Way Forward for Transforming Nepal's Land Administration System

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SUMMARY

Nepal's modern land administration system started in the early 1960s. However, the country has a long history of land administration that goes back to the Lichhabi era (450–750 AD). At present, most legally occupied areas are already covered by the land administration system, except for some village block areas and administratively disputed locations. The system is still mainly based on traditional paper records.

It is estimated that about 25% of the total settlement areas in the country are informally occupied. These areas do not have cadastral records and are home to around 1.5 million households. In addition, there are about 300,000 landless households. Many of them have informally possessed land for housing.

The Constitution of Nepal, 2015, has addressed land issues more strongly. On one hand, it mandates the decentralisation of land administration. On the other hand, it directs the state to end landlessness and informality.

In recent years, Nepal has started efforts for digitalisation. However, a strong system with good quality data is still not in place, and coverage of informal areas is not yet complete. Therefore, the Government of Nepal has not been able to fully meet the spirit of the Constitution. Some initiatives are now in progress to transform the land administration system to meet current needs. These include digitalisation, improving the quality of data, and creating special institutional arrangements to address landlessness and informality.

In this context, the Government of Nepal is working together with the World Bank to assess the present situation and recommend ways forward. This assessment covers the digitalisation and

harmonisation of land information systems, decentralisation of land administration, real estate valuation, and legal reforms.

This paper aims to present the future efforts of Nepal for transforming the land administration system and to show how development partners can support this important work.