

Building Fit-for-Purpose Land Administration Systems

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SUMMARY

Arguably sound land governance is the key to achieve sustainable development and to support the global agenda set by adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The operational component of land governance is the country specific land administration systems dealing with the four key functions of land tenure, land value, land, and land development. Land administration systems - whether highly advanced or very basic – require a land parcel framework to operate. Building such a land parcel framework – showing the way land is divided into parcels and plots for specific use and passion - is not primarily about accuracy. It is about adequate identification and representation of the spatial objects and parcels; completeness to cover the total jurisdiction; and credibility in terms of reliable data being trusted by the users. This paper argues that the land parcel framework should be developed using a flexible and fit-for-purpose approach rather than being guided by costly field survey procedures or over-engineered technology solutions. When considering the resources and capacities required to building such land parcel frameworks in developing countries, the western concepts may well be seen as the end target but not as the point of entry. When assessing the technology and investment choices the focus should be on building a fit-for-purpose framework that will meet the needs of society today and that can be incrementally improved over time. The paper addresses some of the key technological, economic, legal, and social issues related to building fit-for purpose land administration systems in support of sustainable and transparent land governance especially in developing countries. Some key principles are presented and the main benefits and constraints are discussed along with the opportunities for land professionals when applying such a fit-for-purpose approach. Finally, the papers emphasises the demand for capacity development measures being recognised up front.