

# FOOD SECURITY AND LAND GOVERNANCE FACTSHEET

## Afghanistan



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### ABSTRACT

In Afghanistan, insecurity over land and water rights hampers investments in food production and irrigation. In rural areas, customary tenure systems, partly based on religious law, are the most relevant but suffer from weak recognition and offer little protection to rights holders. The land policy reform is on-going but remains slow. Moreover, land administration capacity is weak and improvements mostly take place in urban areas. In this context, land disputes are common and often violent. They mostly relate to competing claims between internally displaced persons/refugees and settlers, or between farmers and nomadic groups, because of ethnic tensions or fraudulent or overlapping land titles. Irrigated farming is important and responsible for a significant part of water consumption. Irrigation infrastructure has been heavily neglected during the past decades of conflict, resulting in low water use efficiency. The skewed distribution of land, the neglect of irrigation infrastructure and the impunity of land grabbing by elites and warlords are additional sources of frustration and potential conflict. The reluctance of the government to change tenure paradigms has special pertinence today given the massive mineral, oil and gas deposits which may be developed on rural lands -now considered government land- in the next few decades.

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In 2016, the factsheet was updated by Mr. Tom Haythornthwaite in collaboration with LANDac (Gemma Betsema, LANDac/UU) with support from the Food and Business Knowledge Platform (F&BKP) as part of the LANDac/F&BKP knowledge agenda on land governance and food security.

### **About LANDac**

LANDac, the Netherlands Academy on Land Governance for Equitable and Sustainable Development, is a partnership between Dutch organizations working on land governance. The partners are the International Development Studies (IDS) group at Utrecht University (leading partner), African Studies Centre, Agriterra, the Sociology of Development and Change (SDC) group at Wageningen University, HIVOS, the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The LANDac network conducts research, disseminates information, and organizes courses and training, focusing on new pressures and competing claims on land and natural resources. Guiding question is how to optimize the link between land governance, sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

[www.landgovernance.org](http://www.landgovernance.org)

### **About F&BKP**

The Food and Business Knowledge Platform (F&BKP) is one of the five Knowledge Platforms initiated by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is an open and independent initiative where representatives from international networks and organizations of business, science, civil society and policy come together. The Platform shares, critically reflects on, generates, deepens and improves (interdisciplinary) knowledge and feeds practices and policies on food and nutrition security. Land governance is one of the prioritized themes in its mission to develop a more focused knowledge agenda.

[www.knowledge4food.net](http://www.knowledge4food.net)

### Regulatory land governance framework

Land laws are complex in Afghanistan and have several origins: religious (Shari'a), tribal or community customary law basis, a civil code drafted in the 1970s, and a series of statutory laws in the form of Presidentially-passed decrees and acts passed by Parliament (Alden Wily 2003a, 2004; Allan 2001; Gebremedhin 2007). Some revisions have been made to national (statutory) land laws since 2001, but without affecting the substance and therefore do not differ significantly from when they were first introduced in the 1960s and 1970s. Activities shaped around donor funding and were influenced by international rather than local priorities (Alden-Wily 2013).

Legal protection of informal urban occupancy and protection of rural customary rights have not improved since the Bonn Peace Agreement of 2001, especially in respect of off-farm collective resources. Although there are some improvements to the recognition of customarily defined land documents, these relate only to house and farm lands, and not to the millions of hectares of rangelands which are so critical to livelihood in dry Afghanistan. This is important as most land and resource assets are by traditional communal property, but neither Sharia, nor the Civil Code or modern national laws recognize that such rural assets are owned. Instead these are defined as belonging to the State as either government land or public land which cannot be owned. The reluctance to change tenure paradigms has special pertinence today given the massive mineral, oil and gas deposits which may be developed on rural lands in the next few decades.

