



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

Strengthening women's land tenure security crucial to eradicating poverty



Africa cannot eliminate poverty or achieve inclusive development without the participation of women, African Union Commission's Rural Economy and Agriculture Commissioner, Ambassador Josefa L.C. Sacko, said Wednesday at the on-going 2019 Conference on Land Policy in Africa.

Ambassador Sacko said for far too long, African women have contributed to the development of the continent without due recognition, adequate support and sufficient benefits.

"This is in part due to gender-based disparities in access to productive resources and opportunities such as land. As you know, land is not only a productive central asset for farming but also a foundational asset upon which economies are built," she said.

"I can confidently state that women's land tenure security is critical for their empowerment and for unlocking transformative social and economic benefits at the macro level in accordance with the AU Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 for the sustainable development goals."

She spoke during a plenary session on Securing Land Tenure for Women and Other Marginalized Groups.

Inheritance remained an essential method of land acquisition for women even though inheritance laws and customs often favoured men over women, the Commissioner said.

"Women are less likely to be allocated land through community distribution or inheritance due to norms related to ancestral lands, and statutory legal frameworks may also be discriminatory or

How partnerships are driving the Cameroun Land Reform process

My name is Amaelle Seigneret. I work as a Research and technical support consultant with IIED (the International Institute for Environment and Development), a research institute with a long history of collaboration with ECA and the African Land Policy Centre. In particular, Through various projects IIED has supported the implementation of the Framework and guidelines on land policy in Africa, and has contributed to the development of the Guiding Principles on Large Scale Land Based Investments in Africa.

Working closely with partner organisations in Africa, we generate evidence, develop practical approaches such as legal

empowerment tools, and formulate policy recommendations to make land governance structures more inclusive and just. This is what we are currently doing with our Cameroonian partners from the CED (Centre for Environment and Development), also present in Abidjan this week, and RELUFA (Anti-Hunger Network) through the LandCam project.

Cameroon has undertaken a land law reform for the first time since 1974. This decision comes at a time when African rural lands are under great pressure and in a national context where there are few mechanisms to protect the land rights of local populations. There are places

in Cameroon where communities' living spaces have been considerably reduced, or have even disappeared, because their lands have been allocated for commercial projects or conservation reserves without prior procedure to consult them and obtain their consent. LandCam aims to support civil society during the reform process to ensure that Cameroon's rural populations are not only represented in decision-making structures, but to see that they can meaningfully participate and actively defend their interests.

Such a mission requires working in partnership with a diversity of actors at different levels. At the local level, for example,

(cont'd on page 2)

Land policy in Africa: Expert panel calls for “fair, efficient land management”

Experts attending this year's conference on Land Policy in Africa have called for fair and efficient land management to support moves to transform the continent.

The third edition of the conference on Land Policy in Africa, currently underway in the Ivorian capital, Abidjan is co-organized by the African Union, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank.

Each speaker shared their thoughts on the challenges facing the land sector and shared knowledge on the fair and efficient management of the natural resource in African states. The panel comprised Angela Thoozile Didi-za, South African Minister of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform; Michael Lipton, Professor of Economics at the University of Sussex; Bitange Ndemo, Professor at the University of Nairobi; and Ali Mufurui, founder and CEO of Infotech Investment Group.

Angela Didiza said: “It is simply essential that women have access to land. Clear policies must be put in place to ensure implementation of recommendations for land management.” In his remarks, Professor Lipton called for “a

democratic approach” to avoid arbitrariness in land management and also protect the interests of landowners.

Bitange Ndemo underscored the need to adopt appropriate technology choices for efficient land management. “We cannot make small farms productive. That is why we need to find ways of turning them into large farms. We must decentralize the land-management system and clearly define what we need over the next ten years; that is the right way to improve the system.”

Ali Mufurui said, “We have aggravated the system by issuing land titles. Giving someone a piece of land with a land title is not the way to solve the problem; the real issue is what use it is put to. Land has a lifespan and we need to work on using it well to provide the maximum benefit to the entire community. The most urgent need now is to rethink this way of managing the land issue.”

The key theme for this year's dialogue is: “Winning the Fight against Corruption in the Land Sector: Sustainable Pathway for Africa's Transformation”.

“The land already belongs to the women. We, as the traditional leaders, are there only to protect it for their use. Why should women - our mothers, sisters and daughters - ask for rights which are already theirs. We should invest in the women and support them so that they can support us in our duties to safeguard as custodians of the land for our people. Only then can we together and support Africa's development,” said HRH Izakare.

How partnerships ... (cont'd from page 1)

we are trying to better understand the impacts of the creation of large concessions on communities, through participatory mapping activities, the organisation of multi-stakeholder fora and exchanges with members of these communities. We have also undertaken extensive work to document customary land management practices across the country. All these activities enable us to formulate policy recommendations for the new law to ensure that it reflects the reality of a large part of the Cameroonian population and helps secure their land rights. In two weeks' time, we will participate in a forum in Yaoundé that will bring together a diversity of stakeholders, including parliamentarians and the Minister of State Property, Surveys and Land Affairs, to define a vision for the new law, which we want based on inclusion and justice.

The “Conference on Land Policy in Africa” happening this week in Abidjan is a chance to exchange with representatives from civil society, academia, the public and private sectors on strategies to secure rural land rights.

Panelists agreed that conflicting and overlapping legal and regulatory frameworks and jurisdictions over land and resources were further excluding women and other vulnerable groups.

Corruption in land administration, they said, obstructed women's access to land, markets and credit by imposing high informal or illegal costs for accessing land-related services. In extreme cases, corruption resulted in evictions.

They emphasized the need for collective responsibility by governments and experts in accelerating the gender-responsive implementation of the AU agenda on land.

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

poorly drafted, including land law, family law, and civil law,” she said.

But His Royal Highness, Drani Stephen Izakare, Chief of the Madi people in Uganda and member of the Forum for African Traditional Authorities (FATA), said women already enjoyed land rights on the continent according to African culture and customs.

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Our mission is to make knowledge work for forest and people. The land policy in Ghana was developed in 1999. There is a challenge when it comes to implementing what it seeks to achieve. There is no policy on integrated land use in my country. The project seeks to ensure that stakeholders adopt a policy that ensures that mining, agriculture and forestry exist in a harmonized way in the same landscape.

We want to put together a policy on integrated land use management in Ghana. From this conference, I would like to learn the various land reforms in Africa so that I can adopt best practices and lessons for the Ghanaian context.

Dr SOMUAH Dorcas, Coordinator for a project Securing food and ecosystem services in mining plagued regions of Ghana at Tropenbos Ghana, a Local NGO - part of a network organization called Tropenbos international.

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Conference in pictures



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The Conference on Land Policy in Africa Bulletin is the result of voluntary contributions by ECA staff: Tahirou Gouro, Aristide Somda, Eskinder Tsegaye, Menkir Girma, Charles Ndungu and Mercy Wambui, Editor, ECA. Photos: Tewodros Ayalew and AfDB Photos. Design and Printing by: ECA Printing and Publishing Unit. Overall conceptual guidance provided by Joan Kagwanja and members of the Conference on Land Policy Scientific Committee.

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