognize different frameworks, strengthen local initiatives, address capacity needs, and actions, including local government as well as need for funding and support to grassroots women.

## Updates on the global development agenda on land rights, climate justice, and gender equality from the perspective of women and girls

This session focused on discussing the trends and challenges in the global land, climate, and development agenda and its significance for grassroots women and girls.

**Clarissa Augustinus'** presentation centered on the background and context of global climate action. It discussed both the relationship between land tenure security and dimensions of the planetary boundaries framework, as well as the role and mandate of different UN



agencies in climate action. Particular attention was paid to developments since the Rio Earth Summit 1992 and the work of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in governing climate action through the Conference of the Parties (COP) process. It discussed the various relevant targets, objectives, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 22 and 23, UNCBD COP15 Decisions 8 and 11, UNCCD Decisions 3 and 27, UNCCD Gender Action Plan, and UNFCCC Decisions 1, 20 and 24, and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGTs). It also addressed the entry points for organizations such as UN-Habitat, GLTN, and CSO partners in engaging with climate action through engagement with governments in national monitoring, reporting, and agenda-setting in these areas.



The **plenary discussion** centered on the post-pandemic recovery, the role of government policies in addressing climate change, and the need for grassroots’ women’s leadership, and local communities’ involvement in addressing climate action. Of particular importance is to build awareness on climate change

needs and responses. The climate change discourse needs to be humanized. It also recognized that discussions on climate action need to address the role of “elites” in decision-making and their relationship with local actors and stakeholders. Another aspect of the discussion was on the role of UN-Habitat in shaping and addressing climate change-related issues and the question of learnings from the discussion and experiences surrounding SDG indicator 1.4.2. and gender-disaggregated data on land tenure security. Data and monitoring were noted as a key challenge as were population pressures. Additionally, human rights, stakeholder engagement and organization, and women’s leadership were discussed, as was the need to think about reporting mechanisms and the involvement of women’s groups in National Action Plans. UN-Habitat and GLTN climate change agenda and projects were also highlighted as were learnings from the Arab Land Initiative. The need to increase awareness, learning of scientific language on climate change among stakeholders, as well as increased coordination with governments to support local climate action was reiterated. At the same time, participants acknowledged the need for the continued adaption of existing land tools (e.g., Social Tenure Domain Model, Gender Evaluation Criteria, Tenure-Responsive Land Use Planning, etc.) to address land and climate issues and the need to develop new tools to strengthen women’s land rights.

**Grace Ananda** (Habitat for Humanity International/HfHI) summarized the session reflecting on six main elements. First, the intersectionality between land, climate, and gender. Second, evidence-based studies are needed to understand the challenges and progress on climate action. Third, partnerships and collaboration are essential to optimize opportunities to engage with high-level discussion on climate change. Fourth, understanding the policy implications of various frameworks involved in global climate action. Fifth, the need for greater empowerment of grassroots women in leadership. Sixth, a focus on enhancing monitoring and evaluation to support local, national, and global climate action.

# Learning from women-led initiatives and reconfiguring climate action strategies

The session was opened by moderator **Naomi Shadrack** introducing the focus on women-led initiatives. Each of the presenters were then invited to present their case study.

**Shanjida Khan Ripa** (Association for Land Reform and Development/ALRD) presented on the experience of the ALRD in Bangladesh and addressing climate action through the lens of women, peace, and security (WPS). The presentation highlighted the need for climate action to build local capacity, knowledge, and advocacy, and build local climate resilience. Strategic areas including climate change, support for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), improving access to climate funds, climate finance, and Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) reporting were highlighted. ALRD's experience of working with communities in the Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Uses (AFOLU) sectors on mitigation and adaption, and local livelihoods, was discussed in the context of sustainability, livelihoods and advocacy, and partnerships with NGOs and government.

**Ruby Haddad** (Homeless Peoples Federation Philippines Inc./HPFPI) presented the experience of the HPFPI in using spatial tools and community mapping to engage with local communities and build awareness and partnerships on climate action. Involving communities in decision-making and building community saving to address land tenure security and housing were identified as key initiatives. A city planning and mapping approach to developing community plans for women-led participation in urban development was identified as integral to the process. An example of developing urban gardening and food security to address healthy food needs and create awareness was given. The need for collecting sex-disaggregated data and raising awareness of gender equality as a priority for climate action was noted.

**Rohini Reddy** (South Asia Rural Reconstruction Association/SARRA) presented the experience of SARRA, working with tribal communities in Andra Pradesh, India in the face of climate and population pressures. It highlighted the need to make understanding and addressing climate change accessible moving from policies to practices. For example, the technical discussions on climate change can be understood by creating memorable jingles and translating into local languages. In the context of issues such as seasonal migration/rainfall, tools such as "do's/don'ts" and "seasonal calendars" were highlighted as usual ways to engage local

communities in protecting forests. Building awareness depends also on partnerships and engaging local government officials from the forestry department and academia to help create climate responsive agriculture.