At the same time, the law facilitates privatization of some categories of these lands to private investors. Changes made are primarily to ease investor access to lands. Despite legal reforms including in the Constitution (2004), the government continues to issue decrees which allocate government/public land to private individuals. This is in line with new investment promotion decrees which make promotion of commercial land use a priority. However, in practice many of the developments on allocated lands are for private interest purposes. Establishment of housing estates called 'little cities' is common. In Afghanistan, the land policy was approved in 2007 but until the present remains a paper document, its policy directives are not embedded in laws.

Law	Content
The Law on Pastures and Grazing Land (1971)	Provides for the protection and use of pastures for cattle grazing
The Land Expropriation Law (2000)	Regulates land expropriation for public use purposes; public purposes such as: construction of manufacturing institutions, highways, pipelines sewerage canalizations; and mining and extraction from underground reservoirs; provides that compensation shall be given; states that emirate lands may be used for public purposes without compensation.
The 2004 Constitution of Afghanistan	Does not directly address land rights despite considerable lobbying at the time to introduce a land chapter (Alden Wily, 2003b). Provisions are largely tradition with classical provisions such as guarantee of protection of private property (but with no clear definition of what constitutes private property), of the right to settle anywhere in the country, and provision for the State to compulsorily acquire private land for public purposes. Private property may also only be confiscated by legal order.
The 2007 Land Policy	Allows for the formalization of land rights in informal settlements, and addresses bottlenecks in land rights administration as well as the overlap in different institutions' authority over questions of land rights. The Policy also provides for community based management and pledges recognition of community lands.
The 2008 Law on Managing Land Affairs – normally referred to as the Land Management Law (LML)	Sets out definitions for various land types and classifications, requirements for land deeds, and principles governing allocations of state land, land leasing, land expropriation, settlement of land rights, and restoration of lands. A main amendment in recent years has been to allow foreigners to lease lands, from 50 years up to 90 years. The law recognizes Shari'a.
Forest Law (2012)	Acknowledges that public, community, and private forests exist, but does not elaborate on the definition of these categories or define the extent to which property rights are applicable.
Mineral Law (2015)	Regulates the affairs related to determining the ownership and control of the state over mineral deposits and provides for the preservation, management, utilization and support of the state, private and joint investments in the mining sector.

(FAOlex 2016; World Bank 2014)

## Land tenure forms

In Afghanistan, around one quarter to one third of rural families own no land. A significant number also do not own a house but live in landlord houses. Sharecropping (receiving wheat in return for labour) is a major source of subsistence for many households. Some landless families do own a few sheep and goats.

Land ownership can be acquired through purchase, government land allocation, and transfer of ownership. The most important is inheritance, in which sharia is generally followed, thus acknowledging rights of wives and daughters.

Several million people<sup>1</sup> are nomadic or semi-nomadic. To acquire pasture land for grazing their livestock they may approach local authorities for vacant land (mawat). However, many settled communities now resist their arrival as rangeland is limited, and many resent the control which pastoral nomads have exercised over spring and summer pastures for a century (Alden Wily, 2004a). For an individual application for ownership rights to mawat land one needs to show that no one has ownership rights, the land is not cultivated or improved, and agree to cultivate or improve the land (McEwan and Whitty 2006; Alden Wily 2003a; Gebremedhin 2006; World Bank 2005).

War and drought have caused traditional land management practices to break down, leading to insecure and unclear land rights that promote unsustainable use of pasture (DfID, 2007). However, with the assistance of a small number of international NGOs, many communities are actively bringing their rangelands under community based management, and this is well supported by national forest and rangeland policy (2005).

Afghanistan's land is vested: (1) individually in private individuals and entities; (2) communally in families, clans, (3) communities – generally pasture; and (4) in the government. There is some inconsistency among the various legal classifications of types of ownership. The Civil Code, Law on Land Management, Presidential Decrees, Agricultural Master Plan and Sharia all classify land differently. Under the 2008 Law on Managing Land Affairs, all land not proved to be private is deemed to be state land.

