

Model for Establishing Tenure Security in Other Countries

Land Administration in Ethiopia

A Land Administration System (LAS) consolidating rights to rural land has been developed in the Amhara Region in Ethiopia. Since the start of the project in 2002 over 2.4 million possession-rights have been registered and over 1.3 million households given certificates. The approach, which has been taken as a model for other regions in Ethiopia, could also be a model for establishing tenure security in other countries.

By Dr Zerfu Hailu and Lennart Backstrom, Environmental Protection, Land Administration and Use Authority, Amhara Region, Ethiopia

The Environmental Protection, Land Administration and Use Authority (EPLAUA) in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia is responsible for the development and implementation of the Land Administration System (LAS) there, activities financed by Amhara Region and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The Swedish firm Orgut Consulting provides consultant services on technical issues. The regional government fully supports the implementation of the system and distribution of the 'Book of Possession' to all farmers is ongoing; more

than 1.3 million households have already got their 'Book of Possession right'. Experts working for

tion of Ethiopia requires food security, economic development and environmental protection. However, land degradation, overgrazing and deforestation are key problems that result in loss of environmental resilience. For example, drought, which appears cyclically, affects an increasing number of people; in the early 1970s drought affected about 1.5 million people and in the drought of the early 1980s this number increased to 6 million. In the drought of early 2000 the number escalated to about 14 million. It was realised in the Amhara Region that the need for

Creating a better life for Ethiopia's rural population

USAID, the World Bank, FAO and Hernando de Soto have reviewed the approach, with positive outcomes.

Devastating Drought

A better life for the rural popula-

aid would increase if nothing were done to reverse the situation. Security of tenure would enable farmers to invest for the long term, which would in turn support food security, economic development and contribute to the protection of the environ-



Landscape of Amhara Region.



Drought in the region.

ment. Considering the importance of security of tenure, the Amhara Region decided that all farmers would have long-term rights to land based on legislation.

Permanent Land Rights

The legal system of rights to land is based on Federal Law, but regions may develop their own legal system in alignment with this. The legal system developed and in practical use in Amhara Region has been taken as a model for a new Federal Proclamation on Land. The legal system includes:

- possession rights unlimited in time (land for ever)
- right of farmers to transfer land



On-the-job training in surveying.

- rights to children and relatives
- farmers rights not to sell the land to third parties but to lease it to others, such as investors, for 25 years
- rules on compensation when land is expropriated; a valuation model for compensation has been developed
- equal treatment of males and females, for example the members of the Land Administration Committee at village level should consist of at least two women.

Survey and Registry

With an area of 170,152 km² populated by 19 million people, Amhara Region is covered by 4 million rural properties. To measure all these plots would take almost impossible amounts of time, given the pressing need to get rural lands certified. To harmonise the conflict between urgency and capacity, two types of certificates were introduced. Pilot projects showed that LAS could be implemented in a fast and cost-effective

aries of household plots, community areas, service areas and offices and schools were demarcated and surveyed. In a second phase, modern surveying technology will be used. However, at district level the number of total stations and GPS instruments is currently insufficient. Surveying and mapping is expensive and requires international support; additional working tools and instruments are needed, especially at district level. Although five hundred surveyors are required to carry out a modern survey, in the district there are only a trained thirty. Moreover, for collecting data for around 20 million plots covering the whole of Ethiopia other methods are needed, such as orthophotos and satellite imagery. But the financial input is not there.

Capacity Building

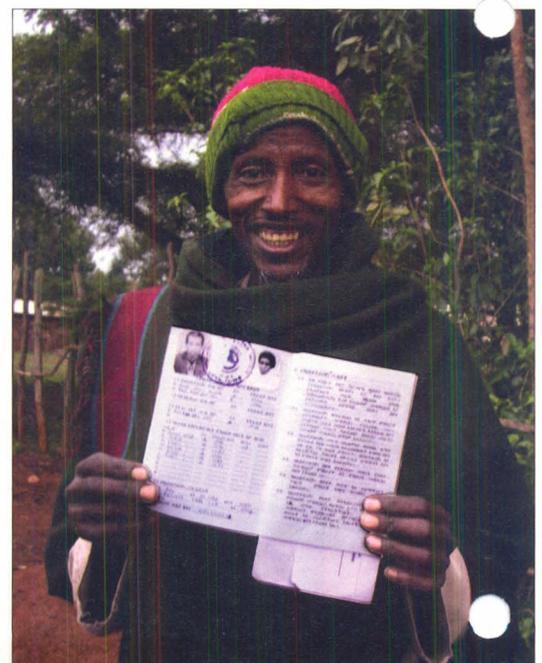
Training in the legal system has been given to officers in all 106 rural districts. The registration process has been communicated to the 50,000 farmers involved, and mem-

Farmers will have long-term legal rights to land

way if farmers participated in the registration process. Such a system is under implementation in all 106 rural districts. The experience gained during the pilot projects guided adaptation to district-specific conditions. Further, district staff were supported and given on-the-job training.

The temporal 'Book of Possession' is based on registration of land users and on traditional plot measurement. Surveying of plots is one of the prerequisites for land administration. Because of lack of equipment and electricity in most of the villages, traditional survey methods, compass and measuring tape (cord) were used. Prior to the surveying of bound-

bers of the Land Administration Committees so far established in over 1,700 of the 2,800 villages have



A happy farmer: finally the right to possess land.

trained. Lawyers from the district courts have also been educated in the new legal system. Farmers and decision-makers at local and regional level have been the main target group for information provision on rights to land and responsibilities related to land use. Information has also been given to decision-makers at federal level. Television and radio stations have put the land registration issues in the

Weakest are surveying, mapping and GIS components

spotlight, not only in Amhara Region but also in other parts of Ethiopia. The training institutions in Ethiopia have always paid attention to land administration; however, universities need international experts to provide surveying

and land-administration courses. For this reason, the education of eight plus eight plus eight future experts in land administration at MSc level is ongoing at the Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden. Development of courses in land management has begun at Bahir Dar University, and these students will work as teachers; knowledge deficiencies here concern surveying, mapping and GIS-components. Co-operation with other universities is needed.

Concluding Remarks

The road map for further development is accepted

but much is still required, including well-educated and competent staff, technical advisers, practical experience and surveying and mapping equipment.

Biography of the Authors

Dr Zerfu Hailu is deputy general manager at the Environmental Protection, Land Administration and Use Authority, Amhara Region, Ethiopia. Dr Zerfu is one of the experts that laid the foundation for the establishment of the Authority and encouraged regional decision-makers to take bold decisions on the issue of tenure security.



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Mr Lennart Backstrom was technical adviser at the Environmental Protection, Land Administration and Use Authority, Amhara Region, Ethiopia during 2003-2005. He is experienced in working with land administration authorities and the private sector in Sweden. Mr Backstrom has worked on international training courses and Land Administration projects, mainly in Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

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