**Jennifer Duncan** (GLTN/UN-Habitat) presented the GLTN Phase III Gender Stocktaking report covering recent developments. This highlighted the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII), the GLTN Gender Strategy, the significance of GLTN land tools, normative approach, country work including in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Uganda, Zambia, and the Philippines, as well as the scaling-up of pilots. The presentation discussed GLTN programs including the Arab Land initiative, and involvement in advocacy for gender equality through the Stand For Her Land Campaign and Generation Equality Forum, as well as engagements in areas such as Women Peace Security (WPS), and in addressing land tenure insecurity.

The **plenary discussion** reflected on the presentations as well as raised issues such as learning from country level experiences and best practices, the role of regional bodies, the significance of SDG indicators 1.4.2. and 5a, participatory budgeting, access to land, GLTN land tools, the needs of different groups of women i.e., in rural area, or as refugees, and the need for civil society and partners to work with others to build political will and support land/climate action. Likewise, greater efforts to gather gender-disaggregated data on the nexus of land and climate change should be pursued.

## Enhancing Land Rights and Women's Climate Action Through a New Social Contract

Moderator **Siraj Sait** opened the session with a background presentation on the context behind the NSC including the origins of the concept of the social contract, its evolution, and reframing in the UN Secretary General's Our Common Agenda report. It also commented on the widening discourse surrounding the creation and implementation of NSCs. The NSC as a potential framework was seen as innovative in both its methods and in helping to recognize the diverse relationships between different stakeholders and partners. It was also acknowledged how social contracts can be developed and implemented at different levels and contexts, with different thematic focus, nature, and scope. This was seen as significant in the context of learnings from UN agencies and programs including the work of UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), the UN75 Social Contract 2020, UN

Commission for Social Development, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN-Habitat and others. The presentation also outlined six main questions for the subsequent discussion.

**Shampa Roy-Mukherjee** (UEL) presented a case study on developing a NSC working with local communities and young people in the London Borough of Newham as part of a project funded by the UK National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The study discussed the overall aim of improving young people's engagement and leadership in health decision-making and the processes involved. It particularly touched on creating an evidence-based and inclusive approach informed by strong partnerships with civil society, community, academia, local government, local business, professionals, and others, including young people as partners through a "youth champion" program. It also discussed the need for a fit-for-purpose approach that engaged with local priorities, aspirations, challenges, and opportunities with the concept of the NSC applicable to a number of different thematic areas, including in addressing issues related to land rights and climate change.

The **plenary discussion** answered the different questions on the NSC, housing, land, and property (HLP) rights, its relevance to women and climate change, priorities, principles and processes, different partners and roles, mutual rights and responsibilities, and monitoring and implementation. Participants expressed diverse views on the different thematic issues and ideas about women's empowerment and leadership, the need to create awareness and consider contexts and languages in the formulation of the NSC. It was stressed that human rights principles and processes should be promoted, seeing women as key contributors to land and climate action. The discussion also focused on elements such as resource allocation, tools for monitoring and evaluation, utilizing indigenous knowledge, creating an enabling environment, and involving different actors in areas such as capacity building for rapid climate action. It was recognized that the NSC does not replace other initiatives but builds upon existing efforts and helps to structure the co-creation of new strategies for engaging in voluntary partnerships allowing for a clear two-way dialogue in which key issues could be addressed.

The outcome of the session was an agreed discussion document that was used to draft the "*The Quezon City Framework for Developing a Women-Led New Social Contract to Enhance Land Rights and Climate Justice.*" This included the main elements discussed during the plenary as well as comments from participants. **Hellen Nyamweru Ndungu** (GLTN/UN-Habitat) summarized the open-ended

discussion commenting on the rich inputs from participants and reflected on the significance of developing a NSC framework for engaging with land rights and climate change issues, with a particular focus on empowering grassroots' women's leadership.

## Assessing preparedness and coping with the socio-economic impacts of climate change

**Roshni Sharma** (International Federation of Surveyors/FIG) opened the session as moderator with a short introduction on the significance of preparedness and coping with the socio-economic impacts of climate change and the work of the FIG related to climate change. This also introduced the main prompt questions on the meaning of preparedness and coping, socio-economic empowerment for women and girls in the context of land and climate, land use and climate change, land tenure status, land governance and climate policy, knowledge and understanding of climate issues, assessing preparedness and coping, enhancing representation of women and girls in land governance structures and climate change policymaking processes, and retrofitting of land tools.

