

# ILC NES NEPAL and LANDex at the India Land and Development Conference 12-14 March, 2019

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The third India Land and development Conference (ILDC) was organized in New Delhi from the 12-14 March 2019, with the theme '*Partnership for Enhanced Inclusion and Impact*'. The India Land Governance Center, in partnership with other pioneer organizations in the global land sector have positioned the ILDC as a unique, annual and inclusive platform that serves the objective of bringing the land community closer. It promotes inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary and multi-level conversations on land and development while catalyzing cross-sectoral learning and amplifying innovations in land governance.



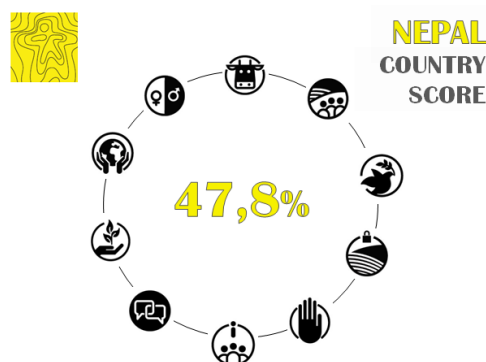
Yonas Mekonen, Global NES Coordinator from the ILC Secretariat and Dharm Raj Joshi, NES Nepal Facilitator and LANDex Researcher were invited to share their innovative work towards the creation of a data ecosystem for land, generally speaking, and particularly about the 2018 LANDex pilot in Nepal. In the session, titled '*Meeting SDG Targets around Land Rights: Global initiatives & Experiences*, 'Yonas provided an overview of the LANDex concept, while Dharm shared preliminary results and hands-on insights from the test phase.

**What is LANDex?** Based on ILC's 10 Commitments to People-Centered Land Governance, LANDex is an innovative tool built with members of the ILC network to develop an alternative land monitoring system that is recognized as legitimate in a global framework. Simultaneously, the LANDex tool aims to members' land data initiatives more visible and meaningful while shedding light on land governance perspectives from and with under-represented sectors of the population. The initiative contributes substance to the new orientations and targets set in global land monitoring frameworks such as the VGGTs and contributes to the monitoring of the land-related indicators included in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 33 LANDex indicators are organized according to the 10 ILC Commitments and divided into three different categories: legal framework, implementation, and outcome, impact and perception indicators.



**LANDex Nepal Implementation:** Through its host organisation, the Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC), NES Nepal has played a coordinating role for LANDex in Nepal. Over the course of the pilot phase, NES Nepal collaborated with more than 12 different organizations, including representatives from the government, CSOs, academia, UN agencies, bilateral and Indigenous Peoples' organizations. Each organization provided a significant contribution to the data collection process for the 33 LANDex indicators, offering diverse perspectives on land governance in Nepal.

**LANDex Nepal Preliminary Results:** Analysis of preliminary results from the test phase<sup>1</sup> gives Nepal an overall country score of 48, set on a scale of 0-100. The results indicate that Nepal's land governance requires improvement in many dimensions of people-centered land governance. Although it is still too early to consider this overall score as final, the pilot team found that results from the test phase depicted a realistic state of Nepal's land governance, including the challenges it currently faces.



**Nationalizing LANDex.** Indicators within Commitment 2, for example, were very difficult to obtain as *family farming* is not differentiated from other agricultural operations in Nepal. The national land data system does not record land data for family farmers, but instead uses categories of small, medium, and big landowners. Since the agribusiness sector is minor in Nepal, all agricultural households can be considered smallholder farms. Consequently, LANDex may contextualize some questions that would enable access to data on the number of family farm operations that have received technical or financial support, for example. The equitability of land ownership and distribution (Indicator 2C.1) is likely to generate debate, as Nepal has many different types of land – from the low land in the Tarai to the mountainous Himalayas – with significant value differentials. In addition, equal land rights for women (proportion of land owners that are women, for example – Indicator 4B) is complicated to derive because the land administration system in Nepal does not disaggregate by sex, making it impossible to approximate the share of women among the total share of land owners. In this context, LANDex may consider modifications to related questions to accommodate such shortcomings.

<sup>1</sup> Out of the 33 indicators, data collection for one third of them was not viable. Minor modifications to the methodology for two of these indicators do not adequately fit the context of Nepal, and will be modified accordingly. Consequently, the result cannot yet be generalized as 11 indicators have no data and two additional indicators have a 0 score.

**Indicators – Deep Dive:** According to commitment-based scores, Nepal received the highest score for Protection of Land Rights Defenders (Commitment 10) and the lowest score for Secure Territorial Rights for Indigenous People (Commitment 5), at 73.6 and 18.9, respectively

Considering the important population of IPs in Nepal and the lack of recognition of their territorial rights, these findings corroborate the recommendation that came up during the 'High-Level Political Dialogue on IPs Land Issues' held in Kathmandu on the December 7 2018, inviting the Nepalese government "to initiate land survey of the IPs land" to protect, promote and strengthen IPs territorial lands and their customary practices. In this context LANDex, has highlighted the current situation – affecting 38.12 percent of the country's population – to the forefront of the land governance debate.



On Inclusive Decision Making (Commitment 7), which includes indicators on the equitable representation of women and men in local decision making, rural land use management and changes that are based on public and community consultations, and the active and meaningful participation of youth, women, IPs and other disadvantaged groups, all indicators were applicable to the Nepalese context. The resulting score of 60 – always on a scale of 0-100 – suggests that Nepal has good practices at all three levels: legal or policy framework in place (82), extent that this is implemented (31), from which certain positive outcomes result (61).

**Conclusion.** The pilot phase in Nepal demonstrates the potential of LANDex as a tool to enhance policy and advocacy and speaks to the legitimacy of ILC's national members' adherence to people-centred land monitoring. LANDex contributes to making the land data ecosystem more accessible, and the state of land governance more digestible through the rigorous analysis of land-related policies, their

implementation and outcome. In doing so, it also depicts areas of strength and where improvement is needed, as well as policy gaps that need to be addressed.

Early LANDex results in Nepal have highlighted the earnest need to review the national land data collection system and the inclusion of specific questions related to land tenure, land ownership and land type, by sex and land values. NES Nepal will be working in close collaboration to support the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) and National Planning Commission (NPC) in their endeavors to include targeted sample question to fill this gap for the next census, in 2021. If the NES manages to include additional questions that were made visible by the LANDex Pilot, it will surely have a lasting impact on Nepal's land governance debate.

For the implementation team, the immediate goal is to have a comprehensive analysis of LANDex that can be shared among wider audiences to advocate for the inclusion of additional questions in the upcoming census. This will in turn create a conducive environment for an ongoing multi-stakeholder process to evolve towards inclusion and meaningful collaboration between government, CSOs, academia, donor organizations, IP and grass-root organizations.