

Book project proposal:

## **Land Reforms in Asia and Africa: - Impacts on Poverty and Natural Resource Management**

**Editors:** Stein Holden and Keijiro Otsuka

Land reforms have played a central role in the political economy of many countries in the world and have been subject to massive disagreements between different political interest groups and ideologies. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century included many of the largest social land reform experiments in history such as in the earlier Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, and Ethiopia. Many of these reforms have later partly been reversed. In other countries with a colonial history there have been tensions between property rights established during the colonial period and traditional (customary) land rights and how to adapt these to changing conditions is becoming critical concern. Some countries have had very skewed land distributions rooted in ethnic, colonial, and other historical circumstances and have created demands for land redistributions to reduce discrimination and poverty and to stimulate economic development.

Several factors have created a new interest in land reforms around the world:

- The Millennium Development Goals sharpened the international focus on poverty reduction and legal empowerment of the poor as seen by the establishment of the Commission for Legal Empowerment of the Poor (CLEP).
- Population growth, population concentration and land degradation have created land scarcity and the emergence of land markets in densely populated countries in Africa and this has created a new interest in land reforms to stimulate more efficient and sustainable land management.
- Excessive regulations on land transactions by land reform regulations in some countries in Asia (e.g., India and the Philippines) have created both inefficiency of land use and inequity of operational land distribution.
- Economic growth in Asia has led to changes in food habits towards more land-demanding foods (meat and milk), and growing land and water scarcity.
- Increasing demands for land for food and energy production have spurred a new land race to ensure national food security in countries with increasing food deficits. This has triggered sharp increases in demands for land in relatively land abundant countries where the property rights and other institutional arrangements are not developed to handle these new demands or to protect the land rights of traditional land users and facilitate sustainable investments.
- Deforestation is one of the main causes of climate change and the increasing international concern and support to stop and reverse deforestation have stimulated new thinking on how property rights and land reforms can play a role to stimulate tree planting and better forest management.

New Land Reforms have been promoted by international institutions, such as the World Bank and UN organizations, donor countries, new governments and pressure groups within countries. Such reforms have typically aimed at stimulating economic growth by enhancing land use efficiency and investment, reducing poverty and promoting more sustainable land management. However, many of these reforms have not had the intended effects or there have been disagreements about what the effect of the reforms have been. These problems may be related to both the design of land reforms and the measurement of their intended and possible unintended effects. The latter of the problems is also caused by insufficient attention to the need for impact assessments and data collection to facilitate such assessments.

The renewed interest in land reforms has also spurred a new requirement to carefully monitor and measure their impacts. New standards are being established for how to carry out program evaluation not only through rigorous internal validation but also by giving more emphasis to the external validation (Ravallion 2009). Development economics research has moved in direction of randomized social experiments as a preferred way to identify unbiased estimates of program impacts. So far it has been rather difficult to implement randomized social land reform experiments; however, there may be clever ways to identify natural experiments in relation to land reform programs and these may help to identify impacts when random social experiments are infeasible for various reasons.

This book aims to draw lessons from land reforms in several Asian and African countries both in terms of their internal and external validity. It will focus on a range of impacts including welfare and natural resource management impacts. Potential contributors will be invited to participate in two workshops. The first workshop will take place in the last week of January 2010 at Peking University, hosted by the EFD-office there, with professor Jintao Xu.

A tentative outline of the book with chapters developed by identified (potential) authors follows:

#### Part I: Conceptual Frameworks

Chapter 1: Overview of Land Reforms in Asia and Africa, by editors

Chapter 2: Theory and Methods for Analysis of Land Reforms, by editors

#### Part II: Poverty and Efficiency Implications of Land Reforms: Do They Have the Intended Effects?

Potential contributions:

- 1) Welfare implications of Land Certification in Ethiopia, by Mintewab Bezabih, Hosaena Ghebru and Stein Holden
- 2) Land Reforms, Modes of Land Access and Welfare Implications in Uganda, by Alex Tatwangire and Stein Holden

- 3) Welfare implications of Land Redistribution Reforms in Zimbabwe, by Precious Zikhali
- 4) Welfare effects of land-to-the tiller programs in India or the Philippines, by Kei Otsuka and colleagues
- 5) Welfare effects of land certification in Vietnam, by Finn Tarp and colleagues
- 6) Welfare effects of forest tenure reforms in China, by Jintao Xu and colleagues
- 7) Welfare implications of land redistribution reforms in South Africa, by Julian May, Espen Sjaastad, Henrik Wiig

### Part III: Land Reform Failures: Reasons and Implications

#### Potential contributions:

- 1) Stalled Land Reform in Malawi, by Stein Holden, Rodney Lunduka and Henrik Wiig
- 2) Caste Discrimination, Political Unrest, Land Reforms and Welfare Implications in Nepal, by Jeetendra Aryal and Stein Holden
- 3) Other?

### Part IV: Land Reforms and Natural Resource Management

#### Potential contributions:

- 1) Impacts of Land Certification on Tree Planting in Ethiopia, by Menale Kassie, Alemu Mekonnen and Stein Holden
- 2) Impacts of the Forestry Tenure Reform on Forest Management in China, by Jintao Xu and colleagues
- 3) Impacts of Forest Tenure Reforms on Forest Management in India, by Gunnar Kohlin and colleagues
- 4) Forestry Tenure Reforms and Forest Management in Nepal, by Kei Otsuka and colleagues
- 5) Large Land Acquisitions and Natural Resource Management, by Klaus Deininger and colleagues
- 6) Climate Negotiations and Land Reform Implications, by Arild Angelsen, Stein Holden and Thomas Sterner

Conclusions, by editors.