

Summary of Global Protection Forum Session 2

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Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights have their origins in international human rights law and the right to adequate housing. However, whilst laws are important, HLP also involves practices, customs and attitudes that revolve around the full spectrum of rights to public and private housing, land and property.

Much of our work is in customary settings – what does this mean for Housing, Land and Property rights? In these settings, different land tenure systems co-exist within a country, each with their own legal framework, legal authority over rights and legitimacy to resolve disputes. How then do we adapt our approaches to increasing people’s security of tenure; ensuring that the rules and arrangements that make it possible for people to live on their land and use their property work well for the most vulnerable?

Safeguarding HLP rights in customary settings can be part of proactive and preventative approaches that reduce harm and mitigate protection risks related to safe, secure and dignified shelter and housing, and access to land for food, agriculture and livelihoods.

Actors and activists from operations, policy and donor perspectives, including those working on development and peace, focused on exploring the value and significance of customary HLP actors in the allocation and management of housing, land and properties, for the protection of ecosystems and indigenous communities as part of this.

Climate change increasingly results in the displacement of local communities. Local communities living in customary settings have an increasingly important role to play in the mitigation of climate risks for the proactive protection of people and livelihoods.

Further efforts are needed to integrate HLP into thinking on prevention and proactive protection, and to do so in collaboration with nexus and solutions-oriented actors. Speakers advocated for this by reflecting on the benefits of a community-based approach, ensuring the development of management strategies that are context-specific, socially acceptable, and ecologically sound, leading to long-term sustainability. Positive examples from field operations illustrated how to address this gap.

In Afghanistan’s informal settlements, approaches that integrate HLP and climate, and put the community at the centre, have had positive impacts increasing tenure security and climate resilience. Securing HLP rights helps mitigate climate vulnerability by increasing household and settlement-level investment in climate-resilient housing and infrastructure.

In Uganda, the escalating menace of land degradation in rural areas called for a comprehensive climate change strategy that incorporates climate change interventions, such as wetland wise use planning, with the registration of land rights to tackle the ecological

concerns and provide a robust solution for securing communal access points to natural resources.

In South Sudan, the HLP AoR has supported capacity development of communities on climate change and environment, including preventive actions such as flood mitigation strategies within the context of HLP. Awareness creation and information sessions aimed at encouraging communities to move to higher ground during the rainy season. Speakers also emphasised the importance of integrated approaches and synergies, working hand in hand with actors from clusters such as Shelter and Food Security.

In Honduras, the protection of HLP rights by registering abandoned land and property is part of a strategy for preventing conflict and promoting longer-term solutions to forced displacement.

Across all these cases, careful planning and coordination is key – developing the right relationships to collaborate across clusters, sectors and different legal systems. Understanding the context is a crucial part of this process, as part of due diligence efforts to identify the relevant laws, rules, community approaches and impact of efforts on HLP.

Overall, the session helped foster greater understanding and connection across clusters, sectors, operations and perspectives. This fits into wider efforts by the HLP AoR following requests from operational colleagues for more resources on working in customary HLP contexts, which should lead to hybrid and evolving frameworks on HLP.