Thousands of people now buy land through an informal system, such as buying plots in private housing developments, which are often set up by armed commanders on government lands. They receive receipts for their purchases but not formal title deeds. Many do not consider this a problem indicating how poorly the legal system is viewed. At the same time, Afghans place great store by legal title deeds. Only those with substantial means can now acquire these, given the levels of rent-seeking required. The documentation system is in any event problematic.

Afghanistan has a deeds registration system<sup>2</sup>. Less than 10% of rural property and 30% of urban property is covered by legal deeds. However, archived deeds are often out of date and inaccurate (McEwan and Nolan 2007; Stanfield et al. 2008). In urban areas, recommendations for the reform of titling was made by a USAID project in 2009 and is being continued by another project which will close in 2013, but has not been adopted in law or procedure. The number of offices involved and taxes to be paid have been reduced. Acquiring property from within the private sector has been accelerated from an average of 250 days to 64 days, and the transfer tax is reduced from 7% to 5% of the value.

Land type	
Private land	Land individually held without title, with non-recognized title or with state formal title, as well as collectively held land without or with customary title or with documentation issued by previous government regimes. Transfer by: selling, transferred inherited or compulsory land acquisition.
Public land	Pastures (allocated for public use); forests; graveyards, entertainment parks, roads, green areas, playgrounds; schools, universities, hospitals. Owned by the Ministries, or municipalities. Cannot be sold, leased, transferred or exchanged
State land	Forests, protected land, arid and virgin land (registered as state land and any land that is deemed public but is not registered in the book of government lands). Only arid and virgin land can be leased or sold provided certain conditions.

1 Within the population of an estimated 33 million people [The CIA World Factbook estimate is 32,564,342 (July 2015 est.) A January 1 2016 estimate is 33 045 440 people. <http://countrymeters.info/en/Afghanistan>

2 The difference between a deeds registration and the Torrens systems is that the former involves registration of instruments while the latter involves registration of title. Moreover, though a register of who owned what land and 'a chain of title' is maintained, it can be challenged in the courts at any time. The limits of the deeds-registration system is that transfers of land are slow, expensive, and often unable to create certain title.

### **Some history on land registration**

Property taxes had been instituted as early as the 1930s. In 1964, the state created AMLAK, a department supervised directly by the Ministry of Finance, to collect land taxes. AMLAK invited voluntary submissions of holding sizes and understandably, most farmers 'under-estimated' their farm sizes. Each District and Province still maintains these Land Books. During the 1970s a mild redistributive reform was launched to provide land to landless farm tenants and workers. Surrender of surplus lands was often voluntary if found to be above the (generous) ceiling established.

Around the same time a formal survey of landholdings began to be conducted and by 1978 had surveyed around 30 per cent of the total land area, including around 30 per cent of private farm lands. This provided a registry of probable ownership, but which has never been verified. Absolute ownership is only obtainable through a court-based system and the courts maintain their own registries of properties.

The communist regime that came to power in 1978 declared a more radical redistribution programme, landlessness was still rife and the aim was to settle 340,000 families, with certificate of ownership, for which the government expropriated land surplus to a ceiling of 6 ha. The land expropriation was one of the drivers behind the fight against the communist system, resulting eventually in the withdrawing of the Soviets in 1988. Between 1989 and 1992, the country was relatively stable under two regimes, but this collapsed in 1992 with fragmentation of the country under different warlords. The Taliban regime began in 1996 and lasted until the Bonn Agreement in December 2001. An important change in land law for rural communities was recognition by the Taliban in 2000 that community-owned pastures existed, as well as private and state pastures.

### **Institutional land governance framework**

Reconstruction of institutions was first discussed after the Bonn Agreement 2001 (Reynold, 2006). Until 2013 land administration and registration was the responsibility of the Afghanistan Land Authority (ALA) which was part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation (MAIL). In 2013 this responsibility was merged into ARAZI (arazi.gov.af). ARAZI was granted all the authority and the responsibilities of AMLAK (land taxation), ALA, and the Independent Commission for the Restitution of Illegally Occupied Land and has a primary role in carrying out many of the directives of the Land Management Law. ARAZI is responsible for managing state lands throughout Afghanistan and for providing land-related services to government institutions, individuals, and investors, including municipalities. ARAZI is not authorized to manage municipality-owned lands. Among new ARAZI capabilities was the development of the Afghan Land Records Management System (Thomson Reuters 2013).

