



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

Fighting corruption in the land sector must be underpinned by effective land governance



Group family photo

The theme of the third biannual conference has as its central focus, "Winning the fight against Corruption in the Land Sector: Sustainable Pathway for Africa's Transformation".

Stephen Karingi, Director of the Regional Integration, Infrastructure and Trade Division at the Economic Commission for Africa said, "Success in achieving the sustainable development goals is underpinned by good land governance, as it contributes to eliminating poverty and hunger; promoting sustainable agriculture; advancing gender equality and women empowerment; and promoting inclusive economic growth; among other development objectives."

He however, underlined that legal uncertainty not only undermined business confidence, but could also foster corruption. He also stressed that undeveloped systems with complex and unclear administrative processes contribute to the lack

of transparency and accountability in the administration of land.

These conditions, said Karingi, increase the likelihood of corruption. In the land sector, it has far-reaching implications for Africa's development.

Ambassador Josefa Sacko, the African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture said, "For us to win the fight against corruption, we need to ensure that land is equitably distributed and accessed by all, more especially women, youths and other vulnerable groups. Women continue to contribute significantly towards agricultural production in Africa but in some circumstances are not able to enjoy their rights to land. It is therefore a reality that women and men still do not enjoy the same rights over land."

"As a factor of production most livelihoods and developmental activities are

undertaken on land; we need to ensure that the way in which land is distributed and used plays an essential role in promoting sustainable development and achieving peace and stability on the continent," she said.

The African Development Bank's Senior Vice President, Charles Boamah, for his part, said sound land policy was critical to economic growth, food security, and poverty alleviation across the continent.

"It can catalyse growth in agricultural productivity through tenure security and protection of land rights, which can in turn enhance investment opportunities in land," he said, adding, land administration systems in many countries on the continent were characterised by poor infrastructure and management practices largely because of corruption.

Corruption in the land sector - a problem that we must eradicate



Redford A. Ahene

Sandra Nyaira sat for a chat with the Chair of the Conference on Land Policy in Africa Scientific Committee Chairperson, Dr. Redford A. Ahene for an overview of the theme: "Winning the fight against Corruption in the Land Sector: Sustainable Pathway for Africa's Transformation". The Scientific Committee is composed of highly placed thinkers and practitioners who are charged conceptualising the theme

and the issues, offering deep analytical perspectives to the CLPA on behalf of the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Africa.

Q. In a few words, please contextualise the question of Land in Development

Ahene: Land is such an important natural resource for national development, for social cohesion, human rights, peace and stability. Land administration deals with the use, administration, management, development and the rights people have controlling their own livelihoods - this requires decision making that is fair, transparent and inclusive.

Q. So, what happens when corruption plays out?

When corruption gets in the way, it takes away the transparency, fairness and inclusivity and encourages discrimination and abuse. When we take the importance of land in everyday life and you take away the access and opportunity through corruption, you undermine the human rights that define us as human beings because you have taken away the one fundamental thing we all depend on.

Q. What's the role of leadership in tackling corruption in the land sector?

Corruption is a big problem and because it occurs all the time in the land sector, it is very important that we tackle it and eradicate it. It goes to the very core of our human rights and it's for that reason that the African Union declared 2018 as the year to fight corruption. By focusing on corruption from the highest level, they were telling member States it was important to focus on corruption.

Furthermore, leadership is very important in setting the tone of the policies everyone should consider. This was a signal that corruption has become such a big problem on our continent that we need to tackle it; and the African Land Policy Centre provides that platform for getting the message out there. This conference is a platform that brings all the experts together to share knowledge, demonstrate best practices and lessons learnt. In the end, we hope the outcome would be to provide information and motivate all the stakeholders to take action against corruption.

Message from Africa's Traditional Leaders

A platform of traditional leaders from across the Continent once again, present at the Conference on Land Policy in Africa. They bring unique perspectives to the discussions with policymakers, academics and civil society actors. Sandra Nyaira spoke with His Majesty Mfumu Difima, Chief from the Democratic Republic of Congo to discuss the role traditional leaders play in land governance.

Q. What role do traditional leaders play in this ongoing discussions on land governance?

H.M Mfumu Difima: Traditional leaders are the custodians of the land in every African community. They have a leadership role in their communities and have a responsibility to safeguard land for their own people, so we are attending the conference in our numbers to learn more about how we can do this together, most importantly to share experiences and best practices. We have to protect the land as an asset not only for today but

also for the future. So, if land corruption is getting in the way of the proper use of and management of land, then we as traditional leaders have the responsibility to ensure that that problem does not continue because it undermines our responsibility as chiefs, as custodians of the land.

We are also here, thanks to the ECA, AfDBA, FAO, and the AUC, to assert that we are the custodians of the African land and are going to do all we can to protect that land for our use and for our future generations.

It is important that we as traditional leaders do as much as we can to rid our land sector of corruption.

How do you as traditional leaders work with or relate to local communities?

H.M Mfumu Difima: Africa is trying now to ensure there is sustainable development on the continent. Our leaders now understand that all development the world over is anchored on the land. We cannot talk about land without local com-

munity. Land is life, land belongs to the chiefs and kings. You cannot work without them; you cannot come to my doorstep without me. Yet, the community is the king, the king is the community.



H.M Mfumu Difima, Democratic Republic of Congo Photo/AfDB

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