

PRINDEX
and the debate on land governance in
the Arab countries

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Preliminary remarks (1)

- The first Arab Human Development Report, published by UNDP, highlighted how weak knowledge bases and stagnant knowledge development condemn many Arab countries to fragile productive power and reduced development opportunities. (AHDR, 2003, p.35)
- If Arabs aspire for advanced knowledge in all spheres of creativity and innovation, freedom is a must. If Arabs seek human development through knowledge, freedom is the first and all-defining step. Thus, freedom and knowledge are central equations of human development. Freedom of opinion, speech and assembly are the key freedoms that guarantee other forms of human liberty. A climate of freedom is an essential prerequisite of the knowledge society (ibid, p. 165)

Preliminary remarks (2)

- The world average of R&D expenditures as percentage of GDP was 2.22 per cent in 2016. Korea had the highest R&D expenditures as percentage of GDP at 4.22 per cent followed by the United States and Finland at 2.74 per cent respectively. The Arab countries do not invest in R&D expenditure efficiently. From the scarce available data, the highest percentage of GDP expenditure on R&D scored in the Arab region was in the United Arab Emirates with 0.96 per cent. (UNESCWA, Intellectual Property for Fostering Innovation in the Arab Region, Beirut, 2019, p.9)

GLTN' s Arab Land Initiative

- In the spirit of the principles just mentioned, GLTN is involved in the development of educational and research in the fields of land governance in the Arab countries through:
- Partnering with NELGA North Africa
- 17 research grants awarded to students and young land professionals from the Arab region interested in conducting research on land governance-related topics in one or several Arab countries.
- Co-organization of a webinar entitled “Towards a Postgraduate Programme in Land Governance Serving the Needs of Lebanon and Other Middle Eastern Countries”, with the Lebanese University

Questions to PRINDEX

- PRINDEX brings precious indications about the perception of security of tenure worldwide
- However this contribution has its limitations for the following reasons:
 1. Land governance systems evolve with time, and we have seen GCC countries simplifying their property registration systems
 2. Therefore, the issue of updating the indications becomes crucial
 3. How is PRINDEX going to cope with this issue ?

Questions to PRINDEX

- I have noticed important contradictions between PRINDEX and Doing Business concerning some countries:
- While Egypt and Algeria are among the least performing Arab countries with regards to quality of the land administration index, they are among the most secure among Arab countries for PRINDEX
- At the same time, Jordan which has the highest quality of land administration index among Arab non-oil producing countries, it is considered as highly insecure
- Prindex considers that Yemen, Morocco and Tunisia have nearly the same level of insecurity of tenure

Questions to PRINDEX

- Such paradoxes deserve to be commented
- In other words, these figures need an analysis per country, to better understand each country's context from the tenure perception point of view
- A superficial analysis might state that these results « prove » that human societies do not need land registration systems, and that informality is not as bad as feared!
- All of us should therefore be keen to fight simplistic attitudes, by trying to highlight the complexities of land governance.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION