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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 9 November 2017 (ECA) – Day two of the 6th Capitalization Meeting began with presentations which focused on addressing the tenure of fisheries, a mid-term review of the European Union Land Governance Program, and addressing disputes and conflicts related to tenure rights on the continent.

In his presentation, Yaw Ansah of the Food and Agriculture Organization, discussed the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication. He spoke on the important use of the guidelines to redistribute marine lands efficiently and equitably to protect the livelihood and industry of small scale fishermen.

Joachim Knoth from the EU discussed the mid-term review of the EU Land Governance Program. He summarized the successes and challenges that the program has faced in the last three years since its inception. The most evident being the inconsistency of evaluation methods between the 18 countries currently implementing the program.

Project implementers discussed different areas of tenure rights after being separated into three groups.

The topics discussed were: How to secure tenure land rights for the marginalized; what is the proper methodology for institutional data collection, and how to roll out the VGGT.

The common theme in all three discussions was the necessity to facilitate information about guidelines, starting at the national level to civil society, ending at community level. This ensures the State supports compliance of projects thus improving the governance of tenure within their countries.

Abdurahman Issack, Technical Advisor for FAO Sudan, emphasized the causes of conflict in Sudan as being rooted in the invalidation of customary land rights, emergency armed indigenous conflicts, and corruption.

He said the assessment of the causes of conflict in Darfur was readily available, although, he added, the focus may not necessarily be land related. The community's perceptions of tribal thinking, which is influenced by political affiliations, was another problem he noted. Due to political conflict over land rights, the approach of VGGT principles must be viewed with sensitivity, said Mr. Issack.

Kyei Yamoah, Program Manager at Friends of the Nation in Ghana, spoke of the country's fisheries that are facing many problems such as access to landing sites, processing sites, and

fishing grounds.

They also face problems of open access to fisheries and inadequate enforcement of laws, weak community leadership, and disputes over pre-financing for women. Illegal fishing is also a major problem in Ghana with some fishermen using methods harmful to the environment such as the use of monofilament nets, dynamite and light fishing.

“Though the government’s thinking is changing now, Ghana’s preference is for oil and not for fisheries, and that’s creating tensions with the fishermen,” said Mr. Yamoah.

He said Ghana can solve these disputes by addressing the policy gaps of offshore oil and gas, securing land sites for smallholder fishermen, and improving political will to enforce marine spatial planning.

Pascal Gbikpi from the Office of the Prime Minister in Ivory Coast emphasized cohesion of thought processes moving forward stating “it’s very important that the modern system, connect with the traditional system because we cannot disregard either.”

The predominant theme that came out of all the presentations that addressed tenured rights disputes was the importance of good governance and the duty of the State to implement practices that have the best interests of the community.

The meeting will conclude Friday November 10.

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