

Meeting on the One-Year Anniversary of CFS Endorsement of the Voluntary Guidelines

Remarks

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As Delivered

The process by which the Guidelines were adopted was unprecedented in its transparency, with participation from many civil society organizations, the private sector, multilateral institutions and more than 95 member states. The United States was happy to participate in this process and congratulates Paul Munro-Faure and his team on the excellent progress to date. In addition, Dr. Gregory Myers sends his warm regards to all members and participants and also congratulates Mr. Munro-Faure and his team.

The Grow Africa Investment Forum held May 8 and 9 in Cape Town included a breakout session on land governance at which government officials, the donor community, NGOs and the private sector discussed opportunities to support and accelerate implementation of the VGs and other measures to improve land governance. Several heads of state and executives of private companies highlighted the central role of secure access to land and good land governance practices to increasing private and public sector investment in agriculture, as well as the need to strengthen access to secure land rights for women.

As Mr. Munro-Faure stated, FAO has become a focal point for implementation, but as noted by Dan Gustafson, many countries and organizations, including the U.S. Government, are working to support implementation of the VGs through multilateral and bilateral program assistance.

Through USAID and MCC, the U.S. is investing in land governance programs that support many of the principles outlined in the VGs. The U.S. Government currently has 53 active land governance programs in 32 countries, representing a commitment of over \$800 million. Through a new program launched in 2012, USAID will further align its activities and policies that strengthen property rights and resource tenure to support the VGs, and MCC will continue to support relevant land governance activities as they emerge through its economic analysis-based process for program development.

As part of an ongoing, collaborative effort to enhance donor communication and coordination, share knowledge, and improve transparency and efficiency, 12 donor agencies, including the World Bank, are in the process of mapping ongoing land tenure projects and programs. The intent of developing this Land Program Database is to help better coordinate work on land governance and, more importantly, focus greater attention on implementation of the VGs. The

U.S. hopes that this exercise will be completed soon and that we can make this information available to stakeholders. This database, when matched with the data collected by FAO on demand for assistance to implement the VGs - should help us all better coordinate the supply of technical assistance and identify opportunities to leverage resources for maximum impact.

Donors, academics, private sector and civil society organizations are increasingly discussing the need to develop and harmonize good land governance indicators. A working group, convened by UN-Habitat, the World Bank, and MCC, has begun a process of developing a framework for comparable land governance indicators and a roadmap for a broad, inclusive, participatory consultation and validation process and technical work to move toward its use. A coherent set of land indicators will service multiple development goals, including implementation of the VGs, and it may influence where investments are made by the private sector and other stakeholders. The development of comparable indicators will complement and enhance other on-going efforts to assess the status of land governance and measure progress over time. It will also provide a powerful tool to define and implement the monitoring and evaluation chapter of the VGs. There are also growing calls to include one or two high-level, land-specific indicators in the post-2015 Millennium Development Agenda.

The US welcomes continued updates from FAO and encourages as many members and participants to recommit themselves to implement elements of the VGs most appropriate to their country context. Thank you.