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Message from the Land Portal Team Leader



Dear Friends,

In November 2019 the Land Portal celebrates its 10th anniversary. We started off a decade ago as a small UN partnership project, working to get the highly dispersed information on land onto one easy to use platform. In the ten years that have passed since then, our mission and vision have matured. We have grown from being ‘simply’ a gateway to better access land data and information that is fragmented across the web, to a trusted knowledge broker that makes a difference by emphasizing data use and impact.

While we are still a small and dedicated team of professionals working from around the Globe, we now welcome over 50,000 visitors a month to our platform, hailing from 231 countries. The ultimate outcome we are working for is an open and inclusive information ecosystem that connects all actors. This information helps to support informed decision and policy making and increases transparency and accountability on land governance issues. Our growing community of visitors and users are at the core of this information ecosystem.

Our newest **strategy**, now in effect, is a direct product our visitors feedback, emanating from a survey which took place last spring, as well as a recent evaluation report carried out by Wageningen University. Put simply, survey and evaluation respondents appreciated the Land Portal for being a strong communicator and

connector in the land domain and for being a one stop shop for those looking for information related to land, especially when related to our country portfolios. Where they felt our work could improve, however, was going beyond the static data which we present, that often remains confined by national borders. Our users want data that they can interact with, that moves beyond the national level to include a wider variety of perspectives, and data that can help them to influence positive change. We have taken note of this and have woven it carefully throughout our new strategy:

- **INFORM** serves to not only make data and information more accessible in the vast and scattered world wide web, but we also put extra emphasis on repackaging, visualizing, storytelling. The Land Portal tries to democratize the information landscape and open up the meaning of data and information to an audience beyond data scientists and analysts. To this end, we have started ‘storifying’ through innovative **data stories**, which serve to explain the meaning behind the data.
- **OPEN** plays a critical role in making the data ecosystem more inclusive. It is a fact that people in the global South do not have equal opportunities to access land data and information, nor in achieving similar visibility when sharing knowledge. Our **State of Land Information reports (SOLI)** have the goal to uncover local information ecosystems. We work with local partners to scope the information landscape, as well as address the accessibility of the data and information. This is followed by targeted capacity building workshop, intended to strengthen the local data ecosystem, make local knowledge sharing practices stronger, reinforce local networks and make people aware of the body of knowledge they have in their countries and how to best use it.
- **DEBATE** means we will promote, inform and enrich the global debate and practice on key land issues while raising the visibility of national, regional and international partners. The main challenge that we aim to overcome is that

discussions around land governance exclude grassroots voices. Our response has been to create virtual meeting spaces where all voices can be heard. This includes media partnerships, webinars and online debates and impact stories.

Finally, perhaps the most significant project we have undertaken and which connects all three of our Pillars is the Land Portal's soon to be launched GeoPortal. The GeoPortal will be accessible and usable, geared specifically to non-GIS experts. It provides an opportunity for all those interested in land related data, not just highly trained researchers, to interact with data in its spatial format. Data to be browsed and visualized will transcend national borders, moving beyond country boundaries and focusing on State or district level information. Our aim with this GeoPortal is to move away from siloed and top-down approaches to data and to democratize information.

I invite you to read our strategy and to get involved in helping us to build a vibrant and sustainable land information ecosystem. We will soon be launching a 10th anniversary campaign to fund this ambitious strategy.

The success that we have achieved these past ten years could not have been accomplished without the steadfast support of our donors, partners and supporters. I sincerely look forward to what the future has in store!

Warm regards,

Laura Meggiolaro

Land Portal Team Leader

Highlights



Land Portal Strategy: Inform, Open, Debate

Our strategy has been developed to target three principal challenges that we believe negatively affect land governance systems worldwide:

- Fragmented, incomplete and closed data
- Poorly managed data from local sources leaves vital information inaccessible and under-leveraged
- Discussions around land governance exclude grassroots voices

Inform: Our response to the fragmentation and inaccessibility of information is to develop and nurture a multilingual platform (landportal.org) that hosts a wide range of country, issue and dataset portfolios. We aggregate and publish data, news articles, publications and much more, to make otherwise dispersed content

easy to discover and access.

Open: Our response to the siloed nature of land information and data is to democratise the ecosystem within which it exists; supporting the creation of a “standards-based data infrastructure” – a data infrastructure based on FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable) and open data principles – and building the capacity of information providers, to strengthen the flow of land governance information from all perspectives, at all levels.

Debate: Our response to the lack of opportunities for people to discuss and share their perspectives and opinions on the complex issues surrounding land governance, has been to create virtual meeting spaces where all voices can be heard on land-related issues. We provide a range of services that promote debate, foster dialogue and support innovative storytelling techniques and approaches.

Read the full strategy.



Land Portal Annual Board Meeting

The Land Portal Annual Meeting 2019 took place from 10-11 October at the IFAD Headquarters in Rome. This provided an opportunity for the Land Portal Board members, the Advisory Committee and the Team to discuss a variety of issues, including successes and challenges. Some of the notable points of discussion were our recent focus on land and corruption, our successful capacity building workshops this year and the increasing visits to our website.

Call for Board Members

The Land Portal is looking to complement its current board with three additional members. We are looking for expressions of interest from committed and motivated individuals with experience and interest in land issues, open data and open knowledge, ICT for Development. Those with a diverse background, expertise and a disposition towards innovation and social change are encouraged to apply.

Read more here.



Stay Tuned for the Geoportal – The Land Portal Spatial Platform

At the end of November we will be launching the beta version of our GeoPortal, a platform to make spatial land information accessible and usable, geared specifically to non-GIS experts from local communities, development agencies, policy makers and social scientists. It will provide an opportunity for all those interested in land

related data, not just highly trained researchers, to interact with data in its spatial format. Data to be browsed and visualized on the GeoPortal will transcend national borders, moving beyond country boundaries and focusing on State or district level information.



**2019 CONFERENCE ON
LAND POLICY IN AFRICA**
NOVEMBER 25-29 IN ABIDJAN, COTE D'IVOIRE



**The Land Portal To Be a Media Partner at the
Upcoming 2019 Conference on Land Policy in**

Africa

The Land Portal has recently been accepted for a media partnership at the upcoming CLPA at the end of the month. More specifically, we have been tasked by UNECA to deliver a communications package which will include social media coverage, publishing of a daily conference bulletin, as well as pre and post conference interviews.

Stay tuned to read more!



Land Portal at CFS46: Empowering Advocates for Women's Land Rights Through Open Data

At CFS 46, the Land Portal had the opportunity to be the co-organizer of the side event How the VGGT have changed rural women's lives: Key strategies and innovations towards gender equality together with GLTN Unit UN-Habitat, the

Cadasta Foundation and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). This side event brought together a range of experts who illustrated efforts aimed at ensuring women's land rights through both formal institutions and customary systems. A consensus emerged during the discussion that there is an urgent need to eliminate the gender data gap on land rights.

The presentation of Laura Meggiolaro, Land Portal Team Leader, highlighted the effectiveness of empowering advocates for women's land rights by making data accessible to grassroots initiatives, which they can in turn use as a powerful tool for advocating their own interests.

Read the blog.



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