

CONSULTATIVE COORDINATING  
COMMITTEE

PARTNERSHIPS  
AND COLLABORATIONS  
AT ALL LEVELS

CHANGES IN  
POLICY  
NEW NATIONAL  
POLICY DOCUMENT  
INCLUDES FOREIGN  
COMMUNITY RIGHTS

UNITING FOR LAND RIGHTS IN

NEPAL

INFLUENCE DECISION MAKING  
INFLUENCE

STRONGER -  
VOICE AND  
PLATFORM -

CHANGES IN  
PRACTICE IN  
IMPLEMENTATION

## COUNTRY CONTEXT

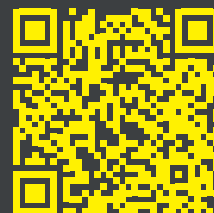
Access to land in Nepal is highly dependent on wealth, caste and gender. In Nepal an **estimated 25 percent of the population is classified as landless** or near landless and most land is controlled by elites or absentee landlords. **Women own just 19 per cent of Nepal's land, despite making up 70 percent of the agricultural labour force.**

The **caste system** impacts many tribal groups and ethnic minorities, despite legislation banning caste-based discrimination and untouchability.

**Dalits** (low-caste groups who comprise 15% of the population) are subject to abuse and segregation and are disproportionately landless. A further excluded group are **Haliya** who are bonded agricultural labourers. The government abolished Haliya as a form of modern slavery in 2008, beginning a process of rehabilitation and emancipation, including grants for housing and land



THE ROAD TO  
EMANCIPATION  
FOR THE HALIYA  
COMMUNITY



*The International Land Coalition, through Nepal's National Engagement Strategy (NES) is engaging in land law and policy reform in the country for almost a decade, during which time a number of important changes have taken place. These include constitutional reform on land and inheritance rights and a new National Land Policy and Land Act, which recognise informal land tenure and reference global frameworks such as the SDGs and VGGTs.*

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ENGAGEMENT  
STRATEGY  
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## PRO-POOR LAND REFORM AND INCLUSION

Nepal's NES platform is leading a strong multi-stakeholder effort to reform land laws and policies and implement the changes needed to achieve people-centred land governance in the country. Including pushing for the scaling-up of land titles and joint land ownership for the poor and marginalised.

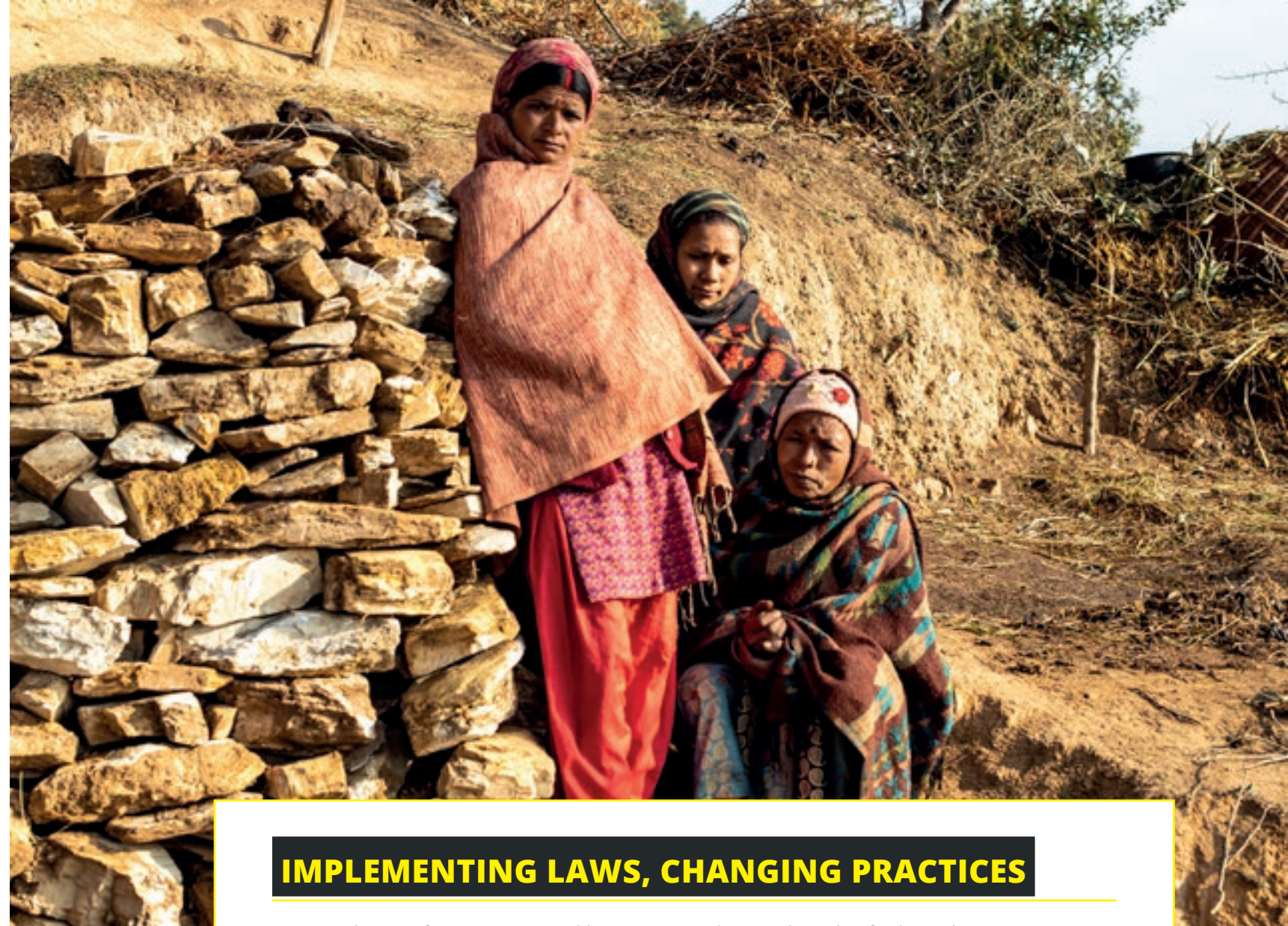
Established in 2011, Nepal's NES includes the Ministry of Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation (MLMCPA), the Central Bureau of Statistics and the National Planning Commission, as well as Inter- and Non-Governmental Organisations, civil society organisations and donor networks.