Whereas, municipalities have responsibility for land acquisition and land allocation, village councils (called shura or jirga) are also active in land issues and disputes settlement in informal ways. However, the shura system is criticized for not representing the interests of economically disadvantaged and vulnerable groups but has made major advances since 2001. Community Development Councils have been established in around half of all villages and are elected. No decentralization of land administration has been undertaken, despite several important pilot projects which demonstrated that this was fully viable.

ALA's main function was to recapture lands which it believes belong to Government, to lease those lands to investors, and to generate revenue for the government (Anderson 2010; Beall and Esser 2005). The Interim and Transitional Administrations of President Karzai, lasting until multi-party elections in 2005, were however not especially keen to change land law or policy. Then and since, recapture of lands claimed as belonging to Government has been a main agenda.

Disputes over access to land and water in Afghanistan have become one of the key drivers of conflict and criminal violence. Fierce competition exists between communities, ethnicities, and tribes for scarce resources. Land disputes are dealt with both in the formal system as well as in traditional systems. However, both formal and informal mechanisms for land dispute resolution are weak. Informal mechanisms have deteriorated especially since the coup in 1979 which weakened community social structures. Ongoing displacement, resettlement, population growth and urbanization have severely increased pressures on land, and this in turn has further destabilized traditional systems (USIP 2015). The formal system is believed to be fraudulent.

### **Gender**

Women are often denied participation in the main shura although many communities have women's shuras (Beall and Esser 2005). The Constitution states that women cannot be precluded from owning or acquiring property and Islamic

law grants widows one-eighth of the property of the deceased spouse; daughters inherit half the share of land inherited by sons. In especially Pashtun communities, daughters tend to relinquish their inherited land rights to their brothers, especially at marriage. Widows who inherit land commonly transfer it to their sons' names. Some studies have suggested that about 2 per cent of women own land, mostly widows (GIROA 2004; Grace 2004; Grace 2005). When registered, most land is in the name of the male head of household. Though in urban settings women are more assertive about their rights to land, they do not register their rights formally because they consider the process as too time consuming and costly (Grace 2005; Beall and Esser 2005). However, other studies find that women own a good deal more land that realized, as found for example in the National Vulnerability Assessment Survey of 2004 (Alden Wily, 2004b).

### Foreign Direct Investment

Afghanistan takes the 166<sup>th</sup> place in the Transparency International Corruption Index (2015), only above Somalia and North Korea (TI 2015). The Afghanistan constitution prohibits foreign individuals from owning immovable property in Afghanistan. Foreign individuals can lease property for the purpose of capital investment (GIROA 2004). Land leasing for up to 90 years is now very common. Many foreign states and companies including from China and India are actively investing in land acquisition for especially mining purposes. Foreign investment in urban areas is significant in the commercial sector.

Land grabbing has soared since the Bonn Agreement, 2001. However much of the land grabbing in the private sector is made by local notables, such as commanders, and who routinely help themselves to especially unfarmed lands. A common type of land grabbing is by business who illegally obtain property deeds with the help of corrupt government officials. They subsequently sell these title deeds to new homeowners who then facing prosecutions. There are also some examples of government grabbing land without consultation or compensation, for the establishment of public infrastructure (US Department of State 2015).

Most observers and agencies can see no real end to the land grabbing which has become a norm in the country, without dramatic governance change. Militarization of land acquisition may also rise, given the high number of arms in the country.

## INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT

### Policy framework

Eighty percent of the country's water resources come from snowmelt from the Hindu Kush Mountains and are contained in three major watersheds. Annual flooding is a problem for many areas of the country (ADB 2002; ADB 2008).