**Adil Sait** (London School of Economics/LSE) presented key issues emerging from the GLTN Scoping Study on Land Rights and Climate Change completed by NUST and UEL in 2021. This study provided a rapid evidence review of more than 120 academic and policy documents, yielding eight case studies and four main thematic findings. This set the scene for discussion: land use changes significantly impact climate change and women's land rights, while land tenure insecurity is both a cause and consequence of climate change, affecting women's abilities to mitigate climate risks. Effective program interventions should begin with assessing women's specific climate vulnerabilities and stressors, ensuring gender-responsive, evidence-based objectives aligned with global frameworks. Utilizing land tools can enhance sustainable development and women's management of climate risks, particularly when targeting development needs to reinforce women-led climate initiatives. Strengthening women's climate resilience and land tenure security necessitates localized capacity development, recognizing the direct influence of local context on women's land tenure status and governance alongside climate policy. Land tools must assess climate hazards, women's vulnerability, and adaptive capacity, emphasizing effective communication to enable the success of women-led climate initiatives, while prioritizing local women's knowledge, priorities, and resources.

The **plenary discussion** revolved around preparedness and coping strategies in the face of climate change-induced migrations, both voluntary and involuntary, with potential conflict ramifications. It was emphasized that preserving and restoring natural resources can alleviate pressure caused by population displacement. Resilience in food, health, and water access is crucial for rural communities, necessitating investments in land tenure security and housing for disaster response capabilities. It is important for rural communities, geared on smallholder production towards food security, to have secure land tenure. Actions to be pursued include: (1) protecting and conserving agricultural lands to ensure food supply and security, (2) lobbying governments to institute responsible land use planning and management, (3) integrating land rights in national action plans on food security and climate change, and (4) reviewing and strengthening land tools to address food security and climate change.

On the other hand, socio-economic empowerment for women and girls, particularly regarding land rights, requires addressing social norms and bureaucratic barriers, along with promoting joint land ownership. To provide the help that will be useful for communities on-the-ground, it is important to understand national budget allocations for disaster response and how these will be implemented at various community levels; otherwise, empowerment and preparedness for women and girls cannot be meaningfully achieved.



Communities also face many uncertainties surrounding future climate impacts and the need to make decisions amidst limited information, meaning that there is a strong need for better awareness-building and knowledge dissemination that is graphical and in local languages. A barrier that was discussed to economic empowerment of girls and women in many rural areas is the growing trends of commercialized agriculture and emergence of costly technologies, which makes it hard for many grassroots women to continue farming. Enhancing representation of women and girls in land governance and climate policy processes requires navigating existing social norms and incorporating women into land valuation discussions through relevant tools, such as STDM, which can be updated to include climate variables.



# Responding to climate change and its impact: community-informed approaches to loss and damage, protection, and compensation

Moderated by **Rafic Khouri** (Co-Lead of the International Professional Cluster), the session tackled the key issues that communities faced on climate change, and the challenges and capacities needed by women to access compensation to loss and damage and other climate change funds.

**Mino Ramaroson** (HC) shared the exercise undertaken by HC members on getting a common position on the ongoing discussions and global policy debates on loss and damage, which was alluded in the Paris Agreement on climate change, with the recognition by countries the importance of “averting, minimizing and addressing” loss and damage. The study, in partnership with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), was done to support grassroots organizations to convene local discussions to understand the long-term impacts of climate change. In particular, the study reflected on how communities experience losses and damages in the face of prolonged and multiple climate and disaster crises which will help in gaining a sharper analysis of risks for enhanced community preparedness, planning, resilient recovery and building back better. The top five hazards identified were: (1) unpredictable weather, (2) unseasonal rain and frequent flooding/flash floods, (3) longer dry seasons/droughts, (4) heatwaves, and (5) forest/pasture fires. Their adverse impact concerned health, injuries, and damage to livelihoods and assets.

Among the key findings indicate that grassroots women’s experience of climate impacts or the need to compensate them is not adequately reflected in global policy debates. There is no framework or accurate estimates that assess or quantify the amount of losses borne by local communities, who are least responsible for contributing to loss and damage caused by global warming. It is also unclear at present how the Loss and Damage funds will be designed and delivered to affected countries and local communities.

**Clarissa Augustinus** reminded the EGM of the international conferences which meet to discuss different aspects of climate change, namely UNCBD (about biodiversity), UNFCCC (about carbon released in the atmosphere), and UNCCD (about land degradation). Although these items have a strong land dimension, these are seldom recognized, while global policies are thoroughly discussed. GLTN members should

lobby their governments to reflect on members' priorities linked to challenges under consideration in these international conferences. As such, capacities that women grassroots leaders need to develop to claim from the loss and damage fund include: (1) finding out if their country is eligible for funding; (2) working with governments; (3) learning the new climate language; (4) reaching out to new partners; and, (5) working with global-local power imbalances.

