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Political Awareness on Land Management and Land Consolidation

1. Introduction

Political awareness on land and land administration, in general, and land management and land consolidation, particularly, is in countries in transition even since 12 years a field of activities and of importance. Until the beginning of transformation process, land was mostly in ownership of the state, and land administration only or mostly in the responsibility of the state and state authorities/entities/bodies. Land transactions were not existing; legislation on land and land use was only focussed on public need.

After the end of the eighties and beginning of the nineties the situation changed totally: through land reforms and fully privatization of land, houses and enterprises all citizens were suddenly private owners of land and real property. Over night there was a big need on special legislation concerning property, land and land administration. The staffs of the public administration had to implement a lot of new procedures with regard to real property like distribution of land, houses and flats by land reform projects, first titling, title registration, creation and establishment of land registers and cadastres and so on. All in all a huge effort and a successful undertaking in all countries in transition.

But, social and political awareness on land and land administration is more than implementing of a title registration system. Non-functioning land markets, not yet existing acceptance of land as collateral for mortgaging and a lack of readiness on leasing of land are signs of missing of awareness and trust in land and the deeper sense of real property. This lack is enlarged upon all sectors of the society, simple people and land owners, the staffs and employees of the state and communal administration and politicians. It is to state that people, engaged in land administration, normally do their

job mechanically and formally, without any knowledge of its legal impacts and economic and social interdependencies.

The most important reason is the lack of pre-experiences with those issues; large know how is only restricted to some few national experts and decision makers. So, there is an urgent danger to misuse this knowledge on their own power and advantage. A wide spread awareness on land, real property and land administration is a crucial point of good governance, precondition for functioning land markets and basis for economic growth; political and social awareness on land administration is a "wide spectrum therapeuticum" and can only be implemented and can only produce effects mid – and long – termed. It has to be established in all social circuits and groups.

2. Political awareness on land administration in general

Political awareness on land administration, in general, has to content

- knowledge concerning property:
 - What does mean property, real property?
 - Nature and character of real property; chance and challenges.
 - What is the legal base of property?
 - Rights and obligations of land owners, particular by social obligations of real property.
- an understanding:
 - Which role do play administration and jurisdiction; where are which responsibilities. What does mean expropriation and under which conditions is expropriation allowed?
- the ability
 - to handle and to deal with real property without any restrictions and fear.

3. Awareness on land management and land consolidation in particular

The approach concerning awareness on land management has to be taken at the special experiences of people during the socialistic period and the land reform after: through privatization people got private real property for the first time, with, at least theoretically, a fully free availability on it. People can see their property, can show their land and cultivate. Owners have title documents in their case and can get a copy from the land register. In most cases parcels are a social symbol and a sign of freedom and wealth.

In the case of a land management procedure or a land consolidation project, parcels are changed or exchanged by administrative decisions. So, people fear to be expropriated again; they are afraid of losing their property and suspect dark machinations of the state, administration or local politicians. In reality, the real property as a right remains untouchably; parcels are only transformed and/or translocated, and – over all – with the same value. On that purpose the land has to be evaluated.

The knowledge of land management principles and land management procedure decides over success or failure of land management projects. Thereby, it is so important to transfer the understanding in wide society circuits that land management and land consolidation are unavoidable to solve the problems of results of the land reforms. Land management can solve land use conflicts between private persons or private owners and public demand. By land management expropriation for public need on land is avoidable. So, land management is an instrument of conflict prevention. Land consolidation is able to initiate land market mechanisms, to improve the recent agricultural structures and to promote the food production.

Land consolidation with its structural approach is much more than land management or merging of parcels; land consolidation has to be interpreted as a gate towards economic progress and an entrance in participatory processes on rural development. Over all, the topic land management is not allowed to be given up to a free game of strengths. All these relations and interrelations are very difficult to transfer and to mediate to people concerned.

So, creation of awareness on land management is a long process, too, similar to awareness building on land administration, in general.

4. How to create social and political awareness

Creation of social and political awareness on land administration, land management and land consolidation has to consider an extensive target group, the whole population and specific persons in policy and projects. And it has to play the total pallet of information and education, beginning with regular and periodical general information by TV, Broad Casting and News Papers and special information to targeted groups and persons. It seems to be important to start the awareness building on real property and land administration already in schools; that matter is appropriate to be mediated in upper classes of high schools and should be part of the curriculum of social sciences. A first general approach and measures are shown in the attachment.

Fig. 1: Mediums and target groups with regard to creation of awareness on land administration

target groups medium	population			land owners		administration staffs		politicians	
	in general	students	pupils	in general	participants in LC projects	in general authorities	land administration authorities	local communal	parliamentarians
general information via reports by TV, Broadcasting, News Papers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
papers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
workshops					X		X	X	X
excursions to successful projects				X	X	X	X	X	X
expert tours abroad							X		
education		X					X		
training							X		
post – graduate studies abroad		X					X		
working sheets			X as part of lessons in high-schools						