

## Contents

Land and the Millennium Development Goals .....	1
<b>Policy and Advocacy</b>	
Common Property .....	2
The Contribution of Small Farmers .....	4
Land and Human Rights .....	5
Current and Upcoming Issues .....	7
News from Coalition Partners.....	10
Land Coalition News .....	13
Tsunami Raises Land Rights Questions	
Coalition Publications.....	16

## Land and the Millennium Development Goals

Three-quarters of the world's poor, about 900 million people, live in rural areas and depend on agriculture and related activities for their livelihoods. In order to cut poverty in half by 2015, as set out in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), access to land for the rural poor and landless must be at the centre of national and international policies.

### Links between MDGs and Land

**Goal 1: Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.** The majority of the extreme poor live in rural areas and are heavily dependent on land and other natural resources for their livelihood. Secure access to common property resources is particularly important to eradicating extreme hunger and poverty in rural areas.

**Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.** Women's land rights are central to food security, particularly in regions where women are responsible for the bulk of

household agricultural work. Equal inheritance rights and equal representation, through both customary and statutory tenure processes, are necessary to ensure rural women's empowerment.

**Goal 7: Ensuring environmental sustainability.** Over-exploitation of land resources by commercial interests – particularly where illegal appropriation occurs – is a leading cause of environmental degradation. Greater tenure security for poor people can encourage environmentally sustainable land-use practices.

Many of the basic principles underpinning the MDGs also reinforce the land agenda.

The principles of freedom and equality recognize the right for smallholders, women, landless populations and indigenous peoples to organize themselves – without threat or intimidation by state or private interests – to influence political processes related to land.

The principles of solidarity and shared responsibility call upon both governments and international organizations to:

- (i) support the efforts by peoples' organizations, NGOs and non-state actors; and
- (ii) make direct contributions to securing land access for poor men and women.

As the MDGs represent a broad international consensus – all 191 UN Member States are committed to their achievement – they offer an opportunity to develop an integrated approach to combating poverty and hunger, including through land and agrarian reform.

A five-year review of progress toward the MDGs will occur this year, providing important opportunities for the International Land Coalition (ILC) members and partners to promote the land agenda. In July 2005, the ECOSOC High Level Segment in Geneva will focus on achieving internationally-agreed-upon development goals, including those set forth in the MDGs. The results from this will feed into a High Level Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, planned to take place in September 2005 at UN Headquarters in New York.

*ILC partners are encouraged to share their thoughts and suggestions for inclusion in the ILC's recommendations to the MDGs review process via E-mail to [coalition@ifad.org](mailto:coalition@ifad.org).*

For additional information about the MDGs: [www.un/ngls.org/MDG](http://www.un/ngls.org/MDG) or [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)