Irrigated farming is important and responsible for a significant part of water consumption. Irrigation infrastructure has been heavily neglected during the past decades of conflict, resulting in low water use efficiency (USAID, 2010).

Law	Content
The 2009 Water Law	One component of the country's strategy to integrate its water systems and institutions. Provides the basic framework for the sector and enumerates ministerial responsibilities. Based on best practice for integrated water resources management (IWRM). Adopts a river basin approach under which natural river basin boundaries (versus administrative boundaries) govern all aspects of natural resources management and planning

(Wegerich 2009; GIROA 2007b).

### Institutional framework

The Ministry of Energy and Water has overall responsibility for planning, management, and development of water resources. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock is responsible for managing irrigation and drainage systems (Wegerich 2009; Ahmed and Wasiq 2004; ADB 2002; ABD 2008).

The 2009 Water Law also establishes River Basin Agencies (RBAs) and River Basin Councils under the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW). The five RBAs established under MEW provide a decentralized management structure and are to create basin master plans to guide basins development and management. The transition to RBAs and their full implementation will require a new approach and new skills for MEW.

Customary law often governs the use of water on private land and in private systems, and also supports the resolution of conflicts over water, and water resource conservation. Water governance has traditionally been dealt with at the village level. One example is the kaerez system for the allocation of water, which is constructed and maintained on a community basis (McMurray and Tarlock 2005). The key actor at the village level is the mirab who delegates authority to sub-water masters. Agreements between farmers, the mirab, and local government determine the distribution of water. The handling of water disputes and the application of customary law rests with village elders (McEwan and Whitty 2006). However, in some regions, military commanders have taken control of water resources (McMurray and Tarlock 2005).

Current policy is attempting to convert traditional arrangements into formal Water User Associations, which involve users paying fees and setting up formal institutions, which not all are able to do. The model is also being applied to forest and pasture management, and at the local level in some regions, fears are being expressed by farmers that they will be excluded because they do not have the money to pay fees to the Association or the means to form a legal body.

Forests represent a small resource in Afghanistan. However, their rehabilitation, especially of vast rangelands, is critical for limit flooding and avalanches in the high central and northern zones. Forests are suffering from a breakdown in management regulations. Forest rights are insecure. New forestry legislation is in the process of being enacted (2012) and will award communities use rights and management duties (ADB 2002; UNEP 2003; GIROA 2007a). The Department of Forestry and Range Management in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock is responsible for the management and protection of the country's natural forests, pasture/rangelands national parks and wildlife resources (Shimizu and Trudel 2006; UNEP 2003; ADB 2002).

## REALITIES ON THE GROUND

In rural areas land rights are highly insecure, especially where these refer to rangelands which communities traditionally own communally. Drivers of the insecurity are: (1) a history of inequitable relations within communities with regard to access and rights to land and water; (2) multiple unresolved interests over the same land, including rights of nomads; (3) failure to develop accepted principles governing holdings of non-agricultural land; and (4) continuing violence and disorder, uncontrolled poppy production, warlordism, land invasions, and ethnic disputes, but most of all, the failure of modern Afghan land law to recognize that off-farm resources are also owned (Alden Wily 2004b; McEwan and Nolan 2007; Beall and Esser 2005; Stanekzai 2008; Denmark 2007; World Bank 2005).

