



AFRICAN UNION



Economic Commission for Africa

Land Policy Initiative

Establishing a Knowledge Sharing Community of Practice on Land Policy

Draft Concept Note

Background

Poor management of land resources, insecure tenure rights, land related conflicts and other land related challenges are contributing factors to Africa's low agricultural productivity and food insecurity, poor environmental and natural resource management, poor urban planning and development, as well as peace and security. It is in recognition of this interrelationship between poor land governance and these challenges and the need to facilitate successful harnessing of land, that many African governments have engaged in various reforms of their land policies and laws and land administration systems. In particular, reforms are aimed at addressing disparities in land ownership, insecurity of land tenure and access, and duality and inadequate systems of land administration, among other challenges. Yet in spite of many efforts in this regard few countries have been successful in tackling land related issues. Many countries have fallen short of formulating comprehensive policies, developing appropriate land laws and institutions and, harmonizing other sectoral laws and regulations. Even less successful are reforms in land administration systems, monitoring and evaluation systems and mechanisms, factors that have contributed to the current low implementation of land policies.

At the continental level, African leaders acknowledged the need to 'extend the area under sustainable land management,' as is documented in the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) of the New Partnership for Africa's Development

(NEPAD). In addition, the Action Plan of the Environmental Initiative¹ of NEPAD stresses the need to address land degradation, drought and desertification and combat climate change through, among other things, supporting national and sub-regional efforts. In particular, NEPAD recognizes the potential role of continental organizations such as ECA in facilitating access to technical expertise, benchmarking, mutual learning from best practices and exchange of information were considered as critical to advancing successful strategies for addressing land related challenges.

Responding to this call by NEPAD, and in order to facilitate the implementation of related conventions (e.g. African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources; Agenda 21) and recommendations of various conferences, (e.g. ICARRD)², the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union (AU) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), under the overall leadership of the AU, undertook a land policy initiative in 2006 aimed at developing and implementing a Framework and Guidelines on land policy and land reform in Africa.

The first phase of the initiative, which entailed the development of a framework and guidelines on land policy in Africa, has been completed. The development process of the framework and guidelines was an opportunity to engage stakeholders (including Africa's Regional Economic Communities; African Member States; the private sector; the African civil society; traditional chiefs, farmers organizations, research and academia; and the development partners) in building consensus on the key lessons, strategies and modalities useful for catalyzing land policy and land reforms on the continent. Following endorsement of the framework by the joint Conference of African Ministers of Agriculture, Land and Livestock, the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government endorsed a Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa in Sirte, Libya, in July 2009. The AU Declaration on land further invites Regional Economic Communities to convene regional platforms to facilitate experience sharing, lessons learnt and dissemination of best practices in land policy formulation, implementation and monitoring based on member

¹ Action Plan of the Environmental Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), June 2003

² International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development

States experiences. It also invites RECs to capture and address issues of land policies within their respective common agricultural policy frameworks

The adoption of the AU Declaration, which commits the African Heads of State and Government, the African Union Commission and other LPI Consortium members, and RECs, paved way for implementation. Subsequently, the implementation phase of the Declaration was launched in Lilongwe, Malawi in October 2010.

In this backdrop, supporting the implementation of the continental framework and guidelines on land at regional and country levels by increasing networking, facilitating knowledge management and sharing of best practices in land policy development and implementation among stakeholders in Africa is timely. The capacity building project, which include the establishment of the Virtual African Land Policy and Administration Facility (VALPAF) that, in turn, will lead to the establishment of : i) a database of land experts ; ii) a database of land related information; and iii) a community of practice. The community of practice (CoP) provides an e.platform to support of land policy development, implementation and monitoring in Africa through information sharing, exchange of experience, thematic discussion, lesson learning and dissemination of best practices.

Lessons from the development of the AU-ECA-AfDB Framework and Guidelines on Land in Africa showed the overwhelming interest of all African stakeholders in information sharing and exchange of experience. Although African countries have inadequate internal technical capacities in formulating and implementing sound land policy which needs to be addressed urgently, there are also tremendous innovative and promising experiences across the continent that can be tapped to catalyze meaningful land reforms. The AU-ECA-AfDB land policy initiative and other complementary programmes will aim to assist African governments in harnessing these experiences in order to improve land policy development, land reforms and monitoring and evaluation of land policy processes.

Objective

The community of practice to be developed within the VALPAF will therefore serve as a means to increase networking, improve lesson learning and optimize exchange of experience related to land policy development, implementation and evaluation.

Partners/Clients

The clients within the context of this CoP will come from a wide range of stakeholders, including:

- The AUC- ECA-AfDB consortium
- The Regional Economic Communities
- AU Member States
- The private sector
- The African civil society
- Centres of Excellence, and
- The development partners.

Knowledge products and services

:

- A regular flow of information regarding land policy processes
- LPI electronic bulletin on land related activities
- Thematic e.discussions on priority/ emerging Land issues
- Face to face EGM on selected themes
- Policy briefs on specific issues related to land policy development, implementation and monitoring
- Making information available on land related events & opportunities
- Identification of and discussion on best practices
- Electronic review for publication on land

Source of Knowledge

- Individual experts
- African Centres of excellence

- Regional/ National networks
- Member states
- Development partners

Roadmap for the establishment of the CoP on land policy

Description of Activity	Timeframe
Preparation/Review of concept note	End of March 2011
Preparation/Review of contact details of potential CoP members	Mid April 2011
Preparation of an interim action plan	April 2011
Uploading available material on the LPI website	April 2011
Contacting and inviting partners, RECs and task force members to conceptualization workshop	April 2011
Workshop on the CoP concept/initiative	Mid May 2011
Seed work post-workshop(Final action plan, recruitment of facilitator, design of platform etc)	June-Nov 2011
Launch of CoP	December 2011