**Hellen Nyamweru Ndungu** (GLTN/UN-Habitat) provided the participants an overview of the variety of tools developed and promoted by GLTN with specific focus on how these innovative land tools and approaches can be applied in the context of loss, damage, and climate reparations. These tools cover the following themes: (1) access to land and tenure security, (2) land management and planning, (3) land administration and information, (4) land-based financing, (5) land policy and legislation, and (6) cross-cutting issues. She illustrated this variety with GLTN's successful experience in Nepal, in particular on how land tools were implemented in Dolakha, one of the districts worst affected when a massive earthquake hit the country in April 2015, including the aftershocks which led to the total destruction of risk-prone settlements due to landslides, ruptures, and destabilization of the earth.

Using this as a case study, the presentation emphasized on the importance of tenure security and discussed how unrecognized land tenure increases vulnerability of communities in the face of disasters. In the case of Dholaka, communities whose land records were destroyed following the earthquake had a difficult time proving ownership of the lands they occupied pre-disaster. They (squatters, undocumented citizens, or owners without a formal land title) also risked missing out of government grants and other form of assistance such as relocation.

In collaboration with the Government of Nepal through the Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation (MoLMCPA), and the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), UN-Habitat and other local and international partners, GLTN tools (STDM, Participatory Enumeration) were implemented to facilitate the identification, verification, and recording (IVR) of land tenure status of local communities in Dholaka. As the project progressed, the Participatory and Inclusive Land Readjustment (PILaR) and the Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration (FFP-LA) tools were also applied within the continuum of land rights approach. Following this exercise, an integrated settlement plan was approved by NRA to facilitate relocation of 85 households from the vulnerable village of Boshimpa to a new safe site in Panipokhari. In conclusion, the presentation underlined the importance of addressing tenure security issues in disaster prone areas to prevent, mitigate, prepare, and respond to natural disasters. Additionally, disaster

management policies must be redirected towards tenure security, poverty, and vulnerability reduction instead of compensation, resettlement, and relief response.

The **plenary discussion** raised the challenge for defining the policy agenda on climate change and capacitating GLTN Partners in advocating such agenda. This can facilitate in organizing the Network members to prepare for climate change discourses. On the other hand, early warning land tools to prepare communities and increase resilience to loss and damages should be further developed and promoted. Such tools should to the extent possible build on indigenous knowledge and practices. The Tenure-Responsive Land Use Planning (TR-LUP) can be retrofitted and can be an added protection of communities against the negative impact of climate change.

The plenary discussion also helped in conveying the visible and invisible losses borne by grassroots women to climate policy and financial institutions, while looking at the challenges and gaps they are facing in coping with crisis, and identify the practical solutions that work best in ensuring communities can anticipate, respond to, and recover from shocks.

**Rafic Khouri** concluded that GLTN Partners should enhance their knowledge of the climate change policies and tools, lobby about land management challenges as a key issue for these policies — at governmental and non-governmental levels, using for that purpose GLTN arguments, tools, and experiences. Greater support for adaptation initiatives, including social protection, should be prioritized to enhance communities' preparedness and response capabilities to natural disasters.

## Where do we go from here? Towards a new social contract for the World Social Summit, Summit for the Future, and World Urban Forum

This session focused on the discussion draft of the "*The Quezon City Framework for Developing a Women-Led New Social Contract to Enhance Land Rights and Climate Justice.*"

**Siraj Sait** (UEL) introduced the structure, form, and agenda of the draft NSC, and the need for a framework that would allow local partners and stakeholders globally to engage with the development of their social contracts to identify priorities,

challenges, and opportunities for land rights and climate change. The Quezon City Framework was recognized as being an innovative and action-oriented document that would operationalize learnings from previous discussions on the NSC as well as case studies, best practices, research, and experiences of diverse stakeholders presented during the EGM, building on progress through the EGM in London and conference in Dhaka, and the special session at the UN-Habitat Assembly.

The discussion of the working draft Quezon City Framework was then presented and reviewed by participants. The **plenary discussion** addressed the significance of the Quezon City Framework, with emphasis on the language, purpose, content, tools, principles, and other dimensions of the draft. Following the discussion, the Quezon City Framework was unanimously adopted by EGM participants. A second draft of the Quezon City Framework was circulated to the participants after the EGM for specific inputs. The final version is included in this Summary Report (see box).

### **The Quezon City Framework for Developing a Women-Led New Social Contract to Enhance Land Rights and Climate Justice**

*The following framework was developed at a two-day multi-stakeholder expert group meeting on “Transforming land rights and climate justice through a women-led renegotiated new social contract” on 29th February and 1st March 2024 in Quezon City, the Philippines. The meeting was attended by representatives of civil society, NGO coalitions, grassroots’ women, youth rights and support groups, professionals, researchers, urban development representatives, human rights advocates, and intergovernmental organizations. They collectively work on housing, land and property rights, women and girls’ rights, community empowerment, urban and rural development, climate action, sustainable cities and communities, and human rights at the local, national, regional, and global level.*

*The Framework is based on prior conference conclusions in Africa, Asia, and Europe, existing research, case studies, ongoing multi-stakeholder initiatives, and inputs from the experience of diverse partners in championing women’s land rights and community empowerment in the context of climate change. The meeting was co-organized by the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Huairou Commission (HC), University of East London (UEL), Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), with inputs from dozens of experts and practitioners.*