The conflict has reached very tense levels with killings in some key foothill areas in the centre of the country as pastoralists attempt to enter the central highlands to access summer grazing. Local resistance is due to a long history of settled communities in the centre and north of the country resenting their colonization by Pashtun nomads over the last century, and now reclaiming their lands as a result of the civil war (Alden Wily, 2009). The fact that many Kuchi joined the Taleban added to tensions. Some projects (such as a USAID-funded PEACE project) have attempted to mitigate these conflicts through peace ambassadors. This has helped solve local disputes but not the larger dispute as to who has primary rights to the central highland pastures and to many northern pastures, which Kuchi have been using since the beginning of the century, often against local will but with the support of the Pashtun rulers. There is also a Presidential Commission mandated to resolve the Hazara-Kuchi crisis. This has so far failed to achieve resolve over the pasture access issue. The Commission and other high level actors are believed to contain armed conflict only through paying bribes to the Kuchi to cease attempting to enter the central highlands. Kuchi settlement schemes have also been initiated but are not proving successful, not least because of the poor selection of settlement areas (Patterson 2004; Alden Wily 2004b; 2009; Foley 2004; Deschamps and Roe 2009).

Especially since 2002, competition for land has increased: population pressures, rapid urbanization, displacement and resettlement, and rising land value, are some of the drivers (World Bank 2014). Land disputes are common and often violent; among the most common causes of land disputes are: the inability to address the land claims of returning refugees and IDPs; land seizures by elites and warlords; ethnic tension between Pashtun and non-Pashtun interests over especially pasture lands; the prevalence of fraudulent land documents; absence of agreements over rights to pasture land and forests and inheritance rights to private property (McEwan and Nolan 2007; Alden Wily 2004a, 2004b; Patterson 2004; Stanekzai 2008; IDMC 2008; Deschamps and Roe 2009).

Actions that are required are the provision of decentralized and deconcentrated services for land and water governance; the integration of customary practices in formal frameworks and strengthening of conflict resolution mechanisms.

Informal mechanisms and institutions are essential for the *resolution of land disputes*. Thus aggrieved parties can take disputes to family members, neighbours, and a local notable person or leader, or approach a village council (shura or jirga) or the head of a wider community area. Alternative dispute resolution has gained strength since 2001 given the failures of the formal court system. Agencies like the Norwegian Refugee Council which assist individuals and groups to resolve cases find that the vast majority of land disputes are handled through alternative dispute resolution. This includes village shura, district shura, mosques and sometime provincial level mediation services. However, rent-seeking also afflicts these informal forums.

The formal court system has limited capacity, and is seen by many to be corrupt. The Special Land Dispute Court established by government was criticized for failing to perform its mandate and abandoned in 2005. There is no dedicated land court system even though land cases constitute by far the greater proportion of cases brought to the formal court system (Alden Wiley 2003; Beall and Esser 2005; Koser and Schmeidl 2009).

The recapture of lands claimed as belonging to Government has been a main agenda, but many of these lands are customarily owned and occupied. There is much debate in Afghanistan as to whom the President is providing state lands and for what purposes. Several hundred administrative decrees have been issued by the President, allocating government land to private persons and without endorsement by Parliament. There is also rising concern in the country at the way in which lands deemed to be public or Government Land are being disposed of by the President, Cabinet Ministers, and Provincial Governors. The law itself is weak and rule of law is even weaker. Overlapping responsibility for allocating government lands to families or investors remains problematic in especially urban areas. However, donors are currently encouraging the Government to reform the Land Expropriation Law to make land takings from the private sector fairer, with more significant compensation.

Another problem facing Afghans is the fact that all procedures around land acquisition are subject to rent-seeking by the many agencies involved in the process, from the local municipality or district ARAZI office to the Supreme Court which issues the final deed.

## FOOD SECURITY

### **Food Security and Climate change**

The Least Developed Country Fund project builds Afghanistan's resilience to risks posed by climate change to the country's water resources. It strengthens the country's capacity to monitor and forecast these risks and integrate them into relevant policies, plans and programmes in the country. In addition, the project undertakes concrete interventions and builds local institutional capacity to improve water use efficiency in selected sites. The project will be implemented by UNEP with NEPA as executing partner. The project cycle started in 2013 and will last until 2017 with a total budget of US \$ 6 million financed by the LDCF.

### **Land governance and food security**

In 2015, 5.9 per cent of the population or more than 1.5 million people were considered severely food insecure.

