Land Governance for the future we want: bridging policy and practice

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SUMMARY

Land administration underpins sustainable national development, economic growth, and environmental management. Despite its importance, most of the world's population lacks secure, legally recognized land rights, limiting investment, equity, and development outcomes. Effective land administration systems, those that record and manage relationships between people and land, are essential for transparent land governance, conflict reduction, and inclusive growth.

To address global gaps, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) endorsed the Framework for Effective Land Administration (FELA) in 2020. FELA serves as a global policy guide for countries seeking to modernize land administration and links geospatial data with sustainable development goals. It promotes inclusive, interoperable, and fit-for-purpose systems. FELA can be used as general guideline to develop national action plans on land administration. Complementing FELA, the Land Administration Domain Model (LADM), established as ISO 19152, provides a standardized conceptual model for managing land rights, restrictions, and responsibilities. Developed through international collaboration led by FIG, LADM enhances interoperability and consistency across jurisdictions.

However, despite these policies and initiatives, major challenges persist. According to the World Bank and UN-Habitat, only a few high-income countries have comprehensive and up-to-date land systems, while gender disparities remain stark. Only 24% of women globally hold legal land titles. The 2024 Prindex report found that 1.1 billion adults feel insecure about their land rights. This undermines progress toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To bridge the policy-to-practice gap, UN-GGIM proposes to establish a Hybrid Hub for Land Administration. This global platform could support countries in implementing FELA, LADM, and

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related frameworks through tailored technical assistance and capacity building. The Hub would operationalize land governance by helping countries develop inclusive and digital land systems adapted to their legal and cultural contexts.

The UN-GGIM Expert Group on Land Administration has been tasked to assess the feasibility of creating such a Hybrid Hub and to prepare an action plan for its establishment. Initial findings will be shared at the FIG 2026 conference in Cape Town, where land administration experts can provide feedback.

FIG 2026's theme, "The Future We Want – the SDGs and Beyond," emphasizes building a fair, inclusive, and sustainable future. Effective land administration, supported by initiatives like the Hybrid Hub, strengthens secure land rights and connects geospatial data with policy and practice. It turns ambition into action to promote global sustainability and equitable development beyond 2030.