



## PRESS RELEASE

### IMPROVE INFORMATION DISCLOSURE TO ENSURE PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO ACCESS LAND INFORMATION

**Hanoi, July 1, 2022** – Many local state agencies have publicized district land use plans and provincial land pricing frameworks on their e-portals/websites as well as disclosed land information at the request of citizens. However, provided information lacked completeness and consistency. Meanwhile, the proportion of state agencies that have well implemented the regulations has not met the requirements initially set out.

Above is one of the findings from the *“Action-Based Research to Enhance Citizens’ Access to Land Information”* jointly conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Viet Nam and the Center for Education Promotion and Empowerment of Women (CEPEW), with the support of Australia and Ireland through the PAPI initiative.

The study was conducted to assess land information disclosure in 63 provinces and municipalities, and 704 districts and towns nationwide in one year, from July 2021 to June 2022. The research findings were shared in the thematic seminar *“Review of Local Government’s Performance in Disclosing Information about District Land Use Plans and Provincial Land Pricing Frameworks”* organized by UNDP in coordination with CEPEW to provide information on the publicization of these two types of information.

Vietnam’s laws on land and access to information have specific provisions on the responsibilities, procedures and deadlines for publicizing information on provincial land use and provincial land pricing frameworks, as well as providing this information at the request of the people. The Resolution of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly also stipulated that the Government needed to raise organizations and citizens’ awareness and observance of laws on land and urban planning; as well as encourage and create conditions for organizations, individuals and socio-professional organizations to participate in social criticism for the implementation of policies and laws on planning, management and use of land.

*“The lack of transparency in land planning and acquisition schemes, combined with low state-defined land pricing, and rent-seeking behaviors among land registrars might be some of the key causes of land conflicts in Viet Nam, especially in suburban areas,”* said **Ms. Diana Torres**, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative and Head of Governance and Participation Team. *“When land-related information is disclosed in an open and transparent manner and when citizens have the opportunity to discuss draft land plans and price frameworks, the risks of corruption and the prevalence of land conflicts are likely to be reduced and as a result the overall citizen’s trust in local government is improved”*.

### **Many provincial and district-level People’s Committees have publicized information on provincial land pricing frameworks, yet the information lacks completeness and consistency**

The study results showed that only 27 out of 63 provinces and municipalities have publicized provincial land pricing frameworks (accounting for 42.9%), and only 337 out of 704 district-level agencies have publicized district land use plans on their e-portals/websites (accounting for 47.9%). However, the posting of state agencies lacked consistency, as the documents to be disclosed listed in the announcement of publicization are often scattered in several different categories on these e-portals/websites, which makes it difficult for citizens to find information in full.

The search results showed that only 17% of agencies published a complete set of land use plan documents which includes four types of documents: (i) announcement of publicization of land use plan, (ii) decision on the approval of district land use plan, (iii) explanatory report, and (iv) map of land use plan; or published the three most important documents except for the announcement of publicization of land use plan.

Of the 561 offices of the district-level People's Committee where requests for information were sent, 98 agencies provided the requested information (accounting for 17.5%), 15 refused to provide the requested information (accounting for 2.7%), and 46 responded but did not provide the requested information (accounting for 8.2%). There was an overwhelming number of 402 agencies that made no response (accounting for 71.7%).

### **19% of provinces and municipalities performed well in information disclosure**

12 out of 63 provinces and municipalities performed best in the posting of land use plans on district-level e-portals and websites, which are: Bac Kan; Son La; Nam Dinh; Da Nang; Phu Yen; Gia Lai; Tien Giang; Tra Vinh; Dong Thap; Hau Giang; Soc Trang; and Ca Mau. Particularly, the three provinces of Gia Lai, Tien Giang, and Tra Vinh have all districts performing well in information disclosure.

## Some recommendations

Among the recommendations submitted to state agencies, the research team emphasized the need to effectively implement the 2016 Law on Access to Information. This law has stipulated the responsibilities of state agencies in exercising citizens' right to access information and defined the procedures for information disclosure at the request of people. The good implementation of these regulations will contribute to the good implementation of regulations on land information disclosure as stipulated in the law on land, in order to contribute to increasing the efficiency of land management and reducing land conflicts.

Through this research, Ms. Ngo Thi Thu Ha, Director of the Center for Education Promotion and Empowerment of Women noted: *"People, the press and social organizations play an important role in promoting information transparency, including information on land planning, land use plans and land price frameworks. More transparent land information will help the State better manage this resource and increase people's trust in state agencies."*

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### Contact information:

Center for Education Promotion and Empowerment of Women (CEPEW)

Vo Truc Linh (Ms.) – Communication Officer

Email: [linh.vo@cepew.org.vn](mailto:linh.vo@cepew.org.vn)

Mobile: (+84) 974 503 686

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Tran Thi Van Anh (Ms.) – Communication Officer

Email: [tran.thi.van.anh@undp.org](mailto:tran.thi.van.anh@undp.org)

Mobile: (+84) 363 585 842

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