Another 7.3 million people – more than one in every four Afghans – are classed as moderately food insecure. [[http://foodsecuritycluster.net/sites/default/files/SFSA\\_2015\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://foodsecuritycluster.net/sites/default/files/SFSA_2015_Final_0.pdf)]

Afghanistan's 2015 Global Hunger Index (GHI) score was 35.4, which indicates an alarming level of hunger, but historical data now available as well shows that the country's 2000 GHI score would have been 52.5, surpassing the GHI threshold of 50. [<http://www.foodsecurityportal.org/795-million-people-chronically-undernourished-armed-conflict-root-cause-hunger>]

Poppy cultivation in Afghanistan has had several impacts, both on land governance as well as food security. The profitable business has increased land values outside of urban areas. At the same time, poppy cultivation has taken over land previously available for agriculture and has used precious irrigation sources, therewith increasing rural land conflicts (USIP 2015). Particularly over the last decade, warlords and powerful individuals have undertaken the illegal appropriation of both public and private lands on a large scale, in some cases especially for the cultivation of poppy (McEwen & Nolan 2007).

### **Urbanization**

Afghanistan faces a major urbanization crisis: rapid urbanization, unsustainable refugee returns and internal displacement

have led to a huge rise in informal settlements in Kabul. National and international responses – despite the urgency of the situation – have lacked behind. The number of both old and new displaced is estimated at almost half a million, and expectations are that this number will only rise with the possible return of large numbers of Afghans from Iraq and Pakistan. The population of Kabul increased immensely since the fall of the Taliban from around 500,000 to 2,000,000 in 2001 to around 4.5 million in 2010 (ODI 2012). Urban areas in Afghanistan are characterized by high levels of food insecurity and poor diets. Internally displaced people (IDPs) in urban centres are especially disadvantaged, one of the reasons being that they can't rely on an existing social network in times of stress (Hall 2014).

## RESOURCES AND OTHER INFORMATION

### Related country profiles

- USAID: <http://usaidlandtenure.net/usaidltpproducts/country-profiles/afghanistan/>
- FAO: <http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index.asp?lang=en&ISO3=AFG>
- IMF: <http://www.imf.org/external/country/AFG/index.htm>
- World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/afghanistan>
- Land Portal: <https://www.landportal.info/book/countries/AFG?indicator=INDFAOFSEC3&comparing-country=ARM>

### Laws, Policy and Regulations search engines

- FAO Lex (Land & NR search engine): <http://faolex.fao.org/faolex/index.htm>
- Water Lex (Water laws search engine): <http://faolex.fao.org/faolex/waterlex.htm>

### Maps and Databases

- Land and soils databases/information systems: <http://www.fao.org/nr/land/databasesinformation-systems/en/>
- Water database/information systems: [http://www.fao.org/nr/water/infores\\_databases.html](http://www.fao.org/nr/water/infores_databases.html)
- Land and water maps and graphs: <http://www.fao.org/nr/solaw/maps-and-graphs/> and [http://www.fao.org/nr/water/infores\\_maps.html](http://www.fao.org/nr/water/infores_maps.html)

### Portals and other resources

- Land Portal: [http://landportal.info/search/apachesolr\\_search/afghanistan](http://landportal.info/search/apachesolr_search/afghanistan)
- Landesa: <http://www.landesa.org/search/?q=afganistan>
- Areu: <http://www.areu.org.af/?Lang=en-US>
- World Food Programme: <https://www.wfp.org/countries/afghanistan>

### Donor support programs

The Global Donor Working Group on Land (GDWGL) quotes 2 donor programmes and projects in Afghanistan (finalized and ongoing): <https://landgov.donorplatform.org>.

But, in addition to that, over the last decade several donors have invested in institutional and/or piloting land developments.

