



## IGAD REGIONAL LAND DIALOGUE PLATFORM & DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS MEETING

Addis Ababa

08-09 November 2017

### OPENING REMARKS SWITZERLAND

Peter Sidler, Embassy of Switzerland in Ethiopia  
Swiss Cooperation Office

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*Check against delivery*

#### Distinguished

- H.E. Dr. Kaba Urgessa, State Minister of Natural Resources, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resource, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- Mr. Mohamed Moussa, Director of Agriculture and Environment Division of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
- Mr. Stephen Karingi, Director at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)
- Mr. Jonathan Nyarko of the Rural Economy and Agriculture Department at the African Union Commission
- Madam Joan Kagwanja. Chief, Land Policy Initiative
- State Minister of Sudan
- Government representatives, civil society representatives, private sector representatives, farmers organizations' representatives, media representatives, academia, development partners

In the name of Switzerland, I first like to thank the colleagues of the LPI/ALPC and IGAD for making it possible that we are meeting here for the inaugural IGAD land dialogue platform.

In my function for the Global Programme Food Security of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC, I am in charge for our Land Governance Project

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with IGAD and the LPI/ALPC. Let me in this regard explain why Switzerland is supporting this endeavor:

Building on our analysis and experience, in the strategy 2017-2020 of the Global Programme Food Security we put a high emphasis on land governance. I quote from there: » Land governance is at the centre of agriculture development and food security.

Consequently, Switzerland is promoting

1. access to land for all, including pastoralists, women, and youth.

Moreover, we are

2. strengthening the security of land tenure for all, again with a particular focus on pastoralists, women, and youth.

We see these two aspects them as crucial elements of good land governance and thus prerequisite for sustaining the livelihood of the majority of the world's smallholders and thus for a sustainable development per se.

How do we promote these prerequisites for sustainable development? Switzerland actively provides support for putting the overarching frameworks for good land governance into action. As such, we support through various projects the implementation of

1. the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security – known as the VGGT,
2. the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems – known as RAI, and
3. the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in accordance with the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa (F&G).

With regard to Africa, Switzerland collaborates with the African Land Policy Centre ALPC in supporting African countries and Regional Economic Communities in integrating both, the VGGT and the AU Framework & Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa into national legislation. Herein, we provide a particular support to the IGAD region.

This Regional Dialogue Platform is a very important step in this regard. On the one hand, the African Union Declaration on Land issues and Challenges requests the RECs together with UNECA, the AfDB, and the AUC to establish appropriate institutional framework(s) to provide coordination of activities and facilitate mutual learning by member States and convene periodic regional platforms.

On the other hand, this Regional Dialogue Platform is a very important with a view to the fact that various IGAD Member States have or are reviewing their existing and developing new national land policies. These processes lead to a wave of legal reforms and a search for new pathways of improving land administration. The Regional Dialogue Platform can facilitate ensured land policy convergence among Member States, as is requested in the AU Framework & Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa.

The Regional Dialogue Platform helps identifying possible areas of collaboration and convergence in taking forward innovations in land administration. It seeks to bring civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders to interact with the Governments and as such creating momenta for national dialogues to emerge on land governance. As such, it is about sharing experience and best practices on land management, land policy reforms, and therefore the implementation of the AU Declaration on Land. It provides incentives for replication at the domestic level.

Thank you for your attention.

*Anecdote:*

*International football tournaments always function as regional dialogue and learning platforms. This does not only apply for questions around how to most successfully managing the land on the football pitch. It is also a sharing of best practices and per se a benefit of coming together, for all the stakeholders from players to fans to business people. As resident in Ethiopia I am biased and was thus a bit disappointed last Sunday when the Walias lost first leg match against a very strong team of Rwanda in the playoff for the last place at the 2018 African Nations Championship in Morocco. Therefore, I am looking forward to next Sunday's second leg. Whether Rwanda or Ethiopia, I am sure the team that makes it to this regional sport event will benefit from the experience*

*in football pitch land management best practices and thus qualify next time for the World Cup...*