## INFLUENCING LAND POLICY AND THE LAW

The NES has influenced important land reforms including **changes to the 2015 Constitution** to prohibit gender-based discrimination, ensure equal inheritance and property rights for women and men and acknowledging land rights of ex-Haliya's.

After a seven-year process, the NES also influenced the landmark **2019 National Land Policy**, which called for the recognition of informal tenure and the duty of the state in guaranteeing equitable distribution of land. The 2019 Land Policy also aspires to global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land Fisheries and Forest (VGGTs).

The **Land Act of 2019** was a further important area of influence for NES members. The Act aims to control fragmentation of agricultural land and classify the country's land resources. Crucially, it acknowledges the role of local land councils. An amendment in 2020 provides for land distribution and land rights registrations for informal



## IMPLEMENTING LAWS, CHANGING PRACTICES

Despite these reforms, NES Nepal has identified significant shortcomings including in the application of **women's land rights**. Through NES's member-led Joint Land Ownership programmes, the platform has secured almost 10,000 joint land ownership certificates, adding women's names on land titles alongside their husbands'. NES also actively promotes rural women's leadership and livelihoods.

Supporting communities who face **discrimination and neglect by the state** is another major area of work. NES Nepal's agrarian and tenancy rights campaigns have led to the issuing of land ownership certificates to over 4,500 village-block households, 2,190 landless households and 955 tenants.

The NES has also facilitated interactions between local communities, municipalities and district governments to support national **rehabilitation grants to Haliya communities**. In 2019, the NES provided assistance to 355 ex-Haliya families awaiting a grant. To date, around 11,000 families have been identified, out of an estimated total of approximately 19,000.

*Landlessness in Nepal is linked with social status, poverty, caste, exclusion and inequality.*

NEPAL







# LOOKING FORWARD

NES Nepal will continue to forge a strong multi-stakeholder approach to ensure land reforms are implemented.

This work includes improvements to data collection, government coordination, funding, human resources, and resolving differences between stakeholder groups.

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**INTERNATIONAL  
LAND COALITION  
SECRETARIAT**

**c/o IFAD**

Via Paolo di Dono, 44 ,  
00142-Rome, Italy

tel +39 06 5459 2445  
fax +39 06 5459 3445

info@landcoalition.org  
www.landcoalition.org