#### **Part A: Context**

1. **Agenda:** As acknowledged in multiple reports, instruments, and policy documents, the current climate crisis is exacerbated by global injustices and obstacles to women’s land rights, and substantially due to the lack of land, housing and property rights of marginalized communities, women, and girls. As recognized in the UN-Habitat Assembly event on “Developing a New Social Contract” (2023), East London Consensus on Gender and Youth Land Rights (2023), and the Dhaka Declaration on “Mainstreaming land rights in the narrative of climate change” (2023): lack of secure land rights means that women and girls face extreme vulnerability due to discriminatory traditions aggravated by the impact of climate change, as they are forced to settle in areas that are fragile and disaster-prone; it inhibits their ability to recover from impacts of climatic events; it restricts their capacity to engage in climate adaptation and mitigation which protect and sustain their lives and livelihoods; it deters them from implementing sustainable land use and governance practices; it severely limits their decision-making, and investments that ensure their survival and resilience; disqualifying them from government compensation for loss and damage, extension services, and resettlement support.

2. **Purpose:** A social contract is a general agreement between diverse partners to recognize each other's rights and responsibilities with details on how to collectively achieve shared objectives and outcomes. The purpose of this framework is to bring together best practices, research, and experiences of diverse stakeholders in addressing land rights, climate justice, and connected priorities. This framework offers a generic and systemic mechanism for easy development through step-by-step arrangement, implementation, and monitoring. The framework is not prescriptive but merely provides indicative issues or actions to be considered and adapted to a specific context or objectives. The framework is intended to facilitate stakeholders' developing their own social contracts rather than using a prototype shape or form. At its ambitious best, this framework is intended to help formulate mutual rights and responsibilities, with clarified expectations and milestones.
3. **Audience:** This framework is intended for stakeholders who would like to initiate discussion and planning towards developing a new social contract suited to their needs. While there may be legal, political, and technical aspects of the final social contract, this framework provides the process and structure within which specific requirements may be incorporated. In addition to supporting the primary negotiators, in the form of a checklist, it is also intended for a wider audience for advocacy, strategy, fundraising, and monitoring.
4. **Women-led:** While this framework's main processes are general and could apply to all types of social contract, this document focuses on women-led initiatives since there is a gap. Women and girls in this document are recognized as diverse, intersectional, and multi-sectoral groups, though attention is given to grassroots women and indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) who are key actors but often ignored. Women's leadership on climate change and land rights is well-acknowledged and intrinsically important but does not exclude co-leadership by men and is not an effort to substitute or pre-select primary actors who are chosen through self-organization or their respective mandates.
5. **Standards:** This framework is not a standalone document and needs to be aligned with national policy, regional and global minimal standards, and regulations. The terminology used in this framework therefore has generalized meaning as found in other relevant instruments and policy documents.
6. **Scope:** There is no one-size-fits-all for a social contract. There could be general or specific social contracts that depend on context. It is up to the primary actors to decide on the nature and scope of their social contract and its content. These social contracts could be at the local, national, regional, or global level, and involve different types of partners and focus on particular thematic issues. Therefore, there can be a number of social contracts some of which could overlap with each other and respond to multiple aspects.

## Part B: Approach

7. **Impetus:** Though social contracts have been formally and informally negotiated over time, the UN Secretary General's report, *Our Common Agenda* (2021) with its 12 commitments, including to "place women and girls at the center," and subsequent dialogues relating to the UN's New Social Contract provides the backdrop of this process, noting its diverse historical, political, and philosophical foundations. Women's land rights have been eroded by multiple, overlapping challenges including COVID-19, conflict, and climate change.
8. **Normative basis:** The UN Sustainable Development Goals, New Urban Agenda, the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, international human rights instruments and system, existing global instruments, and commitments on climate change including the Kyoto Protocol, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Paris Agreement, the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage among others reiterate the commitments of States and all stakeholders towards supporting empowerment of women and girls through equitable development and climate action. Of particular note are the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 22 and 23, UNCBD COP15 Decisions 8 and 11, UNCCD Decisions 3 and 27,

UNCCD Gender Action Plan, and UNFCCC Decisions 1, 20 and 24. In addition, national policies, indigenous knowledge, and community perspectives drive the land rights and climate justice agenda. The new social contract does not diminish existing development, climate, or human rights, but merely serves as an additional framework to support women-led initiatives in these areas.

