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IGAD dialogue ends with Africa being urged to use local solutions for its land challenges

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 10 November 2017 (ECA) – The IGAD dialogue on land governance ended in Addis Ababa Thursday with participants urging member States to use the platform to share experiences and challenges related to effective land administration in the region.

Participants from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and experts the IGAD Secretariat, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Africa Union Commission (AUC) and representatives of donor agencies, agreed member States should look for local solutions to Africa's land challenges using local experts and exploring synergies with research and training institutions.

In their outcome document that has been endorsed by IGAD member States today, they said Africa's socio-economic development is anchored on the land and therefore the resource should be properly managed.

They urged countries in the region to explore approaches to establish national multi-stakeholder platforms that will feed into the regional dialogues; explore the gaining of political commitment to support land issues within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) for increased financing.

Member States should also identify educational needs of member States that can be addressed within the Strengthening Capacities for Land Governance in Africa (SLGA) and linking them to the Networks of Excellence, they agreed.

IGAD countries were also urged to explore how best to assemble national resources to address land challenges at country level. Participants also agreed that reliance on development partners also needs to be reduced.

IGAD and the African Land Policy Center

Participants recommended that the IGAD Secretariat and the African Land Policy Center (ALPC), should, among other things, research into and invest in land use management and land protection for enhanced livelihood options and reversal of land degradation in the region.

IGAD, they agreed, should explore mechanisms to integrate capacity development in its land governance programs in a manner that supports skills enhancement of Member States; package land information in simple understandable ways to increase visibility of the subject and to make it easily understandable and create an online platform for knowledge sharing on land governance.

Participants also urged IGAD to explore mechanisms to engage the private sector on land more strategically to support land administration in the IGAD region; use existing capacities within the centres of excellence on land governance and convene periodic regional platforms to facilitate experience sharing, lessons learnt and dissemination of best practices in land policy formulation, implementation and monitoring based on member States experiences.

The bloc was asked to strengthen the regional dialogue platform to share best practices and challenges in the land sector, in particular land harmonizing and integration agenda in the IGAD region; undertake learning on how National Engagement Strategies have functioned in order to inform the establishment and sustainability of the IGAD regional multi-stakeholder Platform on Land Governance and coordinate knowledge exchange and research capacity according to member States' needs.

Closing

In closing remarks at the end of the workshop, South Sudan's Land Commission Chairperson, Robert Ladu Luki, thanked the IGAD Secretariat and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for organizing the inaugural regional dialogue on land governance in the IGAD region.

He said experiences shared were invaluable and would help member States in developing policies that will ensure land is optimally used for the benefit of every citizen.

AUC's Jonathan Nyarko Ocran said: "Our knowledge on land issues in the IGAD region has been deepened by the dialogue through sharing experiences. I firmly believe that these efforts will lead to rapid socio-economic development of the region."

For his part, Belay Demissie Yazew of the ALPC, said it was great to have member States' representatives and development partners working tirelessly through the past two days to come up with a great outcome document that should allow IGAD countries to continue sharing and discussing land issues in their region.

"The impact and results of this dialogue no doubt will also help to inform debate and dialogue in other regional economic communities (RECs) on the continent as they seek to fulfill what is required of them by the AU declaration on land issues and challenges," said Mr. Yazew.

Peter Sidler of the Swiss Cooperation Office, said; "We are very happy that the inaugural dialogue was such a success. What a perfect and fruitful start! Now we are looking forward to the next dialogue and hope this will inspire other RECs to live up to the AU call have these periodic regional platforms to facilitate experience sharing, dissemination of best practices in land policy formulation, implementation and monitoring and related issues."

Mohamed Moussa, Director of Agriculture and Environment Division at IGAD, was elated that that dialogue was successful, adding there will be many such dialogues in the future.

"This was an interesting first step which can pave the way for more successful dialogues in the future," he said, adding the wave of land governance reforms in the region needs to be supported by finding new ways of doing business and learning from each other thereby increasing efficiency in managing change and also amplifying the impact of the reforms.

Notes to Editors

The purpose of the dialogue was to create an enabling dialogue environment for member states, regional institutions, development partners, CSOs, private sector and other stakeholders to learn from each other and identify possible areas of collaboration and convergence in taking forward the land policy reform agenda at country and regional level. The dialogue focused on pathways in land administration in the IGAD region in response to the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa.

The dialogue was attended by representatives of the following member States: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. In addition, representatives of the IGAD Secretariat and the Economic Commission for Africa, Africa Union Commission also attended. Bilateral/multilateral agencies were also represented, including UN-Habitat, RCMRD Regional Center for Mapping of Resources for Development (MCMRD), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), USAID and SDC.

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