

Discussion Note for Asia Regional Strategy on Gender and Tenure

An initial discussion was organised on Nov 3, 2016, at the RRI Office, Washington DC, wherein it was decided to explore the possibilities for regional co-ordination on Gender and tenure. The people present in the meeting were Nonette Royo; Christi Nozawa; Bharati Pathak; Joan Carling; Vicky Tauli-Corpuz; Rukka Sombolinggi; Madhu Sarin; Julian Atkinson; Natalie Campbell and Kundan Kumar.

The main agenda for the discussion on Gender and Tenure was the need for regional level co-ordination, learning, sharing and strategic action. The group made a decision to organise a regional strategic meeting on Gender and Tenure, by getting the most important voices together and discussing a common strategy for the same. It was also suggested that the group shouldn't be limited to RRI network, but that representatives from other networks working on Gender issues in the region- and who can specifically provide inputs to the process be also invited. Some of the aspects that were discussed were:

- Is there a need for the RRI linked network to engage in Gender and Tenure issues or are there already active networks?
- What are the various networks working on issue linked to gender and natural resources, and can we value add or create synergies with existing processes?
- Are there aspects which need to be brought on board – namely the fact that more and more women are taking leadership for natural resources issues (ex. The 1200 CFUGs in Nepal run by women)?
- How do we engage? Where can we add-value to existing processes? How can we collectively build synergies?
- We need to address the agenda and understand what resources we can contribute (funding, networking opportunities, etc.).

The group decided to organise the meeting potentially in Feb or March – most probably at Bangkok, with RECOFTC providing the logistical support. It was also decided that Asia Associate, RRG, will carry out an initial mapping of the various key networks already working with gender and natural resources issues in the region.

Based on the above, a brief note for the proposed strategic meeting is presented as below. This is very tentative, and you are requested to make edits/changes/additions:

Objective of the Meeting: Bring together selected key people and network working on Gender and natural resources to explore the possibility of co-ordinated action on the issue of gender and tenure in South/South East Asia Region and to draw up a possible strategic roadmap for co-ordinated action.

Potential Participants: Key actors involved in Gender in the RRI coalitional structure; representatives from critically important networks already working on gender and natural resources in the region. The total number of participants to not exceed 20. I request you all to suggest names of people who can participate and contribute to the process.

Location: RECOFTC, Bangkok

Dates: August 23-24 2017 in house at RECOFTC headquarters

Background Note: Gender issues, specially women's access and control over land and forest resources, are absolutely critical to the issue of tenure reforms. Gender justice i.e. ensuring that women's rights and access to resources are protected and enhanced is central to tenure reforms; at the same time, the mission for equitable and just resource reforms is only possible if women are at the forefront of these processes. As economies and societies shift, and men migrate to urban areas, its women who have started to play central role in governance of land and forests as illustrated by more than 1,000 women's only Community forestry groups in Nepal.

In almost all countries of South/South East Asia region – networks which reflect the struggles for gendered rights over resources are emerging and active. The leadership of the forest and land tenure reforms in Asia itself reflects this gendered turn- and it is critical that regional leadership and process which focus on gendered land and forest tenure reforms emerges and provides directions to the reforms processes happening across the region. There have been various initiatives which work on different scales to network on gendered emancipation issues ranging from livelihoods to reproductive rights– and it is also imperative that their collective power and capabilities be also be leveraged to address the most fundamental issue of gendered rights over land, forests and other natural resources.

It is in this context that this small two-day meeting is proposed – wherein the key leadership and thinkers on gendered issues in the region come together to brainstorm on how to create a roadmap for gendered tenure reforms in the region; and to facilitate a process of cross-learning and emergent synergies. The participants would be those who have taken leadership on gender from the RRI network; leadership from other networks on gender and natural resources in the region. The meeting will be driven by the collective that would have gathered- with one objective being to create an open space where the participants can brainstorm and think.

We would like to have the agenda and format for this meeting to emerge from the online discussion- and would also like to have the members of the group suggest how to go about this. A very rough agenda for discussion is provided below, subject to revision and restructuring depending on the decisions of the group.

Proposed Agenda (very tentative and to be fleshed out through collective inputs)

Day One

- Introductions and context/work of people and networks present
- Objectives of the meeting (to be discussed by the groups and finalised) – this may include new agenda items to be inserted
- Presentation of Global baseline on Gender and Tenure Study
- Presentation of other global studies relating to gender and natural resources (Impact of Large Scale Land Acquisition on women; Women's leadership in tenure Reforms Study; CIFOR study on women and forest governance etc.)
- Discussions on Reflections on the status of gender and tenure in the region: led by resource person.

- Evening- storytelling and experience sharing over dinner

Day Two

- Key issues identifications and strategic actions – including follow up to the meeting
- Small break-out sessions on the above key issues – and brainstorming for strategic actions
- General discussion and putting together a roadmap for the region on gender and tenure
- Deciding on concrete next steps/ potential leadership or training opportunities for coalition.

Background initial mapping

Below is a preliminary list (based on brief scan) of organisations in the region working on Women's Land Rights (not including RRI members).

- a. [Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development \(APWLD\)](#)
- b. [Asian Indigenous Women's Network \(AIWN\)](#)
 - i. Published recently a 'Realising Indigenous Women's Rights: A [Handbook](#) on the CEDAW' together with TEBTEBBA and FPP
- c. [South Asian Women's Fund \(SAWF\)](#)
- d. [Asian NGO Coalition \(ANGOC\)](#)
- e. The International Land Coalition (ILC), Thematic 'Commitment' [\(4\) Equal Land Rights for Women](#)
 - i. Recent publication: 'Women's Land Rights [Toolkit](#)' – working with Indian partner Swadhina, India.