- ADB for example, with DfID funds, trailed a community based system of land recordation and certification (but which has not been adopted).
- USAID has fielded several major land projects, such as the 'land titling and economic restructuring in Afghanistan' (LTERA) from 2004 to 2009 now followed by a US\$ 42 million project known as Land Reform in Afghanistan (LARA) from 2011 to 2014 focusing on developing titling procedures and upgrading in Jalalabad, and also encouraging land law reform. LARA established and piloted a model process for land rights formalization of informal settlement in Afghanistan, implemented several technical innovations, capacity building initiatives, and assessments, and provided broad support to ARZAI.
- FAO fielded a combined piloting approach to community land tenure security and rangeland conservation (2006-08) and which did impact significantly on the adoption of community based approaches, now mainly followed by international NGOs working in the field.
- The World Bank has focused mainly on urban land developments. From 2012-2016, the World Bank carried out a Land Governance Assessment Framework in Afghanistan, which has been completed. The LGAF is a diagnostic tool that is implemented at the local level in a collaborative fashion, that addresses the need for guidance to diagnose and benchmark land governance, and that is intended to help countries prioritize reforms and monitor progress over time.
- UN-Habitat has sustained important regularization projects in several cities, including Kabul.

- The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) and the Afghanistan Land Authority sought to address this problem by testing a new model of engaging community dispute resolution in formal land registration. USIP conducted a pilot project from fall 2013 to spring 2014 seeking to increase formal registration of land that had gone through community dispute resolution. WFP assisted nearly 3.5 million people in 2013, primarily in remote, food-insecure rural areas. WFP's food assistance targets poor and vulnerable families, schoolchildren, illiterate people, returning refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs) and disabled people – with an emphasis on vulnerable women and girls.
- In 2013 WFP and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock inaugurated the country's first Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR). The warehouse complex in Kabul can hold up to 22,000 metric tons of wheat. The US\$ 7.7 million facility was funded mainly by the Government of Australia, and is located near Kabul's grain silo in District 3 in the west of the city. [<http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/strategic-grain-reserve-inaugurated-kabul-boost-emergency-response-capacity>]

Many millions of aid dollars have been spent by various donors to help establish the Afghanistan Land Authority but the mandate of which is not significantly different from its predecessor, AMLAK. Many agencies focus on supporting community based land dispute resolution, ranging from the USAID-funded PEACE project, which works only with nomads and settled peoples, and the Norwegian Refugee Council, which focused on the land and other grievances of returning refugees or rising numbers of internally displaced persons. A number of local and international research groups such as The Liaison Office or the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit carry out periodic research on land related issues.

### Civil society organizations

The International Land Coalition and Asia Land Watch have no members in Afghanistan. Since 2005 research and reporting on land issues have expanded and now include:

- Afghanistan Watch: an Afghan think tank devoted to innovative and forward-thinking research, advocacy and training on democracy, good governance, and civic rights and responsibilities. The organisation aims to support a culture of peace in Afghanistan through its research and advocacy programmes in areas such as democracy and political settlement, governance, and promoting civil rights; areas it views as building blocks for sustainable peace in Afghanistan. AW has also conducted research on the reconciliation and reintegration programme, which is the peacebuilding or peace settlement initiative currently underway in Afghanistan.
- Human Rights Watch Afghanistan. Website: <https://www.hrw.org/asia/afghanistan>
- Afghanistan Analysts Network (AAN): The AAN is an independent non-profit policy research organisation. It aims to bring together the knowledge, experience and drive of a large number of experts to better inform policy and to increase the understanding of Afghan realities. Website: <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/about-us-2/about-aan/>.
- Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC). Website: <http://www.aihrc.org.af>
- Afghan Land Consulting Organization (ALCO) – [www.afghan-land.org](http://www.afghan-land.org)
- Afghanistan Research and evaluation Unit (AREU) – <http://www.areu.org.af/?Lang=en-US>
- Cooperation for Reconstruction of Afghanistan (CRA) – <http://cra.af/>

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#### LANDac

More information about LANDac and our activities is available on our website: [www.landgovernance.org](http://www.landgovernance.org).

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