

## BRIEFING SHEET

# Conclusions from HSS thematic conference and workshop

### CONFERENCE

## Sustainable Development Goals: Land Governance for Equivalent Living and Working Conditions in Urban and Rural Areas

Qingzhou, PR China  
May 16-18, 2019



With the objective of promoting an exchange of opinions and sharing experiences of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSS) organized the conference. It brought together around 100 participants, including high-level ministry and provincial officials, project leaders of international organizations, academics, eminent researchers and practitioners from USA, PR China, the Philippines, Lao PDR, Cambodia, South Korea, Vietnam, Myanmar and Germany.

Rural sustainability is a central element of a country's development efforts. It is an essential foundation for achieving SDGs, for at least three reasons. First, in Asia and Africa, about half of the population lives in rural areas, and the majority of them are living in poverty. Second, agriculture is vital in the economies of developing countries. Third, the influx of rural-urban migrants in search of a better life causes barriers to sustainable urban development. Therefore, the rural potential must

be exploited to strengthen the economy of a country as a whole and to improve the standard of living of rural people in particular.

The individual thematic presentations and discussion identified the determinants of rural sustainability to guide policy-makers and development agencies in formulating programs and policies that can better and more effectively address the problems in the rural sector. The types of determinants were presented as a meta-feature made up of six components: social, economic, environmental, cultural, institutional, and natural resource management. It was acknowledged that as land is a major source of people's identity and livelihood, secure land rights crucially affect the equality of opportunities, socio-economic stability, and cultural diversity. In this regard, land governance is a proven pathway to achieving equal access to land, agricultural transformation, food security, and social equality that will help to secure the future of rural areas.



An interactive dialogue on the challenges of land governance pointed out three major issues that are posing challenges to rural land governance in the South-East Asian countries. First, the state's recognition of customary rights to land, which is typically found in communities in rural areas, is generally weak, and this has led to the abuse of land rights. Second, the

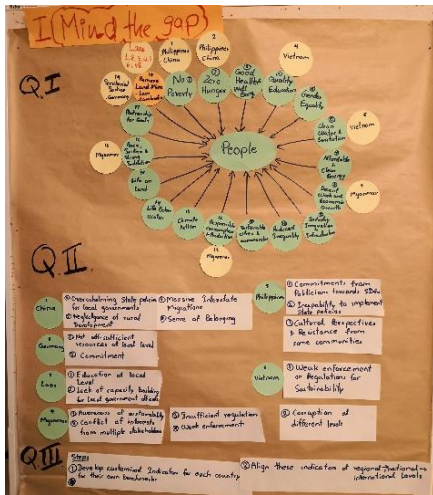
risks from climate change, notably in low lying coastal regions affects rural land use and settlement patterns and cause increased migration or internal displacement. Third, urban-biased land supply policy significantly affect land use changes. Urban expansion has been a major source of rural land consumption, resulting in serious land conflicts.

The discussion stressed that in order to find lasting solutions to land-related challenges, government needs to make a concerted effort, and it also needs to be transparent with clear criteria to implement land-related policies. How the ongoing urbanization trend fits with the concept of balanced urban and rural development is one of the issues that should be on the national agenda. Furthermore, development organizations and the private sector should continue to work with and support communities in addition to the government in identifying solutions as a means of advancing land governance and attaining SDGs.

In the closing of the conference, participants recognized that an integrated rural development approach with functioning institutions, spatial and land use planning, and conflict resolution mechanisms should be built around the objective of achieving balanced rural-urban development as a component of the National Development Strategies. Similarly, existing institutional arrangements should be expanded to accommodate the coordination and cooperation amongst all stakeholders in both the vertical and horizontal levels. Leaders, policy-makers, and stakeholders should offer a wide-ranging view and underpin the opportunities to innovate and grow the new ways of managing the challenges that the rural sector is facing.

## Sustainable Development Goals: A Pathway from Policy to Practice

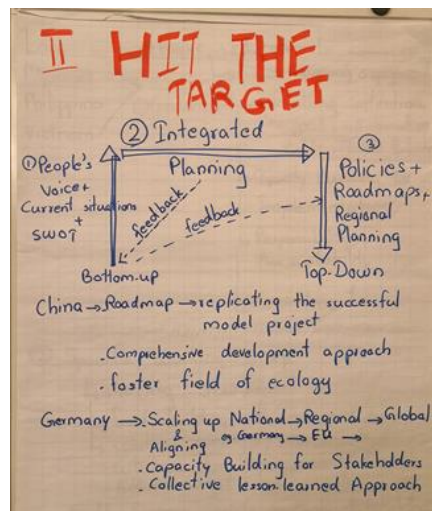
Qingzhou, PR China  
May 20-21, 2019



The HSS arranged a two-day workshop as a cross-sectorial dialogue platform to generate proposals for policy change through the sharing of experiences and perspectives from experts towards the implementation of SDGs. The workshop was unanimously recognized as a large learning and thought-provoking event for all participants. There was a full range of talks on the integrated approach to sustainable development and in particular, on the implementation of SDGs in rural areas. The participants shared their own experiences and were able to find common ground. Around twenty experts from Germany, Vietnam, Myanmar, the Philippines, Lao PDR, and PR China joined the discussion.

Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the world

leaders, the UN member states have taken on different policies and strategies to guide the implementation of SDGs at the national level. However, the experts observed that while the world has made remarkable progress on the SDGs over the past decade, development is uneven across the goals and countries. They identified six key challenges hindering the implementation of the SDGs both in developed and developing countries - inequality in income and wealth within the country, weak institutional and legal frameworks, inadequate capacity at the institutional level, lack of political will and low or no participation of people in the decision-making process.



The experts had a consensus that an enabling environment is essential for achieving all of the SDGs and their targets. The central government should play a proactive role in SDG implementation through identifying and updating the policies, strategies, institutions, and allocating the appropriate budgets for the SDGs. Furthermore, the government should undertake capacity development

programs aimed at strengthening the capacity of the stakeholders to integrate the SDGs as a general framework for strategic planning at the local and regional levels. However, national governments are not the only players. Local governments within their territories are the principal partner of the government in the frontline implementation of the SDGs. They have a role in making progress on the SDGs through their actions.

The experts emphasized that a real change in accomplishing the SDGs is only possible when the local people are involved in the implementation process. It is vital to create systematic means that can generate interest and the engagement of the community with the SDGs. The process should start with the building of awareness of the people to make them understand the multiple benefits for their own lives and the community as a whole. Furthermore, inter-agency and system-wide collaboration and coordination are required to ensure that a country's existing development policies and strategies align with the SDGs. The government should promote public-private partnerships, which can serve as a viable instrument not only for financing the infrastructure projects but also for improving the quality of services.

The experts recognized that as SDGs priorities and the level of implementation vary from country to country, there is no single institutional model to use for the implementation of SDGs. However, the need for high priority and relevant public policy to signal the government's commitment concerning the implementation of SDGs is seen as fundamental.

The Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSS) has been successfully represented in the People's Republic of China for more than 30 years. The HSS, in collaboration with the Bavarian State Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Forestry, established a pilot project in 1989. As a follow-up action to the successful implementation of the project, in 2004 the Sino-German Research and Training Center on Land Consolidation and Land Development in Qingzhou was founded. Presently, the focuses of the center are laid on the training of staff working at the decision-making level, advisory services in land policy and land law issues, integrated policy research, deriving institutional knowledge from pilot projects, and the exchange of experiences and knowledge within China.

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