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Land Reform and Peasant Livelihoods

The Social Dynamics of Rural Poverty and Agrarian Reform in Developing Countries

edited by Krishna B. Ghimire

The reduced role of the state; the growing dominance of market forces (including multinational agro-business groups); the mechanization of agriculture; the growing assertiveness of NGOs and other civil society groups, constitute factors that have significantly altered the context of land reform over the past decade.

This 253-page volume, edited by Krishna Ghimire, Project Leader at UNRISD, and co-published with the London-based ITDG Group, brings together some of the world's leading experts on land reform. It is grounded on rich theoretical and historical discourse and field evidence from Latin America to Africa, Asia and the Near East.

Critical questions are addressed here, such as: What is land reform at the beginning of the Twenty-First Century? What is its extent in various contexts? How are current approaches, such as market-driven land reform, tested? What can stakeholders expect from land reform? Can land reform reverse rural poverty and marginalization? What are the global forces and trends that cause peasants' vulnerability? Who obstructs or helps local mobilization? What recourses and allies can peasants count on?

This book advocates land reform as a valid policy option for rural development poverty eradication. It argues that land reform should be strongly supported by donor agencies, governments and civil society groups. The authors scrutinize the inadequacy of the market-oriented approach,

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which is linked to the structural adjustment policies of the international financial institutions, and provide convincing arguments for a flexible approach towards re-distributive reforms as the appropriate strategy towards alleviating rural poverty.

Contents: Land reform at the turn of the twentieth century: an overview of issues, actors and processes • The role of the state and other actors in land reform • Peasant initiatives in land reform in Central America • Technology and globalization: modern-era constraints on local initiatives for land reform • The political economy of market-based land reform • Peasants' pursuit of outside alliances and legal support in the process of land reform • Peasant mobilization for land reform: historical case studies and theoretical considerations • The role of peasant organizations in managing agrarian conflict.

Krishna Ghimire is a Project Leader and Researcher at UNRISD.

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