9. **Principles:** A new social contract should be founded on shared human rights principles and values. This may include being pro-poor, gender-responsive, age-sensitive, non-discriminatory. It promotes gender equality, social justice, human dignity, cultural diversity, sustainable development, reciprocity, and solidarity. A new social contract should seek to build community trust, resilience, dialogue and participation, multi-stakeholder coordination, transparency, accountability, and ensure self-organizing, participatory co-creation, and mutual benefit for all stakeholders. The new social contract should also help develop a shared understanding and practical pathways towards ensuring the best outcomes for people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships. It is underpinned by health and wellbeing, universal education, safety and security, and land rights for all.
10. **Objectives:** The specific objectives of a social contract may vary but stakeholders are invited to consider the following in developing a new social contract on land rights and climate justice, emerging from the Dhaka Declaration:
  - a) Amplifying the voices of women and girls, indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs) in decision-making processes relating to land rights and climate justice.
  - b) Ensuring that land governance, land reform, and equitable access to land, water, and natural resources are the building blocks for climate resilience.
  - c) Recognizing and protecting indigenous peoples and local communities' access to land and culture, supporting customary use, management, and governance of land and natural resources.
  - d) Addressing gender discriminatory laws, policies, and practices that hinder equal land rights for women and girls.
  - e) Ensuring full involvement of all stakeholders, particularly women and girls from communities most vulnerable to climate change in formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policy instruments for land-based climate change adaptation and mitigation.
  - f) Adopting open data principles and standards, including adhering to FAIR and CARE principles when publishing land governance and climate change data.
  - g) Developing new normative arrangement to respect, protect and enforce the land rights of displaced persons especially vulnerable women and girls.
  - h) Allocating adequate funding for grassroots women through community-informed approaches to loss and damage, protection, and compensation.
  - i) Generating an enabling environment through which women's voices including grassroots and minority women is reflected in priorities, needs, and leadership and can be effective.
  - j) The purpose of multi-stakeholder engagement should be to address gaps through the spirit of solidarity and mutual interests, particularly ensuring information flows and technical skills for full participation of women in land rights and climate justice.
  - k) To build an effective new social contract for the implementation and monitoring of continuous progress on land rights and climate justice.
11. **Defining priorities:** Priorities are to be developed by stakeholders themselves through inclusive and participatory processes as appropriate to the context and subject matter. Such priority actions form the core of the social contract, and are not merely descriptive but are linked to agreed outcomes. As the climate crisis has multiple overlapping causes, effects, and solutions, priorities should address socio-historical injustices, economic, cultural, and local context, and respect indigenous knowledge. Priorities should align with existing standards, approaches, norms, actions, and frameworks.
12. **Tools:** A new social contract needs to be supported by existing and new gender- and climate responsive land tools. These should build upon existing GLTN tools such as the Continuum of Land Rights, Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM), Gender Evaluation Criteria (GEC),

Youth and Land Responsiveness Criteria (YLRC), Framework for Costing and Financing Land Administration Services (CoFLAS), and Tenure Responsive Land Use Planning (TR-LUP), and generic tools such as participatory budgeting, community mapping which need to be adapted to the specific needs and demands of climate action.

### Part C: Partnerships

13. **Co-creation:** The power and effectiveness of the social contract rests on the legitimacy of the agreement through shared ownership of the framework. Therefore, the process of developing a new social contract has to be inclusive, transparent, and reflective of the authentic voices and experiences of all relevant stakeholders, especially grassroots women, girls, and marginalized communities. Co-creation of the new social contract is a pre-requisite. The social contract has to speak the language of the people, be attentive to accessible terminologies, and simplify technical/scientific jargon.
14. **Self-organizing:** The social contract should ensure effective participation and representation of the core stakeholder groups at all levels and all stages of development, implementation, and monitoring. In order to avoid tokenism, each identified stakeholder group should be given adequate space and support to find its own nominee chosen to the extent possible by the relevant constituency group through its own process and deliberations. The link between the member of the stakeholder steering committee and the broader constituencies should take place through regularized reporting and validation including critical inputs or dissent of the nominee or the governance committee. Guidelines need to be developed on stakeholder participation and engagement.
15. **Primary actors:** The definition of primary actors depends on the nature and scope of objectives and priorities set out in the new social contract. These will ideally include: (a) grassroots women; (b) civil society; (c) local and national government; (d) businesses; (e) professionals; and (f) researchers. These six categories are widely acknowledged as key players having distinctive mandates and bringing particular resources and expertise.
16. **Groupings:** Alongside primary actors are various other categories of stakeholders who should include as applicable in the social contract dialogue. These include major groups and other stakeholders are recognized as consisting of 18 groups including the nine major groups that were formalized by Agenda 21 at the Earth Summit in 1992: (i) Women; (ii) Children and Youth; (iii) Indigenous People; (iv) Non-Governmental Organizations (also known as civil society organizations); (v) Local Authorities (currently referred to as local and regional governments); (vi) Workers and Trade Unions; (vii) Business and Industry; (viii) Scientific and Technological Community (the group also includes academia and researchers); and (ix) Farmers. Nine stakeholder groups were recognized by the Habitat Agenda, adopted in 1996, at the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), and by the New Urban Agenda, adopted in 2016 at Habitat III, consisting of: (x) Foundations and Philanthropists; (xi) Parliamentarians; (xii) Professional Organizations; (xiii) Persons with Disabilities (xiv) Older Persons; (xv) Media; (xvi) Grassroots and Informal Sector Organizations; (xvii) Migrants and Refugees; and, (xviii) Volunteer Organizations. These identified groupings have been officially recognized by the UN as essential stakeholders. Other occupational groupings may be included as relevant such as organizations of farmers and small-scale producers, fisherfolk, forest users, and pastoralists.
17. **Trust:** The ethos of the multi-stakeholder consultation and involvement should be based on mutual respect, dignity, and trust. All involved stakeholders are therefore expected to conduct themselves in a manner that foster inter-dependence and solidarity, which are imperative when dealing with complex and competing perspectives, and often uneven power dynamics. Complaints about abuse of power or intimidation should be brought before the governance committee.
18. **Governance:** In order to facilitate the smooth processes from development to implementation and monitoring, a formal committee which carries out essential coordination and governance functions should be set up. The social contract should explicitly mention the criteria of membership, qualifications, role, and responsibilities of members, as well as the modalities and

meeting of the group. To ensure accountability and transparency, all reporting and meeting minutes should be made public and external participants be allowed to attend meetings where possible.

19. **Capacity:** For the success of partnerships, developing leadership and skills of all stakeholders is required, including creating spaces and opportunities for minority women and girls. Creating an enabling environment through which women's and girls' voices can effectively be heard and experiences embedded within a new social contract is imperative.

#### **Part D: Implementation**

20. **Entry-points:** The social contract should identify entry points and specific interventions for land and climate action for each partner/stakeholder at the local, national, and global level as applicable. These should be related to the objectives and aspirations of each stakeholder and practical steps to fulfil the objectives of the new social contract. These could include strategic planning, mobilizing of people/resources, fundraising, advocacy, technical inputs, data collection, and/or reporting.
21. **Reporting:** The social contract should facilitate the sharing of information within and across stakeholder groups to familiarize them with the reporting systems on climate change at the global level, including through the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), and Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) reports. Access to data and information is vital to creating awareness and follow-up. Climate and land policy reforms and gender equality guarantees should be co-developed and implemented by all stakeholders.
22. **Outcomes or Processes:** A social contract should be designed so that it has tangible outcomes or processes, indicators, set roles and responsibilities. Specific times where performance is expected should be indicated. This should include short, medium, and long-term targets and objectives which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. Objectives should be designed at the beginning of the process of developing the new social contract and progress reviewed at regular intervals by primary actors and the governance committee. Certain objectives, such as behaviour change or structural improvements, may be long-term and not immediately tangible and their monitoring and evaluation should be considered appropriately.
23. **Duration:** A social contract can be created for a specific duration relating to defined objectives with set milestones. However, it should not be seen as simply a project document that elapses but something that is dynamic, improving and evolving, reflecting changing aspirations, knowledge, and practices of primary actors involved in the development and implementation process. These emerge connected to the thematic and substantive focus.
24. **Monitoring:** The social contract should also have a part dedicated to monitoring and evaluation. This is essential for ensuring effectiveness, transparency, accountability and learning through the social contract. The monitoring process should be based on pre-identified targets and indicators, and should be designed appropriately.
25. **Data:** The social contract has to be developed and implemented through an evidence-based approach. Where appropriate and available, there is need to access and support collection of sex and age disaggregated data, participatory mapping, and data collection process, utilize technology and innovative methods, and engaging with National Statistics Offices and agencies to enable collection of good quality and relevant data. Data collection and storage should follow open data principles and standards, including adhering to FAIR and CARE principles when publishing this data.
26. **Resourcing:** Commitments and funding through governments and multilateral institutions for addressing climate action should be distributed equitably and reach local communities and grassroots' women and girls. Community-identified priorities and resilience should be the focus in addressing loss and damage due to climate change. Access to climate funds for women and girls



should be strengthened. Additionally, ensuring effective solutions through systems such as carbon credits to compensate (or offset) emissions should be transparent and community focused. The new social contract should be fully resourced, incorporating commitments and mechanisms at the global, national, and local level.

27. **Disputes:** The social contract should ensure clear roles and responsibilities for the primary actors involved. This includes in the development phase (i.e., writing, drafting), the operationalization of the agreement, and in implementation, monitoring, and disputes. The social contract should outline what happens when one or more stakeholders contests the performance/compliance by other stakeholders. It should promote negotiation and arbitration as the preferred settlement of disputes. However, formal dispute resolution mechanisms may be adopted.
28. **Support:** The framework presents a basic outline for the complex task of developing a new social contract for varied needs. The framework needs further work, evidence, guidelines, piloting, promotion, advocacy, and mainstreaming into projects, programs, and policies. In order to provide further consultations and improvement, following the EGM in Quezon City, Philippines, individuals from the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Huairou Commission (HC), University of East London (UEL), Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), Arab Union of Surveyors (AUS), Habitat for Humanity (HfHI), and OXFAM, will comprise a new social contract framework group (i.e., NSC framework group) and will invite others include experts and representatives from other constituencies or groupings. The NSC framework group will develop its terms of reference and work to facilitate its normative, technical, and political contributions. The Noon Centre for Equality and Diversity at the University of East London will serve as the secretariat of this group in the initial period.

