



2019 CONFERENCE ON
LAND POLICY IN AFRICA

LAND POLICY CONFERENCE

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Winning the fight against Corruption in the Land Sector: Sustainable Pathway for Africa's Transformation

A decade of implementing the AU Declaration on Land – a view from the African Land Policy Centre

This year marks the 10-year benchmark of the decade of the AU Declaration on Land – has Africa made progress. The Declaration commits member states to review their land sectors and develop comprehensive policies that take into account their peculiar needs; as well as build adequate human, financial, technical capacities to support land policy development and implementation. The declaration calls on the AUC in collaboration with the RECs, ECA, the AfDB and partners to work towards the establishment of an appropriate institutional framework to provide coordination of follow up activities including the establishment of a fund. Mercy Wambui caught up with Joan Kagwanja, Coordinator of the ALPC to discuss a few perspectives on progress made and where changes are needed.

Q. Can you say with certainty, that Africa is making progress on the question of land?

J.K Certainly, we are making progress. The AU Declaration on Land has been instrumental in creating an enabling environment for land policy development to occur. Bolstered by the push for more inclusive governance and the democratization wave across the Continent, the policy space opened up positively,

making it possible for stakeholders to put the question of land on the table. This wave of democratization has been useful to the land policy agenda. In addition, the AU Framework on Land has been useful to the process of democratization.

Q. How have governments responded to the land question?

Between 2005 and 2008 when the regional conversation on land governance in Africa gained momentum, we saw governments begin to be more receptive to consultation on land reforms; we saw openness in civil society with respect to organizing and participating in land policy processes. The Regional Economic Communities started to ask themselves about their mandate in relation to the land question. Over time, a consensus began to build around land rights for women. And this, despite the lack of land data that shows how much of that land is documented to men and women or how much land is held jointly by women.

There is also consensus around the key areas of the declaration, including capacity development, curriculum on land governance, and a

A decade of ... (cont'd on page 2)



Joan Kagwanja, Coordinator, ALPC

“NELGA meets land governance needs; deepens knowledge,” – Prof Kimani Njogu



The African Land Policy Centre, which is a jointly spearheaded by the AUC, ECA and the AfDB is charged with activities to support the implementation of the African Union's Agenda on Land. In a bid to help Africa address some of its land governance challenges related to capacity at national and regional levels, the ALPC, with support from GIZ has established a Network of centres of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA). For more on NELGA, Sandra Nyaira caught up with Kimani Njogu, who worked with the ALPC on the NELGA curriculum.

Q. What is NELGA doing to support African governments deal with weak land governance and related issues?

KN: NELGA is implementing a key component of the African Union Framework and guidelines requirements for building capacity for researchers and professionals and meeting the needs of communities regarding land as well as the creation of knowledge. Currently there are seven nodes across the continent, which are affiliated to over 70 institutions.

Q. How does NELGA help in strengthening human and institutional capacities within countries?

KN: One of the important functions of NELGA is to work with governments so that they support the functions of NELGA to ensure sustainability of the centres. The centres are also expected to build synergies between themselves while still focused on their national and regional concerns. They advance the mandate of the ALPC and are expected to work closely with them to drive the continental agenda on land governance. Although they are situated in universities they are expected to reach out to other institutions and stakeholders, not only

NELGA ... (cont'd on page 2)

A decade of ... (cont'd from page 1)

shift of the paradigm on land issues, including the importance of the social and spiritual dimensions on land.

Q. We have seen a huge presence of traditional authorities attending the Conference on Land

Let me highlight customary land perspectives – governments have become more receptive. We now have a platform for traditional authorities who have become influential on the issue of the framework and guidelines on land.

Furthermore, the African Land Policy Centre (former Land Policy Initiative) was established, shifting the agenda towards land and agriculture, land and conflict, capacity development, changing curricula and working closely with member states on land reform. Over 20 countries are talking about community land rights and including traditional authorities in the discussion.

Q. Where do we go from here?

A lot remains to be done. The ALPC was only able to address a slither of the pie in advocating the AU declaration land. The demand and the need for more interventions mean that more resources are needed over the next few years. For instance, we established a Network of centres of Excellence on Land Governance in Africa (NELGA) in universities who had been

absent from the question of land governance and customary land rights because werealized the research by universities was not responding to the policy questions; and the curricula was not producing the kind of skills needed in land governance, particularly in customary land rights. NELGA is playing an important role in strengthening African scholarship in the area of land governance. It allows professors to rethink how Africa should reform itself and how universities can reform curricula to respond to these issues. The next 5 years will be critical in terms of maintaining the momentum implementing the decisions of the AU on the question of land governance. I think Africa needs the kind of push and massive support by international institutions seen in post-cold war Europe. And, African governments are playing their role in pushing the question of land at all levels.

NELGA ... (cont'd from page 1)

as resources but also to build their capacity as needed.

Universities are also supposed to build the capacities of governments regarding land issues on the continent.

They are also supposed to liaise with universities in the region; bring together land experts within the continent to discuss issues related to land on the continent and proffer solutions

to the challenges of weak governance and insecure land rights and land policy reforms.

Q. How is NELGA doing in the universities?

KN: NELGA is helping enhance training opportunities and curricula on land governance on the continent; promoting demand-driven research on land issues; and connecting scholars and researchers through academic networks, among others.

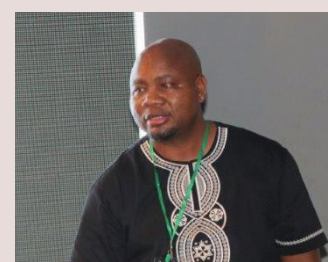
Since the centre took off 2016, so far scholarships have been offered by DAAD, the German Academic Programme. At least a 100 scholarships were offered and 85 have been given out. These scholarships are normally regional allowing students to study land governance-related courses focusing for example on gender issues; women's land rights, land administration; community land; and conflict.

Short term courses are also being given under Political Economy of Land Governance that is led by the University of Western Cape's Plaas Centre.

The centre in support of land policy and governance in Africa will continue to promote knowledge management, dissemination and networking as well as providing and facilitating academic education and training for land professionals and practitioners.

For more on the African Land Policy Centre, visit <https://www.uneca.org/alpc>

Conference in pictures



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