

Building Resilience and Inclusion in Conflict Land Markets: The Role of Geospatial Information and Professionals

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SUMMARY

The objective of the paper is to identify and assess opportunities to build resilience and inclusion in land markets affected by fragility, conflict and violence (FCV). Particular attention will be paid to the role of geospatial information in developing and assessing policy and identifying and addressing gaps concerning vulnerable persons. This is relevant for several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including goal 11 on sustainable and inclusive communities and goal 16 on peace and strong institutions.

Access to land is key to promote well-being, economic livelihoods and social identity. Land markets determine who has access to land and under what conditions by setting the rules and processes for the transfer of land rights, both formal and informal. The parameters of land markets are set through land policies, institutional and legal frameworks, land-registration services and social norms, and land agencies and professionals are critical to well-functioning market. Land markets are necessary to support numerous sectors, including land use planning, urbanization, agriculture, housing and infrastructure. Effective land markets can also promote social cohesion and reduce fragility by making clear the rules by which valuable assets such as land and property are transferred, managed and mobilized for credit.

The results of this research will focus on building knowledge of how land transactions, both legitimate and illegitimate, take place during periods of FCV.

Understanding how land markets function in FCV contexts can help mitigate immediate threats to tenure security and provide guidance as to how to develop land administration and address transitional justice issues including land restitution. Land transactions in situations of FCV are affected by general deterioration of land governance characterized by: inadequate policy and legal

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frameworks; weak, fragmented, and captured institutions; mismanagement of state land; and loss of trust in the state and its institutions. Public spending on land administration may decrease, negatively impacting the ability to provide land transaction services. Non-state actors may step in to provide services in ways that undermine tenure rights for vulnerable persons. Land transactions are more likely to take place under duress, especially for socially or financially vulnerable persons. Oversight bodies and dispute mechanisms may prove ineffective. The conclusions will provide better understanding of the most effective opportunities to build resilience and what data and policy is needed to support them.

The significance of the research is that it will contribute to the currently limited literature on how to mobilize land markets in active conflict, fragility and violence to build resilience. This proposed knowledge is also important to support peacebuilding, social cohesion and prevention of fragility since access to land and land disputes are often drivers or consequences of conflict. Addressing the governance frameworks that underpin land markets will support enhancement of justice and rule of law. This understanding would also underpin efforts to utilize land markets to better protect and empower vulnerable persons in FCV-affected areas.