Adopted in Quezon City, the Philippines, 1st March 2024

## Closing Session: Recalibrating Phase IV of GLTN

**Nathaniel Don Marquez** (ANGOC) opened the final plenary session commenting on the achievements of the EGM in facilitating dialogue on land rights and climate change as well as emphasizing the leading role of grassroots' women's leadership in climate action. The involvement of representatives from the different GLTN clusters in this EGM demonstrates the importance of multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach in understanding the intersectionality of land with other development themes such as climate change. Short interventions from presenters were then invited.

**Arach David James** (NAMATI) commented on land rights and climate change issues in East Africa, particularly Kenya, highlighting the role of local communities in addressing climate hazards and the relevance of women's perspectives and leadership. He appreciated the initiatives taken by the GLTN Rural CSO Cluster to understand the cross-cutting dimensions of land with food security, climate change, and gender.

**Grace Ananda** (HfHI) reflected on learnings from the sessions on women-led initiatives and ensuring the embeddedness of best practices and peer learning across women’s groups and sharing of knowledge to enhance capacity and climate action.

**Roshni Sharma** (FIG) discussed the role of professionals and local governments as partners for climate action and the need to empower communities to enhance land rights, address climate vulnerability, and ensure better outcomes.



**Hellen Nyamweru Ndungu** (GLTN/UN-Habitat) remarked on the achievements of the two-day EGM including the learnings from different project experiences, and the delivery the draft “Framework for Developing a Women-Led New Social Contract to Enhance Land Rights and Climate Justice.” She also commented on the importance of institutional strengthening of GLTN, and Partners on climate change issues, including on engaging with Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in their respective countries. Also important is the adaptation of different GLTN land tools such as STDM and Tenure-Responsive Land Use Planning to respond to climate change issues.

The **plenary discussion** reflected on the EGM’s identification of the nexus between land, climate, and gender and its significance in the context of GLTN’s Phase IV and need for more gender-responsive and women-led interventions to strengthen outcomes and build climate resilience of women and girls.

**Closing remarks** from the organizers centred on the breakthrough at the EGM on agreeing the Quezon City Framework as well as various learnings across the main sessions, highlighting the need for continued dialogue, and working to further engage and develop the main ideas and proposals put forward by participants. All participants were thanked for their involvement and contributions in making this EGM a success. ■



The **Global Land Tool Network (GLTN)** is an alliance of global, regional, and national partners contributing to poverty alleviation and the Sustainable Development Goals through increased access to land and tenure security for all. The Network's partnership of organizations is drawn from the rural and urban civil society, international research and training institutions, bilateral and multilateral organizations, and international professional bodies. GLTN takes a more holistic approach on land issues and improves on global land coordination through development, dissemination and implementation of pro-poor and gender responsive land tools. These tools and approaches contribute to land reform, good land governance, inclusive land administration, sustainable land management, and functional land sector coordination.



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The **Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)** is a vibrant institution of higher learning based in Windhoek, Namibia with over 15,000 students studying on a full-time, part-time and distance education basis. The Department of Land and Property Sciences (DLPS) at NUST together with the Integrated Land Management Institute (ILMI) are playing a leading role in research and outreach in the field of land governance and administration. The Department hosts the NELGA Hub for Southern Africa, together with 14 partner universities playing a leading role in research and outreach for informed policy making in the field of land governance and administration. NUST is co-chair of the GLTN Research and Training Cluster.



The **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)** helps the urban poor by transforming cities into safer, healthier, greener places with better opportunities where everyone can live in dignity. UN-Habitat works with organizations at every level, including all spheres of government, civil society and the private sector to help build, manage, plan and finance sustainable urban development. UN-Habitat envisions cities without slums that are liveable places for all, which do not pollute the environment or deplete natural resources.

Climate change-related threats and land insecurities are increasingly impacting upon disadvantaged communities, especially women and girls. Currently, global climate responses tend to be State-driven and favoring certain technical, research, and professional stakeholders without adequate listening to women and girls – especially at grassroots level. It is in this context that an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) was organized to contributing to the formulation of a new social contract to facilitate women’s climate justice using the experience of women-led land rights initiatives for inclusive and embedded multi-stakeholder partnerships. This publication contains the key exchanges during the EGM, and the *“The Quezon City Framework for Developing a Women-Led New Social Contract to Enhance Land Rights and Climate Justice.”*

